

**‘DRESSING THE PART:’ ELLEN
TERRY (1847-1928) – TOWARDS A
METHODOLOGY FOR ANALYSING
HISTORIC THEATRE COSTUME**

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ABSTRACT

The material culture of historic theatre costume offers a vital resource for the fields of dress and theatre history that has yet to be fully recognised. This thesis unites approaches from both disciplines to create a specific methodology for the study of theatre costume founded upon the examination and assessment of such garments. It argues that theatre costume represents a separate and specific category of clothing and theatrical ephemera.

Celebrated actress Ellen Terry (1847-1928), an individual highly attuned to the significance of dress as an expression of identity, is used as a case study to demonstrate the validity of this new methodology. Adopting an object-based and material culture approach, the thesis engages with the visual and physical evidence about performance and design that can be gathered from Terry's extant theatre costumes. It also highlights crucial information about Terry's dress and its public reception gleaned from additional sources such as photographs; paintings; letters; reviews, and within Terry's papers and books. This thesis represents the first full investigation of Terry's personal and theatrical wardrobe, and is the first study to carry out a close analysis of the actress's surviving garments.

This analysis establishes the factors fundamental to the interpretation and study of theatre costume: the significance of social, artistic and historic context; parallels and contrasts between on and off-stage dress; the collaborative process of design and making; the function of costume as both performance object, and expression of 'identity'; the issue of multiple and complex 'biographies'; and the crucial evidence offered from material culture sources, most importantly, surviving costumes.

Chapter 1 outlines existing methodologies and the cross disciplinary nature of the thesis; Chapter 2 reviews existing literature and proposes a new methodology; 3 provides the context for Terry's professional career; 4 develops the methodology and analyses extant garments. 5 and 6 relate the methodology to ideas of self-fashioning and biography.

The thesis establishes Terry as an exceptional figure in British theatre and society who took an active role in fashioning her public and private image, both during her life, and after her death. The analysis of Terry's wardrobe confirms the status of theatre costumes as unique garments, which represent a key source for design, dress and theatre historians. This detailed case study demonstrates that the methodology presented can be employed in the study of other figures, theatres and periods, and opens up a new and productive direction for future research.

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Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.9 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax131327.

4.87

Cap worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal photograph by the author. 3 June 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.233 [1118958].

4.88

Tunic, part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal photograph by the author. 26 July 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.113a [1118838.1].

4.89

Underdress, part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal

photograph by the author. 26 July 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.113b [1118838.2].

4.90

Costume worn by Ellen Terry as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906. Personal photograph by the author. 5 March 2013. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.156 [1118881].

4.91

Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.1 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:514-2007.

5.1

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup*, Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.2 x 10.3cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:320-2007.

5.2

Henry Frederick Van Der Wedye. Mary Anderson as Panthenia in *Ingomar*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1883, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 9.6 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.140:33-2007.

5.3

W&D Downey. Lillie Langtry as Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Imperial Theatre, 1886, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.3 x 10cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.143:309-2007.

5.4

Henry Frederick Van Der Wedye. Mary Anderson as Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.9 x 10.3cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.140:130-2007.

5.5

Photographer Unknown. Ellen Kean (née Tree) as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, Princess Theatre, ca. 1856, Sepia photograph on paper. 18.8 x 12.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.139:47-2007.

5.6

Lena Connell, photograph of Terry as appeared in the role of Nance Oldfield in *A Pageant of Great Women*, 1910. Published in Cicely M. Hamilton, *A Pageant of Great Women* (London: The Suffrage Shop, 1910), 31.

5.7

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.4 cm. Guy Little Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:474-2007.

5.8

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax131315.

5.9

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax160593.

5.10

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Albumen Cabinet Card. 14.5 x 10.5 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax16978.

5.11

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. Guy Little Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:472-2007.

5.12

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.1 cm. Guy Little Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:473-2007.

5.13

Window & Grove. Edward Gordon Craig as Alexander Oldworthy and Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:550-2007.

5.14

Window & Grove. Edward Gordon Craig as Alexander Oldworthy and Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Photographic paper on card mount. Measurements not recorded. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [1122390].

5.15

Outer gown which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection,

Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109a [1118834.1].

5.16

Pamela Coleman Smith. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1900, Hand tinted print on paper. 31.3 x 26 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.908-2012.

5.17

Inner dress which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109b [1118834.2].

5.18

Detail of the inner dress which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109b [1118834.2].

5.19

James Ferrier Pyrde. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891. Oil and varnish on card. 56 x 35.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG 6568.

5.20

Costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1891. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2011. Museum Number 47.11.

5.21

Detail of costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1891. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2011. Museum Number 47.11.

5.22

Photographer Unknown, Ellen Terry with her granddaughter Nellie, 1919. Terry is wearing the costume she wore as Nance Oldfield, possibly in the *Pageant of Great Women* in 1909. Photographic postcard. Measurements not recorded. National Trust, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number, NT 1120250.

5.23

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:230-2007.

5.24

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879. Albumen Cabinet Card. 14.1 x 10.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x16988.

5.25

Museum Record Photograph. Detail of the darned repairs visible on the cuff of a robe worn by Irving as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1879, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2796:1-8-2010.

5.26

Costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

5.27

Detail of the costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

5.28

Cap, part of the costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

5.29

G.W.Baldry, *Ellen Terry as Portia*, ca.1883. Garrick Club London. Image Courtesy of The Garrick Club, London.

5.30

John Everett Millias, *Portia*, ca.1885-6, Oil on canvas. 125.1 x 83.8 cm. MET Museum, New York. Accession Number 06.1328.

5.31

Clare Atwood. *Vita Sackville-West as Portia*, ca.1910. Oil on canvas. 34.1 x 24.1 cm National Trust, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [1118225].

5.32

Sketch of Terry as she appeared as the 'Shakespeare Ball in aid of the Actor's Benevolent Fund', 13th May 1905, unidentified publication. Personal photograph by the author, 14 April 2016. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Ellen Terry Collection, Press cuttings of Ellen Terry relating to her role in *The Merchant of Venice*, THM/384/32/17.

5.33

H.M.Brook 'Sketches of the Shakespeare Ball in aid of the Actor's Benevolent Fund', 13th May 1905. Pen and ink drawing on paper. 34.2 x 44.5 cm. Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection. Digital Image File Name 37555.

5.34

Zenzie Tinker. Image of the first of two surviving bodices associated with the 'Beetlewing Dress.' On this bodice the silk at the hem matches that present in the remainder of the costume. Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

5.35

Zenzie Tinker. Second of the two surviving bodices associated with the 'Beetlewing Dress.' On this bodice remains of the originally attached crochet skirt are visible at the hips. Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

5.36

Zenzie Tinker. A detail of the bodice (National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114a [1118839.1]), as mounted, and without the separate sleeves, Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

5.37

An image of the British Theatrical Loan Exhibition, Dudley House, Park Lane, 1933. This image appears to have been a cutting clipped from a newspaper and has been pasted into the exhibition catalogue. Personal photograph by the author. 3 November 2014. National Trust, Smallhythe Place. This exhibition catalogue is part of the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

5.38

Detail of the 1933 exhibition showing Edith Craig adjusting the dress worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, (National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.170). The dress is displayed with an apron not used during the original production, or retained within the collection. The image features in the exhibition catalogue. Personal photograph by the author. 3 November 2014. This exhibition catalogue is part of the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

5.39

Detail of the Beetlewing as displayed in the 'Costume Room' before it was re-designed in 2011. Personal Photograph by the author, 17 September 2008.

5.40

A page from the first of two scrapbooks created by Edith Craig between 1929 and 1947. This page features photographs and a flyer associated with a Jumble Sale to raise funds for the Ellen Terry Memorial in August 1931. Personal photograph by the author. 4 April 2016. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

5.41

A detail of the photograph of Olive Chaplin (née Terry) wearing the Beetlewing Dress at a Jumble Sale to raise funds for the Ellen Terry Memorial in August 1931. Photograph mounted in first of two scrapbooks created by Edith Craig between 1929 and 1947. Personal photograph by the author. 4 April 2016. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

6.1

Window & Grove, Edward Gordon Craig as Joey, the gardening boy, in *Eugene Aram* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.6cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:548-2007.

6.2

Frederick Hollyer, Ellen Terry with her children Edith Ailsa Craig and Edward Gordon Craig, Platinum Print from *Portraits of Many Persons of Note*, (Volume 3) 1886. 15.4 x 10.3cm. Museum Number 7862.1938.

6.3

Frederick Hollyer, Ellen Terry with her children Edith Ailsa Craig and Edward Gordon Craig, Platinum Print from *Portraits of Many Persons of Note*, (Volume 3) 1886. 15.4 x 10.3cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number 7865.1938.

6.4

Photographer Unknown, Ellen Terry and Edith Craig on the Lyceum Company tour to America, 1895-6, Sepia photograph on paper. 13.7 x 9.6 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:511-2007.

6.5

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Catherine Duval and Edward Gordon Craig Arthur de St Valery in *The Dead Heart* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1889, Sepia photograph on paper. 8.6 x 5.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:397-2007.

6.6

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry, ca. 1890s. Matte hand coloured bromide postcard print. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x 160594.

6.7

Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:218-2007.

6.8

Artist unknown. Advertisement for Hindes (Patent) “Ellen Terry” Hair pins. Published in *The Illustrated London News*, 23 May 1885. Engraving on paper. Record photograph courtesy of Uthra Rajgopal. 5 February 2012.

6.9

Detail of the rear of a photograph of the Aubrey Arms, Uxbridge. A cottage rented by Terry in ca.1889. Personal photograph by the author, 1 September 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/250.

6.10

Detail of the rear of a photograph of the Red House, Gustard Common. A house Terry shared with Godwin in 1869. Personal photograph by the author, 1 September 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/264.

6.11

Contact sheet photograph inserted in Terry’s copy of J.Comyns-Carr, *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: An Essay* London: Bickers & Son, Leicester Square, 1889.) Personal photograph by the author, 13 April 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number E.V.2.18.

6.12

Detail from a contact sheet of photographs by Window and Grove documenting Terry’s appearance as Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Personal photograph by the author, 4 December 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/2001.

6.13

Composite sheet of images showing Terry as she appeared as Mamillius in *The Winters Tale* (1856), Hermione in *The Winters Tale* (1906) and Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* (1879). Personal photograph by the author, 4 December 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/2003.

6.14

Unknown artist. ‘The Hammocks Under the Apple Tree.’ Line drawn image from an original photograph by Elliot and Fry, featured in Henry How, *Illustrated Interview*, No, XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 1892, 492.

Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.15

Photographer unknown, Tower Cottage, Winchelsea, Photographic postcard. (Publisher unknown, early twentieth century). Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box, THM 117-118. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.16

Photographer unknown, Smallhythe Place, Photographic postcard. (Everett and Ashdown publishers, early twentieth century). Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box, THM 117-118. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.17

Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:218-2007.

6.18

Thomas Matthews Rooke, *The Studio, Little Holland House*, London, 1904. Watercolour on paper, Measurements not recorded. Watts Gallery, Surrey. Copyright © Trustees of Watts Gallery, Surrey. Source Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number TWG114700.

6.19

Edward Linley Sambourne, Design for an Aesthetic Theatrical Poster, captioned “*Let us live up to it*” and featuring Terry at its centre. Reproduced in *Punch* 7th May 1881, 215. Reproduced from Anne Anderson. “‘Fearful Consequences . . . of Living up to One's Teapot’: Men, Women, and ‘Cultchah’ in the English Aesthetic Movement ca. 1870–1900.” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37.1 (2009): 219-54. Print.

6.20

Alfred Byran, Line drawn caricature of Terry, ‘Moonshines Gallery of Professional Beauty, 7 and 8 (Alternated with Illustrated Natural History),’ 1882. Press cutting pasted in the Percy Fitzgerald Album, Vol. 5, 295. Garrick Club London. Personal photograph by the author. 6 August 2013.

6.21

Albert Ludovici, II, One of a series of greetings cards satirising the Aesthetic Movement, 1882. Colour lithograph on card. 12.5 x 8.5 cm. Printed and published by Hildesheimer & Faulkner, London. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.2413-1953.

6.22

Sir Johnstone Forbes Robertson, Ellen Terry, 1876. Oil on canvas 60.8 x 50.6cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG 3789.

6.23

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 10.2cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:317-2007.

6.24

W & D Downey Photographers, May Fortescue as Lady Ella in *Patience* at the Opera Comique, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 9.3 x 5.7cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.146:48-2007.

6.25

Sir Frederick Leighton, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, 1864-5. Oil on canvas. Measurements not recorded. Leighton House Museum, London. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number LGH224376.

6.26

Lawrence Alma Tadema, *The Midday Slumbers*, 1881. Watercolour on paper. 65 x 25cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number HTL91863.

6.27

Unknown photographer, May Fortescue as Lady Ella in *Patience* at the Opera Comique, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 9.5cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.146:83-2007.

6.28

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 10.2 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:318-2007.

6.29

Maxim Garcha. Colour photograph of a gold snake armlet, set with diamonds, turquoise, rubies and sapphires. The armlet was designed by Lawrence Alma-Tadema for his second wife Laura Theresa Alma Tadema and engraved with her name in Greek script. Tadema commissioned the jewellers and goldsmiths JS & AB Wyon to create the armlet in circa 1870-3. Private Collection of Jeffrey A. Cadby.

6.30

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887. Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:407-2007.

6.31

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Fair Rosamund in *Becket*, Lyceum Theatre, 1893. Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.4cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:482-2007.

6.32

Photographer unknown. Ellen Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896. Photographic paper on card mount. 30 x 25 cm. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1122467.

6.33

Detail of the bodice which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 6 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.105 [1118830].

6.34

Detail of the skirt which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 6 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.105 [1118830].

6.35

Photographer unknown. Hand tinted photograph of Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, 1896, Lyceum Theatre. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1119387.

6.36

Edward Godwin. Design for Pigeonwick, Fallows Green, Harpenden, ca. 1869. Ink, watercolour and pencil on paper. Measurements not recorded. RIBA Archive, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Reference number RIBA 12579.

6.37

Mahogany tea table, designed for Terry by Godwin in circa 1870-1875. Museum Record Photograph. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1117440.

6.38

Unknown artist. 'The Alcove.' Line drawn image from an original photograph by Elliot and Fry, featured in Henry How, *Illustrated Interview*, No, XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 1892, 494. Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.39

Magenta silk dress with bodice, jacket, skirt, peplum and bow, Madame Vignon, Paris, 1869-1870. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.118 to D-1979.

6.40

Green silk dress with matching peplum and belt. Maker unknown, England, ca. 1872. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.101-B.1972.

6.41

Detail of internal boning, in a pale blue figured silk bodice. Liberty & Co. Ltd, London, 1898. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by author, 29 October 2010. Museum Number 81.242.

6.42

Detail of internal bustle pad, in jewel green silk velvet plush dress. Hewell [?] and James Ltd., London, ca.1888-9. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by author, 22 February 2011. Museum Number T.407-2001.

6.43

Sir William Blake, *Portrait of Mrs Luke Ionides*, 1882. Oil on canvas. 102.2 x 115.2cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.1062:1, 2-2003.

6.44

William Powell Frith, *Private View at the Royal Academy*, 1881. Oil on canvas. 102 x 193cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Reference CRJ1959.

6.45

Detail from William Powell Frith, *Private View at the Royal Academy*, 1881. Oil on canvas. 102 x 193cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Reference CRJ377198.

6.46

Southwell Brothers. Ellen Terry, circa 1863. Sepia Photograph on paper. 8.8 x 5.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:155-2007.

6.47

Boned corset of silk trimmed with machine-made lace, worn with cage crinoline. Possibly made in France or Great Britain, 1864. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.169-1961.

6.48

G.F.Watts. *Choosing*. 1864. Oil on strawboard mounted on Gatorfoam. Measurements not recorded. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum number NGP 5048.

6.49

Henry Rigge. Ellen Terry, ca.1865-7. Sepia Photograph on paper. 9 x 5.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:153-2007.

6.50

Dress of embroidered cotton muslin. Possibly made in England or France, ca. 1818, Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.79-1972.

6.51

Herbert Watkins. Ellen Terry, ca.1872, Sepia Photograph on paper. 9 x 6 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:188-2007.

6.52

Unknown photographer, Ellen Terry, ca.1875-1880. Sepia photograph on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:358-2007

6.53

Window and Grove. Ellen Terry, ca.1880-1890. Sepia photograph on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:421-2007.

6.54

Katagami stencilled silk kimono unlined, worn by Edith Craig (1869-1947), Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 20 July 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.COST.97, [1118822].

6.55

Katagami stencilled silk kimono with fleece interlining, worn by Edith Craig (1869-1947), Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 20 July 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.98, [1118823].

6.56

Herbert Watkins, Edith Craig wearing SMA.TC.98, ca.1874. Sepia photograph on paper. 10.3 x 6.5cm. Ellen Terry Collections, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT1122635.

6.57

Samuel A. Walker, Ellen Terry, ca.1874, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.4cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:418-2007.

6.58

Eisen Keisai. *'The Koya Tama River'*, from the series *'Six Famous Rivers with the Name Tama'*, early 1820s, Japanese Woodblock print. 37.1 x 25.1cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.12980-1886.

6.59

Claude Monet. *La Japonaise* (Camille Monet in Japanese Dress) ca. 1876. Oil on canvas. 231.8 x 142.3cm, Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Museum Number 56.147.

6.60

Jose Maria Mora. *Lillie Langtry wearing a kimono*, 1884. Albumen cabinet card. 16.5 x 10.7cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x197342.

6.61

Pierre Auguste Renoir, *Madame Hériot*, 1882, 65x54cms, oil on canvas. Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

6.62

James McNeil Whistler, *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green - The Balcony*, ca.1864-1870. Oil on wood panel, 61.4 x 48.8cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Museum Number F1892.23a-b.

6.63

James McNeil Whistler, *La Princesse du pays de la porcelain*, ca. 1863-65. Oil on canvas, 199.9x116.1cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Museum Number F1903.91a-b.

6.64

Herbert Rose Barraud. Ellen Terry, late 1880s. Sepia photograph on paper. 13.2 x 9.7 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:488-2007.

6.65

A woman's green and cream striped silk satin sack back, petticoat and stomacher. English, 1760-1770. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.471 to B-1980.

6.66

Front cover of music sheet for *The Dolly Varden Polka*, as performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, composed by W.C. Levey, late 19th century. Printed ink on paper. 33.6 x24cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.170-2012.

6.67

Unknown photographer. *Terry in dress with Watteau back* ca.1880s. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Image courtesy of Susannah Mayor, 5 May 2016.

6.68

Overview of dress worn by Terry, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 8 August 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

6.69

Overview of dress worn by Terry as mounted following conservation treatment to show bustle silhouette, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014.

6.70

Leon Sault. "Young Ladies Journal Monthly Panorama of Fashion," July 1875. Hand coloured fashion plate on paper. Measurements not recorded. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.319-1955.

6.71

Detail of dress worn by Terry, showing unbleached tussore silk ground decorated with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

6.72

Detail showing tambour work decoration on man's hunting coat of embroidered satin with silk, India, ca. 1620-1630, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number IS.18-1947.

6.73

Roundel, satin weave silk with silk embroidered design of He Xiangu, one of the Eight Daoist Immortals, China, Qing dynasty, 19th century. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number FE.123C-1983.

6.74

Rear view of dress as mounted following conservation treatment, showing 'Watteau back.' Tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

6.75

Detail of collar of dress, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

6.76

London Stereoscopic Company. Ellen Terry, ca.1875-1880. Sepia photograph on paper. 9.1 x 5.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:220-2007.

6.77

Photographer unknown. Ellen Terry wearing a Chinese Robe, *The Sketch*, ca. 1905-1915. Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.78

Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.86.

6.79

Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.85.

6.80

Detail from Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.86.

6.81

Detail from Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.85.

6.82

Photographer unknown. Press cutting showing Ellen Terry ca.1905-1915. Personal Photograph by the author 4 February 2013. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.83

Silk summer dress. Maker Unknown, England, 1920-1925. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.19-1960.

6.84

An example of Terry's personal dress. Batik silk dress printed with a repeat pattern of floral motifs. Maker Unknown, ca.1915-1925. Personal photograph by the author 14 April 2016. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.1415-1984.

6.85

Elliot and Fry. Ellen Terry, ca.1880-1885. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:449-2007.

6.86

Elliot and Fry. Ellen Terry. 1884. Chlorobromide print on cream card mount. 27.8 x 21.1 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum. Museum Number NPG x127489.

6.87

Window and Grove, Ellen Terry, ca. mid 1894-7. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:513-2007.

6.88

Dress consisting of a bodice and skirt of embroidered silk velvet. Possibly made in Paris, retailed by Stern Brothers, New York, 1894. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.272&A-1972.

6.89

Walker & Boutall, after Sir Emery Walker. Ellen Terry, early 1900s. Photogravure. 13.9 x 10.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x19637.

6.90

Unknown artist. Line drawing illustration accompanying an article in *Woman's World*, Vol.2, 1888. Personal photograph by the author 14 October 2015. National Art Library, Special Collections, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.91

Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:226-2007.

6.92

Photographer unknown. Photograph showing Terry and another woman (Kitty[?]) both wearing smocks. ca. 1905-1915. Personal Photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.93

Photographer unknown. "A Cast of Terry's at Ellen Terry's Benefit," *The Sketch*, 1906. Press cutting showing Ellen Terry's 1906 Jubilee. Personal Photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.94

Pamela Coleman Smith. Ellen Terry (1847-1928) as Hiördis in *The Vikings*, Imperial Theatre, 1903. Watercolour on paper. 28 x 19.3 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.913-2012.

6.95

Unknown photographer. Ellen Terry as Kniertje in *The Good Hope*, 1904. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.3cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:528-2007.

6.96

Terry's annotations on the draft of her autobiography. Personal photograph by the author 4 April 2016. Christopher St John, material relating to publications written for and about Ellen Terry. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

6.97

Photographer Unknown. Terry in the robes created for her *Lectures on Shakespeare*, circa 1910. Print on paper. 12.3 x 8cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:533-2007.

6.98

Detail from the transcript of Terry's lecture *The Triumphant Women*. Ellen Terry Collection, Library, Smallhythe Place. Personal Photograph by the author. 23 March 2015. National Trust Inventory Number NT 3118744.

6.99

Photograph showing a detail from a display case in Terry's former home, Smallhythe Place. The items on display were collected by Terry and her daughter, Edith Craig. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal Photograph by the author. 4 April 2016.

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Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed:

Dated:

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INTRODUCTION

Ellen's stage clothes became such a part of her that some magic seemed to belong to them. I know her daughter Edith Craig never liked them being cleaned, she said it spoilt them and the magic went out of them.¹

Sybil Thorndike (1960)

Carriers of Meaning, Memory and Identity

Theatre costumes are ephemeral, they are created to be re-used, re-cycled or discarded and certainly not with preservation in mind. When garments do survive, they represent a departure from the typical life cycle, or 'biography' of a stage costume. Yet, as opening quotes suggests, and this thesis will demonstrate, surviving theatre costumes are significant garments, which have the potential to reveal crucial information about the bodies that once inhabited them, the productions in which they were used and the culture and society within which they were originally designed, made worn and seen.

The contribution that an investigation into the material culture of historic theatre costume can make to the field of dress and theatre history has yet to be fully recognised, researched, and theorised. So far, only a limited range of research has been published relating to the development of theatrical costume, and these publications rarely make more than a cursory reference to extant garments. This thesis addresses those gaps within both dress and theatre history and unites approaches from both disciplines, along with others, to create a specific methodology for the study of theatre costume which is founded upon the examination and assessment of such garments.

¹ Sybil Thorndike, Transcript of Audio Recording, Smallhythe Place, 1960.

The celebrated actress Dame Ellen Terry (1847-1928), an individual highly attuned to the significance of dress as an expression of identity, is used as a case study to demonstrate the validity of this new methodology. The costumes preserved at Terry's home, Smallhythe Place, represent one of the largest and most significant collections of historical theatrical costumes within the United Kingdom and yet have never been fully catalogued or examined before. This thesis presents the first full investigation of Terry's personal and theatrical wardrobe and will reveal the historical and cultural importance of these garments.²

Adopting an object-based material culture approach, this thesis engages with the visual and physical evidence about performance and design that can be gathered from extant theatrical costumes. It also highlights crucial information about Terry's dress and its public reception gleaned from a wide range of primary sources including photographs; paintings; letters; reviews, and Terry's personal papers and books.

This thesis will establish the context crucial not only to developing an understanding of Terry, her clothes and her professional and private identity, but also factors which are fundamental to the wider interpretation and study of historical theatrical costume. These factors include: the significance of social, artistic and historic context; parallels and contrasts between on and off-stage dress; the collaborative process of design and making; the function of costume as both performance object and expression of 'identity'; the issue of multiple and complex 'biographies' and the crucial evidence offered from material culture sources, most importantly, surviving costumes (where they exist).

Igor Kopytoff's concept of 'biographies' and Susan Pearce's exploration of 'the chains of meaning' accumulated by objects, offer a route through which to analyse and articulate

² The research acknowledges and builds upon, Valerie Cumming's initial research into this topic as published in: Ellen Terry: An aesthetic actress and her clothing" *Costume* 21 (1987): 67-74; "Macbeth at the Lyceum" *Costume* 12 (1978): 53-63 and "First Knight: Henry Irving, 1838-1905" *Costume* 40: 67-71.

the complex 'biographies' accumulated by historic theatre costume. Drawing upon the work of Joseph Roach, Barbara Hodgdon and Marvin Carlson this thesis also examines the ability these garments have to carry the 'memories,' or 'ghosts,' of their previous wearer(s), acting as 'surrogates' for the bodies which once inhabited them.

Chapter 1 outlines the existing methodologies within dress history, theatre history and material culture which the thesis draws upon and stresses the cross disciplinary nature of the research. Chapter 2 reviews existing literature and proposes a new methodology specifically tailored to the analysis of historic theatre costume. Chapter 3 provides the wider context for Terry's professional career, whilst Chapter 4 introduces the methodology and analyses extant garments. This methodology is developed further in Chapter 5, which examines the complex 'biographies' accumulated by historic theatre costumes and the important part that context plays in shaping the 'meaning' and 'memories' that they carry. Chapter 6 builds on the debates raised in the preceding chapters, and extends the methodology presented into ideas of self-fashioning and biography. It pays particular attention to the part that Terry's dress played in establishing her identity and legacy as a celebrated actress and respected 'artist' on and off the stage.

Ellen Terry (1847-1928)

Ellen Terry offers rich potential as a case study through which to demonstrate the new methodology this thesis proposes for the interpretation and analysis of historic theatre costume. Of most significance amongst the wide range of material culture objects and archives relating to Terry which survive in museum collections, is the large collection of historic theatre costumes preserved in her former home, Smallhythe Place. The close examination of this material culture evidence, in particular Terry's surviving theatre costumes, will provide a clear and convincing example of how the new methodology

proposed within this thesis can be applied to a specific individual. This will illustrate the important contribution extant theatre costumes can make to such investigations.

The significance of Terry's 'public' and 'private' identities, and her suitability as a case study stems in part from her complex biography and the specific social milieu in which she moved. Terry's lifestyle, both on and off the stage, directly challenged conventional Victorian morality and social codes. Despite this, she succeeded in becoming one of the leading actresses of the era, achieved international success and was made a Dame in 1925. The thesis will argue that Terry's success was due in part to her careful self-fashioning, both during her lifetime and after her death.

The daughter of two 'strolling players,' both Terry and her elder sister Kate (1844-1924), together with their younger siblings, were rigorously trained for the stage from an early age.³ Terry made her stage debut in 1856 and continued acting until her first marriage, aged 16, to the painter George Frederick Watts (1817-1904) in 1864.⁴ Although she separated from Watts in late 1865, the marriage provided her with an important introduction to 'another world, a world full of pictures and music and gentle, artistic people.'⁵

As this thesis will show, the time she spent with Watts had an identifiable influence on Terry's taste in décor and dress. It was her relationship with the architect and designer Edward William Godwin (1833-1886) however, which had the most significant and enduring impact on her approach to dress and design, both on and off the stage. Indeed,

³ Terry's parents had eleven children, nine of whom survived to adulthood. Of these nine, only two, the eldest, Ben (b.1839), and second youngest, Tom, did not pursue a career on the stage. As Chapter 2 will discuss, Terry's life has been well documented in biographies. See in particular, Joy Melville, *Ellen and Edy, a biography of Ellen Terry and her daughter Edith Craig 1847-1947* (London: Pandora, 1987) 48, 146 and Nina Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time* (London, Dent and Sons, 1987) 30-36.

⁴ Terry had been introduced to Watts by her friend, the dramatist, Tom Taylor (1817-1880) and it was whilst Watts was painting a portrait of Terry and her sister Kate that the relationship between Terry and Watts developed.

⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 48.

Terry credited Godwin with initiating her ‘[...] interest in colour, texture, effects of light on colour, the meaning of dress, and a certain taste for beauty which [she] never lost.’⁶ These elements of Terry’s approach to dress are central to the analysis of her stage costume in Chapter 5, and underpin the exploration of the role dress played in her self-fashioning undertaken in Chapter 6.

It was through Godwin that Terry was introduced to the artistic principles and leading advocates of Aestheticism, just as the movement was gaining hold in Britain. Although their relationship had ended by 1876, Terry maintained her allegiance to Aestheticism, and soon established her independent status as a leading figure within the burgeoning Aesthetic movement. Though, as Chapter 2 will acknowledge, Terry’s connections with Aestheticism have been explored within the existing literature, this thesis represents the first research to fully assess the significance of Terry’s status as an icon of Aestheticism and the impact that the movement had upon her theatrical costumes.

Terry first met Godwin in 1863 and the pair became reacquainted during her brief, and unhappy, return to the stage in late 1865. In 1866, Terry abandoned family, friends, and her professional career, to spend six years living with Godwin in rural Surrey. In 1874, escalating debts compelled Terry, once again, to return to London and life as an actress. Now the mother of two illegitimate children, Edith Craig (1869-1947) and Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966), she had to overcome not only the gossip surrounding the failure of her marriage to Watts, but also the scandal and disgrace of her subsequent relationship with Godwin (whom she never married).

⁶ Ellen Terry, “Stage Decoration”, *The Windsor Magazine* (Copyright by S.S.McClure Company in the United State of America, 1911) 74.

In spite of the scandal surrounding her off-stage life, Terry soon secured both the forgiveness, and affection, of the public.⁷ She never attempted to conceal the existence of her children, and as Chapter 6 will discuss, they played an important part in establishing her identity as a caring mother, whose return to the stage was an unavoidable sacrifice made through necessity, rather than any personal ambition.

The reputation for ‘charm’ and ‘womanliness’ upon which the public’s affection for Terry was founded, though beneficial for her professional career, threatened to impose limitations on the theatrical and personal ‘roles’ she was permitted to perform. The implications of such restrictions will be explored in Chapter 3, which will also examine the occasions upon which Terry sought to resist and challenge these limitations. As Chapter 5 and 6 will show, dress played an important part in expressing and reinforcing these acts of rebellion.

By 1878, Terry’s popularity had brought her to the notice of Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905). Newly established as the manager of the Lyceum Theatre, Irving offered her a position as the leading lady of the Lyceum Company. The power balance of their professional partnership, which was sustained for twenty-two years, and the precise nature of the couple’s off stage relationship, has been contested in past biographies of Terry.⁸ Of primary importance for the thesis however, is the evidence Chapter 3 will present to demonstrate that it was a partnership founded upon mutual respect. Irving’s appreciation for Terry’s knowledge of ‘art and archaeology in dress,’ together with the

⁷ As Katharine Cockin notes, ‘At a time when illegitimacy meant exile from respectability, [Terry] managed, extraordinarily, to raise both of her children relatively unscathed.’ Katharine Cockin, *Edith Craig (1869-1947): Dramatic Lives* (London: Cassell, 1998) 15. As Chapter 6 will discuss, Terry’s second marriage to the actor Charles Wardell (who acted under the stage name, Kelly), though short lived, did provide both Terry and her children, with an important, if temporary, return to ‘respectability.’ For further discussion of this relationship see Auerbach, *Ellen Terry*, 184-5 and Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 78-9.

⁸ See for instance, Marguerite Steen, *A Pride of Terrys: Family Saga* (London: Longmans, 1962) 183-6; Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 9-11; Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 90-107 and Katharine Cockin, “Ellen Terry and Henry Irving: A Working Partnership”, *Henry Irving: a re-evaluation of the pre-eminent Victorian actor-manager*, ed. Richard Foulkes (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008) 37-48.

actress' own increasing financial independence, enabled her to gain a significant, and unusual, degree of control over the design and making up of her costumes.⁹

Terry's status within the Lyceum Company established her as a celebrated figure within Britain and America.¹⁰ This growing 'celebrity' obliged her to maintain close and careful control of her 'public' and 'private' identity and the measures she employed to fashion her identity, both on and off the stage will be addressed in Chapters 3 and 6.¹¹ As Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will demonstrate, dress played a crucial part in this process of self-fashioning, communicating and establishing the 'identities' and 'roles' Terry performed for the public.

By 1902 Terry had achieved a position as a financially independent and successful performer.¹² Increasingly disillusioned by the constraints which her partnership with Irving imposed upon her theatrical career however, she chose to leave the Lyceum Company. In 1903 she leased the Imperial Theatre, commencing her first, and only, venture into theatre management.¹³ Working with her daughter (a respected costumier) and son (a progressive and experimental designer and director), Terry chose to stage a controversial production of *The Vikings* by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906).¹⁴ Although the

⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 157.

¹⁰ Whilst part of the Lyceum Company Terry was involved in six extremely profitable tours to America, the first in 1883, the last in 1899.

¹¹ Sos Eltis is amongst those who have discussed this aspect of Terry's life and career. See for instance, Sos Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*. Ed. Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 179 and *Acts of Desire: Women and Sex on Stage, 1800-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 94, 154, 156.

¹² At the peak of her career Terry's salary was up to '£200 a week' in comparison to the £25 to £40 which was the average weekly income of a leading lady at this time. Kerry Powell. *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 7.

¹³ This aspect of Terry's career will be explored in Chapter 3. It has also been addressed by Gail Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 157 and Jenny Bloodworth 'The Burden of Eternal Youth: Ellen Terry and *The Mistress of the Robes*', *Ellen Terry: Spheres of Influence*, ed. Katharine Cockin (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011) 49-64.

¹⁴ Both Terry's children had, like their mother, been trained for a career on the stage, and had acted alongside Terry in Lyceum Productions. Terry's daughter went on to establish a career not only as a costumier, but also a director and her life has been discussed more fully by Katharine Cockin and Joy Melville. Cockin, *Edith Craig (1869-1947): Dramatic Lives* (1998) and Melville, *Ellen and Edy* (1987). The career of Terry's son has been widely documented and Gordon Craig established a long-standing

experimental production proved a commercial and financial disaster, Terry regarded it as an important signal of her intent to challenge her characterisation as ‘a Victorian actress.’¹⁵

As Chapter 6 will make apparent, Terry’s venture into theatre management was part of a wider process of self-fashioning through which she sought to establish a new, progressive, identity.¹⁶ The lecture tours she undertook between 1910 and 1915 and her published writings, particularly her autobiography (published in 1908), also provided an important means through which to edit the narrative of her professional life and to cement her status as an actress who understood the ‘art’ of theatre.¹⁷

Terry continued to act on stage, and in some early films, until ill health, and increasingly poor eye sight, led to her enforced retirement. The extent of the public affection she inspired was evident in the scale of the celebrations that marked her fifty year stage jubilee in 1906. It was not until 1925, however, that her status within the theatrical profession received official recognition and she was finally made a Dame.¹⁸ This honour reaffirmed

reputation as a pioneering designer and director and published an influential range of theoretical work outlining his views on theatre and the role of the ‘director.’ Publications offering further information about Gordon Craig’s career and views include Edward Gordon Craig, *A Living Theatre: the Gordon Craig School, the Arena Goldoni, the Mask: Setting Forth the Aims and Objects of the Movement and Showing by Many Illustrations the City of Florence [and] the Arena* (Florence: School for the Art of the Theatre, 1913) and Irene Eynat-Confino, *Beyond the Mask: Gordon Craig, Movement and the Actor* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987).

¹⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 312.

¹⁶ Katharine Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand” *Ellen Terry Spheres of Influence*, Ed. Katharine Cockin (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), 144. As Chapter 6 will discuss, Terry staged a successful lecture tour across Britain, America and Australia. She also participated in several productions staged to promote the women’s suffrage movement and, between 1911 and 1920, acted as the Honorary President of *The Pioneer Players*. Terry’s daughter played a key role in running this theatrical society, which was established to produce ‘plays dealing with all kinds of movements of interest at the moment,’ including women’s suffrage, feminism and socialism. Katharine Cockin has published widely on the work of this society, see, for instance, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage: The Pioneer Players 1911-1925* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000) and ‘Edith Craig and the Pioneer Players in a “Khaki-clad and Khaki-minded World”’: London’s International Art Theatre,’ *British Theatre and the Great War 1914-1919: New Perspectives*. Ed. A. Maunder (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015) 121-139.

¹⁷ These included a series of three articles for McClures magazine published in 1910, but like her autobiography, written in partnership with Christopher St John. Katharine Cockin, “Ellen Terry, The Ghost Writer and the Laughing Statue: The Victorian Actress, Letters and Life-writing,” *Journal of European Studies*, xxxii (2003): 151-63, 158.

¹⁸ This royal recognition of Terry’s celebrated status came thirty years after the knighthood awarded to Terry’s on stage partner, Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905) and made Terry the second actress to achieve this

Terry's position as a respected figure and leading actress and when she died in 1928 the King and Queen were amongst the 'thousands' who mourned her passing.¹⁹

Terry had also remained conscious of the need to secure and control her legacy not only during her lifetime, but also after her death. Chapter 6 will explore the role Edith Craig played as custodian of her mother's legacy, transforming the actress' home, Smallhythe Place, into a lasting memorial of Terry's life and career. It is here that the vast majority of Terry's costumes are preserved, and these garments, together with the collection of photographs, books, letters and theatrical ephemera she assembled during her lifetime (and which were added to by Craig after Terry's death), play a fundamental part in this thesis.

As the thesis will demonstrate, Terry was a significant figure in British theatre and society who took an active role in fashioning her public and private image, both during her life, and after her death. It is the degree to which she employed dress as a tool for self-fashioning both on and off stage which makes her such a valuable vehicle through which to address the key critical debates relating to the study of historical theatrical costume. The analysis of Terry's wardrobe will confirm the status of theatrical costumes as unique garments, which represent a significant and underused source for both dress and theatre historians. This in depth analysis of a single figure, makes possible a compelling demonstration of the validity of the new methodology this thesis presents for the analysis

honour. The American born actress Geneviève Ward (1837-1922), had been the first actress to become a Dame Grand Cross of the British Empire in 1921. Ward had maintained a reputation for observing 'strict standards of propriety' throughout her career. This lifestyle presented an undeniable contrast to Terry, whose private life encompassed two illegitimate children, three marriages, (the last of which was in 1907, to a man some thirty years her junior), divorce, and rumours of numerous affairs (including a relationship with Irving). Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women* (London: Routledge, 1991) 5.

¹⁹ "Royal tributes to Ellen Terry, Mourned by thousands who knew her, A simple funeral, Actors Church as a likely resting place." Press Cutting, *Sunday Times*, July 22 1928. Ellen Terry Collection, Box 57 SC2-G27, British Library, London. An enduring public memorial to Terry was created the following year, when a silver casket containing her ashes was installed in St Paul's Church, London. The casket was made and designed by architect and craftsman John Paul Cooper (1869-1933). Cooper was an important member of the Arts and Crafts movement who specialised in metalwork and jewellery and he was a friend of Terry's son, Gordon Craig. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 248.

of historic theatre costume, together with its potential for use in the study of other figures, theatres, and time periods.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this thesis is to establish a new methodology, founded upon material culture approaches, for the analysis of historic theatre costume. Terry's complex theatrical and private biography, together with the interrelationships between Terry's 'public' and 'private' identities, offer a rich and significant case study through which to establish and demonstrate this methodology for the research into, and analysis of, historic theatre costume.

Through close analysis of Terry's personal and theatrical dress this research will also contribute new knowledge to her existing biography, demonstrating Terry's status as a figure at the forefront of the Aesthetic movement, and a woman who understood, and employed, the 'art' of self-fashioning.

The methodology and source material upon which the thesis is founded will be introduced in Chapter 1. Chapter 1 and 2 will establish the current state of research into theatre costume within dress and theatre history. Together, they lay the foundations for a thesis that will demonstrate the vital contribution theatre costumes can make to our understanding of dress and theatre history, and presents a new, and specific, methodology for the analysis of these unique garments, which establishes their significant role as carriers of meaning, memory and identity.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH SOURCES AND METHODOLOGIES

1.1 Introduction

This interdisciplinary thesis unites critical approaches from theatre and dress history to devise a methodology for the analysis of historic theatre costume. This will be proposed through a close analysis of the dress worn by the actress Ellen Terry both on and off the stage, highlighting the part these garments played in her ‘self-fashioning’ and demonstrating her significance within late nineteenth century society and today.

This chapter provides an overview of the three fields which have shaped the methodology presented in this study: material culture, theatre history, and dress history. Acknowledging the distinctions between these disciplines, it will also highlight links between them. An interdisciplinary approach to research has been embraced by both dress and theatre historians. Similarly, researchers from both disciplines draw upon material culture sources and approaches, and recognise the need to situate their analysis of surviving material within its original historic and social context. Yet, there are also important differences between these two areas of historical research. Not least that, whilst dress historians focus on ‘clothing’ as a very specific aspect of human experience and identity, theatre historians are generally concerned with all the elements, clothing included, which are brought together to create a theatrical performance.

An object based, material culture approach to research plays an integral role in this thesis. This chapter will therefore begin with an outline of the source material upon which the research is founded. The next section will introduce the approaches within Material Culture which have influenced dress and theatre historians, and which have shaped the methodology presented in this thesis. Having established this foundation the chapter will then engage more directly with current debates and methodology within theatre history

and dress history. It will examine sources and methodology specific to each field before exploring methodologies which can be profitably employed within both disciplines.

The chapter will emphasise the potential for development within both fields and illustrate the detailed, contextualised, level of analysis which can be achieved through uniting approaches from dress and theatre history. The final section will focus specifically on theatre costumes: objects which, in their dual position as theatrical ephemera and extant historic garments, have the potential to be of equal interest to both dress and theatre historians. It will demonstrate the value of this source material for researchers within both fields, and introduce a new methodology tailored to the analysis of this specific category of 'dress.'

1.2 Principal Sources for Study

This research is founded upon the assessment and interpretation of a collection of some thirty five complete theatrical costumes (and associated accessories) worn by Ellen Terry between circa 1878 and 1925. This collection is held by the National Trust at Smallhythe Place (hereafter Smallhythe) in Kent and has never been formally catalogued nor fully discussed. As one of the most extensive collections of theatrical dress from this era, with a direct connection to one of the leading actresses of the late nineteenth century, it is of particular historical significance.

For the purposes of this research an extensive examination was made of the collection. The constituent parts and, where relevant, related accessories, for each costume were examined, photographed, and documented, and the results are presented in the appendix of the thesis.¹ Related items within the collection at Smallhythe, in particular the photographs, literature, properties, and ephemera collected by Terry, were also

¹ See Appendix 1, Catalogue of the costume collection at Smallhythe Place.

investigated. As these additional objects were already in the process of being documented by the National Trust, only the costumes were catalogued in detail.

Whilst Smallhythe holds the largest collection of Terry's costumes, and three of the five surviving examples of her personal dress with reliable provenance, investigations were also made relating to garments connected with Terry held by other institutions in the United Kingdom and these will be discussed later in this chapter.²

Smallhythe Place

During her lifetime Terry amassed a collection, now at Smallhythe, which comprises in excess of one hundred separate garments and accessories, amongst them costumes from twenty-two of the productions in which Terry appeared whilst working at The Lyceum Theatre. The collection also includes examples of personal dress, costumes worn by Terry's contemporaries, and a wide selection of theatrical ephemera connected with Terry and other celebrated performers.

Following Terry's death in 1928 the collection passed into the care of her daughter, Edith Craig (1869-1947). Craig re-organised, and added to, the collection, creating a display in Terry's house Smallhythe Place in Kent to commemorate her mother's career.

Smallhythe and the two neighbouring properties had been purchased by Terry in 1899. They remained in her daughter's possession until 1938 when, having repeatedly failed to raise the funds required to support the long term transformation of the house into a memorial museum, Craig entered into discussions with the National Trust. By 1939 an

² The two other items are a silk tunic dress held by the Victoria & Albert Museum (S.1415-1984) and a cotton jacket held by the Museum of London (64.154). Full details of these items are provided in Appendix 3.

agreement had been reached between the two parties and on Craig's death in 1947 Smallhythe was left to the charity's custodianship.

Although a selection of Terry's most famous costumes has been displayed at Smallhythe since the 1930s the full costume collection at Smallhythe, which is stored in an external converted artist's studio at the property, remains virtually unexplored by researchers. In addition to the costume collection, Smallhythe also holds a wealth of supporting material through which it is possible to gather further information about Terry's life and career, and, significantly, her personal and theatrical dress. This includes Terry's working library and over three thousand contemporary photographs.

The motivations behind the creation of Terry's theatrical collection will be explored in Chapter 6. The material within this collection, in particular the garments, will be drawn upon throughout the thesis, but will play a particularly crucial role in the discussion of Terry's theatrical costumes in Chapter 4 and 5, and of her personal dress in Chapter 6.

Department of Theatre and Performance, the Victoria & Albert Museum

The material held by the Department of Theatre and Performance, Victoria & Albert Museum (hereafter V&A) is as extensive and diverse as that within the collection at Smallhythe. The one noticeable absence however, are any complete costumes that can be reliably established as having been worn by Terry.³

Of most interest within the collection are two recent acquisitions which, like the costumes at Smallhythe, are yet to be fully explored by researchers. These comprise, a collection

³ The V&A do hold a cream silk dress, Museum Number: S.9-1976, which was reputedly worn by Terry as Juliet. However, as Chapter 4 will discuss, this garment departs markedly from the design and silhouette of the costumes worn by Terry in this role, which she played only once at the Lyceum in 1882.

of costumes worn by Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905), and a substantial archive of letters and papers connected with Terry's professional career and private life.⁴

As Chapter 5 will show, examining the costumes worn by Irving alongside those worn by Terry offers a unique opportunity to compare and contrast the style favoured by the two performers during their twenty-four year stage partnership. Uniting the costumes of the two performers also makes it possible to gain a clearer sense of the overall aesthetic of specific productions and the extent to which Terry's costumes echoed, or diverged from, those of her fellow performers.

The collection of letters and papers were previously in private ownership and as such have not yet been fully studied, even by Katharine Cockin, who has published eight volumes containing all the correspondence previously known to have been associated with Terry.⁵ Of particular significance to this study is the fact that the collection contains previously unknown letters between Terry and her costume maker Mrs. Ada Nettleship (1856-1932) and private correspondence (previously thought to have been destroyed) which confirms longstanding rumours about Terry's close personal relationship with Irving.⁶

As indicated, these discrete collections are only part of the vast range of material held by the V&A amongst which are: programmes and newspaper reviews; cartes des visites; photographs; autographed letters; designs, and further archives connected with the

⁴ The collection associated with Sir Henry Irving includes over 60 items of costume, most complete ensembles. It was previously on long term loan to the Museum of London from the Royal Shakespeare Company Collections. The Ellen Terry Archive (THM/384), was previously held by a descendent of Terry until its purchase by the V&A in 2010. A full listing of this archive can be accessed online via Archives Hub. "The Ellen Terry Collection," *Archives Hub* [n.d.]

⁵ The eight volumes which comprise Professor Katharine Cockin's *Collected Letters of Ellen Terry* are being published on an annual basis by Pickering & Chatto, the first was published in 2010, the eighth volume is scheduled for publication in 2017.

⁶ These letters, sent from Irving to Terry, reveal the intimacy of their off-stage relationship (particularly during the 1880s and 1890s). Annotation in Terry's handwriting on the letters indicates that they were carefully retained, and record specific dates on which she re-read them. The letters are catalogued under the reference THM/384/6.

Lyceum Theatre, and the designers and performers employed at the theatre whilst Terry was its leading lady. The V&A therefore provides a resource which complements, and expands upon, the material held at Smallhythe.

Related Collections – Dress and Costume

Whilst Smallhythe and the V&A hold the greatest range of items relating to Terry, there are a number of other collections within the United Kingdom which hold relevant material. The Museum of London holds five costumes (and related accessories) worn by Terry, and at least one example of her personal dress.⁷ At least three of the five costumes are alternative ‘versions’ of costumes in the collection at Smallhythe. As Chapter 4 and 5 will discuss, such duplication exposes a specific challenge faced in the analysis of theatrical costume: namely determining the ‘original’, or ‘primary’, costume, for a theatrical role. Aesthetic garments and accessories from the Museum of London; Fashion and Textiles Department, Victoria & Albert Museum, Platt Hall, Manchester, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and the Fashion Museum, Bath, have also provided key evidence and comparative pieces for the discussion of Terry’s engagement with Aesthetic dress in Chapter 6.

Related Collections – Theatrical Material

A number of collections which hold material relating to Terry’s theatrical career were also consulted. Chief amongst these was the Garrick Club Library which holds a significant collection of theatrical ephemera, including paintings, engravings, playbills, printed texts, documents and discrete collections. Of particular significance for this study were the three scrapbooks documenting Lyceum productions put together by the artist

⁷ See Appendix 2 for full details of these garments. As Sarah Demb, Museum Archivist & Records Manager at the Museum of London was able to confirm, the acquisition records for these costumes indicate that they were donated by a number of different individuals, but many of them had a personal connection with Terry or her daughter Edith Craig. Sarah Demb, Personal communication with the author. 16 May 2014.

Susan Ruth Canton (1849-1932) and the twenty-two volumes relating to Lyceum productions, which comprise the Percy Fitzgerald collection. The latter was assembled by the painter and sculptor, Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald (1834-1925) for his personal reference and, like Canton's scrapbooks, provided a range of valuable material.

The National Portrait Gallery, London and The Russell Coates Collection, Bournemouth, provided key sources of images of Terry. The latter also holds a number of press clippings and sketches of the actress, whilst the range of images of Terry within the National Portrait Gallery collections is comparable in quantity and breadth to that in the V&A and Smallhythe. A comparison of these images made it possible to trace patterns in style and fit of garments adopted by Terry both on and off the stage, and also the artists and photographers that she favoured.

Aestheticism and Aesthetic Dress

As Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil declare,

[...] to know if a woman is participating in fashion at a particular moment
[...] requires enormous contextual information before one can even begin
to speculate as to motives, strategies and identities, let alone assessing a
relationship to place, occupation, cosmopolitanism or provincialism.⁸

Terry's rise to fame coincided with the peak of Aestheticism, and, as Chapter 6 will show, she became established as a figurehead for the movement. Chapter 2 will engage more fully with the existing literature on this theme. Of particular relevance to the methodology employed in the thesis however, is the existing work with surviving examples of Aesthetic dress.

⁸ Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeill, *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2010) 8.

Comparatively few examples of Terry's personal dress survive and the analysis of her garments therefore depends primarily upon a close reading of photographs and contemporary descriptions of Terry. Further details were also gathered from contemporary images and literature relating to Aesthetic dress.⁹ To mitigate for the absence of surviving dress, the garments worn by Terry were examined alongside Aesthetic dress and contrasting examples of fashionable dress from a period of circa 1870 to 1920 within the collections of the Museum of London; the Fashion Museum, Bath; The Gallery of Costume, Platt Hall, Manchester; the Fashion and Textile Collection, Victoria & Albert Museum, London and from Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and Petersfield Museum. The evidence regarding construction, colour and design, gained from close analysis of these garments provides essential supplementary information through which to contextualise and analyse Terry's personal dress.

Terry dressed both herself, and her houses in Aesthetic style. This thesis will therefore draw upon evidence from period photographs of the actress's houses, together with interviews, and surviving pieces of furniture owned by the actress within the V&A and at Smallhythe, to explore the manner in which Terry fashioned the 'private' space of her home. The primary focus of the analysis will be upon the extent to which the décor Terry selected for her houses functioned as a backdrop for the garments which she adopted within this environment.

1.3 Relevant methodological approaches within material culture

This thesis examines the design, raw materials, making, and lifecycle of Terry's surviving theatre and personal wardrobe. It is founded upon an object focused, material culture

⁹ Contemporary handbooks offering guidance on Aesthetic Dress included, but were not limited to, the work of Mrs. H.R. Haweis in particular *The Art of Dress* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1879); J.A. Gotch, *Art in Costume* (London: K. Paul, Trench & Co, 1882) and Lucy Crane, *Art and the Formation of Taste* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1882).

approach set in an interdisciplinary context, which assesses the value and significance of ‘things.’ The wide range of source material and scope of critical themes with which this study will engage demands this interdisciplinary approach to research. The next section will outline the manner in which this analysis draws upon specific methodological approaches, and how they will be used to interpret the extant garments which are fundamental to this study.

‘The Significance of Things’

Leora Auslander explained that ‘In its broadest sense, material culture embraces the class of all human-made objects.’¹⁰ She specifically defines her understanding of material culture as goods which are ‘felt and touched,’ ‘whose design involves aesthetic consideration’; ‘are not simply functional,’ and which are recognised as ‘modes of communication or memory cues, or expressions of the psyche, or extensions of the body, as well as sites of aesthetic investment.’¹¹ The relationship individuals form with material objects and ‘all that they express through their creation and use’ is, as Auslander argues, often ‘not reducible to words.’¹² It is precisely for this reason that the theoretical and methodological approaches encompassed within the broad field of material culture provides such a crucial framework for this thesis. Theory and methodology drawn from this discipline offers the means through which to articulate, the otherwise inexpressible, and indefinable, symbolic significance of objects.¹³

¹⁰ Leora Auslander, “Beyond Words,” *The American Historical Review*, Volume 110, Number 4, (2005) 1015.

¹¹ Auslander “Beyond words’ 1016.

¹² Auslander “Beyond words’ 1017.

¹³ This ‘symbolic importance’ has been explored by writers such as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in “Why We Need Things” *History from Things, Essays on Material Culture*, ed. Steven Lubar and David Kingery (London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993) 20-29. See also texts such as Daniel Miller, *The Comfort of Things* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008) and Judy Attfield, *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

As Judy Attfield has demonstrated, material culture also offers a route through which to examine and articulate the key role that ‘things’ play in the expression and construction of ‘group and individual identity.’¹⁴ As Auslander notes

in twentieth century Europe, the style of a person’s clothing or home inevitably and inexorably located that person in society; the objects did not reflect as much as *create* social personal (as well, some would argue, as the self itself)¹⁵

Taking Attfield and Auslander as a starting point, this thesis will consider what ‘the material culture’ of Terry’s life reveals about her efforts to construct a specific identity within late nineteenth century society, and also, importantly, to fashion a legacy which would endure after her death.

‘Description, Deduction and Speculation’

Direct engagement with ‘things’ (where possible) was at the heart of the methodological approach Jules David Prown proposed in his ‘Introduction to Material Culture,’ in 1982. As Prown demonstrates, it is the information gathered through this close analysis of artefacts which ‘[...] makes visible the otherwise invisible.’¹⁶ The tri-partite approach to analysis proposed by Prown, divided into ‘Description, Deduction and Speculation’, is now securely established within material culture in general, and dress history, in particular. This cumulative process of analysis, is founded upon not only a close examinations of the object, but also a consideration of the ‘sensory’, ‘intellectual’ and ‘emotional’ ‘relationship between the object and the perceiver.’ It therefore offers a clearly defined route through which to document and interpret ‘the information encoded

¹⁴ Judy Attfield, *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life*, (Oxford: Berg, 2000) 14-15.

¹⁵ Auslander, *Beyond Words*, 1018.

¹⁶ Jules David Prown, “Mind in Matter: An introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, 17.1 (Spring, 1982): 1-19, 5.

in objects.’¹⁷ One aspect of material culture objects which Prown does not consider, but is of central importance to this research, is the process of designing and making. Nevertheless Prown’s approach to analysis offers inspiration for the methodology proposed in this thesis, which will demonstrate that it is only through examining a theatre costume at first hand, feeling the weight, examining the construction and documenting the evidence and consequences of repeated use, that a researcher can gain a full sense of, ‘[...] what it would be like to use or interact with the object.’¹⁸

A ‘slow approach to seeing’

In *The Dress Detective* (2015) Alexandra Kim and Ingrid Mida, acknowledging their debt to Prown, proposed an updated, comparable, three part approach to analysis, specifically tailored to the object based study of dress. Their methodology centres upon: Observation (capturing the information from the object); Reflection (considering embodied experience and contextual material), and Interpretation (linking the observations and reflections to theory).¹⁹ They stress that ‘Dress artefacts are unique’ and demand a ‘practice based framework’ which ‘articulates the steps necessary to read and reflect systematically’ on the evidence contained within these objects.²⁰ The methodology presented by Kim and Mida refines terminology employed by Prown, and is founded upon their own experience working with historic dress and textiles. The ability to look closely and slowly at a ‘dress artefact’ plays a fundamental part in Kim and Mida’s methodology. This ‘slow approach to seeing’ is, as they stress, vital if the ‘dress detective’ is to discover, and articulate ‘the biography of the object.’²¹ They emphasise the rewards of ‘patient observation,’ and a systematic approach to documentation and analysis through case studies which illustrate

¹⁷ Prown, “Mind in Matter”, 7-9.

¹⁸ Prown, “Mind in Matter”, 7.

¹⁹ Alexandra Kim and Ingrid Mida, *The Dress Detective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 28-31.

²⁰ Kim and Mida, *The Dress Detective*, 22.

²¹ Kim and Mida, *The Dress Detective*, 13, 33.

and respond to the challenges of specific garments and textiles. These case studies are supported by clear and comprehensive checklists devised to guide the reader through each of the three steps required to read and interpret a dress artefact.²²

The breadth of the themes and garments addressed within the book does restrict Kim and Mida's ability to contextualise their analysis of specific garments through comparison with similar items, or to engage fully with the critical debates raised during the 'Interpretation' of their case studies. Even so, this publication marks a crucial step in the evolution of dress history as a discipline, and clearly articulates a methodology specifically created for the analysis of extant garments. It therefore offers a valuable framework on which to build a methodology through which to analyse and articulate the 'narrative embedded' within theatre costumes.²³

1.4 Relevant methodological approaches within dress history

In their introduction to *Dress History Now: New Directions in Theory and Practice* (2015), Charlotte Nicklas and Annebella Pollen explain that dress history is founded upon not only a fusion of disciplines, but also of methodological approaches.²⁴ This thesis exemplifies the benefits of this interdisciplinary approach to research and analysis. It will build upon current methodological approaches within dress history, theatre history and material culture to establish 'costume' as distinct and clearly defined category within dress history and introduce a new methodology for the analysis of these unique garments.

²² Kim and Mida, *The Dress Detective*, 216-221.

²³ Kim and Mida, *The Dress Detective*, 27.

²⁴ Charlotte Nicklas, and Annebella Pollen. *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) 2-4.

Dress within material culture

In 1998 Aileen Ribeiro argued that extant dress whilst clarifying the ‘cut and construction of garments’, and functioning as an established part of the wider body of source material required for her ‘art historical’ approach to dress history, ‘can present only a fragmented picture.’²⁵ Ribeiro, whilst confident in the centrality of ‘artistic sources for dress history,’ assigned a marginal, supportive role, to extant dress.²⁶ Her views highlight the fact that, as Lou Taylor noted in 2002, object based research centres ‘on [the] examination of minute detail, channelled through a series of patiently acquired skills and interpretative methods’ which are often ‘underrated or perhaps misunderstood.’²⁷

As Chapter 2 will discuss however, there has been a shift in attitudes over recent decades and research within material culture has begun to recognise the contribution both extant garments and surviving textiles can contribute to an awareness that, as Daniel Miller argued in 2010, ‘Clothing is not Superficial.’²⁸ In 1998 Valerie Steele was already promoting this approach to research, declaring that ‘of all the methodologies used to study fashion objects, one of the most valuable is the interpretation of objects.’²⁹ Steele’s analytical approach draws on Prown’s three stage approach to object analysis and also upon the work of E. McClung Fleming.³⁰ As Steele explains, Fleming, like Prown, stressed the importance of obtaining ‘supplementary information from other sources, external to the artefact,’ but proposed an alternative final stage he called ‘cultural

²⁵ Aileen Ribeiro, “Re-Fashioning Art: some visual approaches to the study of the history of dress,” *Fashion Theory*, Volume 2, Issue 4, (1998), 316-7 and 323.

²⁶ Aileen Ribeiro, “Re-Fashioning Art: some visual approaches to the study of the history of dress,” 320.

²⁷ Lou Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 3.

²⁸ Daniel Miller, “Why Clothing is not Superficial”, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 12-41.

²⁹ Steele’s role as the chief curator of The Museum at the *Fashion Institute of Technology* has enabled her to carry out object based research which demonstrates the ‘unique insights into the historic and aesthetic development of fashion’ which can result. Valerie Steele, “A Museum of Fashion is More Than a Clothes-Bag,” *Fashion Theory*, 2:4 (1998): 327-336, 327.

³⁰ Steele, “A Museum of Fashion is More Than a Clothes-Bag”, 329. Steele draws in particular upon Prown’s “Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method” (1982). She also draws specifically from E. McClung Fleming, “Artifact Study: A Proposed Model,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, 9 (1974) 153-173.

analysis,' which examines 'the relationship of the artefact to its culture.'³¹ Steele's synthesis of these two approaches facilitates 'the sharp focus on the materiality of surviving items of dress,' in particular the 'nuanced cultural importance embedded in supposedly trivial details' advocated by Taylor, and which are essential to a complete, and successful, use of extant garments in historical research.³²

Miller has also made a significant contribution to recent work in this field. Miller's early work was shaped by a semiotic approach which viewed 'Clothing as a kind of pseudo-language that could tell us about who we are.'³³ Miller's investigations relating to specific cultures and their dress has had a significant impact on his methodology. It has led him to argue that within certain cultures garments were employed in the creation of something which was not simply 'fashion' but a 'style' which reflects 'the individual construction of an aesthetic based not just on what you wear, but how you wear it.'³⁴ Miller's observation is particularly relevant to the analysis of Aesthetic dress, which was not characterised by a single, unified 'fashion' but rather a fusion of styles which celebrated the individual.³⁵

Miller's collaboration with Suzanne Küchler, *Clothing as Material Culture* (2005), reaffirmed the importance of dress within the study of material culture.³⁶ For Küchler and Miller 'the sensual and the aesthetic – what cloth feels and looks like – is the source of

³¹ Steele, "A Museum of Fashion is More Than a Clothes-Bag", 331.

³² One of Steele's key texts on this theme is her 1999 *The Corset: A Cultural History*. Yale University Press, for which Steele compared what she termed 'dozens and dozens of corsets in a variety of collection'. Steele, "A Museum of Fashion is More Than a Clothes-Bag", 332.

³³ Miller, "Why Clothing is not Superficial", 12.

³⁴ Miller, "Why Clothing is not Superficial", 15.

³⁵ As Chapter 6 will discuss, Mrs. H.R. Haweis (a leading commentator on Aesthetic dress) attached great importance to suiting the colour and cut of clothes to the individual, rather than following the dictates of fashion. Mrs. H.R. Haweis, *The Art of Dress* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1879) 32.

³⁶ Suzanne Küchler and Daniel Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture* (London: Berg, 2005). Both Küchler and Miller drew on their past work in bringing together this edited collection. Of particular relevance are Suzanne Küchler's joint publication with Graeme Were, and Glenn Jowitt. *Pacific Pattern*. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005) and Miller's joint authored, Miller, Daniel, and Sophie Woodward. *Blue Jeans: The Art of the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

its capacity to objectify myth, cosmology and also morality, power and values.’ On this basis they argue that ‘the dissection of clothing into pattern, fibre, fabric, form and production is not opposed to, but part of, its consideration as an aspect of human and cosmological engagement.’³⁷

Importantly, their book rejected ‘the dualism between society and materiality.’ Citing Webb Keane’s warning that regarding clothes merely as ‘signs or representations of social relations’ risks overshadowing their significance as material objects, Miller challenges this ‘artificial separation.’³⁸ As Miller comments, ‘we are prepared now to see clothes themselves as having agency as part of what constitutes and forms lives, cosmologies, reasons, causes and effects.’³⁹ This thesis examines clothing from this dual perspective, considering the materiality of the clothing alongside, and in relation to, the manner in which the finished garments projected the wearer’s social and professional status and reflected Terry’s views on art and dress.

Personal and Public Memories

As Miller acknowledges, his methodological approach has evolved over time and has led him the belief that, ‘A study of clothing should not be *cold*, it has to invoke the tactile, the emotional, intimate world of feelings.’⁴⁰ The collaborative investigation which Amy de la Haye, Lou Taylor and Eleanor Thompson carried out into a collection of clothing connected with the Messel family, exemplifies the practical implications of Miller’s observations.⁴¹ As de la Haye, Taylor and Thompson explain, ‘Whilst other types of

³⁷ Kuchler and Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture*, 1.

³⁸ Webb Kean, “Signs are Not the Garb of Meaning: On the Social Analysis of Material Things” *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) 182-205. Cited in Kuchler and Miller. *Clothing as Material Culture*, 2. Miller develops this theme further in pages 5-7 of the same text.

³⁹ Kuchler and Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture*, 2.

⁴⁰ Miller, “Why Clothing is not Superficial”, 41.

⁴¹ The clothing within the Messel collection was donated to Brighton Museum and Art Gallery and played a fundamental role in the museum’s exhibition, and accompanying publication, *Family of Fashion: The Messels: Six Generations of Dress* (2005). For full details see Amy de la Haye, Lou Taylor and Eleanor

objects are usually collected for their perceived monetary, as well as aesthetic, values, clothes are kept and treasured for their symbolic qualities and for the personal memories they hold.⁴² Through a close examination of the garments, alongside an archive of letters, household bills, photographs and purchasing records, the authors were able to narrate ‘the history, style and aspirations of this family.’⁴³ The emotive resonance of the collection is clear, and through their ‘close focus on the design, making, consumption and survival of these precious garments’ the authors sought to ‘touch on the respect and love each generation of this family had, and has, for the one before.’⁴⁴ Terry’s collection provides an equally compelling route into her biography. Chapter 5 will explore the ‘symbolic qualities’ with which Terry’s costumes have become endowed in further detail. It will pay particular attention to the manner in which, as Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones have discussed, historic theatrical costumes, often retained because of an association with a famous performer, act as ‘carriers of [their] identity.’⁴⁵

1.5 Relevant methodological approaches within theatre history

For Theatre Historians the primary challenge is, as Christopher Balme observes, the fact that they are constantly seeking to recover a performance, which is ‘irretrievably lost the moment it has finished.’⁴⁶ Some material traces of the original performance do outlive the production. As with dress history, it is through ‘the material culture’ of the theatre

Thompson, *A Family of Fashion, The Messels: Six Generations of Dress* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2005).

⁴² de la Haye, Taylor and Thompson, *A Family of Fashion*, 13-14. John Styles explored the ability of clothing and textiles, to represent ‘threads of feeling.’ As Styles showed the tokens left by parents (often in the form of a scrap of textile) enabled mother’s to create a lasting connection with the children they left in the care of the Foundling Hospital. John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) and *Threads of Feeling: The London Foundling Hospital's Textile Tokens, 1740-1770* (London: Foundling Museum, 2010).

⁴³ de la Haye, Taylor and Thompson, *A Family of Fashion*, 8.

⁴⁴ de la Haye, Taylor and Thompson, *A Family of Fashion*, 158.

⁴⁵ Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 177.

⁴⁶ Christopher B Balme, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 100-101.

that researchers are able to recover traces of the lost performance or performers. Surviving playbills were, for instance, fundamental to Jacky Bratton's *New Readings in Theatre History* (2003).⁴⁷ Archival evidence such as account books, newspaper reports and documentation regarding sanitation made possible Tracy C. Davis's comprehensive overview of the material, and specifically, economic, conditions of producing and consuming theatre between 1800 and 1914, in *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (2000).⁴⁸ Similarly, Shearer West in *The Image of the Actor: Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble* (1991), explored the evidence that can be gained from the large range of theatrical portraits produced by painters and engravers in the eighteenth century.⁴⁹ For theatre historians such as Barbara Hodgdon, Vivien Gardner and Gail Marshall, photographic portraits of both actors and sets have provided another route through which to recover and remember 'the absent, irrecoverable performance (and performer) through a (literally) material trace.'⁵⁰

Ephemeral and Intangible

In *Research Methods in Theatre & Performance* (2011) Jim Davis outlines the current state, and continuing challenges, of theatrical and performance histories which are often 'concerned with the ephemeral and the intangible.'⁵¹ Davis foregrounds the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to theatre history and historiography, in which research

⁴⁷ Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴⁸ Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Hereafter Tracy C. Davis will be referred to using the abbreviation T.C. Davis.

⁴⁹ Shearer West, *The Image of the Actor: Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble* (London: Pinter, 1991).

⁵⁰ Barbara Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives: Material Mnemonics." *Remembering Shakespeare, Memory, Performance*, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 135-168, 136. See also Vivien Gardner "Gertie Millar and the "Rules for Actresses and Vicar's Wives", *The Celebrated actors as Cultural Icon* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), 96-112 and Gail Marshall in "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress and her international audiences." *Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, ed. Maggie B. Gale and John Stokes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 52-73.

⁵¹ Jim Davis et al., "Research Theatre History and Historiography," *Research Methods in Theatre & Performance*, ed. Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) 88-109, 97.

must ‘embrace oral testimony and embodied history as well as the material object and the written text.’⁵² Davis explores the specific challenge faced by Kate Normington when seeking to recover the history of a production where textual evidence was lacking, and the practice based endeavour of Gilli Bush-Bailey and Jacky Bratton to ‘revive’ the plays of Jane Scott (from circa 1809-1818). Through this discussion Davis demonstrates the importance of uniting the archive of what Diana Taylor called ‘supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones)’ and the ‘ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e. spoken language, dance, sports, ritual).’⁵³ In their pursuit of ‘the embodied history of the performer’ both Normington and Bush-Bailey and Bratton draw upon the work of Susan Foster and Joseph Roach. In *Choreographing History* (1995) Foster introduced the notion of ‘bodily writing’ produced when bodies touch buildings, clothing or objects and thus creating ‘a series of “material remains” through which a historian can reconstruct the bodies of the past.’⁵⁴ Engaging with Foster’s work, Roach explored ‘the transmission (and transformation) of memory through movement’ preserved in what he termed the ‘kinaesthetic imagination.’⁵⁵ The relationship between memory and performance will be expanded upon later in this chapter. Specifically addressing the ‘kinetic’ nature of performance, this thesis will propose the addition of theatrical costume to the Taylor’s original list of ‘enduring’ sources. Building upon Foster’s concept of ‘bodily writing’ and Roach’s work on the ‘kinaesthetic imagination’ Chapter 5 will demonstrate that such garments can actually bridge the gap between ‘enduring’ and ‘ephemeral’ materials, preserving traces of the ephemeral elements of performance, in particular movement, in material form.

⁵² Davis et al. “Research Theatre History and Historiography,” 97.

⁵³ Diana Taylor’s 2003 publication *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* is cited by Davis in “Research Theatre History and Historiography”, 93.

⁵⁴ Davis et al., “Research Theatre History and Historiography”, 94.

⁵⁵ Bush Bailey and Bratton draw upon Roach’s *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (1996), Davis et al., “Research Theatre History and Historiography,” 94.

Material Objects

Maggie B. Gale and Ann Featherstone note that in recent years ‘the archive has become a vital cultural tool as a means of accessing versions of the past.’⁵⁶ Gale and Featherstone identified theatre/performance collections as a specific category within archives as a whole, set apart from collections of primarily text-based archive by the diversity of their collections which ‘invariably contain a multiplicity of document forms, including visual and oral materials.’⁵⁷ They, like Davis, suggest that an ‘interpretative strategy,’ which often draws on approaches from other disciplines, is required to make full and effective use of their contents.⁵⁸

Gale and Featherstone’s writing also touches upon the emotive ‘connection’ that a historian can experience when handling artefacts such as letters or costumes with a clear trace of their original creator or wearer.⁵⁹ Addressing the role of ‘digitisation’ within preservation, Gale and Featherstone accept that high quality images facilitate wider access and offer the ability to enlarge and print off details of objects. As they show however, the absence of ‘sensations’ such as touch and smell from this examination, means that researchers are unable to appreciate tangible qualities such as the ‘throwaway quality’ inherent in the thinness of a nineteenth century playbill or the vivid colours of an advertisement.⁶⁰ Chapter 4 and 5 will demonstrate the importance of this direct ‘connection’ with costumes, where condition allows. As they will illustrate, it is only through a close examination of a costume’s texture and weight, its construction, and areas

⁵⁶ Maggie B. Gale and Ann Featherstone, “The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research,” *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*, ed. Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011 [Reprinted 2012]), 17-40, 17.

⁵⁷ Gale and Featherstone, “The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research,” 20.

⁵⁸ Gale and Featherstone, “The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research,” 20.

⁵⁹ Gale and Featherstone, “The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research,” 32.

⁶⁰ Gale and Featherstone, “The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research”, 32. They also refer specifically to the waistcoats once worn by the male impersonator and actress Vesta Tilley (1864-1952) which are now in the collections of Worcestershire County Museum. For further details see “The Vesta Tilley Collection”, *Worcestershire County Council* [n.d.]

of damage or wear (rarely evident in a digitised image), that it becomes possible to re-create the physical form, taste, and movement patterns, of the actors who once wore them.⁶¹

A ‘postdisciplinary’ approach?

Bratton and Roach are also amongst those who advocate an ‘expansive interdisciplinary’ or, what Roach terms, a ‘postdisciplinary’ approach, to theatre history.⁶² The success of such an approach is demonstrated by *Theatre/Archaeology* (2001) in which Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks proposed a unification of ‘Theatre’ and ‘Archaeology’ founded upon the ‘convergence’ between, and ‘transferable concepts’ within, the two disciplines.⁶³ Amongst these parallels they single out ‘narrative’ as ‘a feature of the cultural work that is both archaeology and performance,’ demonstrating how ‘narratives of performances may intersect with the narrative of personal identity.’ In an approach which chimes with Marvin Carlson’s work on ‘ghosting,’ they explain that audiences experience performances in ‘[...] a state of preparedness which derives from past experiences and the way in which they have chosen to order them and accord them significance.’⁶⁴ As a consequence, they argue, it is ‘[...] not only impossible for the same performance to take place twice, it is also impossible for the audience to experience the same performance twice.’⁶⁵ One method through which they suggest it becomes possible to ‘remember’ lost performances, is through ‘performance-about-performance.’ Such ‘second-order performances’ are not, they suggest, constrained within a specific form, and could be

⁶¹ As Chapter 4 will discuss, the position of wear and tears to the fabric of costumes such as a pair of silk dupion breeches worn by the actor David Tennant (b.1971) as Touchstone in 1996 (now in the *Royal Shakespeare Company Collections*), can provide important evidence about the actor’s movement patterns on the stage.

⁶² Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xi.

⁶³ Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 2001), 1.

⁶⁴ Pearson and Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology*, 64; Their work recalls Marvin Carlson’s, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machines* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

⁶⁵ Pearson and Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology*, 64.

presented as a ‘re-enactment, revival, lecture, demonstration, audio-visual presentation [or] story-telling.’⁶⁶ Chapter 5 will demonstrate, that this concept of ‘second-order performance’ can also be employed to analyse the role which historic theatre costumes play in ‘remembering’ not only lost productions, but also lost performers.

1.6 Interpreting dress and theatre history through paintings and sketches

Paintings

Paintings of Terry represent a key source for the examination of her dress both in role, and off the stage. Central to the analysis of Terry’s dress in the early years of her career are the portraits and sketches made of the actress by her first husband George Frederick Watts (1817-1904). These include his portrait of Terry in her wedding dress, ‘Choosing’ (1864), now held by National Portrait Gallery, and the informal sketches Watts made of Terry, some of which are also held by the National Portrait Gallery, whilst others form part of the collection at the Watts Gallery.⁶⁷ The National Portrait Gallery hold a number of paintings showing Terry as she appeared ‘off stage.’ These include a head and shoulders portrait of Terry, painted by John Forbes Robertson (1853-1937) in 1876, and additional portraits by Walford Graham Robertson (1866-1948) (hereafter W.G. Robertson) and Cyril Robertson (1871-1949) depicting Terry later in her life.

Of the portraits showing Terry in role, John Singer Sargent’s (1856-1925) portrait of Terry as Lady Macbeth is particularly significant, and, as Chapter 5 will discuss, has played a key role in securing the lasting fame of costume Terry wore in this role. First painted and exhibited in 1889, the original portrait is held by Tate Britain. Two related sketches also exist, one a preparatory drawing presented to Terry by Sargent, is held at

⁶⁶ Pearson and Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology*, 65.

⁶⁷ A full list of the portraits and photographs of Terry has been compiled by the National Portrait Gallery, London, and can be found here online. See Elizabeth Heather, “Ellen Terry,” *Later Victorian Portraits Catalogue*, National Portrait Gallery, London. [n.d.]

Smallhythe, the second, created for a theatre programme used in Terry's 1906 Stage Jubilee celebrations, is held by the National Portrait Gallery. Three other portraits connected to the costume Terry wore as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* are also of particular relevance to themes explored in Chapter 5. Two of these three portraits do not actually feature Terry, but do include her costume. Terry is the model for the first portrait, painted in 1883 by G.W.Baldry (fl.1878-ca.1925) and now part of the Garrick Club Collections. The second, painted by Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896) in 1886, and now held by the *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, features a sitter who resembles, but is not, Terry. She is wearing the robes which form part of Terry's costume (loaned to Millais by Terry), but not the cap.⁶⁸ Terry's costume also features in another portrait from the 1930s. Painted by Clare Atwood (1866-1962) the model in this instance is Vita Sackville West (1892-1962), who wore Terry's costume during a Shakespeare Masque at Knole, Sussex, on the 3rd of July 1910.

These formal portraits of Terry will be examined in conjunction with the sketches created for souvenir programmes, commercial sale, and those which featured in contemporary periodicals. Amongst such sketches are a series of images Bernard Partridge drew of both Terry and Irving in role, many examples of which survive in the collections of both the V&A and the National Portrait Gallery. As with all the source material under discussion, these images will be examined in conjunction with surviving garments, photographs and written descriptions (where they exist).

⁶⁸ Lucy Oakley quotes from letters between Millais and Terry arranging this loan in her discussion of this history of the history of this painting. Lucy Oakley, "The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 16, (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1982) 181-194, 183-4.

Critical approaches to interpreting dress in paintings

The use of paintings in the analysis of dress and fashion is long established, and recent texts, such as that published to accompany the touring exhibition *Impressionism, Fashion and Modernity* (2012), demonstrate the central role such source material plays within dress history as a discipline: particularly with regard to the relationship between ‘art’ and ‘dress’ in the late nineteenth century.⁶⁹ In relation to this thesis, the most significant element of the exhibition and book, was the fact that efforts had been made to unite extant dress with the surviving paintings. This signalled a major step forward in both museum curatorial practice and within the collaboration between the disciplines of art and dress history.

A related development within art history research, are publications which examine the creators of such portraits and their relationship with fashion. An example, which is particularly relevant to this study is *Whistler, Women & Fashion* (2003), which explores the artist’s connections with the Aesthetic Movement alongside his ‘involvement in dress design.’⁷⁰ Ribeiro’s contributions to the volume include a chapter which addresses Whistler’s relationship with ‘Fashion.’ Ribeiro argues that ‘Art and Fashion were inextricably linked as cultures of consumption during Whistler’s working life. A period when the art world in London (and the social and professional status of artist themselves) expanded hugely.’⁷¹ This statement identifies a significant shift in the status of the artist, which is of specific significance to the analysis of Terry’s social circle and self-

⁶⁹ The exhibition opened at the Musée D’Orsay in October 2012 and toured to both the Metropolitan Museum in, New York and the Art Institute of Chicago. The text published to accompany the exhibition by Gloria L Groom took its title from the exhibition, *Impressionism, Fashion, & Modernity* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2012). Groom’s was not the only text to address this theme, as can be seen from publications such as Debra N. Mancoff’s *Fashion in Impressionist Paris* (London: Merrell Pub, 2012), published in the same year.

⁷⁰ Margaret F. MacDonald, Susan G. Galassi, and Aileen Ribeiro. *Whistler, Women & Fashion* (New York: Frick Collection, 2003), vii.

⁷¹ Macdonald, Galassi and Ribeiro, *Whistler, Women and Fashion*, 19.

presentation carried out in Chapters 6. Whilst Ribeiro's chapter provides key contextual information for this thesis and makes effective use of visual sources, close analysis of extant garments is noticeably absent from her discussion.⁷² This thesis will demonstrate the significant contribution uniting visual and written evidence with extant garments can make to the understanding of both dress and theatre costume.

In *The Art of Dress* (1995) Ribeiro remarks upon a portrait's ability to represent a 'fusion of character, likeness and costume.' At the same time she warns that, 'A portrait is not merely a mechanical image, it is a likeness of the sitter and his or her character seen through the temperament of the artist, whose views reflect the opinions of contemporary critics writing about art and dress.'⁷³ Both observations are relevant to the analysis of images which depict Terry, an individual whose celebrity was founded upon her ability to perform a 'role.' This is a challenge repeatedly faced by theatre historians such as Laura Engel who, as Chapter 2 will discuss, draws upon portraits of famous performers to explore key debates surrounding the position of the actress as a 'celebrity' and a 'woman' within eighteenth century society.⁷⁴

The National Portrait Gallery's 2011 exhibition *The First Actresses: Nell Gwynn to Sarah Siddons*, made a significant contribution to this discussion. In her introduction to the accompanying book, Gill Perry argues that '[...] visual and written portraits helped shaped the identity of [their] women protagonists as "goddesses," tragic and comic heroines, models of feminine virtue, objects of erotic fantasy, shrewd self-publicists and

⁷² Ribeiro refers specifically to the 'aesthetic dress of white linen that has a Watteau back and panels of tambour work floral embroidered in blue and pink' in the collection at Smallhythe. She also suggests that this might be the gown that Terry was wearing when described in *The Brooklyn Times* (1884) as appearing in 'an artistic gown, with a Wateau [sic] plait.' As Chapter 6 will show however, Terry owned a range of dresses which featured a 'Watteau back' and the dress in the collection at Smallhythe departs significantly from Ribeiro's description. Ribeiro, *Whistler, Women and Fashion*, 49-50.

⁷³ Aileen Ribeiro, *The Art of Dress* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1995) 236, 14.

⁷⁴ Laura Engel, "The Muff Affair: Fashioning Celebrity in the Portraits of Late-eighteenth century British Actresses," *Fashion Theory*, 13.3 (2009): 279-298, and *Fashioning Celebrity: Eighteenth-century British Actresses and Strategies for Image Making* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011).

even agents of transgression.’⁷⁵ Portraits of women, and actresses in particular, could therefore ‘both enhance or betray the identities enacted on stage or narrated through biography.’⁷⁶ As Perry shows, an analysis of any portrait must take into account the fact these are objects which, tell us ‘not just about the subject, her ambitions and how she wished to be seen (if the work was commissioned by the actress), but [also] about the historical conventions of portrait painting, the artist’s tastes, fashion, gender, social status and so on.’ Theatrical portraits present additional challenges for the researcher, as rather than offering a direct ‘likeness’ of the sitter they ‘may depict the actress in role, or [be] replete with references to role-playing.’⁷⁷ In *Spectacular Flirtations: Viewing the Actress in British Art and Theatre, 1768-1820*, Perry carries the implications of ‘role-playing’ further. Looking specifically at the ‘theatrical portrait in role’ she argues that such portraits offer ‘a representation of a staged or pseudo event’ and, moreover, one that has been ‘translated through the conventions and aesthetic preferences of the artist.’ They therefore form part of a process, which Perry calls, ‘double mediation’ in which the artist’s ‘painted reconstruction’ is substituted ‘for the masquerade on stage.’ Theatrical portraits in role would therefore seem to be ‘twice removed from the supposedly “real” person.’⁷⁸ Yet, as Perry notes, ‘[...] many of these portraits fostered or encouraged a sense of identification and engagement in the viewer’ and their success was founded upon their ability to ‘reveal a recognisable individual.’⁷⁹ Theatrical portraits are therefore enmeshed within ambiguities, and those which show a performer in role often generate

⁷⁵ Gill Perry, Joseph R. Roach, and Shearer West, *The First Actresses: Nell Gwyn to Sarah Siddons* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011) 13.

⁷⁶ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 13-16.

⁷⁷ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 27.

⁷⁸ As Perry explains she employs the term ‘double mediation’ to ‘[...] represent the complex networks, relations and processes that link the artist’s work of theatrical performance to historical situations, cultures, genders and sexualities.’ Gill Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations: Viewing the Actress in British Art and Theatre, 1768-1820* (London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2007) 20-1.

⁷⁹ Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations: Viewing the Actress in British Art and Theatre, 1768-1820*, 20-1.

further conflation between the ‘personal, painted and public (theatrical) identities’ of their subjects.⁸⁰

In his analysis of portraiture in both painted, and photographic form, Richard Brilliant also remarks upon the frequency of confusions which arise from the ‘ambiguity of impersonation,’ and the ‘conflation’ of ‘various identities in the public mind’ which result. Focusing on twentieth century film stars, Brilliant suggests that this confusion is generated by the fact that these figures maintain ‘a flexible relationship between familiarity and distance, between their image and illusion, between their “natural selves” and their film roles.’⁸¹ As Chapter 3 and 6 will show, the same holds true for theatre actors in the late nineteenth century.

Brilliant also examines the role of ‘the artist’ in self-fashioning. He quotes Herman Rosenberg’s description of portraiture as a ‘consensual ritual encounter which is both trusting and wary’ and in which ‘the subject submits to the interpretation of the artist, hoping to retain some control over what that interpretation might be.’ He adds his own observation that ‘[...] the artist’s collusive involvement may, or may not, correspond to the subject’s own representation of self, even at the time of portrayal.’⁸² Brilliant stresses that the ‘[...] rhetorical character of self-fashioning and its deference to the expectations of others’ is such that ‘[...] putting people in the “rightful” place within a social context always requires a high degree of cooperation and collusion among the participants in a social encounter.’⁸³ These remarks highlight the crucial role that the ‘collusion’ of the viewer/audience plays in the process of self-fashioning, in which success depends upon their willingness to accept and sustain the identity being projected.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 27-8 and Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations*, 15.

⁸¹ Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: Reaktion Book, 1991), 89-90, 104.

⁸² Herman Rosenberg quoted in Brilliant, Richard, *Portraiture*, 90.

⁸³ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 89.

⁸⁴ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 90.

Building upon the insights offered by Perry and Brilliant, Chapter 6 will consider the impact that this ‘confusion’ between an actress’ ‘costumed performances’ and her “‘real’ person,’ had upon the viewer’s engagement with, and interpretation of, their portraits.⁸⁵ It will also examine the extent to which Terry embraced, and, or, resisted, the perceived parallels between her ‘public’ and ‘private’ identity in her visual and written biographies.⁸⁶

Caricatures and Sketches

Periodicals and caricatures from the period offer an additional perspective on the specific style of aesthetic clothing favoured by Terry and also the public response to her attire. Publications such as *Punch* and *The Illustrated London News* offer a particularly fruitful source for such research. Leonée Ormond has argued that many people learnt about Aestheticism from social cartoons in such periodicals.⁸⁷ Ribeiro has also noted the value of such source material, arguing that cartoonists, like artists ‘provide invaluable testimony to the culture, the manners, the *vision* of the times. *What* they depict and *why* is of crucial importance to anyone seriously interested in the study of dress.’⁸⁸

Both Ormond and Ribeiro are conscious however that the value of such resources depends on a nuanced reading which takes in account the degree of exaggeration indulged in by both authors and artists for dramatic effect. Taylor presents a methodological approach for those decoding ‘the cultural messages passed down to us in individual cartoons’ in *The Study of Dress History* (2004). The five-fold approach advocated by Taylor assesses not only the images themselves, but also the personal and political interests of their

⁸⁵ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 27-8.

⁸⁶ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 24.

⁸⁷ Leonée Ormond, “Punch and Satire,” *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1890*, Ed. Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle-Orr (London: V&A Publishing, 2011) 212.

⁸⁸ Aileen Ribeiro, “Re-Fashioning Art: some visual approaches to the study of the history of dress,” *Fashion Theory*, Volume 2, Issue 4, (1998), 323.

creators, their publishers, and their readership. This thesis also recognises the importance, as Taylor stresses, of appreciating the ‘exact period context of the specific cartoon at the moment of publication’ before placing any images within their ‘proper dress historical context.’⁸⁹

Davis notes that historians within any discipline are required to confront, ‘The referential dilemma’ which is presented by ‘the gap between the actuality of events in the past and how they have been represented.’ Without vital contextual information such visual sources, whether they take the form of paintings, photographs or caricatures, are, Davis argues, ‘limited in their scopes for revealing exact details of past theatrical performance.’⁹⁰ To interpret and employ such material effectively it is therefore essential to be conscious of their limitations, in particular contemporary ‘aesthetic rules and conventions,’ and the extent to which they may present an ‘idealised rather than “authentic rendering” of an event.’⁹¹

The importance of Davis’ observation is borne out by the ‘intriguing gaps, even ruptures’ which Kimberley Wahl identified between ‘the visual representation and literary framing of “artistic” dress,’ and ‘how these forms of clothing were actually acquired, adapted and worn on the body.’⁹² As Wahl observes, the ‘presence of Aesthetic dress in the print culture of the nineteenth century is rich, varied and ubiquitous.’⁹³ When examining extant Aesthetic garments, however, Wahl discovered that many were actually ‘stylistic hybrids’ which conformed to ‘the predominant stylistic features of mainstream fashionable dress’ rather than ‘the radical examples of alternative dress as called for in the art and reform

⁸⁹ Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, 145.

⁹⁰ Davis et al. “Research Theatre History and Historiography,” 95.

⁹¹ Jim Davis et al. “Research Theatre History and Historiography,” 95.

⁹² Kimberly Wahl, “Picturing the material/manifesting the visual: Aesthetic Dress in late nineteenth-century British culture,” *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, ed. Charlotte Nicklas, and Anabella Pollen (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) 97-112, 97.

⁹³ Wahl, “Picturing the material/manifesting the visual: Aesthetic Dress in late nineteenth-century British culture,” 100.

literature of the day.’⁹⁴ As Wahl states, it was this work with surviving garments which drew her attention to ‘the chasm which exists between the material culture evidence of artistic or alternative forms of dress and the representation of Aesthetic dress as an ideal form or as a visual expression of cultural critique.’⁹⁵ Wahl’s experience highlights the ‘complex relationship between material forms of clothing and visual/literary representations of “fashion” and, by extension, theatrical costume.’⁹⁶ Her research demonstrates the importance of examining visual/literary representations of historic theatrical costume alongside comparable garments, where possible. Only through considering the physicality of garments can the researcher appreciate how dress is actually constructed and worn on the body, and, through this, its impact on movement, and the manner in which it can distort, or support the form beneath. Such considerations will be central to the discussion of both Terry’s personal and theatrical costume carried out in Chapter 5 and 6.

1.7 Interpreting dress and theatre history through photographs

Hundreds of photographs showing Terry in both her stage costume, and in off stage dress survive, making it possible to chart developments in her personal and private dress from her first performance in 1856, through to her death in 1928. The majority of these images depict Terry in a professional setting and are held in the collections of the National Portrait Gallery and V&A. One of the most important collections of photographs of Terry survives at Smallhythe however, as it is here that the largest proportion of informal, ‘private’ images of Terry have been assembled.

⁹⁴ Wahl, “Picturing the material/manifesting the visual: Aesthetic Dress in late nineteenth-century British culture,” 106.

⁹⁵ Kimberly Wahl, *Dressed as in a Painting: Women and British Aestheticism in an Age of Reform* (Durham: University of Hampshire Press, 2013), xix.

⁹⁶ Wahl, “Picturing the material/manifesting the visual: Aesthetic Dress in late nineteenth-century British culture,” 99.

The surviving photographs of Terry provide a visual narrative of the actress's life. The formal studio images offer an illustration of her professional self, as presented to the public, and the large proportion of images depicting the actress in Aesthetic dress testify to her commitment to the movement. The fact that photographs showing Terry in the 1850s and 1860s (prior to her marriage to Watts and relationship with Edward William Godwin (1833-1886)) have survived, make it possible to analyse her evolving style and to evaluate the impact that Terry's partnerships with leading artists, and members of the Aesthetic movement, had upon her sartorial development. As few examples of Terry's personal dress survive, these photographs play a crucial part in the analysis of her off stage garments carried out in Chapter 6.

As is often the case, far fewer images showing Terry in 'private' life survive, but those that do will be analysed in relation to the more formal images, facilitating a comparison of the parallels and contrasts between Terry's 'public' and 'private' dress. Both these informal and professional photographs also document Terry's domestic surroundings. Chapter 6 will draw upon evidence from these images to examine the manner in which Terry constructed a 'stage-set' within her domestic space, which allowed her to sustain specific 'public' and 'private' identities.

'Reading' Photographs

The history and interpretation of photography has been thoroughly covered elsewhere. Its significance in relation to this study lies in the fact that the commencement of Terry's stage career (in the mid-1850s) coincided with key developments in photographic technology.⁹⁷ This included the ability to produce multiple copies of the same image, and

⁹⁷Key texts include: R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (London: Fontana, 1984); Maria Morris Hambourg, et al., *The Waking Dream: Photography's First Century*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993; L. Heron and V. Williams, *Illuminations* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1996); André Jammes and Eugenia Parry Janis *The Art of French Calotype*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *Industrial Madness: Commercial Photography in Paris, 1848-1871* (New

significant improvements in the quality of the images that could be produced. Balme has drawn attention to the potential value of these photographs for theatre historians.⁹⁸ Gardner, Catherine Hindson, David Mayer and Marshall are amongst those who have explored the significant part that the 2 ¼ by 3 ½ inches cartes des visite prints (produced from 1854), and the larger cabinet cards (6 ½ by 4 ½ inches) which replaced them in circa 1866, played in the promotion of both productions and performers.⁹⁹

It was not only celebrities whose images were recorded in photographers' studios however, and, recognising the demand for 'private' photography, George Eastman (1854-1932) introduced the first film based 'Kodak' camera in 1888. These cameras offered the first opportunity for private individuals to create their own photographs outside the photographer's studio.¹⁰⁰ Photographs taken with these non-professional cameras provide another perspective on Terry's 'private' self, as will be demonstrated in Chapters 6.

There are however limitations to this source material, not least the fact that many photographs of Terry have been taken in a studio setting. As Chapter 5 will show, whilst efforts were made to replicate elements of the theatre set in the studio and to recreate, or at least evoke, scenes from a production, photographs showing Terry in role cannot be relied upon as a true record of how the costume would have appeared on the stage. A

Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); B. Newhall, *The History of Photography* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1982); S. Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin Books, 1978), J. Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, (London: Macmillan London, 1992).

⁹⁸ Christopher Balme discusses the potential of such sources for theatre historians in Balme, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*, 105-6.

⁹⁹ The use of photographs, in particular the picture postcard (created in the late 1890s), to promote theatrical productions and performers has been discussed by Gardner in "Gertie Millar and the "Rules for Actresses and Vicar's Wives," *The Celebrated actors as Cultural Icon* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004); Catherine Hindson in *Female Performance Practice on the Fin-de-Siècle popular stages of London and Paris: Experiment and Advertisement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), David Mayer in "The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film," *Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, ed. Maggie B. Gale and John Stokes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 74-94 and Gail Marshall in "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress and her international audiences," *Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, ed. Maggie B. Gale, John Stokes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁰ Graham Clarke, *The Photograph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 18.

further significant limitation lies in the fact that despite the fact that colour photography was first invented in the mid nineteenth century, it was not until the 1950s that colour photographs became widely available. As a result, although some images of Terry have been hand tinted or coloured, most of them are black and white or sepia, and therefore reveal little or no information about the original colours of the garment they depict.

As Graham Clarke suggests in his introduction to *The Photograph*, 1997, ‘any photograph, by implication, involves a set of questions and ambiguities endemic to its nature as an act of representation.’¹⁰¹ Clarke’s primary interest lies in the cultural and social meanings of the photograph. He has also presented a specific methodology for ‘How to Read A Photograph.’¹⁰² This takes into account both the pre-conceptions inherent in any analysis, and also the ‘levels of meaning’ present in any photographic image. As Clarke observes,

Whenever we look at a photographic image we engage in a series of complex readings which relate as much to the expectations and assumptions that we bring to the image as to the photographic subject itself. Indeed, rather than the notion of looking, which suggests a passive act of recognition, we need to insist that we *read* a photograph, not as an image but as a *text*.¹⁰³

Clarke’s approach has therefore been employed here to construct a framework for an informed analysis of surviving photographs, which takes into account, not only the artistic and cultural conventions shaping the creation and reception of photographic portraits, but also the impact that technological innovations had on the medium.

¹⁰¹ Clarke, *The Photograph*, 7.

¹⁰² Clarke, *The Portrait in Photography* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992) and *The Photograph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁰³ Clarke, *The Photograph*, 27.

Clarke is also amongst those who have explored the relationship between the photographer and the sitter within the studio and seeks to restore an awareness of the photographer to the analytical process.¹⁰⁴ The controlling role of the photographer is also an important consideration for David Mayer, who has explored the stylistic conventions present in theatrical photographs from the late nineteenth century. Mayer claims that whilst

Gradually, the actress, her entire physical self visible, begins to emote, [...] her emoting is aestheticized and controlled by the photographer and is unlikely to have been as overtly theatrical as it would have been on a stage before an audience.¹⁰⁵

As Helen Walter notes, before the 1890s photographs of performers were not taken in the theatre, but were, in effect, as posed studio portraits.¹⁰⁶ She therefore argues that photographs of actors in role should be regarded as ‘a moment of performance’ which provide ‘[...] only one opportunity for the exposition of character’ they represent, ‘[...] a distillation of the traits which the actor and photographer considered most important.’¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, ‘[...] with the opportunity for expression through movement and vocalization removed, the pose and costume were of paramount importance in realizing characterisation.’¹⁰⁸ The observations of both Mayer and Walter recall Roland Barthes’

¹⁰⁴ Clarke, *The Photograph*, 7-9, 29. Richard Brilliant (referred to previously) has examined the nature and significance of the interactions between the subject, artist and viewer. See: Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: Reaktion Books, 1991).

¹⁰⁵ David Mayer, “The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film,” *Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, ed. Maggie B. Gale and John Stokes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 74-94, 81.

¹⁰⁶ Helen Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage”, *Costume*, 47.2, (2013): 161-179, 167, 170. As Walter notes the history and production of theatrical photography has been explored in further detail by Michael R. Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Barbara McCandless, ‘The Portrait Studio and the Celebrity,’ *Photography in Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Martha A. Sandweiss (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1991) and by Michele Majer in ‘Staging Fashion, 1880-1920,’ *Staging Fashion 1880-1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, Billie Burke*, ed. Michele Majer (London: Yale University Press, 2012).

¹⁰⁷ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage”, 167, 170.

¹⁰⁸ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage”, 161-179, 167, 171.

description of photography as a ‘kind of primitive theatre.’ All three highlight the complications present in any ‘reading’ of a photograph, exposing the ‘theatrical nature’ of a process repeatedly employing stage sets, established poses and re-touching.¹⁰⁹ Engaging with these concerns Chapter 6 will address the fact that, as an actress, Terry is an unusual sitter, conscious that her photographic portraits were produced for a public, rather than for a domestic, audience. It will also consider the level of control Terry might have exerted over her photographed self and examine how these images functioned as an extension of Terry’s on stage performance and within the actress’s efforts to ‘fashion’ her ‘public’ and ‘private’ identity.

Photographs as ‘objects’

The thesis will also consider the photograph’s role as a physical object, which as Elizabeth Edwards asserts is, ‘central to its function as a socially salient object’ and plays an integral part in ‘the construction of meaning.’¹¹⁰ Whilst acknowledging the importance of Bourdieu’s writing on the ‘social uses of photography’ Edwards has highlighted the absence of a true consideration of the ‘materiality’ of these images.¹¹¹ Her own analysis establishes the important part physical engagement plays in the creation and consumption of photographs.¹¹² Situating photographs within the wider realm of ‘performative material culture’ Edwards encourages a consideration of the role photographs play in the way ‘in which people construct themselves and are constructed by others through the cultural forms of their consumption.’¹¹³ This construction of self through the creation, and

¹⁰⁹ R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (London: Fontana, 1984), 31-2.

¹¹⁰ Elizabeth Edwards, “Photographs as Objects of Memory,” *Material Memories: Design and Evocation*, ed. M.Kwint, C.Breward, J.Aynsley (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 221-222.

¹¹¹ Edwards cites Bourdieu’s, *Photography: A Middle Brow Art*, trans. S. Whiteside (Cambridge, 1990) and *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1986 [1979]). Edwards, “Photographs as Objects of Memory,” 224-5.

¹¹² Edwards, “Photographs as Objects of Memory,” 227-8.

¹¹³ Edwards, “Photographs as Objects of Memory”, 225. Susan Stewart has also published important work on this theme. See, for instance, Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

dissemination of photographs will be a central concern within Chapter 6. This chapter will respond to Mayer's characterisation of the photograph as a 'connection' between the actress and their consumer or 'audience' as it considers the part photographs of Terry played in the 'public consumption' of the actress's image.¹¹⁴

Analysis of Dress through Photographs

As this thesis will show, photographs also have the potential to provide an important insight into the clothing habits of their subjects. The work carried out by Avril Lansdell for her two books *Wedding Fashions 1860-1980* (1983) and *Fashion a la Carte, 1860-1900* (1985), for instance, demonstrated the information that cabinet cards and cartes des visite photographs can provide about nineteenth century fashion. Lansdell's work was founded upon a methodology which used dated and named photographs wherever possible. This information is not always recorded for the photographs of Terry, but cross referencing undated photographs with performance schedules, images within the press and related periodicals, and details of photographic studios records on the rear of some prints, offer a means through which to make informed deductions regarding dates.

Clare Rose's close analysis of 1,800 documented photographs of young children placed in the care of Dr. Barnardo's Homes from 1875-1900 demonstrated that these images can also shed light on the dress of those outside the exclusive section of society which featured in the *Fashion in Photographs* series.¹¹⁵ Rose's methodology, which united close reading of photographs with information drawn from periodicals, registered designs, surviving garments, related images and approaches from within social history, lays the foundation for the interdisciplinary, and detailed analysis of photographs and images of Terry

¹¹⁴ Mayer, "The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film," 83-5.

¹¹⁵ The results of this research, which was at the foundation of her doctoral research, were published in Clare Rose, *Making, Selling and Wearing Boys' Clothes in Late-Victorian England* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010). See in particular 40-54.

undertaken throughout this thesis. Surviving photographs of Terry will be examined in relation to her contemporaries both on, and off the stage. Recurring features within garments and their 'fit' will be used to identify and document the actress's 'personal style.' The motivations behind these sartorial choices will be explored within Chapter 6 which will consider why, and how, Terry's personal aesthetic was influenced by, and deviated from, the conventional fashions of the late nineteenth century.

1.8 Interpreting dress and theatre history through letters

As Terry records in her autobiography both her diaries and many of her letters were subject to selective destruction by both Terry herself and her descendants.¹¹⁶ The thousands which survive, dating from the mid-1860s and continuing into the days leading up to Terry's death in 1928, are therefore testament to the important role this form of communication played in her personal and professional life. The largest collection of surviving correspondence was originally part of the collection at Smallhythe and remains the property of the National Trust. For practical reasons of access and conservation however these letters are now housed in the British Library. Many caches also remain in museums not only across Britain, but also America, where Terry travelled on lengthy tours during the later decades of her career.¹¹⁷

As the letters reveal Terry's correspondents were numerous and extremely varied. Of most interest to this thesis are the surviving letters between Terry and figures connected with her theatrical career. These include letters Terry sent to her costumier, Mrs. Ada

¹¹⁶ Ellen Terry, *The Story of My Life* (London: Hutchinson, 1908), Introduction.

¹¹⁷ Terry embarked on her first tour to America with the Lyceum company in 1883, Terry's seventh, and final tour to America with the company took place in 1903. Terry returned to North America again on her own lecture tour in 1910-11. Katharine Cockin who has carried out extensive research into Terry's surviving correspondence has discovered letters in numerous archives within America. These include, but are not limited to: the Fales and Berol Collection, New York University; the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC; Houghton Library, Harvard University, Massachusetts; The New York Public Library; The New York Players' Club and the University of California, Los Angeles.

Nettleship (1856-1932), love letters from her on-stage partner, Henry Irving and personal correspondence exchanged with her daughter, Edith Craig (who also made costumes for the actress and worked as a costumier and director in her own right). Unfortunately no letters have yet been traced between Terry and her costume designer, Alice Comyns-Carr (1850-1927), though Comyns-Carr's *Reminiscences* and Terry's auto-biography offer an alternative insight into their relationship.¹¹⁸ Also of note are the sketches Terry often drew in her own letters. The correspondence between Terry and her costumier, Nettleship, frequently includes drawings, or scraps of material which indicate the trimming or silhouette required and demonstrate beyond question that Terry provided firm guidance about the materials, and colours required for, not only her own costumes, but also those of other female members of the cast.¹¹⁹

Terry's letters as a source for dress history

The value of letters as a historical source has long been recognised within the field of dress history, not least because of the breadth of time periods and themes which letters can help to illuminate.¹²⁰ For Miles Lambert, when contextualised with evidence gathered from a wider body of evidence gained through court trials, pledge books and trade directories, letters offered a 'glimpse' into 'The consumption and distribution of second-

¹¹⁸ It is possible that some letters may be discovered through Katharine Cockin's continuing research into Terry's correspondence but as yet no letters exchanged between Alice Comyns-Carr and Terry have been discovered in the collections at Smallhythe, the V&A, or in the Garrick Collection. Similarly, no references could be found through searches using the online database of UK based archives, Archives Hub, "Archives Hub, at the centre of great research," *Archives Hub*. [n.d.].

¹¹⁹ One such letter, sent from Terry to Nettleship and dated 'One o'clock in the morning', includes a sketch and detailed instructions from the actress, relating to a dress required for the next day. Victoria and Albert Museum, Autographed Letters Series, (hereafter ALS), THM/14/20/TERRY/5, Letter from Terry to Nettleship, July 1895.

¹²⁰ Such texts include Clare Browne, "Mary Delany's embroidered court dress," *Mrs. Delany and her circle*, ed. M. Laird and A. Weisberg-Roberts (New Haven and London: Yale Center for British Art, 2009); Maria Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2009); Elizabeth Kramer, "Not so Japan-easy: The British Reception of Japanese Dress in the late nineteenth century," *Textile History*, 44.1 (2013): 3-24 and Clare Rose, "Evaluating the Manufacturing and Retailing Practices of H. J. & D. Nicoll through a c. 1860 Boy's Suit," *Textile History*, 45.1 (2014): 99-118.

hand clothing in northern England during the long eighteenth century.’¹²¹ Beverley Lemire’s research has demonstrated that even a single letter has the potential to contain crucial evidence regarding an individual’s relationship with their clothing, revealing personal details which are rarely recorded in more formal documents such as account books or probate inventories.¹²² For Edward Maeder the letters of costume designer Renie Conley formed part of a range of ephemera through which he was able to investigate her connection with a specific ‘fashion phenomenon’ and to illustrate (in some instances literally) the ‘excitement and fear’ Conley’s scandalous creations were provoking.¹²³ Similarly, by contextualising accounts of John Chute in letters with surviving paintings, textiles and decorative furnishings at The Vyne (a country house in Hampshire, England) Daniel Claro was able to present a revised, and very different, portrait of his subject. Letters written by, and about, John Chute, provided a means through which to assess ‘the divergence’ between historian’s accounts and primary sources’ revealing that whilst ‘historians writing since the 1940s described him [Chute] as affected, foppish, and flamboyant, Chute’s letters portray quite a different gentleman.’¹²⁴

Terry’s letters represent a crucial source of information for the thesis. Their primary, and most obvious value lies in the details they contain relating to Terry’s personal and professional life. They will also be examined with regard to the evidence this correspondence reveals about Terry’s involvement in the design and creation of the costumes worn by both herself and other members of the Lyceum and company.

¹²¹ Miles Lambert, “The consumption and distribution of second-hand clothing in northern England during the long eighteenth century” *Textile History*, 35.1 (2004):1-26.

¹²² Beverley Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade Before the Factory, 1660-1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 149.

¹²³ Edward F. Maeder, “Research Note: Sources for a Forgotten Episode in The History of Post-war Fashion”, *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 1.2, (1997): 215-229.

¹²⁴ Daniel Claro. “Historicizing Masculine Appearance: John Chute and the Suits at The Vyne, 1740–76,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 9.2, (2005): 147-174, 148.

Cockin has argued that

Within the field of auto/biography the letter itself becomes a resonant text, the location of words on the page a matter for interpretation and the process of dating and situating it in the broader historical landscape is one which [...] naturally opens up a discussion of historicism and cultural materialism.¹²⁵

Recognising the strength of Cockin's argument this thesis will demonstrate that the value of such source material extends beyond its written content. The analysis of Terry's correspondence will not only consider the language employed by Terry, but also the role Terry's writing played in her self-fashioning. Nina Auerbach's 1987 biography of Terry offers a starting point for this analysis. Auerbach focussed her analysis on the different names, both nicknames, variations on Terry's own name, and the names of her most famous parts, with which the actress signs off her letters. She argues that Terry's letters show her adapting her written self to the individual with whom she is corresponding, suggesting, significantly, that the names Terry adopts 'designate her [Terry's] own mercurially shifting incarnations.'¹²⁶

For Jennifer Adams an analysis of letters must also consider their status as physical objects in which the message contained 'may be enhanced, illustrated, or even obscured by the writer's choice of paper, writing instrument, or even handwriting style.'¹²⁷ Whilst this thesis cannot encompass a full examination of the mediums encompassed within Terry's surviving correspondence, it will analyse these letters as a form of material

¹²⁵ Katharine Cockin, "Dame Ellen Terry and Edith Craig: suitable subjects or teaching" *The Higher Education Academy, English Subject Centre*, Higher Education Academy [2 October 2009].

¹²⁶ Nina Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time* (London: Dent & Sons, 1987) 209.

¹²⁷ Jennifer Adams, "Recovering a Trashed Communication Genre: Letters as Memory, Art, and Collectible" / *Residual Media*. Charles R. Acland (Ed) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007): 185-199, 188.

culture.¹²⁸ Specific attention will be paid to the evidence which Terry's annotations offers, that particular letters were re-read and highly valued.¹²⁹

Cockin has led research into Terry's correspondence and has drawn attention to the role writing played in Terry's career.¹³⁰ Her most significant contribution to researchers studying the private correspondence of Ellen Terry are her *Collected Letters of Ellen Terry*, which brings together letters distributed across fifteen collections throughout Europe and America for the first time.¹³¹

There have been previous efforts to publish Terry's correspondence, most significant amongst them *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence* (1931). Shaw and Terry began exchanging letters in 1892, and against the wishes of some of Terry's family, a collection of these letters, edited by Christopher St John, was published after Terry's death. As Cockin notes however, St John's editorial style extended beyond the excusable standardisation of spelling and correction of punctuation and grammar, to include the removal of specific names, and the omission of some letters altogether.¹³² Cockin's volumes are not bound by same the need St John felt to omit or conceal revelatory opinions of Terry's colleagues (then still living) and can therefore restore Terry's original text and also attempt to capture her distinctive epistolary style. Galen Goodwin

¹²⁸ The forms taken by the surviving letters include photographic and plain postcards; small scraps of paper; sheets of letter paper headed with the actress's address or with those of the theatres, and also encompasses envelopes covered with stamps which indicate where and when the actress was on tour. In some instances additional items enclosed by, or sent to, Terry also survive.

¹²⁹ Love letters sent to Terry by Irving (and previously thought to have been destroyed) include dated annotation by the actress indicating when the letters may have been revisited. These letters are part of a wider archive collection in the V&A. They form part of the Ellen Terry Collection, and are catalogued under the archive reference THM/384/6. "The Ellen Terry Collection." *Archives Hub*. [n.d.].

¹³⁰ Some of the key writing Cockin has published on the correspondence can be found in Katharine Cockin, "Ellen Terry, The Ghost Writer and the Laughing Statue: The Victorian Actress, Letters and Life-writing," *Journal of European Studies*, xxxii (2003):151-63 and Katharine Cockin, "Ellen Terry and Women's Suffrage Agitation," *Gender and Politics in the Age of Letter-writing 1750-2000*, Ed. Caroline Bland and Marie Cross (London: Ashgate, 2004).

¹³¹ Cockin has brought together these letters in an eight volume series which organises the correspondence chronologically. As noted earlier, this eight volumes series entitled *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry* is being published on an annual basis by Pickering and Chatto.

¹³² Katharine Cockin, eds. *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry, Volume 3: 1894-1898* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), Introduction, xi.

Langstreth (2001) and Sally Peters (1992) have also examined the correspondence between Shaw and Terry and used these letters to re-evaluate their relationship, and, in Langsteth's case, to explore the extent to which Terry continued to 'perform' in her letters.¹³³

Cockin's edited volumes of Terry's correspondence were put together before the recent emergence of a further archive of letters which are now part of the collections of the V&A. This thesis builds upon the significant and crucial work Cockin has carried out in relation to Terry's correspondence and will also draw attention to aspects of the correspondence which are yet to be considered. An emphasis will be placed upon the information this surviving correspondence can reveal about Terry's personal and theatrical dress, as will be demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 5.

Of particular interest for this thesis is Cockin's research into Terry's correspondence with her friend and ghost-writer, Christopher St John, born Christabel Marshall (1871-1960). Cockin draws upon evidence within letters between the two women to argue that '...the act of writing-even of engaging another woman to write for her – appears to have been a means of self-performance for Terry.'¹³⁴ Terry personal and professional relationship with Marshall, in particular her decision to employ Marshall, a professional woman, as a ghost-writer, will be addressed in Chapters 6.

Ann Hardie is one of the few researchers who have considered what the surviving letters reveal about Terry's theatrical costume. Her research was inspired by a letter sent by Terry to her costume maker, Mrs. Ada Nettleship (1856-1932), in 1895. As Hardie states,

¹³³ A significant body of research has been published relating to this correspondence. This includes Galen Goodwin Langstreth, 'Epistolary Follies: Identity, Conversation and Performance in the Correspondence of Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw', *Shaw: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies*, 21 (2001): 27-40 and Sally Peters, 'A Paper Courtship: Bernard Shaw and Ellen Terry', *Annals of Scholarship*, 9, 3, (1992): 327-40.

¹³⁴ Christopher St. John, born Christabel Marshall (1871-1960) became a long term companion of Terry's daughter, and was also a respected playwright and author. Cockin, "Ellen Terry, The Ghost Writer and the Laughing Statue: The Victorian Actress, Letters and Life-writing", 161.

her own past career as a theatrical costumier meant that she empathised with the letter's recipient, recognising that 'Just for a minute the anonymity which shrouds the members of [her] profession opened a crack.'¹³⁵ Hardie remarks upon the extent to which costume makers and designers remain absent from theatre history and presents her own explanations for this absence.¹³⁶ Whilst a full exploration of the history and importance of theatrical costumiers lies beyond the scope of this thesis it will demonstrate the potential for further research in this area. Chapter 5 will, for instance, draw upon this correspondence between Terry and Nettleship to explore the latter's significant role in the creation of Terry's theatrical, and personal dress.

1.9 Interpreting dress and theatre history through memoirs

A further source which will be central to this thesis is Terry's autobiography, *The Story of My Life*. Published in 1908 Terry's text offers a unique and personal record of the actress's dress.¹³⁷ As with any autobiographical text, particularly one intended for publication, the scope for exaggeration, deliberate editing and invention cannot be discounted, nor should the extent of St. John's involvement in the editing and creation of the text be overlooked. Fortunately statements within the text can be substantiated or re-evaluated in the light of evidence gathered from the myriad of complementary source material, including typed and manuscript texts relating to previous attempts made by the actress to capture her 'Stray Memories.'¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Ann Hardie, "A Letter from Ellen Terry," *Costume* 33 (1999): 110-115, 110.

¹³⁶ Hardie notes that despite Nettleship's position as a highly successful costumier and dressmaker little has yet been written about this either her personal life or her professional career. She cites Michael Holroyd's biography of Nettleship's son-in-law *Augustus John: The New Biography* (London: Vintage, 1997) as the primary source of any current information about the costumier and dressmaker. See Hardie, "A Letter from Ellen Terry", 113-4.

¹³⁷ Ellen Terry, *The Story of My Life* (London: Hutchinson, 1908).

¹³⁸ This material formed part of the archive recently donated to the V&A and catalogued under the archive reference THM/384/38. It includes notes assembled under the heading 'Stray Memories' which date from the late 1890s (prior to the publication of Terry's autobiography in 1908). "The Ellen Terry Collection." *Archives Hub*. [n.d.].

By the mid to late nineteenth century it had become common practice for performers to publish their memoirs or an autobiography.¹³⁹ A wealth of biographies and autobiographies published by and about Terry and her contemporaries therefore survive.¹⁴⁰ These texts offer a particularly valuable resource for this thesis and will be examined alongside Terry's autobiography to gather further evidence about the life, and public perception of the actress. They also provide a key point of comparison for the analysis of the role autobiographical writing played Terry's construction of a theatrical legacy which cemented her status as a celebrated figure and artist.

Perry argues that as accounts which offered an insight into the "real" identities of performers, 'biographies had the potential to 'demolish as well as enhance reputations.'¹⁴¹ She suggests that many actresses were compelled to adopt 'autobiographical strategies' to take control of, and shape 'a public identity that was vulnerable to misrepresentation.' As she also notes, whether approved or condemned by their subject biographies offer a selective interpretation of a life, 'rather than holding up a mirror to [their] subject.'¹⁴² As Taylor has argued however, the careful 'editing' which is an inherent quality of autobiographical accounts can 'reflect personal flaws, vanities and anxieties.'¹⁴³ The value of Terry's autobiography is enhanced by the survival of draft manuscripts for the text. These drafts, together with letters documenting the editorial process, makes it possible to substantiate, and document decisions made when 'fashioning' this narrative of Terry's life, which could only be surmised from the final printed text.

¹³⁹ As Perry notes in *The First Actress*, the practice of publishing biographies, memoirs, diaries and other 'tales' of performers can be traced back to, and beyond, the late eighteenth century. Perry, *The First Actress*, 27-31.

¹⁴⁰ Key examples include Sarah Bernhardt, *My Double Life. Memoirs of Sarah Bernhardt. With many portraits and illustrations* (London, William Heinemann, 1907); Alice Comyns Carr, *Mrs. J. Comyns Carr's Reminiscences* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1926); Dame Madge Kendal, *Dame Madge Kendal by Herself* (London: John Murray, 1933) and Lillie Langtry, *The Days I Knew* (London: Hutchinson, 1925).

¹⁴¹ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 27, 28.

¹⁴² Perry, *The First Actresses*, 28, 31.

¹⁴³ Lou Taylor, *Establishing Dress History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) 99.

Autobiographical writing also has the potential to illuminate wider themes, as can be seen in Morag Martin's use of the memoirs of Giacomo Casanova de Seingalt (1725–1798) and Mlle. Clairon (1723– 1803), an actress at the Comédie Française, as a vehicle through which to explore the impact of the move towards neo-classical simplicity in late eighteenth century France.¹⁴⁴ For Julia Emberley, autobiographies were part of a wider body of texts by female writers through which she explored 'the complexities of fashion and its various meanings in everyday life'. These texts provided Emberley with a way of 'reading objects in everyday life in order to negotiate their meanings and values for subjective and aesthetic experience'.¹⁴⁵ This element of Terry's autobiography will be fundamental to the discussion of Terry's relationship with her dress in Chapters 5 and 6.

The value of auto/biography in '*Interpreting the Theatrical Past*' was highlighted by Thomas Postlewait (1989).¹⁴⁶ His contribution to a volume of essays exploring 'The Historiography of Performance' identifies specific challenges encountered in drawing evidence from publications where

not only can no separation be established between face and mask, presence and absence, private and public personality, life and art, but also that these dualisms are too neat because they split identity, documents, and historical conditions in ways that are reductive¹⁴⁷

Such dualisms are inescapable in any effort to trace the 'private self' of a performer. Terry's autobiography must be therefore approached as a carefully edited narrative of the

¹⁴⁴ Morag Martin, Casanova and Mlle Clairon: Painting the Face in a World of Natural Fashion. *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, Volume 7, Number 1 (2003): 57-77.

¹⁴⁵ Julia Emberley, "Material Fictions of Desire," *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, Volume 11, Number 4 (2007): 463-481.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Postlewait, "Autobiography and Theatre History," *Interpreting the Theatrical Past: Essays in the Historiography of Performance*, ed. Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989) 248-272.

¹⁴⁷ Postlewait, "Autobiography and Theatre History", 250.

actress's life, rather than a true, complete, or reliable, account. The fact however, that it is possible to re-evaluate the 'self' Terry's presents to her readers in the light of evidence gathered from the actress's private correspondence and information from related sources about the 'true' nature of her off-stage life, makes a significant difference to the manner in which this text can be read and used. As Chapter 6 will show therefore, Terry's autobiography provides an important insight into the 'private self' she sought to construct for her audience.

1.10 Interpreting dress and theatre history through extant garments

As Chapter 2 will discuss, the status of extant garments as an important source for research is now firmly established within dress history. What has yet to be fully appreciated however, is the contribution that extant theatre costumes can make to our understanding of the history of theatre and to the individual self-fashioning of performers. This thesis builds upon existing work with extant garments to present a new methodology specifically tailored to the examination and analysis of theatre costumes. The section which follows will outline the methodological approaches upon which this new methodology will be founded. It will also introduce some of the theoretical approaches which are drawn upon to address the specific challenges presented by this unique category of garments.

'The clothes themselves'

Kate Strasdin's recent research into Alexandra, Princess of Wales (1844-1925) has demonstrated the contribution an examination of extant garments can make to the understanding of an individual's approach to dress. Strasdin was able to gather information about the psychological factors which impacted on Alexandra's approach to dress through private journals, memoirs, letters and a rich range of images. It was her

close analysis of surviving garments however, which revealed key details about the physicality of the Princess. Most importantly that garments worn by Alexandra after suffering from rheumatic fever in 1867 were deliberately designed to ‘normalise’ the Princess’s silhouette and conceal the curvature of her spine which had resulted from her illness. The evidence obtained from ‘the clothes themselves’ offered Strasdin an entirely new insight into the physiological factors which influenced the design and structure of Alexandra’s garments. On the basis of this information Strasdin was able to reveal, and understand, a ‘clothing strategy which went beyond the dictates of fashion alone.’¹⁴⁸

The importance of ‘context’

Terry’s physicality was one of many factors which influenced the ‘clothing strategy’ she adopted both on and off the stage. Miller has highlighted the importance of the relationship between ‘clothing’ and ‘the body.’¹⁴⁹ His observation is particularly relevant to the analysis of extant theatre costumes, which must allow for the degree to which these garments are shaped by the physicality of both their original wearer(s) and the performance in which they were used. As this thesis will show however, this is only one of several factors which need to be considered when examining garments created for, and used in, stage performance.

The research Walter carried out into the relationship between actor-managers and dress, establishes important elements of the specific approaches required for analysis of theatrical costumes. Her close examination of the costumes Henry Irving wore as Charles I in 1873, exposed the distinction between the contemporary perception of his costumes

¹⁴⁸ Kate Strasdin, “Fashioning Alexandra: A Royal Approach to Style 1863-1910,” *Costume* 47.2 (2013):180-197, 181.

¹⁴⁹ As Miller notes Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: fashion, dress, and modern social theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000) and Leigh Summer, *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset* (Oxford: Berg, 2001) have also begun to explore this theme. Küchler and Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture*, 4.

as an exact ‘reproduction of Van Dyck’s portraits of Charles I’, and the true nature of garments created to convey ‘[...]an overall impression of Van Dyck in Action.’¹⁵⁰ Walter’s research demonstrates the importance of recognising the ‘context specificity of theatre costume.’¹⁵¹ As she notes, and as Chapter 4 will discuss, these are garments which are designed to be ‘read’ from a distance, under stage lighting.¹⁵² The ‘context’ is not limited to the specific physical space for which theatrical costumes are created however, but extends to encompass the factors which shape their public reception. Drawing upon the earlier work of Bert O. States and Martin Meisel, Walter suggests that the theatrical production should be viewed as ‘[...] a transaction of a collaboration between actors and audience’ in which, as Meisel argued, the success of the production, and its costumes, depends upon the ability to ‘negotiate an audience’s expectations.’¹⁵³ She uses her analysis of Irving’s costumes to demonstrate that when working with historic theatrical costumes researchers must consider ‘[...] not only the setting of the play itself but the experiences and cultural contexts which framed the expectations of its particular audience [...]’¹⁵⁴ The significance of the artistic and social context within which Terry and her costumes operated will be addressed in Chapter 3 and 6 of this thesis, and will be made apparent in the close analysis of Terry’s costumes undertaken in Chapters 4 and 5.

The Missing ‘Costumes’

Barbara Hodgdon is one of the few theatre historians whose work does offer a crucial illustration of the significance and ‘emotional resonance’ of surviving costumes as

¹⁵⁰ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage,” 167, 174.

¹⁵¹ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage,” 163.

¹⁵² Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage,” 173.

¹⁵³ Walter draws specifically on Martin Meisel, “The Role of the Audience,” *How Plays Work: Reading and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 96-128 and Bert O States, “The Actor’s Presence: Three Phenomenal Modes,” *Acting (Re) Considered*, ed. Phillip B. Zarrilli, (London: Routledge, 2002), 23-39. See Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action,” 163.

¹⁵⁴ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage,” 163.

physical objects.¹⁵⁵ Hodgdon's material culture approach to analysis conveys not only 'the thrill' 'of touching a costume's fabric' but also the importance of 'feeling its weight and drape in one's hand [...]'¹⁵⁶

She positions costumes as part of a research process she describes as a 'recontextualisation from surviving remains,' which draws together individual 'fragments' to "'push" the aura of theater [sic] into re-being, into consciousness.'¹⁵⁷ Her research demonstrates the importance of uniting a range of source material when seeking to 'reconstruct' a performance. As she shows, surviving theatre costumes can reveal details not apparent in black and white images, the colours of these garments 'tinting, toning and reanimating the photograph[s].'¹⁵⁸

Building upon Hodgdon's work, Chapter 5 will draw upon examples of extant costumes worn by Terry, contextualised with images and written sources to address, in depth, the absence of theatrical costume from both dress and theatre history.

1.11 'Fashioning' a Methodology

Multiple Identities

Researchers seeking to 'interpret' theatrical costumes must also contend with the number of 'associations' and 'identities' a costume accumulates during a life cycle that often includes not only damage, repair and alteration, but potentially the transfer to different performers and productions over time. A recognised framework has yet to be proffered for documenting and analysing the complex life history of theatrical costumes.

¹⁵⁵ Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives," 135-168.

¹⁵⁶ Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives," 140.

¹⁵⁷ Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives," 138-9. See also Barbara Hodgdon. 'Photography, Theatre, Mnemonics; or, Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Still'. *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History*. Ed. William B. Worthen and Peter Holland. (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

¹⁵⁸ Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives," 140.

This thesis draws upon theoretical approaches outlined by Igor Kopytoff, in particular his concept of ‘object biographies’ to examine and delineate these ‘multiple identities.’¹⁵⁹ Dinah Eastop is amongst those who have demonstrated the manner in which Kopytoff’s theories have been successfully employed within material culture to analyse an ‘object’s significance.’¹⁶⁰ Eastop notes that it is possible to construct two types of ‘object biography’. The first, ‘a biography constructed for a specific object’, the second, ‘a biography constructed for a type of object.’¹⁶¹ Eastop demonstrates the implications of Kopytoff’s methodology for conservators and curators determining appropriate treatments for objects which exhibit evidence of several stages in their ‘life.’ Her analysis exposes the degree to which ‘Consideration of the garment’s technological and cultural biography allows the different values attributed to these ‘life stages’ to be brought into sharper focus.’¹⁶² Within her article, Eastop references the work of Verity Wilson, who, as she notes, employed Kopytoff to examine the ‘life histories’ of a specific type of textile. For Wilson, Kopytoff offered a model through which to examine the shifting ‘identities’ of Chinese Dragon Robes transferred from their traditional Chinese context, to North American and European museums.¹⁶³

Inspired by Eastop and Wilson’s use of ‘Kopytoff’s idea of object biographies’ as a tool for ‘recording and preserving objects in museum collections’ this investigation will apply Kopytoff’s biographical mode of analysis to theatrical costume.¹⁶⁴ The case studies

¹⁵⁹ Igor Kopytoff, “The cultural biography of things: commoditization as a process.” *The Social Life of Things Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. A. Appadurai. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1986] 2006) 64-91.

¹⁶⁰ See Dinah Eastop, “The biography of objects: a tool for analysing an object’s significance,” *International workshop on flexible materials in Asian collections: Exchange of approaches to conservation, presentation and use* (Kuala Lumpur: Department of Museums and Antiquities, 2003): 100-113 and Dinah Eastop “Conservation as Material Culture,” *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Christopher Tilley et al (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2006): 516-533.

¹⁶¹ Eastop, “The biography of objects: a tool for analysing an object’s significance,” 102.

¹⁶² Eastop, “The biography of objects: a tool for analysing an object’s significance,” 107.

¹⁶³ Verity Wilson, “Studio and Soiree: Chinese Textiles in Europe and America, 1850 and Present,” in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, ed. Ruth Phillips and Christopher Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999): 229-242.

¹⁶⁴ Eastop, “The biography of objects: a tool for analysing an object’s significance,” 100.

discussed in Chapter 5 will demonstrate that Kopytoff's biographical approach to analysis can be employed to document both the 'typical biography' and the 'actual' biography of surviving costumes.¹⁶⁵ These case studies will also illustrate the degree to which several layers of history can be simultaneously present within one object, and explore the means through which it might be possible to communicate this complex story within a single, coherent, narrative.

Chains of meanings

The semiotic approach to analysis used by Susan Pearce to explore the 'chain of meanings' that individual objects accumulate over time will be used in conjunction with, and offers a potential alternative to, Kopytoff's concept of 'object biographies.'¹⁶⁶ Pearce demonstrated this approach through an infantry soldier's red jacket, worn at the battle of Waterloo, and now at the *National Army Museum* in Belgium. She explores the layers of both symbolic and historical meaning which this jacket has accumulated over time. As a result, Pearce argues, the jacket has become a 'message-bearing entity, acting in relationship to Waterloo as both an intrinsic sign and as a metaphorical symbol, which is capable of a very large range of interpretations.'¹⁶⁷ As Pearce demonstrates, 'the dynamic process of interpretation and reinterpretation...extends far beyond the mere perception of what the object is.' It is therefore a 'creative' and 'active' process in which, whilst the object has a fixed form, its interpretation and reinterpretation is almost limitless.¹⁶⁸ She argues that, in the analysis of any object, it is essential to remain conscious of the range of 'meanings' that this the object has already accumulated; has the potential to

¹⁶⁵ Igor Kopytoff, "The cultural biography of things," 67-9.

¹⁶⁶ Pearce adopts a technical mode of analysis (which draws upon the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes and J.W. Leach) to delineate the objective system of signs and signifiers within which the jacket operates. Susan Pearce, "Objects as meaning; or narrating the past," *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994) 19-29, 21-23, 28.

¹⁶⁷ Pearce, "Objects as meaning; or narrating the past," 21.

¹⁶⁸ Pearce, "Objects as meaning; or narrating the past," 26-27.

accumulate; and to which you, as ‘interpreter’, will construct in the process of interpretation. Pearce’s ‘chains of meanings’ offer a model which Chapter 5 will employ to address and articulate the changing status and ‘meaning’ of Terry’s theatrical costumes as they moved from their initial status as working garments, to their current status as items of ‘historical significance.’

1.12 - Conclusion

This chapter has begun to explore the challenges inherent in the analysis of historic theatre costume and has demonstrated the range of source material available for this research. Although both theatre and dress historians have begun to engage with theatre costume as a source for research, with the exception of Hodgdon and Walter, few researchers have considered the kind of evidence that can be amassed through physical engagement with surviving costumes. The object based approach to research which is fundamental to this thesis will demonstrate the importance and value of undertaking a close reading of such garments.

As this thesis will show, Terry offers an ideal case study through which to illustrate significant themes which historic dress and extant theatrical costume can illuminate. Having made apparent the wide range of material culture that survives in relation to Terry and her career, the next chapter will introduce the themes which this material culture will be employed to illuminate. It will also indicate how the thesis will engage with, and build upon, existing literature relating to: the actress; Aestheticism; self-fashioning and theatre costumes.

By uniting existing critical theory and established methodology within dress, material culture, and theatre history, this thesis will create a new methodology for the analysis of theatrical costume.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the critical debates which will be at the core of the thesis and illustrates how the analysis of primary material, in particular evidence relating to Terry's dress, will be situated within existing theoretical approaches.

Whilst the career and life of Ellen Terry are by no means absent from theatrical record, the significant role that dress played in Terry's self-fashioning, has been largely overlooked within recent scholarship. Valerie Cumming is one of the only figures to have published work which specifically addresses the costumes worn by Terry and considers the significance of 'Costume' within the Lyceum productions. She also remains one of the few researchers to have explored the evidence Terry's personal dress and theatrical costumes can provide regarding her connection with the Aesthetic movement.¹ Cumming's initial research must therefore be credited with laying the foundation for the detailed examination of Terry's dress and costumes undertaken in this thesis.²

Whilst this chapter draws upon this, and other existing research into Terry, it also sets out further interdisciplinary methodologies which will be employed in a re-evaluation of Terry's historical and contemporary significance both as a woman, and as a performer in her own right. It will focus on illuminating overlooked discussions about Terry's career, in particular her position as an icon of the Aesthetic movement and the significant role dress played in establishing her professional and public identity. This is the first study to undertake a detailed and complete analysis of the actress's personal and theatrical dress and to unite material across existing collections to achieve this.

¹ Valerie Cumming, "Ellen Terry: An aesthetic actress and her clothing" *Costume* 21 (1987): 67-74

² Valerie Cumming, "Macbeth at the Lyceum" *Costume* 12 (1978): 53-63 and "First Knight: Henry Irving, 1838-1905" *Costume* 40 (2006): 67-71.

This chapter will demonstrate that Terry was undeniably an exceptional figure in British theatre and society who offers an ideal vehicle through which to advance our understanding of the history of the actress and the development of theatrical costume. As this chapter explains, Terry will be employed as a case study through which to develop critical approaches to the following issues: the relationship between dress and theatre costume during this period; self-fashioning through dress; celebrity and the construction of ‘public’ and ‘private’ selves in relation to the nineteenth century actress and, crucially, establishing a methodology for the study of theatrical costume.

Throughout the thesis the garments worn by the actress, in particular Terry’s theatre costumes, will provide both the starting point, and the evidence through which, to address these critical debates. This thesis argues that theatre costume represents a separate and specific category of clothing and theatrical ephemera. The distinctive characteristics and significance of theatre costumes, both as garments and source material, will be introduced in the conclusion of the chapter. This initial discussion will lay the foundations for Chapters 4 and 5, in which close analysis of Terry’s theatre costumes will demonstrate the practical and theoretical applications of the methodology this thesis presents for the study of theatrical costume.

2.2 Key Context

Biographies of Terry

This thesis will re-examine Terry’s life and career from a self-consciously twenty-first century, revisionist perspective. It will demonstrate the agency Terry showed in fashioning her personal and professional identity, both during her lifetime, and after her death. A starting point for this is an assessment of the biographies written about the actress from 1902 onwards. The first such biography was published by T. Edgar Pemberton in

1902, and offered a romanticised version of Terry's life entitled *Ellen Terry and Her Sisters*.³ Pemberton adopts an elegiac tone and anecdotal approach throughout the book and, despite drawing information from both Terry's own brief account of her early life, published under the title *Stray Memories* in *The New Review* in 1891, and corresponding with the actress during the drafting of his text, his narrative contains several factual errors.⁴

Six years after Pemberton's biography was published, Terry produced her own account of her life and career in her autobiography, *The Story of My Life* (1908) which will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6. It was the publication of a collection of the letters exchanged between the actress and the playwright George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) in 1930 however, to which Terry's son, Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966) attributed his reluctant decision to offer his own account of her life. Craig's biography of Terry, entitled *Ellen Terry and her secret self* (1931) deliberately set out to produce a counter narrative to that offered in the edited letters and to reveal 'that little Nelly who was my mother-her secret self-[...] a very small person, not a famous person-the little mother – who fought quietly and magnificently for fifty years [...]'⁵ At the commencement of his text Gordon Craig confidently declared that the 'Nelly' he describes was 'someone unknown to all but her father and mother, sisters and brothers, my father and myself.'⁶ It was perhaps his additional observation that, 'My sister never knew her' and 'preferred to cling to the more

³ An amateur actor, and playwright Pemberton had many connections within theatrical circles and this was not Pemberton's only biography of a theatrical performer. Pemberton's subjects also included the comic actor Edward Askew Sothem (1826-1881); a joint biography of William Kendal (1843-1917) and his wife Madge Kendal (1848-1935); the dramatist Thomas William Robertson (1829-1871); the actor/manager John Hare (1844-1921) and the actor/manager Sir Charles Wyndham (1837-1919). These texts were published in 1889, 1891, 1892, 1895 and 1905, respectively. See also T. Edgar Pemberton, *Ellen Terry and Her Sisters* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1902).

⁴ A letter, sent from Terry to Pemberton in July 1901 survives in the collection of Terry's letters now held in the British Library. Pemberton himself also refers to Terry's account of her early life, '*Stray Memories*,' in the introduction to his own biography of the actress. Pemberton, *Ellen Terry and Her Sisters*, 24. Pemberton also describes his own memories of seeing Terry play the Duke of York aged about 6, however this is a story Terry denied in her own autobiography in 1908. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 6.

⁵ Edward Gordon Craig, 'Foreword,' *Ellen Terry and her secret self* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co, 1931), n.p.

⁶ Gordon Craig, *Ellen Terry and her secret self*, n.p.

solid fabric, the famous Ellen Terry,' together with the combative stance of the text, which provoked the actress's daughter, Edith Craig (1869-1947) to produce a revised version of the Terry's own autobiography. Jointly edited with her partner, Christopher St. John, and including substantial notes and commentary from them both, their account, *Ellen Terry's Memoirs* was published in 1932.⁷ They emphasised the fact that 'very few alterations had been made in the original text' and that the 'amplified' and 'complete' narrative presented was founded upon evidence gathered from Terry's letters, diaries and notebooks.⁸ Their stated aim was to provide an 'accurate record of the last years and death of Ellen Terry' which corrected the 'inaccuracies' of Gordon Craig's account and present[ed] 'Ellen Terry [as] the best authority on Ellen Terry.'⁹

This sibling contest over the true narrative of Terry's life was complicated further by the publication of *A Pride of Terrys* by Marguerite Steen (1962). Steen was a close friend of the actress, and she offered what Nina Auerbach, in her 1987 biography of Terry, described as 'shrewd, if gossipy and partisan' account of the life of both Terry and her siblings.¹⁰ Many of the anecdotes Steen related are open to question but her biography did not, as its author freely confessed, aspire to perfection. Instead it offered 'the picture of a great theatrical family, the royalty of the English theatre' in a text informed by a personal relationship with the Terry, her family and the theatre.¹¹

⁷ Dame Ellen Terry, Edith Craig and Christopher St. John, eds., *Ellen Terry's Memoirs: With a Preface, Notes and Additional Biographical Chapters by Edith Craig & Christopher St. John* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933).

⁸ Terry, Craig and St. John, eds., *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, v.

⁹ Terry, Craig and St. John, eds., *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, xi.

¹⁰ Marguerite Steen, *A Pride of Terrys: Family Saga*. (London: Longmans, 1962). In her prefatory note, for instance, Steen notes that Terry's autobiography was 'ghosted' by Christopher St. John, a fact not widely publicised or openly admitted upon its publication. Nina Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time* (London: Dent & Sons, 1987) 28.

¹¹ Joy Melville, in her biography of Terry notes that Steen's version of the circumstances which surrounded Terry's romance and elopement with Edward William Godwin (1833-1886), differs from that offered by Terry's friend, the couturier Lucile, Lady Duff Gordon (1863-1935). Joy Melville, *Ellen and Edy: A Biography of Ellen Terry and Her Daughter, Edith Craig, 1847-1947* (London: Pandora, 1987), 95. See also Steen, *A Pride of Terrys: Family Saga*, xi. See Steen, *A Pride of Terrys: Family Saga*, xi-xii.

Roger Manvell's *Ellen Terry: A Biography* (1968) claimed to be the 'first-full scale biography' of Terry.¹² This text certainly offers the most reliable account of the actress's career since Terry's own biography in 1908, drawing upon previous biographies, personal conversations with Terry's descendants and some archival material for its narrative.¹³ Yet Manvell also returns repeatedly to his exploration of Terry's 'own essential nature,' her feminine qualities, in particular, her capacity for, and susceptibility to, love, and the degree to which her career was shaped by the great men she encountered.¹⁴ As a result, in Manvell's account, Terry's private self remains obscured by the pre-existing figure of a beautiful, if flawed, actress who, largely through her partnership with Henry Irving, became a magnificent object of public adoration.¹⁵

Three further biographies of Terry were published in the mid to late 1980s, and writers such as Nina Auerbach, strove to highlight and raise awareness of a woman whose potential and ambition was restrained by her position as 'Irving's obedient subordinate.'¹⁶ In Auerbach's view Terry's willingness to submit to 'Irving's reign', 'both obstructed and inspired a woman-centered theatre.' She does however acknowledge moments of 'whispered challenge' on the part of the actress, and draws attention to the manner in which Terry was able to exploit the 'love' she inspired in both friends and the public to manipulate those around her.¹⁷ The crucial point at which Auerbach's account of Terry's life expands beyond previous biographies, is in its investigation of the 'mobile and opaque

¹² Roger Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography* (Heinemann: London, 1968), flyleaf, n.p.

¹³ Significantly Manvell's research uncovered the first proof, in the Register of births for the district of St Johns and St Michaels Coventry, that Terry was born, not in 1848 as was previously believed, but in 1847. Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography*, notes, n.p., vi.

¹⁴ Manvell touches upon Terry's 'nature' repeatedly in his text. Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography*, 79, 91, 136-7. Two of the ten chapters, named after men with whom Terry was connected, and are entitled 'Godwin' and 'Shaw.' Similarly, two more of the remaining eight chapters, centre upon her father, Benjamin Terry (1818-1896), and her on stage partner, Henry Irving.

¹⁵ Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography*, flyleaf (n.p.), 288, 328-329.

¹⁶ Nina Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time* (London: Dent & Sons, 1987), 11. Auerbach has also published subsequent work on the actress, including Nina Auerbach, 'Perturbed Spirits: Victorian Actors and Immortality', *Victorian Shakespeare: Vol. 1, Theatre, Drama, Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

¹⁷ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 9-11.

self beneath [Terry's] roles' and the steps Auerbach takes to recover these 'suppressed identities.'¹⁸ Auerbach presents Terry as a woman eternally performing as she 'tried to become what others imagined.' The 'many parts' which Terry adopted during her lifetime were all, Auerbach suggests, 'performances of womanliness' which do not transcend, or threaten, the values of her age but instead 'make her its true abstract and brief chronicle.'¹⁹ Chapter 6 of this thesis will engage directly with Auerbach's characterisation of Terry as a woman adopting multiple roles to conciliate a society subject to 'unnerving tension between incarnate power and "incarnate womanhood" and which by definition renounced power and ego.'²⁰ Chapter 6 will also reassess Auerbach's positioning of Terry as, forever 'shackled' to a composite identity as 'Henry Irving's stage wife, and Ophelia to his celebrated Hamlet.'²¹

Joy Melville's joint biography of Terry and her daughter, *Ellen and Edy: A Biography of Ellen Terry and Her Daughter, Edith Craig, 1847-1947*, published the same year as Auerbach's account, offers a further perspective on Terry. For Melville, Terry was an 'enigma', an actress with two sides, one 'the talented professional', the other 'frivolous', 'unpunctual' and frequently 'collapsing with laughter on stage.' A further complication, as Melville relates, was that 'the actress in [Terry] warred with the woman,' and her desire for domesticity - playing 'a dutiful Victorian wife,' was overcome by the need for money, and her inherent 'unconventionality' which 'kept bursting through.'²²

As importantly, Melville's text also signalled an increased interest in Terry's daughter, Edith Craig. The contribution to theatre history made by Craig, a costumier and director in her own right, has long been overshadowed by that of her brother, Edward Gordon

¹⁸ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 14-5.

¹⁹ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 16-7.

²⁰ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 23.

²¹ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 175.

²² Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, xiii-xiv.

Craig.²³ Melville has ‘deliberately given Edy’s brother [...] a lesser place in this book,’ focussing her attention on the interdependence between the mother and daughter. Melville’s biography of Terry is the first to fully acknowledge the significance of Craig, not only her leading role in Terry’s life, but as a figure worthy of biography in her own right.²⁴

Both Melville and Auerbach’s interest in retelling Terry’s history are in line with a contemporary shift towards recovering ‘Women’s History’ across a wide range of disciplines. Though written two years after Melville and Auerbach published their revised accounts of Terry’s life, David Cheshire’s *Portrait of Ellen Terry*, (1989) returns to the established narrative and presentation of the actress as ‘an attractive but erratic charmer.’²⁵ As with Manvell’s biography, the chapters are shaped around the male figures with whom Terry was associated, with five of the eight chapters focusing on her interaction with these men.²⁶ Frustratingly, Cheshire offers no formal references for the information presented in his text.²⁷ The primary value of this biography therefore lies not in the text, but in the images which it contains. As Cheshire records in his ‘Acknowledgements,’ many of these were obtained through Edward Craig (Terry’s grandson) and were therefore not included in previously published sources. Of particular

²³ The controversial and ground breaking experimentation with light and set design initiated by Terry’s son has established the reputation of Gordon Craig. Gordon Craig remains a revered figure within both theatre history and contemporary theatre design. A case in point is the annual Gordon Craig lecture at Central School of Speech and Drama, together with the 2010 exhibition ‘Space and Light’ at the Victoria & Albert Museum which focused specifically on the designer and director.

²⁴ This challenge has been taken up by Katharine Cockin who, as discussed in Chapter 1, continues to publish research focussing specifically on Craig, her career, and her contribution to the movement for Women’s Suffrage. See, for instance, Katharine Cockin, *Edith Craig (1869-1947): Dramatic Lives* (London: Cassell, 1998) and *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage: The Pioneer Players 1911-25* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001). Another figure who has made a notable contribution to the existing research on Edith Craig is Roberta Gandolfi. A case in point being her biography of Craig, *La Prima Regista: Edith Craig, Fra Rivoluzione Della Scena E Cultura Delle Donne* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2003).

²⁵ David Cheshire, *Portrait of Ellen Terry* (Oxford: Amber lane Press, 1989), 7.

²⁶ See ‘Contents’ list, in which the chapter titles include: ‘G.F.Watts’; ‘E.W.Godwin’; ‘Irving and the Lyceum’; ‘Ellen and Henry and ‘Craig’, Shaw and a Jubilee’. Cheshire, *Portrait of Ellen Terry*, 5.

²⁷ Cheshire confidently records Terry’s height as ‘about 5ft 6ins’ and suggests that her ‘long dresses were used to accentuate her height’ but includes no reference to the source of this information. Cheshire, *Portrait of Ellen Terry*, 12.

value for this thesis are the images which show moments early in Terry's career, and the private sketches made of Terry by her associates.²⁸

Michael Holroyd's 2010 publication *A Strange Eventful History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving and their Remarkable Families*, which presented a joint biography of Terry, Irving, and the children of both performers, signalled a similar return to traditional portrayals of Terry. It presented her as a woman 'who loved people being in love with her,' who had 'little interest in theatre administration' and was therefore inclined to 'give way' to Irving.²⁹ Similarly whilst Holroyd acknowledges the importance of Terry's 'aesthetic sense,' he also observes that 'Sometimes her inappropriate sweetness, her sheer playfulness, suggested she was more concerned with her dresses than with Shakespeare's lines.'³⁰ The disregard for the significant role that costume played in Lyceum productions, demonstrated in Holroyd's words, is something that this thesis will address directly.

A Victorian Actress?

By the time of her death in 1928, Terry was recognised as 'the most popular and universally revered English actress of her time,' her contribution to the arts having received official recognition three years earlier, when, in 1925, she became only the second actress to be made a Dame of the British Empire.³¹

Terry was, as T.C. Davis has noted, exceptional and at the peak of her career at the Lyceum theatre, she earned substantially more than her contemporaries. The 'financial independence- combined with their sexual freedom' of these star actresses was Mary

²⁸ These include a photograph from 1859 which shows Terry with the cropped hair and 'peg-trousers' adopted for her role as Hector in *Home for the Holidays* and informal sketches of the actress by E.W. Godwin. Cheshire, *Portrait of Ellen Terry*, 19.

²⁹ Michael Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving and their Remarkable Families* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2010) 86 and 121.

³⁰ Holroyd, *Strange Eventful History*, 122, 186.

³¹ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as working women*, 5.

Luckhurst and Jane Moody argue, ‘unprecedented.’³² As Chapter 3 will show however, Terry, though distinguished by her success and prominence within society, was still subject to the same social and cultural pressures as her male and female contemporaries. As such Terry’s life and career offer a route through which to explore the developments in the acting profession and artistic world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and their impact within society as a whole.

As Terry herself anticipated, her legacy has suffered from her characterisation as a ‘Victorian Actress of the old school.’³³ This stems in part from her long association with the elaborate and somewhat conservative productions presented at the Lyceum. This perceived conservatism is often contrasted with the independent and progressive careers of Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) and Elenora Duse (1858-1924), as was the case in John Stokes, Michael Booth, and Susan Bassnett’s joint authored publication, *Bernhardt, Terry, Duse: The Actress in Her Time* (1988).³⁴ Marshall has attributed Terry’s loss of status in comparison to actresses such as Duse and Bernhardt, to the demise of ‘traditional’ drama upon the advent of the plays of Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) and the ‘New Woman’ they portrayed. She suggests that

In this duel between these two actresses, Ellen Terry was displaced as the leading female performer in London [...] Terry [was] immersed in an aesthetic which was coming to seem outdated [...] the final Victorian practitioner of a national

³² As Luckhurst and Moody note, actresses such as Terry also ‘made considerably more money than successful women novelists.’ Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody, eds., “Introduction: The Singularity of Theatrical Celebrity,” *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 8.

³³ In her autobiography Terry anticipates and seeks to counter this characterisation. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 312.

³⁴ John Stokes, Michael Booth and Susan Bennett, *Bernhardt, Terry, Duse: The Actress in her time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

tradition which Bernhardt and Duse had sidestepped, bringing their own repertoire to the English stage [...] ³⁵

Significantly however, Marshall uses this a starting point from which to challenge Terry's previous confinement within the nineteenth century. Her examination of the 'ways in which Terry negotiated the end-of-the-century conditions affecting Shakespearean productions' offers a crucial starting point for the reappraisal which will take place within this thesis. For Marshall, and for Chapter 6, Terry's writings on Shakespeare, are central to an examination of the actress's efforts to fashion a new role for herself 'beyond the confines of the spectacular Lyceum stage' and in the later years of her life. ³⁶

Another figure whose research considers Terry as an autonomous woman, and has begun to explore the actress' legacy beyond the Lyceum Theatre, is Katharine Cockin. ³⁷ Cockin's focus on the later years of Terry's career is prompted in part by her interest in recovering of the history of Terry's daughter, and the theatrical organisation Craig managed, 'The Pioneer Players.' Her research sheds light on Terry's connection with the Suffrage Movement, an important aspect of her life which has received little attention to date and will be touched upon in Chapter 6. ³⁸

Drawing upon the narratives of Terry's life already presented in these biographies, this thesis will seek to offer a new biography of the actress. The focus in this instance will be upon exposing previously under-explored elements of Terry's success and significance, in particular her role as a leading figure within the Aesthetic movement. Emphasis will

³⁵ Marshall, "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress," 69.

³⁶ Marshall, "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress," 154.

³⁷ Katharine Cockin. "Ellen Terry and Henry Irving: A Working Partnership", *Henry Irving: a re-evaluation of the pre-eminent Victorian actor-manager*, ed. Richard Foulkes (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008) 37-48.

³⁸ Cockin explores Terry's connection with the Suffrage Movement and also her characterisation as a 'Freewoman' by the journal of the same name in 1911. See: Katharine Cockin, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage: The Pioneer Players 1911-25* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 7-9. Joy Melville, also refers to Terry's self-designation as a 'suffragette.' Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 222

be placed on the key part that the garments worn by the actress, both on and off the stage, played in cementing her position within the Aesthetic movement and in fashioning her identity as a celebrated actress who understood the ‘art of theatre.’

2.3 An Icon of Aestheticism

As this thesis will show Ellen Terry’s public and private personas were founded upon her adoption of Aesthetic dress and her prominent position within the Aesthetic movement. As the first investigation to fully explore this aspect of Terry’s professional and personal life, it is essential that Terry’s dress is explored within the wider context of the Aesthetic movement.

‘The Cult of Beauty’

The history and the impact of the Aesthetic movement is not a new topic for historical enquiry. An early writer on the theme was William Gaunt in *The Aesthetic Adventure* (1945). Gaunt’s text offered useful contextual information regarding the movement and a detailed account of the development and trajectory of its aims and exponents over the course of the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s.³⁹ Amongst the most notable recent contributions to the field is the book created to accompany the 2011 exhibition at the *Victoria & Albert Museum, The Cult of Beauty* curated by Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle Orr. The comprehensive collection of essays brought together in Calloway and Orr’s edited collection *The Cult of Beauty* (2011) makes apparent the impact of the Aesthetic movement on art, architecture and interior design between circa 1870 and 1900. They also draw attention to the range of material evidence which survives in paintings, period

³⁹ William Gaunt, *The Aesthetic Adventure* (London: Sphere Books Ltd, 1945 [Cardinal Edition, 1975]). The arrest and trial of Wilde in 1895 is widely recognised as the point at which the decline of the movement becomes inevitable. This is a view put forward by Lionel Lambourne in *The Aesthetic movement*, who suggests this decline was cemented by the early death in 1898 of Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898), an artist lauded by Aesthetes throughout the 1890s. Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic movement*, (London: Phaidon, 1996), 226.

publications and caricatures, together with furniture, wallpaper, metalwork, ceramics, jewellery and textiles.⁴⁰

In *Art for Art's Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (2007) Elizabeth Prettejohn traces the origins of the actual term, 'Aestheticism' and the idea of a coherent movement of this kind to circa 1868, when the phrase 'Art for Art's sake' (translated from Gautier's '*L'Art por L'Art*'), first began to be applied to artists and their work.⁴¹ This date is of particular significance to this thesis as it confirms that Terry was living and working with one of the leading exponents of both Aestheticism and Aesthetic dress, Edward William Godwin (1833-1886), throughout the early phases of the Aesthetic movement (between 1868 and 1875).

Whilst Prettejohn's research focuses on the place of 'Art' within Aestheticism, she notes that the movement encompassed the full range of visual arts and that its influence was felt in dress and interior décor, as well as on the subject matter and approach to painting adopted by its followers.⁴² As Lionel Lambourne comments in *The Aesthetic Movement* (1996) this quest for a balance between decoration and attire resulted in a movement 'deeply concerned with the visual arts, valuing the frame as much as the picture, placing much emphasis on listing the individual components which make an attractive room setting – a "Home Beautiful."⁴³

⁴⁰ Stephen Calloway, Lynn Federle-Orr, and Esmé Whittaker. *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement, 1860-1900* (London: V & A Publishing, 2011).

⁴¹ Prettejohn cites Sidney Colvin's article "English Painters and Painting" published in *The Fortnightly Review* in 1867, in support of her claim that it is possible to identify of a moment when a group of artists within England, though not formally working together or indeed 'declaring allegiance to the motto "art for art's sake"' began to be in close social contact, with the result that 'their work demonstrates a complex pattern of correspondences and inter-relationships [...].' Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Art for Art's Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 5.

⁴² Prettejohn, *Art for Art's Sake*, 7. The artists listed by Colvin were Frederick Leighton, Albert Moore, James McNeil Whistler, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones, Simeon Solomon, G.F. Watts, Arthur Hughes and George Heming Mason. Prettejohn addresses explored similar themes in her 1999 publication *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

⁴³ Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic movement* (London: Phaidon, 1996) 6.

Calloway's examination of 'Artists, Collectors and their houses' in *The Cult of Beauty* (2011), establishes the ideals and inspiration which generated the devotion to art manifested in this desire for 'The House Beautiful.'⁴⁴ As Calloway explains

[...] the emerging Aesthetic movement [...] sought to redefine the artist primarily as a super-sensitive seeker after ideal beauty. Artists engaged in the creation of this new kind of exquisite art had a need, it was held, to look constantly upon beauty, to surround themselves only with exquisite things [...]⁴⁵

The resultant search for beauty was explored by Charlotte Gere in her 2010 publication, *Artistic Circles: Design and Decoration in the Aesthetic movement*, in which Gere investigates 'the influence of artists' houses and households on eclecticism in house decoration.'⁴⁶ Gere's detailed analysis of the photographs, paintings, documentary evidence and surviving examples of the studios and homes created these by artists leads her to expand upon previously established, and narrower concepts of Aestheticism, 'with its focus on chinamania and the rediscovered art of Japan' and to establish the panoply of historic styles and cultural influences embraced by the movement.⁴⁷ Chapter 6 will reveal the impact that this interest in a wide range of historic periods, cultural influences and decorative styles and effects had upon Terry's approach to dress and design both on the stage and within her home.

Aesthetic Dress

⁴⁴ Stephen Calloway, 'The Palace of Art: Artists Collections and their houses', *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic movement 1860-1900*, Ed. Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle Orr (London: V&A Publishing, 2011) 90-109.

⁴⁵ Calloway, 'The Palace of Art,' 90.

⁴⁶ Charlotte Gere, *Artistic Circles: Design and Decoration in the Aesthetic movement* (London: V&A Publishing, 2010) 9.

⁴⁷ Gere, *Artistic Circles*, 9.

Chapter 6 of this study will focus specifically on Terry's engagement with Aesthetic dress. There has been a growing interest in the study of Aesthetic dress within dress history since Stella Mary Newton published, *Health, Art & Reason* in 1974.⁴⁸ Newton's publication is still the most comprehensive and thorough guide to dress reform during the late nineteenth century. This is one of the few texts which examines the interrelationships and shared stylistic traits which existed between Aesthetic dress and the other dress reform movements established in the decades between 1850 and 1910. Newton's text also makes apparent the importance role that political, social and artistic motives played in shaping taste during this period.

Other notable contributions have been made to the literature published on the theme of Aesthetic dress by researchers such as Edwina Ehrman, Diana Crane and Patricia Cunningham.⁴⁹ Diane Crane (1999) and Patricia Cunningham (2006) have focussed primarily upon literary sources in their discussion of Aesthetic Garments. Ehrman has also drawn extensively upon literature from the period to explore debates regarding women's dress, in particular the relationship between dress and art. Significantly, she supports and contextualises this discussion with images and surviving examples of both Aesthetic and fashionable dress.⁵⁰

Though Annette Carruthers and Mary Greensted's *Simplicity or Splendour: Arts and Crafts Living: Objects from the Cheltenham Collections* (1999) focused on the Arts and Crafts movement, it also provides a concise overview of trends within Aesthetic dress

⁴⁸ Stella Mary Newton, *Health Art and Reason: Dress Reformers of the 19th century* (London: Murray, 1974).

⁴⁹ Edwina Ehrman, "Frith and Fashion" *William Powell Frith: Painting the Victorian Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006); Edwina Ehrman, "Women's Dress," *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic movement 1860-1900*, Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle Orr, Ed. (London: V&A Publishing, 2011); Diana Crane, "Clothing behaviour as non-verbal resistance: Marginal women and alternative dress in the nineteenth century" *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives* (London: Routledge. 1999) 335-364; Patricia A. Cunningham, *Reforming women's fashion, 1850-1920: politics, health and art* (Kent State University Press. 2006).

⁵⁰ Ehrman, "Frith and Fashion," 111-129.

and jewellery, which establishes the key characteristics of Aesthetic dress, whilst illustrating the diverse range of styles encompassed within the movement.⁵¹ Like Ehrman, Carruthers and Greensted employ a rich variety of material culture to support their discussion, with paintings, photographs and surviving garments illustrating the range of approaches to ‘Aesthetic’ dress.⁵² Carruthers and Greensted’s work also exposes the fact that, in many instances, there remains only a loose definition of what distinguished Aesthetic dress from concurrent movements advocating what Taylor has termed ‘counter-cultural’ dress.⁵³ Taylor (2005) is one of the few researchers to have addressed the cross fertilisation which occurred between the movements for dress reform during this period and, crucially, attempted to distinguish between them. Taylor’s work offers an initial consideration, rather than a full dissection, of the differences between movements. It focuses upon identifying the characteristics which distinguished what she termed Arts and Crafts based ‘Simple Life Dress’ from Aesthetic dress (which she describes as ‘fine-art related dress’), and uses existing garments to illustrate the subtle stylistic differences between the two categories of dress.⁵⁴

A significant recent publication is Kimberley Wahl’s *Dressed as in a Painting* (2013).⁵⁵ Whilst previous research has investigated the interrelationships between fashion and art, Wahl is amongst the first scholars to focus specifically on the role of dress within the Aesthetic movement. Wahl’s analysis encompasses the full range of visual culture connected with the movement. She employs this material, alongside text drawn from

⁵¹ Annette Carruthers and Mary Greensted, *Simplicity or Splendour: Arts and Crafts Living: Objects from the Cheltenham Collections* (London: Lund Humphries, 1999).

⁵² Carruthers and Greensted, *Simplicity or Splendour*, 35-47.

⁵³ Taylor employs this term to refer to clothing which departs from, or directly challenges, mainstream fashion in Lou Taylor, *Establishing Dress History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) 123.

⁵⁴ These garments included an ornate silk velvet coat, hand embroidered with sprays of flowers from circa 1895-1900 (V&A Collections, Museum Number T.49-1962) and a dress by Thérèse Lessore of embroidered linen from 1905 (Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, Museum Number T.10086.1). Lou Taylor, “Arts and Crafts Dress,” *International Arts and Crafts*, Ed. Livingstone & Parry (London, V&A Publications, 2005), 224-227.

⁵⁵ Kimberly Wahl, *Dressed as in a Painting: Women and British Aestheticism in an Age of Reform* (Durham, New Hampshire: University of Hampshire Press, 2013).

period periodicals and publications, to argue that ‘Aesthetic dressing was a highly symbolic form of representation in the nineteenth century, with the potential to signify a range of cultural values, from the expression of individual identity to larger shifts in social ideology in relation to the body and clothing.’⁵⁶ The manner in which, as Wahl’s comments suggest, Aesthetic dress could be used to express individual identity, is fundamental to the analysis of the attraction such garments evidently held for Terry, and the role they played in Terry’s ‘fashioning’ of her social and artistic persona.

2.4 ‘Dressing the Part’

This thesis considers how dress can be employed to express and ‘fashion’ an identity within art and society. It highlights the part dress played in Terry’s self-fashioning and its key role in communicating the ‘identities’ she adopted both on and off the stage.

Fred Davis has explored the purposes fashion serves in ‘social differentiation and social integration,’ arguing that cultural scientists have yet to give full consideration to the ‘meaning’ of fashion.⁵⁷ He contends that ‘clothing styles and the fashions that influence them over time constitute something approximating a code.’⁵⁸ This ‘clothing-fashion code’ is, he suggests, ‘highly context dependent,’ and this ‘context’ can be defined as the ‘identity of the wearer, the occasion, the place, the company, and even something as vague and transient as the wearer’s and viewer’s moods.’⁵⁹ F. Davis’ observations have important implications for the analysis of both off-stage garments and theatre costume as both categories of ‘dress’ are shaped by, and subject to, the influence of social, historic and artistic ‘context.’

⁵⁶ Wahl, *Dressed as in a Painting*, Introduction, xi.

⁵⁷ Fred Davies, *Fashion, Culture and Identity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1992) 4. Hereafter, referred to as F. Davis.

⁵⁸ F. Davies, *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, 5.

⁵⁹ F. Davies, *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, 8.

As F. Davis' arguments highlight, an awareness of the specific social and cultural 'context' within which Terry operated is essential to the analysis of her life, dress and career. Terry would have been conscious that all her garments (whether worn on or off the stage) were potentially subject to public scrutiny and widespread comment in the illustrated press. Her theatre costumes in particular, were created specifically for a 'public context' within which both Terry and her clothing would be displayed before an audience. Evidence gathered from Terry's surviving costumes and examples of her personal dress will demonstrate that Terry was highly attuned both to the 'clothing-fashion codes' which operated within late nineteenth century and to the manner in which her clothing could be skilfully employed to challenge, or conform to the ideology underpinning these 'codes.'

The 'social dimension of clothing'

Leonore Davidoff's exploration of the shifting 'social spheres' operating within Victorian Society, *The Best Circles* (1973) was a landmark publication, being amongst the first texts to make full use of primary sources and to demonstrate a clear understanding of the cultural significance of clothing within a social context. Whilst her research did not extend to an examination of surviving clothing, Davidoff's recognition of the 'codes' expressed within Victorian middle class female dress, is evident in her observation that 'Every cap, every bow, streamer, ruffle, fringe, bustle, glove and other elaboration symbolised some status category for the female wearer.'⁶⁰ Nearly ten years later, in *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie* (1981), Philippe Perrot, used a multidisciplinary approach to carry out a detailed study of the clothing worn by the 'Parisian bourgeoisie' in the mid nineteenth century. Perrot looked at the 'social dimension of clothing' and investigated 'the behaviours it implied' and the 'upheavals it provoked.'⁶¹ His work offers valuable

⁶⁰ Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles* (Suffolk: The Cresset Library, [1973] 1986), 93.

⁶¹ Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994 edition)

context for the analysis of Terry's clothing, confirming the role clothing played in establishing and communicating social position and, by extension, the important part dress could perform in 'fashioning' identity.

The adoption of what F. Davis refers to as 'Anti-Fashion' has become a topic of ever increasing interest within dress history over the past two decades.⁶² Elizabeth Wilson has identified similar evidence of groups within society adopting dress as an expression of a specific social, political or artistic identity.⁶³ In *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts* (2000) she explored the social and economic circumstances which favoured the emergence of 'the bohemian.' She focussed particularly on the role art, and 'the arts' as a whole, played in the development of different notions of 'bohemia' and 'bohemians' concluding that

The figure of the bohemian acts out the way in which the artist was caught up in the uncertainties modernity produced. By living, dressing and behaving not only differently from the surrounding social culture, but in a manner calculated to shock and outrage his or her audience, the bohemian dramatized his/her love-hate relationship with the society that had given birth to him/her.⁶⁴

As Wilson explains, both the social groups in which bohemians moved and the urban context within which such communities developed, 'played an important role in Bohemia.'⁶⁵ She highlights the performative elements of the 'bohemian lifestyle,' describing this urban context as 'The Bohemian Stage.' Wilson also suggests that, as bohemians 'brought into play all those aspects of daily life that were *not* central to the production of works of art,' in particular 'dress, surrounding and relationships,' they

⁶² F. Davies, *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, 159-188.

⁶³ Elizabeth Wilson. 'Utopian Dress and Dress Reform', *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., Ltd., 2007) 208-227.

⁶⁴ Elizabeth Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts* (London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2000) 8-9.

⁶⁵ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 25.

‘challenged the bourgeois insistence that art was a realm apart.’⁶⁶ Chapter 6 will consider how Wilson’s analysis of ‘the bohemian identity’ relates to Aestheticism, in particular the importance Aesthetes attached to the cultivation of beauty in all aspects of life. It will also address the performative element of Bohemia and consider how Terry’s domestic space functioned as a stage set for her ‘private’ identity.

Within theatre history, Bratton has also considered the theatrical elements of ‘Bohemia’ and discovered clear ‘links between Bohemia and the development of the theatrical West End.’ Bratton’s exploration of Bohemia in London was primarily founded on literary sources, which led her to suggest that “‘Bohemia” was more of a notion than a new reality, a way of presenting themselves that was created by the writers for the newly powerful periodical press and the stage.’⁶⁷ Whilst acknowledging that many writers emphasise the male role and masculine identity formation within their depictions of Bohemian life, Bratton also identified scope for female empowerment within Bohemia society. This is one of the few areas, Bratton suggested, in which women appear to be recognised ‘as a presence’ and she argues that ‘the theatrical/Bohemian public sphere differed [...] from the closed all-male world of bourgeois business, precisely in its responsiveness to female importance – even where that response is to seek to appropriate or deny the power to which it is reacting.’⁶⁸ Bratton developed her analysis of Bohemia and its interrelationship with the mid Victorian theatre using a process she termed ‘conceptual mapping.’ This focus on the mental conception of physical spaces allows her to examine how ‘ideas’ about places functioned alongside, and shaped, their ‘material’ presence. From this foundation Bratton was able to explore how ‘the creators of Victorian theatre perceived their own world; how they conceived of their work and the social identity it gave them.’⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 24.

⁶⁷ Jacky Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage: Marriage, Management and the Mapping of Gender in London, 1830-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 94.

⁶⁸ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 107, 104-5.

⁶⁹ Bratton, *The Making of the West End*, 6-7.

Bratton's work, together with that of Davidoff and Wilson, offers important insights into the specific theatrical and artistic context within which Terry was operating and the social identities available to Terry as a nineteenth century actress.

The 'Public' Spheres

As a woman whose celebrity and professional career required her to abandon the security of the 'domestic sphere' and live almost entirely within in the 'public sphere,' Terry occupied an unusual position within Victorian society. Davidoff and Catherine Hall offered a helpful discussion of the implications and origins of this concept 'separate spheres' in *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (1987).⁷⁰ They trace the origins of this ideology to the late eighteenth century and explain that its foundations lay in the belief that 'men and women occupied separate spheres by nature as well as custom and propriety.' As a consequence men were perceived to be naturally formed for 'the more public exhibitions on the great theatre of human life.' Women, by contrast, were best suited to the smaller scale of the domestic, seeing the world 'from a little elevation from [their] own garden' where they had 'an exact survey of home scenes.'⁷¹ The continuing influence of this ideology within late nineteenth century Britain is apparent within contemporary writing on the subject of women's 'nature' and 'function', including: etiquette manuals; magazines; novels, and polemical essays such as John Ruskin's *Of Queen's Gardens* (1865).⁷² Women working in the theatre therefore represented a direct challenge to the established context and behaviour for conventional middle and upper class women within Victorian Society.

⁷⁰ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

⁷¹ Davidoff and Hall cite and quote from the influential writings published by Hannah More (1745-1833), which articulated her views on these 'spheres.' Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 169.

⁷² Ruskin's work is widely credited with articulating the ideal of Victorian Womanhood, and was published in as part of a collection of three essays entitled *Sesames and Lilies* (London: Smith Elder & Co) in 1865.

The impact that the ideology of ‘separate spheres’ had on the role and status of women, has already been ably addressed elsewhere.⁷³ Amongst recent publications, the collection of essays that Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus brought together in *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850: an Introduction* (2005) has offered important new insights into the ‘ideology of female domesticity [...] encapsulated in the notion of “separate spheres”.’ Arguing for a ‘modified’ understanding of this model, Barker and Chalus highlight ‘[...] women’s agency in the formation of modern society, without ignoring the constraints and complexities of life in what was still a highly patriarchal world.’⁷⁴ Similarly, writing specifically of actresses, Cockin has suggested that

On stage, the female body provided an opportunity to challenge the prevailing separate spheres ideology which relegated the middle-class woman in this period to the private and domestic sphere and attempted to ban her from the public world of politics and work.⁷⁵

Taking into account the re-evaluations continually occurring across all fields of research, the primary focus of this thesis is upon the impact that developments within Social and Women’s History have had upon literature and theory relating directly to ‘the actress’ and her status within society.

⁷³ An early contribution to this field, which still remains relevant to the discussion, was the collection of essays brought together in Martha Vincus eds., *Suffer and be Still* (London: Methuen, 1980); Pat Jalland’s *Marriage and Politics 1860-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), provided a crucial bridge between the fields of social and women’s history studies. Whilst Jane Purvis’ *Women’s History: Britain 1850-1945, An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1995) demonstrated the expansion in women’s and gender history. Significant recent contributions include Hannah Barker, and Elaine Chalus, *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850: an Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2005); Krista Cowman and Louise A. Jackson. *Women and Work Culture: Britain C. 1850-1950*. Aldershot: Ashgate Pub, 2005; Ruth Watts, *Women in Science: A Social and Cultural History* (London: Routledge, 2007) and Susan Shifrin, *Reframing Representations of Women: Figuring, Fashioning, Portraiting, and Telling in the 'picturing' Women Project* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008). There are also an increasingly wide range of specialist journals such as *Women’s History Review* (established in 1992) and *Women's Studies International Forum* (formerly *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, established in 1978).

⁷⁴ Hannah Barker, and Elaine Chalus, *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850: an Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2005), 5-6.

⁷⁵ Katharine Cockin, “Dame Ellen Terry and Edith Craig: suitable subjects for teaching,” *Word Play, Online Newsletter, Issue 2*, (York: The Higher Education Academy, English Section, October 2009).

2.5 'The Actress'

My reconsideration of Terry draws upon an increasingly wide and diverse body of research into the status and significance of 'the actress.' The willingness of theatre historians to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to research ensures that the field remains open to continual evolution and expansion. This aspect of the discipline was discussed by Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait in their 2010 publication *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*.⁷⁶ In spite of their positive appraisal of the current state of theatre historiography, however, Canning and Postlewait recognise that there remain limitations to the scope of contemporary enquiry: an issue also addressed by Susan Bennett in her contribution to the volume.⁷⁷ Referring back to T.C. Davis' article "Questions for a Feminist Methodology in Theatre History" (1989), Bennett argued that, whilst many valuable texts have been published since this date, research into women's contribution to theatre 'remains collectively marginal, still in the shadow of theatre history's customary archives.'⁷⁸ Bennett's view accords with that of Bush-Bailey, who has also expressed frustration at the continued 'marginalisation and occlusion of female narratives' in theatre history.⁷⁹

Even if still working to move beyond this 'marginal position' within the wider body of theatre history, the expansion of interest in rediscovering the history of 'the actress' since the publication of Julie Holledge's *Innocent flowers: women in the Edwardian theatre* (1981), T.C. Davis's *Actresses as Working Women: their social identity in Victorian*

⁷⁶ Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait, *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010) 3.

⁷⁷ Susan Bennett 'The Making of Theatre History', *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*. Ed. Canning, Charlotte, and Thomas Postlewait. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010) 64-5.

⁷⁸ Bennett 'The Making of Theatre History', 65. Bennett is amongst those who have contributed to this body of literature an in 2003. She published a chapter entitled 'Decomposing History (Why Are There So Few Women in Theater History)' in *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

⁷⁹ Gilli Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds: Actresses and playwrights on the Late-Stuart stage* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2006) 5.

culture (1991) and Kristina Straub's *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-century Players and Sexual Ideology* (1992) is evident in the breadth of the research which has been initiated by their initial considerations of this theme.⁸⁰ Amongst the figures currently leading research in the field are Gale and Gardner. Their joint publication *Women, Theatre, Performance: New Histories, New Historiographies* (2001) heralded the first in a series of publications which actively sought to retrieve 'hidden histories' of women who had made a creative contribution to the theatre as both writers and performers.⁸¹

The Cambridge Companion to the Actress (2007), jointly edited by John Stokes and Gale, drew further attention to the scope for research into this area of theatre history.⁸² Divided into three themed sections the wide time period and range of issues addressed by the contributors to this volume make apparent the diversity of this field and the range of methodological approaches which can be employed to facilitate research. Marshall's work on the relationship between the actress and her audience, Mayer's research into early photography and Gardner's exploration of the part that autobiography played in shaping identity and legacy, are of particular relevance to this thesis. The work of all three researchers will be drawn upon to consider the importance Terry, as an actress, would

⁸⁰ Publications which have followed J. Holledge, *Innocent flowers: women in the Edwardian theatre* (London, Virago, 1981) and Tracy C. Davis's *Actresses As Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture*. (London: Routledge, 1991) and Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton, N. J: Princeton University Press, 1992) include: Jane K Curry, *Nineteenth-century American Women Theatre Managers*. Westport (Conn.: Greenwood press, 1994); Vivien Gardner and S. Rutherford. *The New woman and her sisters: feminism and theatre, 1850-1914* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1992); Maggie B Gale. *West End Women: Women and the London Stage, 1918-1962* (London: Routledge, 1996); Kerry Powell. *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Gillian Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations: Viewing the Actress in British Art and Theatre, 1768-1820*. (London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2007); John Stokes, *The French Actress and Her English Audience* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005). There has also been an increase in the range of journal articles published on this theme appearing in periodicals such as *Nineteenth Century Theatre*, *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film*, *Theatre Notebook*, *Theatre Journal* and *The Drama Review* (amongst many others).

⁸¹ Maggie B. Gale, and Vivien Gardner, *Women, Theatre, and Performance: New Histories, New Historiographies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.) As this chapter will discuss, subsequent titles in the series have included Maggie B. Gale and Vivien Gardner, *Auto/biography and Identity: Women, Theatre, and Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

⁸² Maggie B. Gale, and John Stokes, *The Cambridge Companion to the Actress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

have attached to controlling her public ‘persona’ and the tools available to shape her ‘cultural’, ‘professional’ and ‘private’ identity.’

‘Wo-managers’

This thesis will reassess how Terry has been presented within existing literature on ‘the actress,’ and question her characterisation as a subordinate partner to Irving and ‘A Victorian actress’ overshadowed by more dominant figures such as Bernhardt and Duse.⁸³

Bratton’s *The Making of the West End stage: marriages, management and the mapping of gender in London, 1830-1870* (2011) marks a crucial step towards establishing the significance of women’s contribution to the development of theatre in the mid-nineteenth century. *The Making of the West End* builds upon T.C. Davis’s earlier investigations carried in *Actresses as Working Women* and *Economics of the British Stage* (2000) which examined the nature of the profession and the conditions within which actresses were working and sheds further light on the diverse roles and pressures operating on women within the theatrical profession during the nineteenth century.⁸⁴ Whilst T.C. Davis explored ‘The geography of sex in society and the theatre’ through an examination of the ‘erotic zones outside the playhouse,’ Bratton employs a tighter focus on 1830-1870, rather than the entire nineteenth century, and also a specific zone within London.⁸⁵ This facilitates a detailed consideration of ‘the parts played by women, not only on the stage but also in management and creative entrepreneurship.’⁸⁶ Bratton’s examination of ‘The shaping of West End management’ is particularly useful for this thesis, as it is one of the

⁸³ This characterisation of Terry emerges from work such as Michael Booth, *Bernhardt, Terry, Duse: The Actress in her time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Kerry Powell. *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). It is addressed and questioned however in more recent publications, in particular Gail Marshall, “Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress” (2007) and *Shakespeare and Victorian Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁸⁴ T.C. Davis, *Actresses As Working Women* and *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁸⁵ T.C. Davis, *Actresses As Working Women*, vi.

⁸⁶ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 7.

few studies to explore women's ability to engage with theatre in 'an important managerial or empowered capacity at its centre.'⁸⁷ As her research demonstrates, 'a fresh look at even the male commentators in the mid and early Victorian periods suggests a less embattled, more even handed appreciation of the managerial achievement of women.'⁸⁸ Bratton reaffirms T.C. Davis' argument that 'in order to understand how women participated in the public sphere of theatre business it is necessary to regard them as 'a category unique among performers and possibly among the categories of people typically excluded from and uncontested public participation.'⁸⁹ T.C. Davis focused her attention on what she termed 'wo-managers', such as Marie Wilton (1839-1921) and Madame Vestris (1797-1856), who entered into management and then recruited their husbands to join them in the business.⁹⁰ Bratton also considers the case of Ellen Tree 'a successful actress whose fame was - quite deliberately - entirely subsumed into her choice of role and title of Mrs. Kean.'⁹¹ Both present convincing evidence for the argument that forming marital and professional partnerships with men allowed the work of these women to be 'read by their contemporaries entirely within the frame of their femininity', 'conveying the conjunction of the intimate sphere [family life] with business.'⁹² Though Terry was not married to Irving, their professional partnership endured for over twenty years. Whilst Irving clearly began the partnership in a dominant role this thesis will present evidence of Terry's growing influence within the Lyceum Company and of the mutual respect and personal affection upon which their partnership was founded.

Active 'Performer' – on and off stage

⁸⁷ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 145.

⁸⁸ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 146.

⁸⁹ T.C. Davis, cited in Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 147.

⁹⁰ T.C. Davis, *Economics of the British Stage*, 290.

⁹¹ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 159.

⁹² Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 147.

This thesis will demonstrate Terry's active engagement in the direction and design of theatrical productions, both at the Lyceum and during a brief career as a manager in her own right. Bush-Bailey's examination of 'the performing women's influence in the creation and realisation of the female characters written for her' offer a useful starting point from which to commence an analysis of the level of control Terry had over the interpretation and presentation of her roles, even if not in their creation.⁹³ Whilst comparatively few of the roles performed by Terry were specifically created for her, Chapter 6 will show that surviving original prompt copies and annotated editions of the productions, which survive in the actress's library at Smallhythe, contain clear evidence of 're-authoring' on the part of the actress. This is an aspect of Terry's approach to performance which Marshall has examined in *Shakespeare and Victorian Women* (2009). Citing the 'lectures, and Terry's more explicitly autobiographical writings' which 'sit in her library alongside her annotations of play scripts and critical texts,' Marshall describes Terry as 'an actress ever engaged in the process of interpretation, retrieval, intervention and disputation.'⁹⁴ Though recognising that the marginalia within these texts was not intended for public view, Marshall draws on Laura Mayali's work on annotation to explore the 'relationship of annotation to the text [as one of] power.' On this basis Marshall argues that whilst,

As an actress, Terry's opportunities for intervening within the public remit of her texts was limited to appearances, and to her appearance, on the stage. As a writer or annotator she might legitimately hope to influence more effectively and strategically how these plays might be read, and her own role might be understood.⁹⁵

⁹³ Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds*, 10.

⁹⁴ Gail Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 160.

⁹⁵ Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 161.

This observation offers a new stance from which to commence Chapter 6's consideration of the routes through which Terry extended the fashioning of her on-stage identity extended beyond her public performances. The same chapter will also address Terry's creation of the collection now held at Smallhythe and, the hypothesis that, if created in private for future public eyes, this collection, of which the texts to which Marshall refers form a key part, might have been established to secure and shape the actress' long term legacy.

Theatrical Aristocracy

Also of relevance to Terry's success and legacy is the concept of a 'theatrical aristocracy' referred to by both Bratton and Gardner.⁹⁶ As Chapter 3 will discuss, Bratton has suggested that, 'Deep theatrical roots provided a kind of aristocracy of theatrical rather than landed property within which women could take a leading place, if their talents so enabled them [...].' Her argument offers one explanation for the level of professional and financial success Terry, trained for a career in the theatre from birth, was to able achieve, particularly given the scandals within her personal life.⁹⁷ Gardner's related concept of an 'aristocracy' within the theatre, admittance to which was dependent upon, and a reflection of, a performer's status and level of success, has particular significance for the discussion of Terry's fashioning of her legacy, which is the focus of Chapter 6.

2.6 Self-Fashioning

An evaluation of the extent to which Terry was also able to shape her 'public' and 'private' identity through a process of 'self-fashioning' is a central theme within this

⁹⁶ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 148. Viv Gardner, "The Three Nobodies: Autobiographical Strategies in the work of Alma Ellerslie, Kitty Marion and Ina Rozant," *Auto/biography and Identity: Women, theatre and performance*, ed. Maggie B. Gale and Viv Gardner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 33.

⁹⁷ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 148.

research. Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning, from More to Shakespeare*, published in 1980, was one of the first publications to outline a methodology and terminology through which to articulate the process of 'self-fashioning.' Greenblatt argued that the 'fashioning of human identity' [can be] 'a manipulable, artful, process' and employed the term 'self-fashioning' to designate the 'forming of a self.'⁹⁸ Although Greenblatt's research drew upon literary sources and focussed upon the Renaissance period, this research will demonstrate that his theories can also be successfully applied to a late nineteenth century context. The analysis undertaken here will expand Greenblatt's previous focus to consider the role of garments and photographic portraits, within the context of 'the cultural system of meanings,' current in late nineteenth century society.⁹⁹ Building upon Greenblatt's research, in particular his suggestion that human identity can be self-consciously 'fashioned,' this thesis will consider the cultural and social forces which shaped the 'selves' Terry presented to her audience, and will analyse the manner in which Terry constructed 'a distinctive personality' to win public affection and respect.¹⁰⁰

Dress and Identity

In their introduction to the collection of essays brought together in *Dress History Now*, Charlotte Nicklas and Annebella Pollen declare that '[...] dress is a fundamental means, indeed sometimes one of the only ways, by which groups and individuals express and negotiate their identities.'¹⁰¹ For Nicklas and Pollen, dress should therefore not be viewed 'merely [as] a mouthpiece,' researchers should rather engage with 'the particular material qualities and affordances of clothing.' Noting that dress represents a material object which

⁹⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. (London: University of Chicago Press, 1980) 2.

⁹⁹ Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning*, 3.

¹⁰⁰ Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning*, 2-3.

¹⁰¹ Charlotte Nicklas, and Annebella Pollen, *Dress History Now: New Directions in Theory and Practice* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) 1.

is ‘sensual, intimate and proximate to the body, while simultaneously public, declarative and performative,’ they argue that clothing occupies a place at ‘centre stage culturally as well as at the heart of lived experience.’¹⁰²

Christine M.E.Guth’s contribution to *Dress History Now* focuses on the American art collector Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840-1924), a woman who, as Guth demonstrates, understood the ‘active power of dress and textiles.’¹⁰³ Taking her lead from Penny Sparke’s observation that ‘dressing in fashionable clothes and selecting the decoration of their private surrounds not only permitted modern women to express their personalities to others, but also, more importantly, to themselves’ Guth shows how, for Gardner, dress and textiles offered a tool for fashioning not only the body, but also a means of controlling and ‘clothing’ physical space.¹⁰⁴ Guth demonstrates the prominent role that dress and textiles played in the creation of a museum which established ‘[...] an enduring aesthetic environment for and material representation of her identity both as a woman and a collector.’¹⁰⁵ The manner in which Gardner employed dress and textiles, whether as a form of decoration, or as depicted in portraiture, to ‘assert her presence’ within a space ‘implicitly designed to materialise her presence,’ is of particular relevance to Chapter 6 of this thesis.¹⁰⁶ This chapter will examine how Terry’s personal dress and domestic space, functioned within a complex and carefully controlled process of self-fashioning.

Roach has also considered the power of ‘costuming’ both for public display and predefined roles.¹⁰⁷ In what he terms ‘the sorcery of clothing,’ clothes become objects

¹⁰² Nicklas, and Pollen. *Dress History Now*, 12.

¹⁰³ Christine M.E. Guth, “Dress, Self-fashioning and Display at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum,” *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, ed. Charlotte Nicklas, and Annebella Pollen (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015): 113-125, 123.

¹⁰⁴ Penny Sparke, ‘Framing the Modern Woman: From Clothes Horse to Interior Decorator,’ *Fashion, Interior Design and the Contours of Modern Identity*, ed. A Myzelev and J.Potvin, (London: Ashgate, 2010), 206. Quoted in Guth, “Dress, Self-fashioning and Display” 118-9, 123.

¹⁰⁵ Guth, “Dress, Self-fashioning and Display” 113.

¹⁰⁶ Guth, “Dress, Self-fashioning and Display,” 123.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Roach, *it* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

which have the potential to ‘make things happen.’ They can become ‘provocations to enact behaviours or initiate social processes. They *perform*, in a word, and by performing, they carry the charismatic potential to turn personalities into events, events into occasions, and occasion into precedents.’¹⁰⁸ This thesis will draw directly on Roach’s arguments regarding the performative power of clothing and the manner in which personality can be expressed and created through costuming. It will look at parallels between Terry’s on and off stage dress, and consider the degree to which Terry ‘costumed’ herself in both public and private to ‘perform’ specific ‘identities’ for her audiences.

‘Public’ and ‘Private’ selves

Gale and Gardner’s *Auto/biography and Identity: Women, Theatre, and Performance* (2004) explores self-fashioning as achieved through a specific medium. Gale and Gardner acknowledge that they are not the first researchers to foreground the role of ‘performance’ and ‘performativity’ in relation to ‘autobiography and identity formation.’¹⁰⁹ Where they depart from their predecessors is in their consideration of the autobiographical writings specifically in relation to the actress, their examination of the ‘analysis or representation of self in a professional or national context,’ and their discussion of ‘the relationship between autobiography as evidence and historic practice.’¹¹⁰ They suggest that evidence for the ‘perceived particularly of the actresses’ private/public self’ can be seen in the quantity of ‘[female] performers’ autobiographies, [relative] to non-performers’ works.’¹¹¹ It was the volume of autobiographies published by leading actresses which

¹⁰⁸ Roach, *It*, 87.

¹⁰⁹ They cite the important contributions made by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Interfaces: Women, Autobiography, Image, Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Mary J. Corbett, *Representing Femininity: Middle-class Subjectivity in Victorian and Edwardian Women's Autobiographies* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992) and Deborah Pye, "'Irreproachable Woe and Patient Workers": The Memoirs of Victorian Leading Ladies', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* (2001): 73-91.

¹¹⁰ A wide ranging survey of contemporary attitudes to biography as a form of historic research can be found in Barbara Caine, *Biography and History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹¹¹ Maggie B. Gale and Vivien Gardner. *Auto/biography and Identity: Women, Theatre, and Performance*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) 1-3.

inspired Mary Corbett's comparison of actresses' autobiographies with those of their non-theatrical female contemporaries. Significantly for this study, Gale and Gardner note that Corbett was surprised to identify 'as many resemblances as differences between actresses' and writers' [autobiographical] text.'¹¹² Gale and Gardner explore and evaluate these perceived similarities and differences further. The essays brought together in *Auto/Biography and Identity* are united in their exploration of issues of 'identity and the female performer' and the manner in which actresses 'have used autobiography and performance as both a means of "expression" and "control" of their public selves.'¹¹³

The two worlds of autobiography and performance are central to the issues raised in this research. As Terry's own autobiography, *The Story of My Life* (1908) demonstrates, autobiographical writings can reveal key details about their writer's 'professional lives, sometimes their private lives, and sometimes their sense of a place in the world.'¹¹⁴ *Auto/biography and Identity* offers a valuable critical framework from which this thesis will interpret the evidence gathered from Terry's autobiographical writing, and a foundation from which it will consider the part these texts played in Terry's fashioning of her 'self' and her legacy.

Celebrity

Issues of self-fashioning and celebrity are central to the analysis of the 'public' and 'private' personas of Ellen Terry. Sos Eltis is amongst those who have examined the pressures faced by the late Victorian actress, continually 'under the curious gaze of the public.'¹¹⁵ She argues that 'celebrity actresses had to negotiate a more complex set of

¹¹² Mary J. Corbett, cited in Gale and Gardner. *Auto/biography and Identity*, 3.

¹¹³ Gale and Gardner, *Autobiography and Identity*, 3.

¹¹⁴ Gale and Gardner, *Autobiography and Identity*, 3.

¹¹⁵ Sos Eltis. "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress." Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Eds.) *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 169-188. This theme has also been addressed by writers such as Macdonald Russ, *Look to the Lady: Sarah Siddons, Ellen Terry and Judi Dench on the Shakespearean Stage* (Athens and London:

prejudices and assumptions than their male counterparts.’¹¹⁶ These women were obliged to find ways ‘of maintaining their popularity whilst protecting their private lives, negotiating traditional ideas of female virtue without abandoning their personal claims to respectability.’¹¹⁷

Hindson offers an important insight into the commercial element of this ‘celebrity.’¹¹⁸ Looking specifically at Paris and London, she contends that,

Rapid urbanisation and population growth made the city a powerful force and signifier of the fin de siècle and, as a result of this, modern metropolises became sites where current ideas about performance, spectatorship and identity were realised: not only on the stage, but also on the streets.¹¹⁹

She focuses her investigation on the position and status of the female performers who appeared on the stages of the two cities, paying particular attention to the expansion of print and visual material relating to the theatre and its star performers. She argues that the entertainment industry which evolved in expanding cities, ‘framed the female celebrity performer in its popular “spaces”’: a set of real, conceptual and ideological environments that simultaneously created and enabled celebrity identity.’¹²⁰ Together, Eltis and Hindson offer another useful framework through which to examine the ‘high profile female celebrity’ who, ‘[d]uring a period when ideas about gender were contested and challenged, [...] became a significant and powerful figure.’¹²¹

Georgia University Press, 2005) and, more broadly by Michael Quinn in “Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting,” *New Theatre Quarterly* 22, (1990) and Chris Rojek in *Celebrity*. London: Routledge, 2010.

¹¹⁶ Eltis, “Private Lives and Public Spaces”, 171.

¹¹⁷ Eltis, “Private Lives and Public Spaces”, 171.

¹¹⁸ Hindson, *Female Performance Practice*, 12.

¹¹⁹ Catherine Hindson. *Female Performance Practice on the Fin-De-Siècle popular stages of London and Paris: Experiment and advertisement*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). 9.

¹²⁰ Hindson, *Female Performance Practice*, 24.

¹²¹ Hindson. *Female Performance Practice*, 3.

With such power at their disposal, successful actresses were, as Luckhurst and Moody observe, required to become ‘agents of their own celebrity’ maintaining careful, and constant control over the ‘performance of public selves on and off the stage.’¹²² Under pressure to manage their ‘public personas,’ Hindson suggests that ‘ [...] the lithograph, the interview, and the autobiography were strategically employed by performers to establish and disseminate strong on-and off-stage images.’¹²³ These notions of ‘performance,’ ‘control’ and a division between ‘public’ and ‘private’ selves will be central to Chapter 6, which will investigate the manner in which Terry, a ‘high profile female performer,’ was able to balance the scandalous nature of her off stage life, with a career founded upon what Luckhurst and Moody term ‘performing virtue.’¹²⁴

“It”

As descriptions of Terry’s performances and personality examined in Chapters 3 and 6 will show, constant references were made to Terry’s ‘charm.’ Roach’s work, in particular his 2007 book *it*, offers means through which to analyse the ‘charm’ which Terry exercised over the public and her friends. As Roach shows this concept of ‘charm’, which he refers to as ‘It’, is not a quality unique to Terry. ‘It’ is, Roach explains, by its nature multifaceted and hard to define, ‘It’ is a quality which is not restricted to a single school of thought or public arena and is associated with notions of charm, charisma, presence, aura, attraction, glamour, radiance and sex.¹²⁵

In a definition which encapsulates the powerful attraction to an audience inherent to the ‘It factor,’ Roach establishes ‘It’ as,

¹²² Luckhurst and Moody, eds, *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*, 8.

¹²³ Hindson, *Female Performance Practice*, 4.

¹²⁴ Luckhurst and Moody, “Introduction: The Singularity of Theatrical Celebrity”, 8.

¹²⁵ Roach, *it*, 3-7.

the power of apparently effortless embodiment of contradictory qualities simultaneously: strength *and* vulnerability, innocence *and* experience, and singularity *and* typicality among them. The possessor of “It” keeps a precarious balance between such mutually exclusive alternatives, suspended at the tipping point like a tightrope dancer on one foot; and the empathetic tension of waiting for the apparently inevitable fall makes for breathless spectatorship ¹²⁶

This is a definition which, as Roach observes, ‘moves beyond the tautology of innate charm and enters into the realm of theatrical and cinematic technique [...]’¹²⁷ As Chapter 3 and 6 will discuss, whether Terry’s ‘charm’ was performed or innate, it arguably played a crucial part in her success and long standing appeal. As Roach suggests,

Theatrical performance and social performance that resemble it consist of struggle, the simultaneous experience of mutually exclusive possibilities – truth and illusion, presence and absence, face and mask. Performers are none other than themselves doing a job in which they are always someone else [...] with an intensity of focus beyond the reach of normal people, those with It can project those and other antinomies apparently at will. From moment to moment on the stage or on the set, they must hold them together with the force of their personalities, but in the service of a representation to which their personalities are supposedly excrescent ¹²⁸

Roach makes repeated references to the paradoxes which are an inherent part of the attraction exercised by the possessors of ‘It’ which offers a valuable perspective from which to consider Terry’s ‘performances’ both on and off the stage. The seeming

¹²⁶ Roach, *it*, 8.

¹²⁷ Roach, *it*, 8.

¹²⁸ Roach, *it*, 9.

inconsistency between the ‘womanly’ and ‘naïve’ roles Terry was frequently called upon to perform on stage, and the scandals within her off-stage life, will be a key discussion point in the analysis of her theatrical career carried out in Chapter 3. Similarly, Chapter 6 will reconsider Terry’s public and private ‘performances’ in the light of Roach’s work, and will establish the extent to which the contrast between Terry’s on and off stage personas may have been an inherent part of the ‘charm’ she exercised over her audiences.

Public Intimacy

Roach traces the origins of the growing power of ‘It’ to a process of ‘increasingly invasive saturation and ingenious manipulation from the seventeenth century, when popular celebrities began to circulate their images in the place of religious and regal icons.’¹²⁹ This is an observation which prompts a reconsideration of the significance that should be accorded to the global dissemination of photographic portraits of Terry from 1856 onwards. Such images, be they paintings, drawings, or photographs, provided their subjects with a means through which to strategically convey what Roach described as ‘the effortless look of public intimacy’ which is an important component of ‘the multifaceted genius of It.’¹³⁰ Gardner has argued that these photographic images could act as a substitute for actually witnessing an actress perform. As such, as Gardner notes, by the early twentieth century, the picture postcard, rather than the performance itself, represented the site where the ‘point of intersection of public demand (the star as a phenomenon of consumption) and the producer initiative (the star as phenomenon of production)’ met.¹³¹ Engel, who has also examined the part images of actresses play in their interaction with ‘the public’ drew attention to the ‘agency’ an actress can exert when

¹²⁹ Roach, *it*, 1-2.

¹³⁰ Roach, *it*, 3.

¹³¹ This comment is drawn from Gardner’s consideration of the role of the picture postcard in relation to both the self-promotion of the actress, and also her relationship with an ‘audience’ who may never actually has witnessed her perform and yet collected her image. See “Gertie Millar and the “Rules for Actresses and Vicar’s Wives”, *The Celebrated actors as Cultural Icon*. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), 96-112.

employing ‘self-fashioning for her own professional purposes.’¹³² Engel attributes much of the ‘danger’ associated with ‘female celebrity’ to this threat that ‘[...] regardless of the success or failure of the process, the “it” factor can be shaped and manipulated by the performer herself.’¹³³ She references Felicity Nussbaum’s examination of the ways in which eighteenth actresses employed memoirs, portraits and other elements of a burgeoning ‘celebrity culture’ (loosely categorised by Engel into ‘print’ ‘stage’ and ‘pictures’) to construct ‘private personas’ and to generate, and sustain, a sense of ‘public intimacy’ with their patrons.¹³⁴ As Engel demonstrates, by employing such tools to manipulate their ‘public image’ actresses could become ‘revered and adored’ even in an ‘era when the popular feminine ideal dictated that women should be passive, demure and domestic.’¹³⁵

This practice continued, and arguably expanded, throughout the nineteenth century. Chapter 6 will unite the work of Roach, Engel, Gardner and Hindson to consider the manner in which Terry could connect with the public through her visual and physical presence. Their work will also inform analysis of photographs, drawings and paintings of the actress undertaken throughout the thesis, particularly in relation to the role these images played in Terry’s self-fashioning and in heightening the affection the actress inspired in her audiences, both on and off the stage.

‘Ghosting’

Terry’s ability to entrance audiences, which endured throughout her career, will also be examined in relation to the concept of ‘ghosting’ presented by Marvin Carlson in *The*

¹³² Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 295.

¹³³ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 295.

¹³⁴ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 283. Engel specifically references Felicity Nussbaum’s contribution to “Actresses and the Economics of Celebrity,” *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*, ed. Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) and her book *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press, 2010).

¹³⁵ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 285.

Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine (2002).¹³⁶ Carlson's work articulates key ideas surrounding any theatrical performance's 'inescapable and continuing negotiations with memory' and is founded upon a consideration of the theatre as 'the repository of cultural memory,' with the present experience 'always ghosted by previous experiences.'¹³⁷

Marshall touches upon comparable concepts in her discussion of the final decades of Terry's career, during which, she argues, Terry's performances entered a form of stasis in which 'The only way in which she might remain on stage was through the turning back of the theatrical and social clock, which the illusion of an ever-youthful Terry enabled.'¹³⁸ In the light of Marshall's observations, Carlson's description of the theatrical experience as a 'retelling of stories already told, the re-enactment of events already enacted, the re-experience of emotions, already experienced' offers an new perspective from which to consider Terry's enduring appeal to audiences seeking to recapture and sustain 'their initial enamoured response.'¹³⁹

Bratton attaches equal importance to the part that 'memories' of both 'performers and players' plays in the 'theatrical experience,' suggesting that they are 'woven upon knowledge of performers' other current and previous roles, and their personae on and off the stage.'¹⁴⁰ She therefore advocates an 'intertheatrical' approach to analysis which looks beyond the specific performance and considers the interdependence of theatrical productions, connected by traditions which shape 'not only the speech and systems of the

¹³⁶ Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machines* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

¹³⁷ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 2.

¹³⁸ Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 157.

¹³⁹ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 3 and Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 155.

¹⁴⁰ Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, 37-38.

stage - scenery costumes, lighting and so forth' but also 'genres, conventions, and, very importantly, memory.'¹⁴¹

Read together, Bratton, Marshall, and Carlson offer a framework through which to analyse the extent to which the 'memories' carried by audiences shaped responses to Terry's performances and sustained her success in later years.¹⁴²

The 'Body' of the Actress

Acknowledging the influence of Carlson's work, Roach has described how this process of 'ghosting' creates of a constant dichotomy in the minds of an audience watching a performance. They are therefore continually conscious of the discrepancy between the 'vulnerable body' of the performer, and the 'enduring memory' of past performances which 'haunts' the role.¹⁴³ Roach suggests however that it is these 'enduring memories' which enable celebrated performers to overcome age or physical infirmity. Sustained by 'public memory,' they are able to transcend 'the body of flesh and blood' and inhabit another body consisting of 'actions, gestures, intonations, vocal colours, mannerisms, expressions, accustoms, protocols, inherited routines, authenticated traditions – "bits."¹⁴⁴

The performer's physical body, in particular the body of the actress, as shaped, and perceived within Victorian Society, is also a central concern within the thesis. The relation between these preconceptions, and Terry's costumes, in particular the evidence relating

¹⁴¹ Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, 37-38. Bratton acknowledges the influence that the work of Richard Schechner, in particular *Performance Theory* (London: Routledge, 1988) has had upon her methodology and also the inspiration that the concept of 'intertextuality' as discussed within Semiotics by Barthes and Kristeva (amongst numerous others) provided for the terminology she employs. See in particular Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (London: Cape, 1974) and Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

¹⁴² Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, 37-38.

¹⁴³ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 80.

¹⁴⁴ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 93.

to the ‘physicality’ of the ‘body’ preserved within surviving garments, will also be considered.

Engel, though focusing on the eighteenth century, engages with important debates surrounding ‘[...] the ambivalent position of actresses as female celebrities.’¹⁴⁵ As she notes, the body of the actress occupies a dual position as both a ‘female body’ and a ‘theatrical body,’ ‘available for public consumption both on canvas and on the stage.’¹⁴⁶ By the late nineteenth century images of an actress might appear in mass produced photographs and illustrated newspaper reviews. Engel argues that actresses ‘were caught in a representation dilemma: how could they present themselves as respectable and sympathetic at the same time that their livelihoods were based on theatrical display?’¹⁴⁷ As Eltis has shown, this dilemma became increasingly pressing as distinctions between ‘[...] an actress’s life on stage and her activities in the “real” world’ became increasingly blurred.¹⁴⁸

Chapter 3 will address this issue directly, considering how Terry’s body functioned both as ‘the tool of her craft’ and part of ‘her public, performed, identity.’¹⁴⁹ Herman Roodenburg’s research, although focusing upon the modes of ‘self-presentation’ that operated within the late seventeenth century Dutch Republic, touches upon many themes which are extremely pertinent to this thesis.¹⁵⁰ Drawing attention to what he terms ‘the eloquence of the body,’ Roodenburg demonstrates that physical and social behaviour can be used not only to communicate, but also to secure, an individual’s place within society. As Chapter 3 will show, his argument that the body is ‘socially constituted’ and ‘culturally

¹⁴⁵ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 281.

¹⁴⁶ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 281.

¹⁴⁷ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 284.

¹⁴⁸ Eltis. “Private Lives and Public Spaces”, 171.

¹⁴⁹ Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds*, 17.

¹⁵⁰ Herman Roodenburg, *The Eloquence of the Body, Perspectives on Gesture in the Dutch Republic* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2004).

shaped in its performances' is of particular relevance to the body of an actress, which is required to 'perform' both on the 'public stage' and within the 'private sphere.'¹⁵¹

Simon Shepherd and Mick Wallis' offer further insights into the function of 'the body on the stage', and the theme of 'Embodiment.' As they argue, a performance presents the audience with 'two sets of bodies – the body scripted by society and the body scripted by theatrical practice and value.'¹⁵² Chapter 3 will draw upon Roodenburg, Shepherd and Wallis, together with literature relating specifically to the actress, to examine the role Terry's body, in particular her gestures and movement, played in communicating and establishing her professional identity and cementing her position within 'the theatrical aristocracy.'

The 'Body' in the costumes

Notions of 'embodiment' and 'the body' are central to Roach's discussion of a concept he calls the 'kinesthetic imagination.' This 'faculty of memory' which, he suggests, '[...] flourishes in that mental space where imagination and memory converge,' provides 'a way of thinking about movements-at once remembered and reinvented - the otherwise unthinkable.' As Roach shows this also offers a means through which to analyse '[...] patterned movements made and remembered by bodies' and the 'residual movements retained implicitly in images and words.'¹⁵³

Historic theatre costumes, preserve a record of the body and movement patterns of their original wearer(s) within their structure. This information, and particularly the pace and physicality of performance evidenced through wear to seams, elbows, knees and hems, is

¹⁵¹ Roodenburg draws upon and acknowledges the influence of Paul Connerton on this aspect of his work and cites Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Herman Roodenburg, *The Eloquence of the Body*, 18.

¹⁵² Simon Shepherd and Mick Wallis, *Drama/Theatre/Performance* (London: Routledge, 2004), 193.

¹⁵³ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 16-17

never captured in static photographs. Such garments therefore have the potential to play a crucial part in Roach's process of 'kinesthetic imagination.'

2.7 Theatre Costume

With the notable exceptions of books such as James Laver's *Costume in the Theatre* (1964), a text now fifty years old, and Diana de Marley *Costume on the Stage 1600-1940* (1982), the history of theatrical costume has remained, until recently, relatively unexplored.¹⁵⁴ Laver's *Costume in the Theatre* was one of the earliest twentieth century surveys of theatrical costume. This book, like De Marly's *Costume on the Stage*, provided a useful narrative of key moments in the history of the development theatrical costume. Whilst De Marly did consider the impact of artistic taste and technological advancements such as the sewing machine on costume design, neither text engaged in more than a descriptive analysis of the surviving material.

Amongst researchers who have already identified this weakness is Aoife Monks, whose 2010 book *The Actor in Costume* takes important steps towards exploring the way audiences respond to actors 'in' and 'out' of costumes. As Monks acknowledges however:

There is an important book to be written about the actor's emotional and aesthetic relationship to costume but this is not it. Instead [she tries] to imagine what the costumed actor might do to - or for - the spectator at the theatre.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ James Laver, *Costume in the Theatre* (London: Harrap, 1964) and Diana De Marley, *Costume in the Theatre 1600-1940* (London: BT Batsford, 1982). Some discussion of costume also features in Ann R. Jones and Peter Stallybrass. *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2000) and Ann Hollander, *Seeing through Clothes* (New York: Viking Press, 1978), but in neither case is it the primary focus of the text.

¹⁵⁵ Aoife Monks, *The Actor in Costume* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 12.

Although, the book and its chapter titles are structured around notions of ‘dress’ and ‘undressing,’ Monks’ focus remains firmly on the wearer, rather than the ‘garments’ in which they are dressed. It is not until the Epilogue that Monks begins to consider costumes as objects and, specifically their function as carriers of memory. Chapter 5 of this thesis will draw upon Carlson and Roach to explore Monks’ suggestion that ‘costumes [can] act as a literally material memory of performance, permeated and formed by the work of performer.’¹⁵⁶ Building on Monks’ initial description of the ‘imprint of the work [production]’ which ‘continues in the textures, smells and shapes of the fabric left behind,’ the close reading of Terry’s costumes will draw attention to evidence preserved in ‘the traces’ they contain ‘of a lost performance and a lost body.’¹⁵⁷ It will also challenge Monks’ contention that a theatrical costume, although imprinted with key information, remains ‘stubbornly mute in its unwillingness to tell us “what really happened”’ and will demonstrate that, through the application of a specific object based methodology, previously ‘mute’ costumes can be made ‘to speak.’¹⁵⁸

In *Shakespeare and Costume* (2015) Patricia Lennox and Bella Mirabella seek to address the lack of publications which ‘[...] consider the importance of costumes as an interpretative element that goes beyond the production’s design aesthetic.’¹⁵⁹ They propose an approach which combines ‘theatre, performance and costume [dress] history with material culture’ to facilitate an ‘interdisciplinary conversation’ about Shakespeare and Costume.¹⁶⁰ This interdisciplinary approach facilitates important discussions about the costume practices from the sixteenth century to the present day, and illuminates the range of source material available to stimulate such ‘conversations.’ The book opens with

¹⁵⁶ Monks, *The Actor in Costume*, 140.

¹⁵⁷ Monks, *The Actor in Costume*, 140.

¹⁵⁸ Monks, *The Actor in Costume*, 140.

¹⁵⁹ Patricia Lennox, and Bella Mirabella, *Shakespeare and Costume* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015), 3.

¹⁶⁰ Lennox, and Mirabella, *Shakespeare and Costume*, 4.

a useful stage overview of the history of costume practices within Shakespeare productions. However, despite stressing the importance of material culture within their research, the ‘costumes’ themselves remain absent from the discussion.¹⁶¹ The range of theatre costumes connected with Shakespeare’s plays preserved in accessible collections within United Kingdom and beyond makes this a particularly a surprising omission.¹⁶²

Whilst Monks’ previous work concentrated almost entirely on the actor, her recent publication, in collaboration with the freelance designer and lecturer Ali Maclaurin, restores costumes and those who make and design these garments, to the discussion.¹⁶³

They aim to engage with costume,

[...] from multiple perspectives, thinking about its relationship to historicism and modern dress; examining its role onstage for actors and backstage in the ‘craft’ work of designers; thinking about the work it does to produce, reinforce or deconstruct systems of identity.¹⁶⁴

To achieve this they focus specifically on the twentieth and twenty first centuries, a parameter which allows them to incorporate interviews with a range of current ‘theatre artists’ into their text. These interviews offer important new perspectives on the design, function and power of theatre costume. They also acknowledge the crucial creative input of makers and designers, figures whose contribution to the creation of theatre productions is rarely documented within, and occasionally deliberately omitted from, records of historic theatrical productions.¹⁶⁵ Whilst, as was the case in *Shakespeare and Costume*,

¹⁶¹ Russell Jackson, ‘Brief Overview: A Stage History of Shakespeare and Costume,’ *Shakespeare and Costume*, ed. Patricia Lennox and Bella Mirabella (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015) 9-20.

¹⁶² Examples include The Royal Shakespeare Company who hold their own archive of costumes, a variety of theatre costumes connected with Shakespeare productions are also held by the Victoria & Albert Museum, and the Museum of London. Within America the Stratford Shakespeare Festival also hold their own archive of costumes from their productions.

¹⁶³ Ali Maclaurin, and Aoife Monks, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice* (London, Palgrave, 2015).

¹⁶⁴ Maclaurin, and Monks, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 4.

¹⁶⁵ Helen Walter, for instance, notes how the actor/manager Henry Irving was credited with the ‘design and realization of all aspects of performance’ and that on at least one occasion, the name of figures responsible

there is no detailed analysis of extant costume, or indeed the fate of costumes after productions finish, the authors do convey the dramatic and emotional power of costume. They argue that costume does not stop ‘performing’ backstage, but ‘performs differently’ and consider the shifts which occur in the ‘qualities of their materiality’ which occur as their context and status alters¹⁶⁶ These initial discussions offer important insights into ‘the typical biography’ of a theatre costume, and the implications of the new ‘status’ accorded to costumes transferred into a ‘museum context.’ Also of particular relevance to this thesis is Monks’ suggestion that costumes can function as ‘the connective tissue’ between different productions. Her observation suggests that, as Chapter 5 will discuss, costumes also have the potential to play a part in the process of ‘ghosting’ described by Carlson and Roach.¹⁶⁷

One of the few dress historians to attempt to create a methodology and theory for research into theatrical costume has been Cumming (2004). In her book *Understanding Fashion History*, Cumming proffered a key and significant ‘introductory consideration of the how and why the clothing worn for performance can afford an extra dimension to the understanding of dress in society.’¹⁶⁸ Of particular relevance to the themes of this thesis is Cumming’s argument that theatrical costume can provide a vehicle through which to discuss topics which include ‘the relationship between artists and the theatre and the consequent impact on the changing styles of theatre costume.’ The focus of her writing in this instance however, is specifically upon ‘the changing attitudes towards fashions outside and within the theatre and the impact of one on the other.’¹⁶⁹ The case studies she discusses facilitate her exploration of the close parallels that can be traced between

for creating the costumes were omitted from Lyceum Theatre programmes. Walter, “Van Dyck in Action,” 167-9.

¹⁶⁶ Maclaurin and Monks, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 78.

¹⁶⁷ Monks refers specifically to costumes worn by Mark Rylance’s (b.1960) in the title role of two different productions of *Hamlet*. Maclaurin and Monks, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 73-4.

¹⁶⁸ Valerie Cumming, *Understanding Fashion History* (London: B.T. Batsford, 2004) 114.

¹⁶⁹ Cumming, *Understanding Fashion History*, 114.

fashionable and theatrical dress, and draw upon source material ranging from theatrical souvenirs and paintings, to extant garments. This chapter, whilst only touching upon ‘the supplementary evidence [available] to contextualise [a theatrical costume’s] production and use,’ provides ample support for Cumming’s concluding assertion that there remains ‘considerable scope for new work looking at the connections between performance and fashion.’¹⁷⁰

Theatre and Fashion

As Cumming’s work indicates, much of the current research relating to historic theatre costume within dress focuses on the relationship which developed between theatre and fashion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Partly in consequence of the profitable commercial partnerships established between couturiers and theatre managers during this period, the ‘theatre’ became an increasingly important ‘context’ for the formation and display of new fashions.¹⁷¹ Christopher Breward has made a series of significant contributions to the development of this discussion, particularly in relation to actress and their dress in the Edwardian period.¹⁷²

One of the most recent additions to the writing on this theme, is *Staging Fashion, 1880-1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, Billie Burke*.¹⁷³ Published to accompany an exhibition at the Bard Graduate Center, New York in 2012 it includes contributions from a range of

¹⁷⁰ Cumming, *Understanding Fashion History*, 129.

¹⁷¹ This link between theatre and Haute Couture was also the subject of an article by Nancy J. Troy entitled ‘The Theatre of Fashion: Staging Haute-Couture in Early 20th Century France’ which examines the relationship from the perspective of the couturier, rather than the theatre or performer. Nancy J. Troy, ‘The Theatre of Fashion: Staging Haute-Couture in Early 20th Century France’, *Theatre Journal* 53 (2001), 1-32.

¹⁷² Two of his key publications are ‘The Actress: Covent Garden and the Strand 1880-1914’ (2004) and ‘“At Home” at the St James’s: Dress, Décor and the Problem of Fashion in Edwardian Theatre’ (2010). Both pieces formed part of larger works, the first of the two was published in Breward’s 2004 *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis* (Oxford: Berg, 2004). The second was a contribution to Morna O’Neill, and Michael Hatt (Eds.). *The Edwardian Sense: Art, Design, and Performance in Britain, 1901-1910* (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 2010).

¹⁷³ Michele Majer, Lenard R. Berlanstein, Marlis Schweitzer, and Sheila Stowell. *Staging Fashion, 1880-1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, Billie Burke*. (New York: Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture, 2012).

established and emerging scholars within the field, and builds upon the foundations laid by Christopher Breward.

The majority of the book is shaped around the detailed examination of the dress worn by three actresses who dominated the stage during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: Jane Hading (1859-1941); Lily Elsie (1886-1962) and Billie Burke (1884-1970), each of whom was dressed by a leading couturier. All three cases studies examine surviving photographs, articles and garments to explore the actress' relationship with 'Fashion'; 'The Press'; 'The Photographer's Studio', and 'Advertising' to argue that the success achieved by these performers owed much to the distinct "personalities" they created on stage and cemented through their dress. Whilst this publication demonstrates the potential for further research in this area, and showcases a wealth of surviving material, surviving garments (though featured in the exhibition and illustrated in photographs within the text) remain largely absent from the discussion.

Respectability and taste

In 'The Actress: Covent Garden and the Strand 1880-1914' Breward's research centred upon the part Gaiety and Musical Comedy played in the establishment of what he terms 'a modern iconography of fashionable celebrity which set up alternative models for stylish contemporary living to those previously promoted by the dictates of the aristocratic 'Season' or the West End and the Parisian dressmaker.'¹⁷⁴ Within his discussion Breward considers the extent to which turn of the century actresses, conscious that they were operating within 'a well networked fashion culture which bracketed the thespian identity to a sartorial renaissance,' began to take control of their presentation both on and off the stage.¹⁷⁵ This 'public persona' was, Breward argues, of necessity

¹⁷⁴ Breward, *Fashioning London*, 72.

¹⁷⁵ Breward, *Fashioning London*, 87.

‘manufactured and inauthentic’ and an actress such as Marie Tempest (1864-1942), who was ‘an expert in self-promotion,’ could use her ‘personal style’ to appeal to the tastes and outlook of her ‘rising lower middle-class audience.’¹⁷⁶ Breward’s discussion established the significant role dress played in the process of self-fashioning by actresses. This, together with the arguments Breward raises regarding ‘authenticity’ and notions of ‘control,’ will be a central concern within discussions of Terry’s use of dress in the creation and management of her ‘public persona’ in Chapters 6.

In ‘At Home’ at the St James’s: Dress, Décor and the Problem of Fashion in Edwardian Theatre’ (2010) Breward contends that the Victorian and Edwardian ‘Popular Theatre’ played a significant role in ‘promoting powerful versions of fashionable femininity, through the figure of the celebrity actress.’ He suggests that from circa 1892 a form of drama developed, ‘whose primary function was the promotion of contemporary trends.’¹⁷⁷ The result was that not only the figures appearing on the stage, but the stages themselves, became part of what Breward describes as ‘a parallel process of presentation.’¹⁷⁸

To explore this process of presentation further, Breward focuses specifically on the period during which the St. James Theatre was under the management of George Alexander (1858-1918) and his wife Florence (1858[?]-1946). He credits Florence Alexander, described in *The Sketch* as ‘one of the best dressed women in London,’ with a ‘crucial creative role’ in the presentation of both the theatre and its productions. He outlines her close collaboration with the set and costume designer W.G. Robertson and her profitable partnerships with West End dressmakers such as Mesdames Savage and Purdue who

¹⁷⁶ Breward, *Fashioning London*, 88-91.

¹⁷⁷ Breward makes specific reference to the 1892 production of *In Town* staged at the Prince of Wales Theatre, which he suggests, established the precedent for this form of drama. See Breward, “‘At Home’ at the St. James’s,” 144-5.

¹⁷⁸ Breward, “At Home at the St James,” 148.

produced costumes for thirteen productions between 1892 and 1897.¹⁷⁹ Although Breward focuses on the Edwardian Theatre, his examination of Florence Alexander's dominant role in the design of both set and costume at St James' offers a parallel case study against which to set an investigation of the partnership between Irving and Terry at the Lyceum: in particular, the evidence surrounding Terry's involvement in the design not only of her costumes, but those of fellow performers, which will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Costume as a deliberate 'Challenge' and 'Statement'

An area which, as yet, remains comparatively underexplored, is 'the complex relationship between theatre, fashion and society.'¹⁸⁰ One of the first texts to draw attention to the potential for research into this area was Sheila Stowell and Joel Kaplan's ground breaking book, *Theatre and Fashion from Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes* (1994).¹⁸¹ Kaplan and Stowell explore the significance of theatrical costume not only as part of a 'theatricalised fashion show' but also as a potential political statement. They also examine efforts by Edwardian feminists 'to use both Haute couture and the stage to challenge gender stereotypes and aesthetic conventions.'¹⁸² Whilst the connection between fashion and theatre is already established, Kaplan and Stowell set out 'to reassess [the] self-conscious employment of stage dress,' particularly in relation to the Suffrage Movement, opening up new and fertile ground for future research.¹⁸³ Their work is particularly relevant to Chapter 5, which examines some of the costumes Terry wore during her involvement

¹⁷⁹ Breward, "At Home at the St James'", 155.

¹⁸⁰ Joel H. Kaplan, and Sheila Stowell. *Theatre and Fashion: Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) n.p.

¹⁸¹ Joel H. Kaplan, and Sheila Stowell. *Theatre and Fashion: Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹⁸² Kaplan and Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, n.p.

¹⁸³ Kaplan and Stowell present their work as a challenge to Roland Barthes' condemnation of couture houses and as a case study through which to discuss in relation to arguments about signification. They refer specifically to Barthes' "The Disease of Costume" *Critical Essays*, trans. B.Howard (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972). Kaplan and Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, 2.

with the ‘Pioneer Players’ (the theatrical company founded by Terry’s daughter in 1911, which staged work to promote women’s suffrage and related social reforms).¹⁸⁴

Kaplan and Stowell also touch upon the control actresses could exert over their stage dress during this period. Their examination of Mrs. Patrick Campbell (1865-1940) offers an insight into the manner in which a successful actress, such as Terry, could fashion her on and off stage identity through her costumes. Kaplan and Stowell demonstrate how ‘the body and wardrobe of a single actress’ were ‘used to create and ultimately dismantle a peculiarly English form of drama.’¹⁸⁵ They show how, by working with her personal dressmaker, Campbell was able to employ her costumes to ‘resist’ and ‘rewrite’ the text she was performing, and to reject her previous reputation as a ‘lady in couture house gowns.’¹⁸⁶ Their analysis demonstrates the communicative power of dress both on and off the stage within Victorian and Edwardian society, a theme which will be explored further in Chapters 5 and 6.¹⁸⁷

Costumes as ‘material objects’

As this overview has shown, whilst theatrical costumes have not been entirely absent from either dress or theatre history, few researchers have exploited the unique evidence preserved within their physical structure.¹⁸⁸ Signs of a move towards the examination of

¹⁸⁴ This chapter will discuss her role as Nance Oldfield in *A Pageant of Great Women*, staged at the Scala Theatre, London in 1909 and her revival of this role in *The First Actress*, at the Kingsway Theatre in 1911 and also her 1906 performance as Kniertje in *The Good Hope* which she reprised during the second season of the company.

¹⁸⁵ Kaplan and Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, 3-4.

¹⁸⁶ Kaplan and Stowell focus on Campbell’s performance as the seamstress Theodosia Hemming in the 1904 production of *Warp and Woof*. This production sought to draw attention to ‘the abuses of an exploitative dress trade’ and audiences expecting to see Campbell as ‘a vision in tulle, furs and feathers, gliding gracefully through a succession of West End parlors’, whose gowns ‘they themselves had come to copy’, were instead confronted with ‘a towering Mrs. Pat, clad entirely in dressmaker’s black’ ruling over a shabby dress shop. Kaplan and Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, 3-4, 94-65.

¹⁸⁷ Kaplan and Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, 60.

¹⁸⁸ Though interesting and valuable articles have been published on theatre costume, the same ‘absence’ of the surviving garments is also apparent. See for instance, Lydia Edwards, “Trilby’s Dress: Reception, Inspiration and Interpretation,” *Theatre Notebook* 65.3 (2011): 171-188 and Rachel Fensham, “Designing for Movement: Dance Costume, Art Schools and Natural Movement in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Design History* 28.4 (2015): 348-367.

physical garments within dress and theatre history can be seen in Walter's (2013) advocacy of a methodology which looks more closely at the costumes themselves. It was her detailed examination of Irving's costumes for the role of *Charles I* (a part Irving first played in 1872) which led her to conclude that '[...] it seemed to be the overall impression of Irving's figure,' rather than the design of the costume itself 'upon which his appearance was authenticated [by audiences and critics] as a "startling reproduction of Charles I's dress.' Significantly for this thesis, Walter's new perspective on Irving's approach to costuming, directly contradicts '[...] the idea that costume design in this period was specifically "archaeological" in nature' and suggests that '[...] although portraits were used for inspiration, other factors, such as the nature of the theatrical space, practical considerations, and ideas of character were just as important to the realisation of theatrical costume.'¹⁸⁹

Donatella Barbieri (2013) has also demonstrated the rewards of working with theatre costumes as 'material objects.' Using Prown's process of description, deduction and speculation as a starting point, she proposes a '[...] methodology of enquiry based on analysing costume as a material, performative object.'¹⁹⁰ For Barbieri, whilst '[...] existing historical studies provide readings of the context of performance, it is ultimately necessary to return to consider technology and production to really understand the paradoxes presented by this mute costume/museum object.'¹⁹¹

Writing from the perspective of an experienced 'costume practitioner' who considers 'the performativity of materials [...] at every stage of producing the specifically costumed body,' Barbieri emphasises the importance of recognising that theatre costumes are garments constructed '[...] through the application of expert embodied, material and

¹⁸⁹ Walter, "Van Dyck in Action," 167, 172.

¹⁹⁰ Donatella Barbieri, "Performativity and the historical body: Detecting performance through the archived costume," *Studies in Theatre and Performance* 33.3 (2013): 281-301, 281.

¹⁹¹ Barbieri, "Performativity and the historical body," 282.

culture knowledge.’¹⁹² This expertise enables Barbieri to appreciate the ‘technical complexity’ of costumes and to identify evidence ‘of the expert engineering deployed in the construction.’¹⁹³ Barbieri therefore positions theatre costumes as an embodiment not only of its original wearer but also of the individuals responsible for their design and construction whose ‘voice,’ as she notes, ‘remains largely unheard.’¹⁹⁴

Through her close engagement with a jacket worn by the clown, Charlie Keith (1836-1895), she seeks to expose not only ‘[...] the “text,” inscribed in the archived costume redolent of the performer’s body’ but also to ‘[...] articulate the performativity of the “impertinent” costume of the clown’ by separating the costume, from the performer.¹⁹⁵ In endeavouring to separate ‘costume’ from ‘performer,’ Barbieri does not overlook the relationship between ‘body’ and ‘costume,’ and pays close attention to the evidence surviving garments reveal regarding adaptations to accommodate props, facilitate movement and emphasise, or conceal, the physicality of their wearers.¹⁹⁶

For Barbieri, costume has the potential to ‘empower its wearer’ endowing them with dignity and presence and creating a ‘self-sufficient stage persona.’ It can become a literal ‘second body’ distorting the proportions of the wearer and altering their movement.¹⁹⁷ Barbieri demonstrates that successful costumes have the potential to ‘become a blueprint’ for future designers and performers. She also considers ‘The ‘agency’ of costume, suggesting that it ‘could be greater than the body inside,’ indeed, on occasion, actually acting as a substitute for the body of performer: an idea which Chapter 5 will explore further.’¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 283-4.

¹⁹³ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 289.

¹⁹⁴ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 283.

¹⁹⁵ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 283.

¹⁹⁶ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 287-92.

¹⁹⁷ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 295.

¹⁹⁸ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 297.

Barbieri's discussions resonate with Bill Brown's interrogation of Jean Baudrillard's arguments surrounding 'the object' and 'the subject', in particular Baudrillard's assertion that 'the object is often intelligible only as 'the alienated, accursed part of the subject.'¹⁹⁹ The gap Brown identifies between 'the function of objects and the desire congealed there' is particularly apparent in historic theatre costumes which, in becoming 'museum objects,' cease to fulfil their practical 'function' and are 'reconstituted' by society as garments which represent the 'desire and affection' inspired by the performer or production for which they were originally created.²⁰⁰ Brown's arguments offer a means through which to analyse the theatre costumes selected for preservation within museum collections, which derive their privileged status as historic objects from an association with a celebrated wearer or production, rather than through their original function.

The implications of this connection between historic theatre costumes (objects) and their original wearers (subjects) will be explored in Chapter 5. This chapter will also draw upon Susan Pearce's theories surrounding the 'chains of meanings' that can be present simultaneously within a single object, which provides a further route through which to investigate the ability of costumes to embody a series of individuals or productions, rather than a single performer.²⁰¹ Uniting Pearce's theories with Barbieri's discussions, it will examine the extent to which Terry's costumes might act as a 'substitute' for, or 're-embodiment of' the actress. In the course of this discussion Chapter 5 will also engage with Hodgdon's exploration of the 'material memory system' within which historic costumes become enmeshed when they are deliberately resurrected and worn again by other performers and will consider the material and emotional link this creates between

¹⁹⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, trans. Philip Beitchman and W.G.J. Niesluchowski, ed. Jim Fleming (New York, 1990) 111. Cited by Bill Brown in "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28.1, *Things* (Autumn, 2001), 8

²⁰⁰ Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28.1, *Things* (Autumn, 2001): 1-22, 13, 15

²⁰¹ Susan Pearce, "Objects as meaning; or narrating the past," *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994).

past and current wearers and productions.²⁰² The significance of this ‘material link’ will be examined further by drawing upon Roach’s discussion of ‘effigies,’ specifically their ability to ‘produce memory through surrogation’ and thereby fill a vacancy created by the absence of an original.’²⁰³ For Roach ‘performed effigies – those fabricated from human bodies and the associations they provoke’ are particularly significant, as they offer ‘[...] communities a means of perpetuating themselves through specially nominated mediums or surrogates.’²⁰⁴ Chapter 5 of this thesis will argue that historic theatre costumes, through their intimate material and symbolic connections with now ‘absent’ performers, have the potential to, and indeed have acted as, ‘surrogates,’ which literally ‘re-member’ the bodies which once inhabited them.²⁰⁵

2.8 Conclusion

As Chapter 1 discussed, this thesis adopts an object based approach to research, drawing upon a multiplicity of source material to re-examine and analyse Terry’s dress on and off the stage, and the social, historic and artistic context which shaped her clothing choices. This chapter has introduced the interrelated themes which this material culture approach will be used to illuminate. It has also outlined breadth of the literature within dress history, theatre history, material culture and related disciplines upon which this discussion will be founded. Through this process it has identified key gaps within existing research, specifically, the general absence of surviving theatrical costume from within the source material currently employed within both dress and theatre history and, consequently, much analytical discussion of its value in either field.

²⁰² Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 160-1.

²⁰³ Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36.

²⁰⁴ Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36. Roach has explored this idea further through the specific case study of the royal effigy of Charles II and the role this ‘traditional royal effigy’ played in efforts to ‘[...] preserve and publicise the image of an individual in the absence of his person.’ Roach, *It*, 46-7

²⁰⁵ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 36.

This thesis, by contrast, will highlight the crucial evidence which can be gathered from extant costumes, and demonstrate the important role these garments play both in the original performance and in its ‘recovery.’ As Chapter 4 will show, in order to carry out a complete and successful analysis of surviving theatrical costume, it is essential that such garments are examined in relation to their original historical and theatrical context. The physical evidence revealed through a close examination of a surviving costume, must therefore be combined with information drawn from related primary source material, be it visual material, written commentary or comparable extant garments. Only then, does it become possible to reanimate what Monks termed, this ‘incomplete body.’²⁰⁶

As Nicklas and Pollen have declared ‘[...] dress has a uniquely expressive capacity to carry a range of cultural information and meanings, past and present.’²⁰⁷ The analysis of Terry’s costumes undertaken here will therefore extend far beyond the practical purpose of theatrical costumes as physical objects, by considering their role as carriers of ‘meaning,’ ‘identity’ and ‘memory.’

This thesis is therefore not only concerned with theatre costumes, but also with the bodies which once inhabited them. It will show that both historic theatre costumes, and the performers who wear them, have the capacity to carry both personal and public memories acting as, what Roach termed, ‘an eccentric but meticulous curator of cultural memory [and] a medium for speaking with the dead.’ The next chapter will therefore examine the ‘theatrical traditions’ and ‘memories’ within which Terry was enmeshed and the influence these factors had upon her approach to performance and dress.²⁰⁸ This chapter will also establish the social and historical environment within which Terry rose to prominence and will provide vital context for the analysis of Terry’s personal dress and

²⁰⁶ Monks, *The Actor in Costume*, 140.

²⁰⁷ Nicklas and Pollen, *Dress History*, 12.

²⁰⁸ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 80.

theatrical costume which follows. It will provide a foundation from which Chapters 4 and 5 will establish a methodology for the research and analysis of historic theatre costume, whilst Chapter 6 will illustrate the crucial role that Terry's dress played in her 'self-fashioning' both on, and off, the stage.

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CHAPTER 3 – ELLEN TERRY: ACTRESS

Introduction

When seeking to analyse a ‘theatrical event,’ as Postlewait argues, the ‘theatre historian’ must not limit his or her ‘attention to the aesthetic qualities’ of a production, but also examine the ‘[...] many intentions, factions, actions, and aims that were distributed not only among the production team, and performers but also a [...] community of spectators and reviewers’: the ‘historical context.’¹ Whilst a theatrical costume is only one element of the total ‘theatrical event’ Postlewait describes, any analysis of theatrical costume is equally dependent on possessing a full understanding of the ‘historical conditions’ which contributed to their ‘identity and meanings.’² Of specific significance to the analysis of a theatrical costume, or indeed any example of historic dress, is an awareness of the factors which shaped the process of design, construction and use (action), and which influenced the public reception of the garment and its wearer (reaction).³

This chapter therefore provides the historical context required to understand and analyse Terry and her theatre costumes. It will establish the theatrical environment within which she was trained and rose to prominence and will introduce the figures who had a formative influence on her attitude to dress and movement on the stage. It will examine her career in relation to broader contextual issues, in particular, the social position of actresses and their status within the theatrical profession during this period. This will feed into an initial

¹ Postlewait, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 21, 225.

² Postlewait, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 119.

³ Postlewait, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 124-5. As Chapter 1 discussed, Riello and McNeill attach the same importance to gaining an understanding of the context which shaped clothing choices in their introduction to *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives*, 8.

consideration of the impact Terry's celebrity had upon her 'public' and 'private' identity, a theme that shall be explored further in Chapter 6.

The focus throughout the discussion will be on the manner in which the historic, theatrical, artistic and social context within which Terry was performing, shaped her attitude towards costume and performance.

3.1 Early Years and Training

'A child of the stage'⁴

The daughter of two 'strolling players,' Benjamin (1818–96) and Sarah Terry (1819–92), Terry was immersed in the world of the theatre from her birth in 1847.⁵ Four of her eight surviving siblings also became actors and, as Terry explained in her autobiography, she could not recall

[...] when it was first decided that I was to go on the stage, but I expect it was when I was born, for in those days theatrical folk did not imagine that their children *could* do anything but follow their parents' profession.⁶

The theatrical career selected by her parents was unstable and did not offer a regular, or reliable, income. Prior to the introduction of 'long runs' in the 1860s, most actors relied

⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 1.

⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 5. Roger Manvell offers a useful account of Terry's parents in his biography of the actress. Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography*, 3-6. Manvell's research also uncovered the first proof, in the Register of births for the district of St Johns and St Michaels Coventry, that Terry was born, not in 1848 as the actress herself believed, but in 1847. Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography*, vi.

⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 3. Terry's parents had eleven children, two of whom died in infancy, Of Terry's surviving siblings her elder sister Kate (1844-1924), and her younger siblings Marion (1853-1930), Florence (1856-1896) and Fred Terry (1863-1933) all pursued successful careers on the stage. Her brothers George (1852-1928) and Charles (1858-1933), though not performers, also followed careers connected with the theatre. Little is known about Terry's two remaining brothers, Benjamin (born 1839) and Tom (born 1860). The elder Ben, emigrated first to Australia and then to India, whilst Tom, whose career and life were often disreputable and insecure, was continually in need of financial support from his more successful siblings. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 48, 146 and Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 30-36.

upon ‘run of the piece contracts,’ and even actors who were hired for ‘provincial summer tours and long overseas tours of many months or years duration [...] forfeited the stability of a permanent residence.’⁷ As her parents were generally obliged to follow ‘engagements,’ Terry’s childhood was characterised by frequent travel in which there was limited opportunity for any formal education in a ‘*real school*.’⁸ This upbringing departed significantly from the private, domestic, environment, which, as Chapter 2 discussed, was traditionally advocated for young middle class women in the late nineteenth century.⁹ Furthermore the education Terry did receive was intended only to equip her with the skills required for a career on the stage, and focused on her movement and elocution, rather than on domestic skills or academic subjects. Her teachers were drawn from amongst her employers, colleagues, and family and the training she received could take place at any time and anywhere. In her autobiography Terry described how:

At breakfast father would begin the day's “coaching.” Often I had to lay down my fork and say my lines. He would conduct these extra rehearsals anywhere—in the street, the 'bus—we were never safe! I remember vividly going into a chemist's shop and being stood upon a stool to say my part to the chemist!¹⁰

⁷ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 7 and 22. For a more detailed discussion of the unstable nature of the theatrical profession see also T.C. Davis, *Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 56. Although Terry received no formal education, her younger siblings were sent to school. Indeed, as Terry notes in her autobiography, their education was, to some extent, funded by the earnings of Terry and her sister, Kate. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 35.

⁹ As Chapter 2 noted, the idea of separate of ‘spheres’, with women confined to the domestic space and the role of mother, carer and passive support for her husband has been discussed in detail elsewhere. Jeffrey Richards’ account of Irving’s career, and the actor’s partnership with Terry, provides a valuable outline of how the education, social, and professional environments experienced by members of the acting profession of both sexes, departed from the ideals and traditions which characterised nineteenth century society. Jeffrey Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and his World* (London: Hambledon, 2005), 42-44.

¹⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 16.

Both she, and her sister Kate (1844-1924), were taught to strive for ‘clear articulation’ and Terry recalls that her father ‘[...] never ceased teaching me to be useful, alert, and quick [...] and always he corrected me if I pronounced any word in a slipshod fashion.’ As she reflected, [...] if I now speak my language well it is in no small degree due to my early training.’¹¹

Examining reviews of Terry’s lecture tour to New Zealand and Australia in 1914 Katherine E. Kelly noted that critics frequently mentioned Terry’s ‘[...] extraordinarily expressive voice as one of the remarkable qualities of her performance.’¹² Similarly in 1888 another reviewer praised Terry’s mastery of the ‘[...] art of voice projection,’ and described how ‘without the slightest effort, [Terry] can be heard, even if she whispers. Every note in her voice is distinct and audible.’¹³ The quality of Terry’s voice and delivery consistently earned the actress praise throughout her career, and played a significant part in Terry’s continuing ability to ‘charm’ audiences, even in her final years.

Systematic training

Terry was unusually fortunate to receive such comparatively intensive and systematic professional training. Until the last decades of the nineteenth century, when the employment market became increasingly competitive for performers, the training available to aspiring actors and actresses within Britain remained informal and relatively unstructured.¹⁴ Julie Holledge describes how most actresses therefore relied upon lessons

¹¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 8.

¹² Katherine E. Kelly, “The After Voice of Ellen Terry,” *Ellen Terry Spheres of Influence*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), 71.

¹³ “Revival of *The Amber Heart*,” May 23rd, 1888, Press Cutting, pasted in Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1884-1892*, Garrick Club, London.

¹⁴ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as working women*, 36. This was in contrast to European Theatre practices in countries such as France where state theatres provided more regimented training systems and career trajectories. John Stokes touches upon the French approach to training and performance in Stokes, *The French Actress and her English Audience* (2005). A related discussion of the contrast between European and British attitudes to acting and performance styles is offered by Marshall in “Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress” (2007) and also Hindson in *Female Performance Practice* (2007).

from fellow performers. She suggests that it was not until 1896 that the first acting academy was established by the actor/manager Sir Philip Barling [Ben Greet] (1857–1936) in Bedford Street, The Strand.¹⁵ As Ross Prior notes however, Greet was not the only figure seeking to encourage systematic training of performers. In 1883, the actor Sir Francis Robinson Benson [Frank Benson] (1858-1939) had established his Shakespeare Company and the actress and theatre manager Sarah Thorne (1838-1899) had also set up at school at the Theatre Royal, Margate in 1885. Another prominent figure seeking to promote more formal training for performers, was Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree (1852-1917). Tree established a training school at the Haymarket Theatre in 1904, the popularity of which was such that it soon moved to a larger venue in Gower Street and remains in operation as the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art today.¹⁶

Before such schools were established most novice performers spent several years building up experience and contacts within the profession. As Jeffrey Richards has explained, Terry's stage partner, Henry Irving (1838-1905) was amongst those performers obliged to rely upon the 'slovenly and haphazard training of minor and provincial theatres.' Here he had little opportunity to learn the 'proper stage bearing, good elocution and artistic self-containment' which were instilled in Terry from a young age.¹⁷ As a result, an eighteen-year-old Irving spent ten years in the provinces working with various stock companies and a further five working at theatres in London, in order to acquire the experience needed to earn a long-term engagement with the Bateman's Company at the Lyceum Theatre, in 1871. Irving then served another seven years apprenticeship with the

¹⁵ Julie Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre* (London: Virago, 1981) 11.

¹⁶ Ross W. Prior, *Teaching Actors: knowledge transfer in actor training* (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), 7-8.

¹⁷ Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, 306-7. Richards is responding to the particularly harsh critique of Irving's acting published jointly in 1877 by William Archer, Robert Lowe and George Halkett. See William Archer and Robert W. Lowe, *The Fashionable Tragedian: A Criticism* (Edinburgh: T. Gray and Co, 1877).

Batemans before rising to a position where he could take over the management of the Theatre in 1878.¹⁸

An alternative route to success was, as Bratton discusses, ‘from a base within a theatrical family.’ Whilst Bratton recognises that there were opportunities for women who were not part of a theatrical family, she emphasises that ‘Deep theatrical roots provided a kind of aristocracy of theatrical, rather than landed property, within which women could take a leading place, if their talents so enabled them.’¹⁹ Gardner also refers to the concept of a ‘theatrical aristocracy,’ arguing that one manner in which a performer sought to cement their position within this exclusive circle was through the ‘insertion of self, and *assertion* of self, in *The Green Room Book*.’²⁰ The significance of appearing in this publication, which contained the biographies of ‘eminent actors, dramatists and critics,’ lay, Gardner asserts, in its self-proclaimed status as a ‘serious guide to the contemporary stage’²¹ She argues that figures featured in its pages, among them ‘Ellen Terry and Mrs. Kendal,’ therefore represented ‘not only the “aristocracy” of theatre families, but also the acme of theatrical and artistic success and respectability.’²²

Being born into a theatrical family certainly played a crucial part in enabling both Terry and Dame Madge Kendal (1848-1935) to reach positions within the acting hierarchy that were deemed worthy of recognition in first edition of *The Green Room Book*. Kendal, like Terry, was brought up parents who worked on the stage, soon joining them on ‘the

¹⁸ Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 88. The challenges faced by Irving during the early years of his career are discussed in Madeleine Bingham, *Henry Irving and the Victorian Theatre* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1978) and more recently in Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World* (2005); Richard Foulkes, *Henry Irving: a re-evaluation of the pre-eminent Victorian actor-manager* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008) and Holroyd in *A Strange Eventful History* (2008).

¹⁹ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 148.

²⁰ Gardner, “The Three Nobodies,” 33. The full title of this publication, first printed in 1906, was *The Green Room Book or Who's Who on the Stage: An Annual Biographical Record of the Dramatic and Musical Variety World*, it was published in London by T. Sealey and Clark and edited by Bampton Hunt.

²¹ *The Green Room Book*, 1907, p.xi. Quoted in Gardner, “The Three Nobodies,” 33.

²² Gardner, “The Three Nobodies,” 33.

Lincoln circuit' and making her stage debut, under the management of her father, the actor, William Robertson (d.1872), at the Marylebone Theatre in 1854. Kendal subsequently went on to work in Bristol and Bradford in the 1860s, before gradually establishing herself as a leading performer on the London stage.²³ During her time in Bristol, Kendal worked in the same stock company as Terry, and also performed alongside her in a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, at the Theatre Royal, Bath, in 1863. Portrayed as antagonistic rivals in the press, both Terry and Kendal used their autobiographies to deny that any hostility existed between them. They certainly proved willing to work together in the later years of their careers, appearing alongside one another as Mistress Page (Terry) and Mistress Ford (Kendal) in the 1902 Coronation production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at His Majesty's Theatre.²⁴

Stage debut

Terry received her first theatrical 'engagement' from the actor/manager Charles Kean (1811-1868) in 1856 and she soon came to appreciate the importance of her early training. Kean, who became joint lessee of the Princess' Theatre, London in 1850, was amongst the 'small and large scale entrepreneurial managers' who had exploited a change in the legislation governing the theatrical industry which took place in 1843, four years before Terry's birth.²⁵

The 'Theatre Regulation Act' abolished 'the monopoly which, since 1660, had restricted performances of legitimate plays in London to Covent Garden and Drury Lane,' thereby dissolving '[...]the separation between "major" and "minor theatres"; and between

²³ Kendal provides a vivid account of her early life and career in her autobiography written in collaboration with Rudolph de Cordova and published in 1933. Madge Kendal and Rudolph de Cordova, *Dame Madge Kendal: by herself* (London: J. Murray, 1933.)

²⁴ Kendal, *Dame Madge Kendal*, 25-27 and Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 104-5.

²⁵ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 6.

“legitimate” and “illegitimate” drama.²⁶ As Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow show, the theatres which were successful in the period between the passing of the Act in 1843, and the ‘boom’ of the mid 1860s ‘tended to be those with a well-defined repertoire.’²⁷ The result was that, as T.C. Davis explains, many West End houses became ‘inextricably associated with their particular genre, production style, and material.’²⁸ Kean’s company presented, what Alan Hughes describes as, ‘a solid repertory of “gentlemanly melodrama” and scholarly productions of Shakespeare.’ Kean was not the only manager reclaiming Shakespeare’s plays however, and he faced competition from Samuel Phelps and the Sadler’s Wells Company (1844-62) who also played a significant part in firmly re-establishing Shakespeare on the popular stage.²⁹ As Chapter 5 will discuss, Kean’s productions were distinguished by the importance attached to ‘historical authenticity.’³⁰ In fact, though Terry admired Kean’s acting, the actress attached far greater importance to the manager’s legacy as ‘a stage reformer than as an actor’ and felt that, whilst

²⁶ Foulkes, *Henry Irving: a re-evaluation of the pre-eminent Victorian actor-manager*, 1 and Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2001) ix. Whilst it is difficult to provide a precise definition of ‘legitimate drama’ T.C. Davis employs the phrase ‘legitimate drama’ to encompass ‘tragedy, comedy and farce.’ The category can be defined as ‘spoken drama’ as opposed to either the ‘opera’ and ‘the circus,’ both of forms of entertainment that could include ‘ballet’ and which T.C. Davis identifies as the competitors of legitimate drama. T.C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914*, 19. As Mayer has noted, by the late nineteenth century the category of ‘illegitimate drama’ had expanded to include further ‘music based entertainments’ and might also encompass ‘burlesques, extravaganzas, pantomimes, variety theatres, aerialists, acrobats, gymnasts, contortionists, cyclists, Indian club virtuosi and other [performers] exhibiting physical skills.’ Mayer, “The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film,” 75-6.

²⁷ Whilst, as Davis and Emeljanow discuss, the period between 1843 and 1866 was marked by uncertainty and an ongoing financial depression, by circa 1866 a ‘boom in theatre building’ was taking place, and this continued until the end of the century. Alongside the licensed venues there were also saloon theatres and music halls, with their own specific venues and repertoire. As Davis and Emeljanow stress, theatre going was not strictly divided on a class basis, and ‘both theatres and music halls catered to mixed clienteles, sometimes within one building, sometimes according to neighbourhood.’ Davis and Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880*, x, 170.

²⁸ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 20.

²⁹ Alan Hughes, *Henry Irving, Shakespearean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 3. Michael Booth also provides an illuminating outline of Kean and the nature of theatre in London during this period in Michael Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). See in particular 47-49.

³⁰ This policy was, Hughes argues, enormously assisted by the Queen’s patronage. Hughes, *Henry Irving, Shakespearean*, 3.

[...] the old happy-go-lucky way of staging plays, with its sublime indifference to correctness of detail and its utter disregard of archaeology, had received its first blow from Kemble and Macready [...] Charles Kean gave it much harder knocks and went further than either of them in the good work.³¹

An eight-year-old Terry made her debut with Kean's company in the role of Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale* in April 1856. An insight into Kean's attention to detail can be gleaned from Terry's recollections of the production. She remembered not only the 'little red-and-silver dress' and 'very pink [and baggy] tights' she wore in the production, but also the pride inspired by her 'beautiful "property."' This 'property,' '[...] a go-cart, which had been made in the theatre by Mr. Bradshaw,' was '[...] an exact copy of a child's toy as depicted on a Greek vase.'³²[FIGURE 3.1] As Terry's descriptions suggest, Kean's productions attracted audiences by offering them an experience in which 'Archaeological findings and the Mediaeval Court could [...] come to life,' a 'simulacra' which 'gained an immediacy and authenticity [through its] integration with the fictional lives of the characters on stage.'³³ Booth, Davis and Emeljanow, trace the long-term impact of Kean's 'antiquarian approach' in the spectacular and laboriously researched Shakespearean productions subsequently staged by managers such as the Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales Theatre in the 1870s. They also identify clear connections to 'the living historical pictures' presented by Irving at the Lyceum Theatre, and also by Beerbohm Tree at the Haymarket Theatre from 1887-1889 and, latterly, at Her Majesty's Theatre.³⁴

³¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 9.

³² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14-15.

³³ Davis and Emeljanow attribute some of Kean's success to the popularity and proximity of the 1851 Great Exhibition and the interest this spectacle stimulated in the cultures and objects of the past. Davis and Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880*, 197-199.

³⁴ Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, 48 and Davis and Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880*, 200.

Significantly for this thesis Terry would work with all these figures at various stages in her career.



Figure 3.1 - Photographer unknown. Charles Kean as Leontes and Ellen Terry as Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale*, Princess's Theatre, 1856. Sepia photograph on paper. 19.4 x 14.5cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:146-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry spent three years, (between the ages of eight and eleven), as part of Kean's company, performing in Shakespearean productions, melodramas and pantomimes and leaving only when the Kean's management of the Princess Theatre ended in 1859.³⁵ During this period Terry received instruction in skills that were to prove crucial to her subsequent stage success. As the actress recalled, one of 'the most wearisome, yet

³⁵ Whilst part of the Kean's company Terry's principal roles included Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale* and Puck in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (both 1856), Fairy Goldenstar in the Christmas Pantomime (1857), Prince Arthur in *King John* (October 1858) and Karl in a revival of *Faust and Marguerite*. Never 'out of the bill' except when recovering from a broken toe in 1857, Terry was also cast in smaller parts in the 'extra productions' required to 'fill the bill', was 'a little boy "cheering" in several other production and performed non-speaking roles in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II* and *Henry VIII*. See Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 21.

essential details' of her education, was connected with the costume that she was required to wear as Fairy Goldenstar in the Princess Theatre's 1857 Christmas Pantomime.³⁶

This costume, 'as pink and gold as it was trailing,' was Terry's 'first long dress.' It was Mr. Oscar Byrn (fl.1856), at that time employed by the Keans as 'the dancing-master and director of crowds,' who taught Terry how to manage her trailing skirts. Under his guidance Terry learnt to achieve the 'uprightness of carriage and certainty of step' essential to 'the art of deportment.'³⁷ Her graceful movement 'won high praise from Mr. Byrn' and Terry emphasises the long-term 'value [of] all his [Byrn's] drilling.' She continued to attach great importance to being able to move gracefully, and appropriately in her costumes throughout her career. Indeed, as Chapter 4 and 5 will discuss, and her costume designer Comyns-Carr regretfully observed, Terry, though possessing 'a fine sense' of historical dress, would 'jib at fashions that she fancied might interfere with her movement while acting.'³⁸

Formidable role models

Another figure who had a significant long-term impact on Terry was Kean's wife, née Ellen Tree (1805-1880). Terry expressed immense gratitude for the patience and industry exhibited by her extremely 'accomplished', if 'formidable,' teacher, and recognises the significance of the training she received.³⁹ Her recollections present Mrs. Kean as '[...]

³⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 20.

³⁷ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 20-21.

³⁸ Comyns-Carr contrasts Terry's attitude with that of the actress Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) who had a reputation for a 'love of correctness of detail [which] amounted almost to a passion' and once assured that 'a certain costume was absolutely authentic [...] never flinched from wearing it.' Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences* (London: Hutchinson, 1926), 215-6.

³⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 11. When preparing for the role of Puck Mrs. Kean, provided Terry with further lessons in clear enunciation and also taught the actress how to 'draw [her] breath in through my nose and begin a laugh,' which was, as Terry notes, 'a very valuable accomplishment!' Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 18.

the leading spirit in the theatre; at the least, a joint ruler, not a queen-consort.’⁴⁰ An assessment of the Kean’s working partnership which supports Bratton’s assertion that Ellen Kean represents the ‘[...] most obviously hidden influence on the development of the West End [...], a successful actress whose fame was - quite deliberately - entirely subsumed into her choice of role and title of Mrs. Kean.’ Whilst Bratton feels that the Kean’s marriage was a ‘love match’, she suggests that it was also a ‘shrewd career move’ for Ellen Tree. For in marrying Kean she effectively moved into high class management under his name. As Ellen Kean she was able to establish a successful career for herself in her own right, and in performances alongside her husband proved herself ‘a brilliant teacher of other performers and what in modern terms is called a director.’⁴¹ Bratton argues that whilst later in her career Terry came to resemble ‘[...] the theatre-managing women who taught her [...] in many ways as a performer and as an independent woman,’ she did not achieve a position as ‘the Lyceum’s co-manager.’ In Bratton’s view, Terry was hired by Irving to play opposite him, and remained a ‘leading lady’ rather than a business partner.⁴²

Working under the supervision of this formidable teacher soon taught Terry that ‘[...] if [she] did not work, [she] could not act.’ When rehearsing the role of Prince Arthur in *King John* in 1858 Terry was eager to equal the success her elder sister, Kate, had previously achieved in the role. She therefore began to ‘[...] get up in the middle of the night and watch [her] gestures in the glass.’ She also practiced her lines, trying to bring her voice ‘[...] down and up in the right places.’ In spite of these efforts however, Terry still struggled to ‘[...] express what [Kean] wanted and what she could not teach me by

⁴⁰ The couple were married in 1842, but Kean’s wife had made her professional stage debut some twenty years earlier and had achieved success first in the provinces and subsequently in London. Their professional and personal partnership endured until Kean’s death in 1868, at which point Ellen Kean retired from the stage.

⁴¹ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 159.

⁴² Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 207.

doing it herself.’ It was only after an enraged Kean ‘stormed’ at and slapped her, that Terry experienced, and could finally capture, ‘the mortification and grief’ required for the part. Mrs. Kean, finally satisfied, ordered Terry to use the experience, and to ‘[...] remember what [she] did with [her] voice, reproduce it, remember everything, and do it!’⁴³

The fourteen year old Terry drew on this experience during her first engagement at the Royalty Theatre, Soho in 1861.⁴⁴ This theatre was then under the management of the French dancer and actress Madame Albina de Rhona (fl.1860s.) and Terry remained part of the company until February of 1862.⁴⁵ The ‘expressive’ and ‘quick tempered’ Frenchwoman offered Terry another powerful and ambitious female role model, and she was ‘[...] filled with great admiration for her.’⁴⁶ She was eager to impress de Rhona when appearing in her first role, that of Clementine; ‘an ordinary fair-haired ingénue in white muslin’ in the melodrama *Attar Gull*.⁴⁷ At the climax of the play Clementine is slowly strangled by a venomous snake and Terry was required to produce screams of ‘wild terror.’ During rehearsals however, she struggled repeatedly to achieve these ‘frantic, heartrending screams.’ Finally, and only after being shaken and shouted at by an increasingly frustrated de Rhona, ‘the wild, agonized scream that Madame de Rhona

⁴³ Terry, *The Story of my Life*, 26.

⁴⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life* 37.

⁴⁵ Madame Albina de Rhona was one among an increasing number of female theatre managers in the mid to late nineteenth century. As T. C. Davis has discussed, the independent lease which the actress and singer Madame Elisa Vestris (1797-1856) signed for the Olympic theatre in 1831 signalled a ‘turning point in women’s managerial participation, not only setting a trend in her own day, but also marking the point after which women could no longer be excluded.’ T.C. Davis, *Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914*, 275. Bratton has recently built upon T.C. Davis’s research in her in depth investigations into ‘[...] the parts played by women, not only on the stage but also in management and creative entrepreneurship’ between 1830 and 1870. Bratton. *The Making of the West End Stage*, 7.

⁴⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 36-40.

⁴⁷ The melodrama was, Terry recalls, adapted from a short story written by the author Eugène Sue (1804-1857) in 1831. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 8.

wanted came to [Terry].'⁴⁸ Reconsidering her performance, Terry reflected that whilst she 'had the emotional instinct to start with,' if she performed well

[...], it was because I was able to imagine what would be *real* in such a situation. I had never *observed* such horror, but I had previously *realized* it, when, as Arthur, I had imagined the terror of having my eyes put out.⁴⁹

Terry attributes her ability to perform with such conviction directly to her earlier training under Mrs. Kean. Lynn Voskuil, in her examination of Terry's approach to acting, also attaches especial importance to the initial influence of Kean, arguing that '[...] Mrs Kean's early lesson in using her own emotion as a tool shaped [Terry's] practice profoundly, especially in the development of her imaginative powers.'⁵⁰ Terry herself declared that amongst the qualities 'necessary for success upon the stage,' 'Imagination, industry, and intelligence [...] are all indispensable to the actress,' of which '[...] the greatest is, without any doubt, imagination.'⁵¹

The central role that 'imagination' played in Terry's performances is also apparent in Terry's description of the research she undertook, over a decade later, in 1878, to prepare for the role of Ophelia. Visiting a 'madhouse,' Terry was disappointed to discover that 'There was no beauty, no nature, no pity in most of the lunatics,' who seemed 'too *theatrical* to teach [her] anything.' Upon the point of leaving, the actress finally found the inspiration she was seeking when she '[...] noticed a young girl gazing at the wall.' Though the girl's face 'was quite vacant' her 'body expressed that she was waiting,

⁴⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 38.

⁴⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 39.

⁵⁰ Lynn M. Voskuil, *Acting Naturally: Victorian Theatricality and Authenticity* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004) 207.

⁵¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 39.

waiting. Suddenly she threw up her hands and sped across the room like a swallow [...] She was very thin, very pathetic, very young, and the movement was as poignant as it was beautiful.’ It was an experience which, as Terry explains, convinced her ‘[...] that the actor must imagine first and observe afterwards. It is no good observing life and bringing the result to the stage without selection, without a definite idea. The idea must come first, the realism afterwards.’⁵²

Significantly it was the movement, both the stillness, and sudden darting across the room, that struck Terry, and which would influence her own interpretation of the role throughout her career. Contemporary descriptions convey both the physical and emotional style of Terry’s performances. One reviewer, from 1881, for instance, remarked upon Terry’s

[...] change of action at the first allusion in her presence to Hamlet; her placing her hand upon her brother’s shoulder as though to add weight to the counsel given to him by Polonius, her lingering look at the presents as she returned them to the giver.⁵³

A review published in *The Evening Telegraph* in 1884, for instance, makes apparent the degree to which Terry succeeded in her endeavour to convey emotional intensity, and yet avoid ‘theatricality,’ in her performance. They describe her interpretation of Ophelia as ‘[...] the embodiment of a broken-hearted, distracted woman [...] of extraordinary loveliness, in her original nature, and [in which] the touch of frenzy only seemed to invest

⁵² Terry does not specify which madhouse but the visit is described in detail, both in her autobiography and in her *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 154-155 and Ellen Terry, Christopher St. John, and William Shakespeare eds., *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, (London: Hopkinson, 1932) 165-167.

⁵³ “Our Biographies: Being brief sketches of the lives of Managers, Authors, Actors and Actresses, No. XV. Ellen Terry,” *Unidentified Periodical*, ca.1881. Press Cutting, pasted in Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883* Garrick Club, London.

her with a certain spiritual radiance.’ Yet, as they add ‘The execution is as free as a summer wind [...]’⁵⁴

Surviving photographs showing Terry in the character and costume of Ophelia capture a sense of the ‘emotional intensity’ she sought to project. A series of head and shoulder portraits from circa 1878 show Terry gazing intensely at, or even slightly beyond, the camera, her hands are clasped and held tightly to her chest [FIGURE 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4]. Not only her pose, but also Terry’s expression, in particular her unfocused, yet direct gaze, are intentionally unsettling and vulnerable.



Figure 3.2- Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878. Sepia photograph on paper. 9.3 x 5.9cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:246-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁵⁴ *The Evening Telegraph*, ca.1884. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 32, Garrick Club, London.



Figure 3.3 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878, Sepia photograph on paper. 7.7 x 5.2cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:249-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 3.4 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878. Sepia photograph on paper. 8.8 x 5.8cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:250-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

As Walter has observed commercial photographs, produced to promote productions and collected by fans of the performers, were created to capture a ‘moment of performance.’ As objects which provided ‘[...] only one opportunity for the exposition of character,’ such photographs were, Walter suggests, in effect ‘[...] a distillation of the traits which the actor and photographer considered most important.’⁵⁵ Regarded from this perspective, these images of Terry offer an important insight into her interpretation of the role, and tools she employed to convey this interpretation to her audience on, and off, the stage.

On a Lyceum Company tour of America in 1883-4, Terry’s performance as Ophelia was singled out for specific praise.⁵⁶ One reviewer declared that ‘[...] in the character of Ophelia she reached a height of emotional power which thrilled a vast audience’ and that ‘with a poetic insight and an excess of sensibility, which were unsurpassed, she afforded a revelation of the grandest art [...]’⁵⁷ Another American reviewer, praised Terry’s ‘charmingly natural’ performance, reporting that,

[...] Miss Terry imbues the character with so much spirituality that we forget all else [...] The conflict of emotions which swept over her heart, was reflected in every lineament of her face, and in her tear-stained eyes, and the mad scene, with its snatches of plaintive song, its fitful gleams of reason and protracted outbursts of grief, was marked by great power and originality.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action,’” 167, 170.

⁵⁶ It received a standing ovation in Chicago. This is described by one reviewer, *Chicago Tribune*, 14 February 1884. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 190, Garrick Club, London.

⁵⁷ “Amusement: The Drama,” Unidentified periodical. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 195, Garrick Club, London.

⁵⁸ *Daily Baltimore*, December 1883. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 195, Garrick Club, London.

All these reviews convey the impression that, as one author claimed, the performance was felt to be particularly ‘intense and true.’⁵⁹ One writer attributes this quality to the fact ‘Ellen Terry is unique among actresses in possessing a nervous organisation fine enough, to conceive the character of Ophelia.’ They suggest that such ‘[...] sensibility, wedded to such poetic insight, and embodied in such sincere expression,’ enabled Terry to give a performance in which ‘[...] all the pathos of the great poet’s conception weighed upon her soul.’ Indeed the success of Terry’s efforts to ‘imagine’ and ‘identify’ with Ophelia’s position was such that the reviewer felt, ‘Acting ceased to be acting and became inspirational interpretation [...]’⁶⁰

The tone and content of these assessments of Terry’s performance uphold Marshall’s argument that an actress can, ‘enter into the leading character’ or ‘substitute herself for it.’⁶¹ Many of the adjectives employed to praise Terry’s performance, though positive, also illustrate her continual struggle to overcome her characterisation as a ‘charming’, ‘personality actress.’ This chapter will explore the constraints this ‘public identity’ imposed upon Terry and the means through which she sought to challenge this ‘persona,’ and earn recognition as a serious performer.⁶²

Life in a stock company

Terry’s ability to achieve such a compelling performance owed much to the breadth of her early experience on the stage. A phase in Terry’s early career at the age of 15, which

⁵⁹ “Amusement: The Drama,” *Unidentified periodical*. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 195, Garrick Club, London.

⁶⁰ *Chicago Tribune*, 14 February, 1884. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 190, Garrick Club, London.

⁶¹ Marshall, “Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress,” 67. Marshall’s discussion of this process is focussed upon two of Terry’s contemporaries Bernhardt and Duse and engages with Shaw’s article on their contrasting performance styles, “Duse and Bernhardt,” *Our Theatres in the Nineties, Vol.1*, (London: Constable, 1932) 148-54.

⁶² Richards, touches upon this element of Terry’s characterisation in *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, 44-45.

provided crucial training for her future work, was the time she spent as part of a stock company in Bristol, between 1862 and 1863. Working in a stock company was a common apprenticeship for a future theatrical career. As Terry records, Marie Wilton (1839-1921) had left the company just before she joined it, and Madge Robertson was still part of the company, as was Henrietta Hodson (1841–1910).⁶³ Such companies were generally based in one venue, but presented a different play each night, drawn from a repertory of productions and costumes, and depended on a cast who could specialise in dramatic ‘types.’⁶⁴ Terry described a stock company as,

[...] a company of actors and actresses brought together by the manager of a provincial theatre to support a leading actor or actress -“a star” from London [...] these companies were ready to support them in Shakespeare. They were also ready to play burlesque, farce, and comedy to fill out the bill.⁶⁵

In *Actresses as Working Women* T.C. Davis outlines the range of ‘theatrical specialisations’ that were open to women. She explains that these depended not only upon the particular talents, but also, to a large degree, upon the age and appearance of the performer.⁶⁶ If seeking to earn a position within ‘The Drama’ an actress would usually begin as a supernumerary, assisting with group scenes, and was seldom listed in the

⁶³ As Terry notes, both Wilton and Robertson would go on to act under their married names, Bancroft, and Kendal. Terry, *The Story of My Life* 41. Hodson also married, though only after a long-term affair with the journalist and politician Henry Labouchère and three years after the birth of their daughter. W. J. Lawrence (rev. J. Gilliland), ‘Henrietta Hodson (1841–1910),’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004 [online edition, Oct 2009]).

⁶⁴ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as working women*, 6 and 20-23.

⁶⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 41-2.

⁶⁶ As T. C. Davis explains a pretty young actress might therefore be cast as the Ingénue or ‘love interest.’ Another, might achieve a reputation as a reliable ‘Character Actress’, often playing in low comedy or dialect. Those with a good voice and appealing personality, might establish themselves as a ‘soubrette’ and also obtain employment in musical genres. These ‘soubrettes’ gained increasing status over the course of the nineteenth century, achieving star billing, and evolving from the beautiful Burlesque actress, into the glamorous star of the Gaiety Theatre. T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 22.

playbills. They might progress to a ‘walking lady’, playing smaller supporting roles, but it was only the few, particularly successful performers, who finally graduated to the role of ‘leading lady.’ As an actress aged, concessions to both ‘maturity and experience’ would often necessitate another shift towards ‘heavy business’ in secondary, and more mature, female roles.⁶⁷ For Terry, seeking to maintain her position as leading lady of the Lyceum Theatre some thirty years later, it was the transition towards ‘mature’ roles which presented a particular challenge.

Terry’s experience in Bristol, trained her in many of the ‘specialisms’ required for a career in ‘The Drama.’ She had already performed the role of ‘supernumerary’ and ‘walked on’ with the Keans, whilst Madame de Rhona had engaged Terry as an ‘Ingénue.’ As part of stock company in 1862 however, a far greater range of skills was demanded of her, and despite her protests that she could not sing, or dance, Terry’s first part in a Burlesque required her to do both. As she relates ‘It was in the stock companies that we learned the great lesson of usefulness [...] There no question of parts “suited” us; we had to take what we were given.’⁶⁸ Terry attaches particular importance to this quality, declaring that on the stage ‘Usefulness’ is ‘[...] the first thing to aim at.’ For, as she argues

Not until we have learned to be useful can we afford to do what we like.

The tragedian will always be a limited tragedian if he has not learned how to laugh. The comedian who cannot weep will never touch the highest levels of mirth.⁶⁹

The value of the training Terry received through working in both stock and repertory companies became apparent when in 1863, aged 15, she was offered the part of

⁶⁷ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 22.

⁶⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life* 41.

⁶⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life* 41.

Desdemona. The part, in a matinee production of *Othello* at the Princess's Theatre, London, was Terry's first lead role in a play by Shakespeare. In her autobiography she recalls how the agents sent her the part on Saturday, expecting her to perform the role on Monday.

But for my training [Terry explains], how could I have done it? At this time I knew the words and had *studied* the words—a very different thing—of every woman's part in Shakespeare.⁷⁰

'A six year vacation'

Terry's career is punctuated by what she described as a 'six year vacation.' Her initial departure from the stage in 1864 was prompted by her marriage to the forty-seven-year-old artist Watts, at the age of sixteen. Though she returned to the stage for a brief period following the collapse of the marriage in 1865, she did so reluctantly.⁷¹ Her subsequent elopement with the architect and designer Godwin, in 1868, therefore offered her both a professional and personal escape. The long-term impact that her relationship with Watts, and the six years she spent living (unmarried) with Godwin, had upon Terry and her career, will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 6. Of primary significance to Terry's professional status however, was the moment, in 1874, when financial necessity, and the offer of a leading role, compelled Terry to return to London and the stage.⁷² The fact that the actress was, as she phrased it, able to 'rest so long without rusting' resulted, Terry felt, from the fact that, she '[...] had been thoroughly trained in the technique of acting

⁷⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life* 66.

⁷¹ Terry is frank about her unhappiness at this period in her life and reveals the extent to which she felt controlled by 'well meaning' friends and family. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 9, 61.

⁷² Terry confesses that her peaceful retreat from London and society was soon disturbed by '[...] shadow of financial trouble' and, it was the recollection of '[...] the bailiff in the house a few miles away' which encouraged her to accept an invitation from actor/manager Charles Reade to return to the stage. See Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 82-3.

long before [she] reached her twentieth year – an age at which most students are just beginning to wrestle with elementary principles.’⁷³

3.2 Our Lady of the Lyceum

A triumphant return?

Terry returned to the stage in February 1874 at the age of twenty-seven having been offered forty pounds a week by the actor/manager Charles Reade (1814-1884) to play Philippa Chester in *The Wandering Heir*.⁷⁴ Yet despite her success in this and several other leading roles, the threat of financial instability remained. By 1875 Terry’s relationship with Godwin had ended, and the actress was in debt and living alone in a house which ‘had been dismantled of some of its most beautiful treasures by the brokers.’ The offer she received that year from the Bancrofts to play Portia in a production of *The Merchant of Venice* therefore provided her with a crucial respite from these ‘domestic troubles and financial difficulties.’⁷⁵ Auerbach suggests that this opportunity to perform in Shakespeare was particularly important for Terry’s career. She contends that whilst Reade had ‘rescued Ellen Terry from privacy and returned her to audiences,’ it was Marie Bancroft who rescued the actress ‘from Reade’s melodrama and returned her to art.’⁷⁶ As Chapter 6 will show the Bancrofts’ lavish production, though not a critical success, played a key part in establishing Terry as a celebrated actress and leading figurehead of the Aesthetic Movement.

⁷³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 9, 77.

⁷⁴ Terry’s return to the stage was carefully stage managed by Reade who delayed the revelation of the identity of his new leading lady until the night before Terry’s first appearance. As Melville explains ‘The heroine in the play was advertised as being “an eminent actress” returning “after a long period of retirement.”’ See Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 64.

⁷⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 100-1.

⁷⁶ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry, Player in her time*, 168.



Figure 3.5 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Olivia*, Royal Court Theatre, 1875. Sepia photograph on paper. 8.8 x 5.8cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:233-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry's year with the Bancrofts, was followed by an engagement at the Royal Court Theatre, then under the management of John Hare (1844-1921). In 1878 Hare cast Terry in the role of Olivia in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, a part that she would later revive at the Lyceum. The production, and the costumes, were designed by Marcus Stone to reproduce 'the eighteenth century spirit,' but with a silhouette which reflected the fashions of the late 1870s in the fit of the bodice and the narrowness of the skirt, appealed to the public [FIGURE 3.5]. Terry's success was such that, 'Every one was "Olivia" mad' and her costumes inspired fashions in which 'The Olivia cap shared public favour with the Langtry bonnet.'⁷⁷ This was not the only instance upon which Terry's costumes inspired

⁷⁷ As Terry explains, 'That most lovely and exquisite creature, Mrs. Langtry [Lillie Langtry (1853-1929)], could not go out anywhere, at the dawn of the 'eighties, without a crowd collecting to look at her! It was no

fashions in both theatrical costume and off stage dress. The riding habit worn by Terry as Lucy Ashton in the production of 1890 *Ravenswood* ‘set a fashion in ladies coats’ and the singer Nellie Melba (1861-1931) commissioned Terry’s costumier, Nettleship, to copy the costume worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust* (1885) [FIGURE 3.6 and 3.7].⁷⁸



Figure 3.6 - Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1885, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.6cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:405-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

In 1878, a journalist reflecting upon Terry’s position ‘in the very front rank of our actresses,’ suggested that it owed much to the fact that Terry ‘[...] not only has convictions of her own as to the reading of any character with which she may be entrusted, but has the courage of her convictions,’ and consequently made her ‘mark’ upon a performance.⁷⁹ Terry discusses the value of the criticism she received from colleagues,

rare thing to see the crowd, to ask its cause, to receive the answer, "Mrs. Langtry!" and to look in vain for the object of the crowd's admiring curiosity.’ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 141-2.

⁷⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 310-1 and 355-6.

⁷⁹ “The Future of the Lyceum Theatre,” *The Examiner*, Saturday September 21 1878, Issue 3686.

notably Reade and the playwright Tom Taylor (1817-1880) in her autobiography. She was ready to acknowledge the value of the advice offered by these figures, but she was also quick to challenge any observations which she felt to be inaccurate or misguided. As Terry explained

It is through the dissatisfaction of a man like Charles Reade that an actress *learns*—that is, if she is not conceited. Conceit is an insuperable obstacle to all progress. On the other hand, it is of little use to take criticism in a slavish spirit and to act on it without understanding it. Charles Reade constantly wrote and said things to me which were not absolutely just criticism; but they directed my attention to the true cause of the faults which he found in my performance, and put me on the way to mending them.⁸⁰



Figure 3.7 - Aimé Dupont, Nellie Melba as Marguerite in *Faust*, 1896. Albumen cabinet card. 14 x 10.3cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x135901.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁸⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 91. See also 91-98 and 110-112.

Terry's confidence in her interpretation of a role was to prove particularly important in the later stages of her career when the actress sought to challenge preconceptions relating not only to roles she was performing, but also regarding her own 'public' and 'private' identity.

A Shakespearean actress – The Lyceum Theatre 1878-1902

In 1878 Henry Irving, became the manager of the Lyceum Theatre and invited Terry to join the company. Her appointment as Irving's leading lady at the age of thirty-one owed much to the personal recommendation of a mutual friend, Lady Juliet Pollock (d.1899), who had, Terry explains

[...] told him that I was the very person for him; that "all London" was talking of my Olivia; that I had acted well in Shakespeare with the Bancrofts; that I should bring to the Lyceum Theatre what players call "a personal following."⁸¹

It is clear that by 1878, Terry's success had established her as a 'general favourite' who, as Martin Meisel suggests, '[...] brought Irving a great deal more than pictorial appeal, aesthetic credentials, and a following alert to decorative elegance.'

The nature of Irving and Terry's professional partnership developed as their trust in each other's judgement grew. As Meisel argues, and this thesis will show, '[...] Irving, with his traditional stage wisdom and sense of scenic effect, assimilated Ellen Terry's gifts and knowledge to an idea of a theater [sic] that bridged the widening gap between aesthete and philistine.'⁸² Irving soon gave Terry control over the design of her own costumes and

⁸¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 147.

⁸² Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1983) 403.

also consulted her regarding those worn by other members of the cast. Terry also came to appreciate that, although she '[...] knew more of art and archaeology in dress than [Irving] did, he had a finer sense of what was right for the *scene*.'⁸³

Many biographies of Terry have portrayed the actress as a subordinate figure, content to curtail her ambitions and sacrifice her talent, in order to maintain a partnership in which Irving retained a dominant and controlling role. This was certainly the manner in which Auerbach presented their professional relationship. She claims that Terry was 'reinvented' by Irving as his 'stage wife and Ophelia to his Hamlet' a 'composite identity' that would simultaneously 'bless and shackle her.'⁸⁴ She also stresses the inequality of the partnership noting that 'At least until the turn of the century, Ellen Terry never received billing equal to Irving's at the Lyceum.'⁸⁵ Powell shares Auerbach's views, suggesting that Terry whilst '[...]a preeminent star in her own right was 'as dependent on Henry Irving as Victorian wives were upon their husbands'⁸⁶ Similarly Sos Eltis notes that 'For all her personal successes, Terry was figured primarily as a faithful, Ruskinian helpmeet to her theatrical partner.'⁸⁷ As a counter this, however, Eltis acknowledges that 'The extent to which this image of the selfless actress, unmotivated by ambition, was constructed or was created by a general desire to view this woman herself as a reflection of her stage roles remains difficult to determine.'⁸⁸ Chapter 6 will therefore consider the significance of Terry's subordinate, feminine, identity within the context of late nineteenth century society and Terry's increasing celebrity. As it will discuss, Terry's

⁸³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 157.

⁸⁴ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 175. Marguerite Steen also highlights the extent to which Terry's talents and ambition was curtailed by her partnership with Irving, See Marguerite Steen, *Pride of Terrys* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd, 1962), 147, 160, 183.

⁸⁵ Auerbach stresses that 'only in 'the more egalitarian America' did Terry obtain the 'equality of billing England denied her.' Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 194.

⁸⁶ Kerry Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 51.

⁸⁷ Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 180.

⁸⁸ Eltis. "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 181.

controversial off stage life arguably necessitated the cultivation of respectability and placed the actress in a position where her reputation, and popularity, however high, remained extremely vulnerable to threat from scandal.⁸⁹

Writing before a recent cache of letters revealed the intimacy of Terry and Irving's off-stage relationship, Cockin raised the possibility that, rather than a sexual relationship (as has since been proved), their bond might be regarded as one of parent and child.⁹⁰ Such a relationship, she argues, had the potential to be 'a dynamic exchange which was mutually supportive, nurturing and disciplinary.' As Cockin suggests, evidence of Irving's trust in Terry's judgement can be found in the very limited critical feedback Irving's provided on her performances, particularly during the rehearsal period.⁹¹ Cockin acknowledges that this was often very frustrating for Terry, but she suggests that Irving may have 'refrained from giving [Terry] public direction about her performance because he knew that her studies were thorough and he trusted her judgement.'⁹²

A range of evidence testifying to Terry's committed and conscientious preparations for her roles does survive. This includes Terry's autobiography and her surviving letters.⁹³

Comyns-Carr's *Reminiscences* also offer an insight into the intensive research undertaken

⁸⁹ One route through which it has been suggested Terry sought 'respectability' was through her marriage to the actor Charles Wardell (1839-1885). Terry met this actor/journalist during the original run of *Olivia* in 1878 and married him the same year. Their marriage was not a success, Wardell proved to be an alcoholic and the pair separated in 1881. He did however give his name to Terry's children who were given temporary 'legitimacy' under the names Edith Wardell and Edward Wardell. See Auerbach, *Ellen Terry Player in Her Time*, 183-5 and Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 80-86. As Melville notes, in spite of this separation, Terry paid Wardell's debts, and also provided financial support to the sisters of his first wife for several years. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 117.

⁹⁰ As mentioned in Chapter 1, these letters were donated to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2010 and form part of the Ellen Terry Collection. The letters are catalogued under the archive number THM/384/6.

⁹¹ Terry notes that her scenes with Irving in *Hamlet* were still 'unrehearsed' when only ten days remained before the opening of the production. See Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 153.

⁹² Katharine Cockin, "Ellen Terry and Henry Irving: A Working Partnership", *Henry Irving: a re-evaluation of the pre-eminent Victorian actor-manager*, ed. Richard Foulkes (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008) 37-48.(42).

⁹³ As this Chapter has noted, Terry visited a madhouse to gain inspiration for her performance of Ophelia and in her autobiography Terry recalls that she actually learnt to spin when rehearsing for the role of Marguerite in *Faust*. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 243.

when preparing for Lyceum Productions.⁹⁴ As Marshall has shown, the extent of Terry's preparation is particularly apparent in the detailed annotations the actress made on the acting copies of her scripts, which, together with a range of texts related to the history of dress, theatre and acting, survive in the library at Smallhythe.⁹⁵

It seems most likely, therefore, that the partnership was founded upon a mutually beneficial compromise, rather than inequality or competition, and it is evident that Irving appreciated the value of Terry's practical and artistic experience.⁹⁶ Similarly Terry, whilst acknowledging that she was often obliged to play 'second fiddle' parts, makes it '[...] quite clear that [she also] had [her] turn of "first fiddle" ones.' Indeed, she maintains that, "Romeo and Juliet," "Much Ado About Nothing," "Olivia," and "The Cup" all gave [her] finer opportunities than they gave Henry' and that 'In "The Merchant of Venice" and "Charles I," they were at least equal to his.'⁹⁷ Terry's evaluation of their partnership is reaffirmed by a critic's response to her performance as Portia in 1878. As they suggested, the quality of the actress's 'accomplished' performance indicated that

[...] the actor-manager [Irving] does not contemplate the fatal mistake of trying to reign alone in an art-kingdom where, could the ideal conditions

⁹⁴ This included a trip to Nuremberg when researching the 1885 production of *Faust* on which both Joseph Comyns-Carr (a playwright and journalist) and his wife, Alice (Terry's principal costume designer from 1887) accompanied Irving and Terry. They were also subsequently joined by the Lyceum's 'scenic artist' Hawes Craven who came to make sketches of local scenery which could be used to add 'realism' to the Lyceum scenery. Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 149-152.

⁹⁵ As Marshall discusses many of Terry's acting copies of plays are preserved within the library at Smallhythe. These texts are filled with Terry's notes which record the mood and movement required for scenes. These notes also include Terry's personal annotations regarding the direction and design of productions. This library also includes a wide variety of reference books and a full catalogue can be found in F T. Bowyer, *Catalogue of the Working Library of Ellen Terry at Smallhythe Place, Tenterden, Kent* (Rolvenden, Kent: Rother Valley Press and National Trust, 1977). See also Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 154-160.

⁹⁶ Terry records several ways in which she advised Irving early in their partnership. This included persuading the actor to '[...] give up that dreadful, paralyzing waiting at the side for his cue.' As she explains, '[...] after a time he took my advice. He was never obstinate in such matters. His one object was to *find out*, to *test* suggestion, and follow it if it stood his test.' Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 155.

⁹⁷ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 164.

be attained, all who are deemed worthy of a share in the labours would be equal.⁹⁸

Although Irving granted Terry independence regarding specific elements of the production, in decisions relating to the overall ‘direction’ of a production she was required to submit to his judgement. This could prove frustrating as Terry had strong opinions regarding not only the interpretation of her own characters, but also the narrative in which they appeared.⁹⁹ She was particularly disappointed by Irving’s determination to include a traditional “gag” in the 1882 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. As she explained, Irving was convinced this “gag”, ‘was necessary: otherwise the “curtain” would be received in dead silence [...]’ Even though Terry ‘[...] used every argument, artistic and otherwise’ to persuade Irving to relent, the actor/manager though ‘gentle’, as was ‘his custom’, ‘would not discuss it much, [and] remained obdurate.’ She also felt hampered by Irving’s performance, in particular his ‘[...] rather finicking, deliberate method as Benedick’ which meant that Terry, convinced that ‘Beatrice must be swift, swift, swift!’ felt that she ‘[...] could never put the right pace into [her] part.’¹⁰⁰ In spite of her misgivings however, Beatrice, like Portia, was soon established as one of the roles which the critics, and public, felt to be ideally suited to her temperament, with one critic regarding it as Terry’s ‘[...] finest part in pure comedy.’¹⁰¹ Furthermore, and as Terry notes, ‘Such disagreements occurred very seldom’ and ‘[...] for one thing [she] did not

⁹⁸ “The Future of the Lyceum Theatre,” *The Examiner*, 1878.

⁹⁹ The strength of Terry’s views are apparent both in her published writing, and the annotation with which she covered her working texts. Chapter 6 will explore this evidence further using the examples of Terry’s scripts and reference texts which survive in museum collections, including The Garrick Collection, the Department of Theatre and Performance and in the library at Smallhythe Place.

¹⁰⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 162-3.

¹⁰¹ “The Theatres – Mr. Irving and Miss Terry at the Royalty,” Press Cutting, possibly *The Saturday Review*, June 9 1883: 732. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 39, Garrick Club, London.

like doing at the Lyceum, there would probably be a hundred things [she] should dislike doing in another theatre'¹⁰²

It is clear that Terry's partnership with Irving placed restrictions on the parts available to the actress. Irving's 'hurry' to produce *Macbeth*, for instance, denied Terry the opportunity to perform the role of Rosalind in *As You Like It*, a part which Terry deeply regretted never playing.¹⁰³ Yet, whilst it is apparent that Terry was obliged to conform to Irving's selection of productions, she was also subject to the preconceptions and demands of the public. Indeed, Marshall maintains that it was, in actuality, 'the dual pressure of the public's desire to see the actress appear in 'an Ellen Terry part', together with the Lyceum's focus upon productions of Shakespeare's work, [which] confined Terry firmly within her role as a 'Shakespearean actress.'¹⁰⁴

'An icon of traditional feminine tenderness and virtue'

Eltis contends that, in spite of the controversial nature of her private life, Terry's celebrity was founded, at least in part, on her position as '[...] an icon of traditional feminine tenderness and virtue.'¹⁰⁵ The financial independence and success Terry had gained through her professional career by the 1880s certainly freed her, to some extent, from the

¹⁰² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 164. See also Ellen Terry, Christopher St. John, and William Shakespeare. *Four Lectures on Shakespeare* (London: Hopkinson, 1932), 96.

¹⁰³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 302. See also Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in her Time*, 230-1. Looking back upon her career Terry confessed that this sacrifice ranked amongst '[...] the greatest disappointments of her life.' Terry, St. John, Shakespeare, *Four lectures on Shakespeare*, 97.

¹⁰⁴ The role of Leonora in *The Adored One*, by J.M.Barrie, (1913) was created by Mrs. Patrick Campbell, but described in *The Era*, 10 September 1913, as 'an Ellen Terry part'. See Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 179. Similarly, as Marshall comments, 'During the Victorian period, the concept of the 'Shakespearean actress' was one which carried transparent cultural connotations of an actress defined primarily by, and known mainly for, her work in Shakespeare's plays.' Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 153.

¹⁰⁵ Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 179. Eltis discusses this element of Terry's 'public identity' further in *Sos Eltis, Acts of Desire: Women and Sex on Stage, 1800-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 94, 154, 156.

constraints of this role. Even so, she was repeatedly called upon to portray the feminine and submissive qualities valued by society in her on-stage roles and celebrity persona.

Powell, argues that Terry was a ‘less dominating, more sentimental actress,’ contrasting her acting style, with the unashamed ferocity and power of Bernhardt and the ‘subdued’ strength of Duse.¹⁰⁶ Citing Oscar Wilde’s (1854-1900) review of Terry’s performance as Olivia in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Powell suggests that the “power” of Terry’s acting arose from ‘[...] her genius for thrilling an audience with tender emotions.’ As Powell notes however, ‘[...] even this quieter “power” [...] was difficult to reconcile with the private and passive roles that Victorian woman were usually asked to play in life.’ She suggests that a specific rhetoric was therefore used in the press to subdue Terry, and reassure audiences, one in which reviewers characterised the actress as a performer ‘on the margin of humanity – [...] a delicate flower or a “mystical force,”’ portraying Terry as ‘not so much a woman, as a nonhuman, vaguely spiritualised essence – a “wan lily.”’¹⁰⁷

Critics also repeatedly remarked upon Terry’s ‘charm’, ‘beauty’ and ‘grace’ and this focus on Terry’s feminine qualities, was combined with a concentration upon, what was perceived to be, the fragile nervous state of the actress.¹⁰⁸ Upon Terry’s arrival in America in 1883 for instance, the *New York Herald* declared,

The actress is evidently a woman of extreme nervous sensibility, with an organisation so highly strung, that [...] she always has her heart in her

¹⁰⁶ Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre*, 14-16.

¹⁰⁷ Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre*, 16-17.

¹⁰⁸ Instances of such descriptions include reviews published the *Pall Gazette*, 4 November 1879, Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume II: 222 and Henry James, *The London Theatres*, Vol XXI, 26, 1881, Press Cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume III: 361, both Garrick Collection, London.

mouth. The muscles of her face respond to that slightest excitement, and her emotions are clearly reflected on it [...] ¹⁰⁹

Similarly, a reviewer commenting upon Terry's performance as Henrietta Maria in *Charles I*, contended that 'Her acting has less mind in it than that of Mr. Irving, [...] it proceeds essentially from the nervous system which is the soul.'¹¹⁰

This careful 'scripting' of Terry's on-stage persona shaped responses to her performance and dominated the public perception of the actress. As Powell suggests, attributing the emotional intensity of Terry's performances to the 'weak' and 'vulnerable' nature of the actress allowed the public to control Terry's "power," and re-fashion the actress as a safe, dependent, figure, constrained, and contained, by her femininity. The restrictions this characterisation placed on Terry become apparent in the controversy provoked by the announcement that she was to play Lady Macbeth in 1888. Many critics declared that Terry was 'too good, too gentle, too feminine for the part' citing the '[...] old stage idea was that a big woman, with harsh features and a strident voice could best express the terrible creature who urged on her hesitating lord.'¹¹¹ Indeed one critic suggested that

[...] there is a gentle womanliness about Miss Terry which makes it impossible to for her to utter convincingly such a speech as that hideous invocation to "thick night" and the Spirits of Evil. To read this and

¹⁰⁹ [Untitled, but written in response to Terry's arrival] published in *New York Herald*, October 1883, Press Cutting, mounted in Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883*, Garrick Club, London.

¹¹⁰ *The Tribune*, October 1883, Press Cutting, mounted in Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883*, Garrick Club, London.

¹¹¹ "Macbeth at the Lyceum," *The Standard*, December 1888, Press cutting, mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume V: 333, Garrick Collection, London. Another reviewer, made comparable observations about Terry's physicality, arguing that '[...] the part [was] ill-suited to the actress's physique and dramatic manner.' They were, nevertheless, adamant that Terry, rather than yielding '[...] to the temptation of adopting a new and untenable reading of the part, with a view to bringing it more fully within the compass of her powers,' should have '[...] accepted this inevitable drawback, and to have combated it as best she might.' *The Saturday Review*, ca. 1888: 10-11. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V, 332, Garrick Club, London.

suppose that Lady Macbeth was other than diabolical and fiendish is impossible; and these are qualities to represent which is beyond the wide scope of Miss Terry's genius, great as it unquestionably is.¹¹²

Such criticism indicates, as Powell suggests, that the actress struggled to escape the rhetoric which controlled her performance and compelled Terry to supply '[...] a masculinist public with what it demanded – a representation of itself, its prejudices and ideals.'¹¹³ Powell contends that as a result even Terry's '[...] enactment of Lady Macbeth was trimmed to the proportions of a Victorian Dame.'¹¹⁴ Yet there is evidence to suggest that the actress sought to resist and challenge this perception of her performance.



Figure 3.8 -Delattre (engraver), Mrs Siddons as Lady Macbeth in Act V of *Macbeth*, London, 1784, Engraving on paper, 15.4 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.2381-2013.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹¹² "The Real Macbeth," *Unidentified periodical*, ca. December 1888, Press Cutting, mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume V: 311, Garrick Collection, London.

¹¹³ Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre*, 54.

¹¹⁴ Powell cites Walter Macqueen-Pope's summation of Terry as 'womanliness personified,' in support of her argument, quoting from Macqueen's 1952 publication *Ladies First: Women's Conquest of the British Stage* (London: W.H. Allen) Powell. *Women and Victorian Theatre*, 57.

A 'womanly' Lady Macbeth

Discussing the theatrical importance of 'Lady Macbeth', Marshall notes that the role '[...]' had a recognised part in an English theatrical tradition going back most notably to Sarah Siddons.' Significantly however, she notes that this Shakespearean character did not '[...]' have a similar role within expectations of English femininity.'¹¹⁵ As such it offered Terry a crucial opportunity to perform a role which was certainly neither 'charming' nor 'winsome.'

As an experienced actress she would have been conscious of the long tradition in which Sarah Siddons (1775-1831) was popularly felt to have provided the definitive interpretation of the part.¹¹⁶ [FIGURE 3.8] Terry also owned a copy of Siddons' *Remarks on the Character of Lady Macbeth*' (as published by Thomas Campbell in 1834) and would therefore have been familiar with Siddons' personal account of her reading of the character.¹¹⁷ As her 'Remarks' reveal, Siddons was determined that Lady Macbeth represented a '[...]' woman in whose bosom the passion of ambition has almost obliterated the characteristics of human nature, in whose composition are associated all the subjugating powers of intellect and all the charms and graces of personal beauty [...]'¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Marshall, "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress," 64.

¹¹⁶ Robert Shaughnessy notes that 'Not only her contemporaries but many later commentators have considered her portrayal to be definitive; in 1812 Charles Lamb, who tended to doubt that Shakespeare's tragedies could or should be staged at all, wrote that "we speak of Lady Macbeth, while we are in reality thinking of Mrs S."' Robert Shaughnessy, "Sarah Siddons (1755–1831)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, [online edition, May 2008]). Similarly, the essayist, William Hazlitt (1778-1830) described Siddons as 'Tragedy Personified'. See William Hazlitt, *Selected Writings*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 339-340. Furthermore, an article entitled published in *The Era* on December 15, 1888, describes Terry's praise for the 'stupendous performance' of Siddons. See "The Revival of 'Macbeth,'" *The Era*, Saturday, December 15, 1888, Issue 2621, n.p.

¹¹⁷ Siddons' 'Remarks' were published by Thomas Campbell in his *Life of Mrs. Siddons* in 1834. A first edition of Thomas Campbell's text forms part of the library at Smallhythe place. Siddons' *Remarks on the Character of Lady Macbeth* appear in Volume 2 of the two volume work by Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons*, Vol. 2 (London: Effingham Wilson, 1834) 10-34.

¹¹⁸ Siddons, quoted in Thomas Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons, Volume 2* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1834), 10-11. Laura Rosenthal also offers an interesting assessment of Siddons interpretation of the role in Laura J. Rosenthal 'The sublime, the beautiful, "The Siddons"', *The Clothes That Wear Us: Essays on Dressing and Transgressing in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, ed. Jessica Munns and Penny Richards (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999).

Terry agreed with Siddons that Lady Macbeth was driven by the ambition and ‘craving for power’ which she felt to be a ‘true to woman’s nature.’¹¹⁹ She placed far greater emphasis, however, on the degree to which Lady Macbeth’s love for her husband motivated her actions. Consequently, despite her praise for, and acknowledgement of, Siddons’ success, Terry believed that ‘[...] Siddons soared in this part higher than Shakespeare, and that Shakespeare, had he foreseen such a woman, would have shaped his character accordingly.’ She therefore returned to Shakespeare’s original text for her ‘inspiration’ and ‘guidance.’¹²⁰



Figure 3.9 - Unknown photographer. Sarah Bernhardt as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, ca.1884, Sepia photograph on paper. 13.8 x 10.5cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.137:118-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹¹⁹ Ellen Terry, handwritten annotation in pencil in Joseph Comyns-Carr, *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: An Essay* (London: Bickers & Son, Leicester Square, 1889) 20. This book forms part of the library at Smallhythe place, Pressmark E.V.2.18.

¹²⁰ “The Revival of ‘Macbeth,’” *The Era*, 1888.

In addition to studying past performances and reading essays and commentaries on the text, Terry would also have been conscious of more recent interpretations of the role, not least those of her contemporary, Bernhardt, for whom the ‘[...] part became a seminal one.’¹²¹ [FIGURE 3.9] Indeed, as Marshall stresses, whilst Terry’s 1888 performance is ‘[...] usually read in comparison to Siddons’ innovations in the part,’ it is equally likely that Terry was also ‘[...] responding to recent European and American performances.’¹²² When Bernhardt first attempted the part of Lady Macbeth in 1884 her performance provoked mixed responses from the critics. Some described it as ‘one of her most original and most carefully elaborated characters’ and ‘the one character in the list of Shakespeare’s heroines that exactly and completely suits her idiosyncrasies.’ Other critics however, particularly those based in England, recast the emotional intensity and energy of Bernhardt’s performance ‘as a specifically sexual one,’ suggesting that her Lady Macbeth represented a fulfilment of that ““character” of serpentine sexuality which was her trademark.’¹²³ When comparing Terry’s performance with Bernhardt’s Lady Macbeth, critics identified an important distinction between

[...] the sensuality of the French Lady Macbeth seeking to work upon her lord’s nature by means of animal passion and the sweet winning womanliness of the character as now presented at the Lyceum.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Marshall, “Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress,” 64.

¹²² Marshall, “Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress,” 64.

¹²³ Marshall suggests that this perception of Bernhardt continued to ‘[...] determine [the] reception of her performances in England, no matter what her motivations.’ The reviews quoted are “Madame Bernhardt’s Lady Macbeth,” *The Times*, 25 June 1884: 10 and “Gaiety Theatre: Madame Sarah Bernhardt in *Macbeth*,” *The Times*, 5 July 1884: 7. Both reviews are cited in Marshall “Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress,” 67-8.

¹²⁴ Untitled newspaper clipping, dated by hand December 29th 1888. Press Cutting mounted in Ruth Canton Album, Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre (1884-92), Vol II. Garrick Collection, London.

As the tone of this review suggests, critics continued to reinforce and emphasise Terry's 'womanliness.'¹²⁵ Her performance was also repeatedly contrasted with the strength and passion of Siddons' earlier portrayal. One reviewer, focusing on the lines 'Come you spirits / That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here' contrasted the 'faltering' delivery of Terry, struggling to 'repress her feminine instincts,' with the dominating force of Siddons' performance, in which the actress spoke 'The great invocations' in 'blood-curling tones.'¹²⁶

In spite of the criticism attracted by her 'feminine' interpretation of the role Terry's personal papers, and published writings testify to her conviction that Lady Macbeth was 'A woman (all over a woman)' who 'was *not* a fiend, and *did* love her husband.'¹²⁷ The force of Terry's determination to persist with her personal understanding of the character is manifest in a letter she sent to her daughter in 1888. Indeed, Terry actually quotes from this correspondence in her autobiography, using it to justify and explain her interpretation of Lady Macbeth. As the letter stresses, despite the criticism provoked by her interpretation, Terry resolved 'not [to] budge an inch in the reading of it, for that I know is right.' She was therefore prepared to 'what is vulgarly called "sweat at it," each night' in order to counter any critics who claimed she wanted to 'make [Lady Macbeth] a "gentle, lovable woman"', for, 'She was nothing of the sort.'¹²⁸

Examined in the light of the theatrical traditions and social preconceptions that shaped her performance, Terry's 'Lady Macbeth' represents a carefully judged compromise between her personal interpretation of the character, and the expectations of her audience.

¹²⁵ One author, noting that Terry 'is not cast in the masculine mould' anticipated a Lady Macbeth 'with a winsome face and a fascination of personal charm.' See "The Revival of 'Macbeth,'" *The Era*, 1888.

¹²⁶ "Macbeth at the Lyceum," *The Times*, ca.1888. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V, 299, Garrick Club, London.

¹²⁷ Terry, handwritten annotation on her copy of Joseph Comyns-Carr's *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: An Essay*, 28; Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 307.

¹²⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 307.

Recognising the limitations imposed on her by her reputation for ‘femininity’ and ‘charm,’ Terry was obliged to present a Lady Macbeth which would maintain this established ‘public identity,’ and yet fulfil her ambition to play an assertive and commanding figure. Her portrayal of Lady Macbeth as a woman whose actions were motivated by passionate love for her husband, enabled Terry to emphasise the feminine qualities within the character, and thereby sustain her reputation for ‘womanliness.’ This interpretation of the role simultaneously enabled Terry to create a ‘new Lady Macbeth,’ whose ‘femininity,’ though associated with weakness and ‘fragility,’ represented a source of strength, and the means through which she was able to manipulate her male counterparts, and satisfy her craving for absolute power.¹²⁹ As one critic concluded:

Is this Lady Macbeth? Who shall decide? That it is not the Lady Macbeth of Mrs. Siddons we know. It is scarcely a Lady Macbeth we realise. It is perhaps, one of which we have dreamed. [...] This is Miss Terry’s Lady Macbeth.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ A reviewer writing for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, described ‘The new Lady Macbeth’ as an ‘exquisite creature’ who was both ‘passionate [...] sensuous and finely strung’. “Macbeth at the Lyceum,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 31st, 1888. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V, 330, Garrick Club, London.

¹³⁰ “Lyceum Theatre,” December 31st 1888. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V, 331, Garrick Club, London. Another reviewer reached a similar conclusion, writing that ‘[...] Though certain passages of Shakespeare may give colour to the Lyceum interpretation of the text, personally I must admit I hold with the traditional reading; at the same time, the “startling innovations” once accepted, there is such subtle power in Mr. Irving’s conception, and such a picturesqueness and melancholy charm in Miss Ellen Terry’s rendering, as to enthral the sense and afford the spectator an intellectual feast.’ *Dramatic Notes*, 29th December 1888, Press cutting, Production file Lyceum Theatre, Macbeth, 1888. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 3.10 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.2 x10.1cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:426-2007.

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3.3 – Harmonious Costume

Costume as ‘armour’

Whether in a deliberate anticipation of the controversy her performance was likely to provoke, or in pursuit of a specific artistic effect, Terry’s costumes played an important part in her portrayal of Lady Macbeth and provided an immediate statement of her reading of the character. This is particularly evident in the dress in which Terry made her first appearance [FIGURE 3.10]. This costume, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, was deliberately designed to reproduce the effect of ‘chain mail,’ an

impression heightened by the serpentine gleam of the blue green beetle wing cases and metal tinsel which covered its surface.¹³¹ It therefore provided Terry with a form of ‘armour’ which conveyed her Lady Macbeth’s majesty and power and yet retained sufficient signs of femininity and beauty to placate even the harshest of critics.

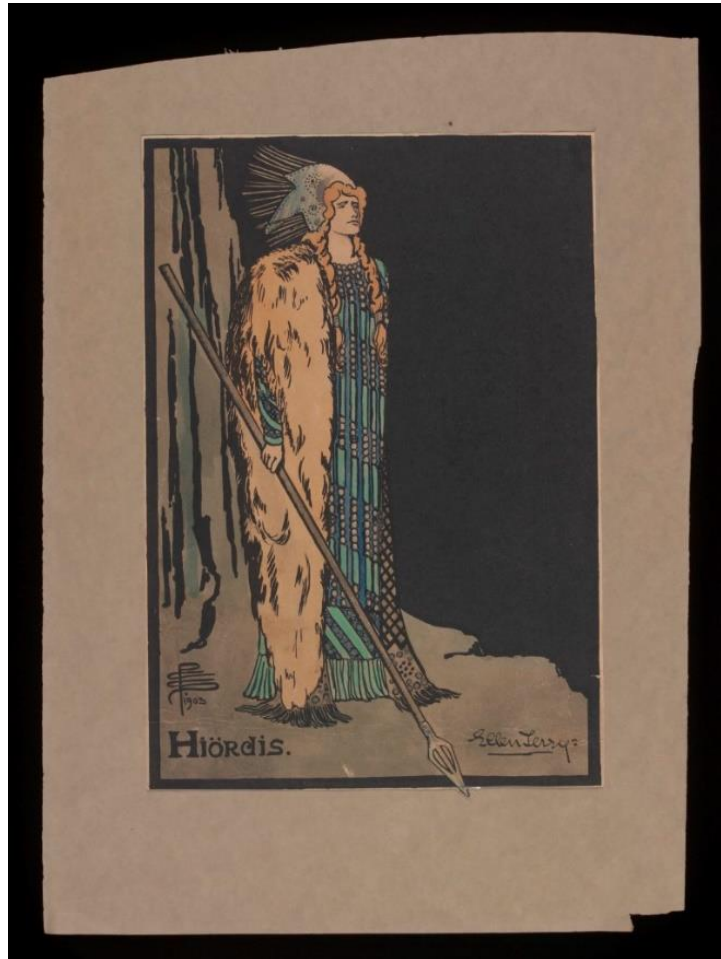


Figure 3.11 - Pamela Coleman Smith (1877-1925). Ellen Terry as Hiördis in *The Vikings* by Henrik Ibsen, Hand coloured print on paper. 27.2 x 19.1cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.952-2014.

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The 1903 production of Henrik Ibsen’s (1828-1906) early work, *The Vikings*, offers a further significant example of Terry’s use of costume to communicate her departure from her established ‘womanly’ role, both on and off the stage. Staged some fifteen years after the Lyceum Company production of *Macbeth*, this production marked Terry’s first

¹³¹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 211-2.

independent venture into management and her departure her previous status as Irving's leading lady. In this instance Terry's costume needed to act as a visual embodiment of the 'primitive, fighting, free, open-air person' she sought to portray.¹³² [FIGURE 3.11]

The floor length tunic, which she wore as Hiördis in the first act survives in the collection at Smallhythe [FIGURE 3.12]. Designed by her son, Edward Gordon Craig and made by her daughter, Edith Craig, this tunic is formed from lengths of sea green leather and indigo blue wool, set on a black cotton net ground. As with the chain mail construction employed for Terry's more famous 'Beetlewing dress' in *Macbeth*, the colour palette and decoration used for the tunic, in particular the discs of burnished metal with which the costume is embellished, and the bronze silk velvet which edges the neckline, explicitly reference armour [FIGURE 3.13]. This warrior-like costume, which was worn with a 'cap of steel' covered with upstanding 'quills, standing up behind,' set the tone for the production and provided an apt costume for the 'magnificent' figure of Hiördis, a 'superb' woman who, in Terry's assessment, combined the force of '3 Lady Macbeths.'¹³³ The significance of Terry's decision to select this Ibsen play, and in particular this cold and remorseless role to mark her first venture into independent management, will be considered in Chapter 6.

¹³² Terry offers this description of Hiördis in Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 325.

¹³³ "Imperial Theatre, *The Vikings*," *Unidentified Periodical*, 1903. Press Cutting, mounted in Ruth Canton Album, *Henry Irving*, Garrick Club, London. Terry made this observation in a letter sent to her son, Edward Gordon Craig on 19th November 1902. Auerbach quotes from the letter in *Ellen Terry: Player in her time*, 334. She cites Edward Antony Craig's book, *Gordon Craig: The Story of His Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968) 174 as her source.



Figure 3.12 - Costume worn by Terry as Hiördis in *The Vikings*, Imperial Theatre, 1903, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 23 May 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.116, [1118841].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 3.13 -Detail of costume worn by Terry as Hiördis in *The Vikings*, Imperial Theatre, 1903, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 23 May 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.116, [1118841].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

‘Archaeologically correct, and artistically appropriate’¹³⁴

As noted in Chapter 1, and in the introduction to this chapter, in order to understand the design, construction, dramatic impact, and historical significance of stage costumes, it is vital to establish the artistic, social, and historic context within which these garments were designed, created, used, seen and preserved. The significant changes in attitude towards stage costume over the course of the nineteenth century are of particular relevance to this thesis. As Cummings has observed ‘most performers in the 18th century and into the 19th century mixed contemporary dress with costumes suggestive of character type.’¹³⁵ Indeed T.C. Davis suggests that ‘before the movement for historical authenticity took hold, the cloth and decoration of theatrical costume alone signalled the dramatic role.’¹³⁶ The result was that whilst it ‘was recognised that a few characters had to have historical costumes as this was part of their identity’ in many instances budgetary constraints and contemporary taste meant that ‘the rest of the cast had to make do with the contemporary suits in the wardrobe.’¹³⁷

Though contemporary fashions and established conventions continued to govern costume design throughout the eighteenth century there were some ‘early idealists’ who sought to reform stage costume.¹³⁸ Jackson has identified evidence of a shift in attitude towards ‘[...] the costuming of plays set in other periods and places with increased (or novel)

¹³⁴ Oscar Wilde, “Truth and Masks,” *Intentions: The Decay of Lying. Pen, Pencil, and Poison, The Critic As Artist, The Truth of Masks* (London: Osgood, 1891. [Online edition, Project Gutenberg, Transcribed from the 8th edition published by Methuen and Co. in 1913].) n.p.

¹³⁵ Cummings, ‘Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?’ *Understanding Fashion History* (London: Batsford, 2004) 118. See also Maclaurin, ‘The Stage Picture,’ *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice* (London, Palgrave, 2015) 48-50.

¹³⁶ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 109.

¹³⁷ De Marly, *Costume of the Stage*, 42, 45. See also Russell Jackson, “Brief Overview: A Stage History of Shakespeare in Costume,” *Shakespeare and Costume*, ed. Patricia Lennox and Bella Mirabella (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 13.

¹³⁸ Cummings, De Marly and Maclaurin cite the example of Aaron Hill’s 1731 production of *The Generous Traitor, or Aethelwold* at the Drury Lane Theatre. Cummings, ‘Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?’, 118, De Marly, *Costume on the Stage 1600-1940*, 49-50 and Maclarin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 48-49.

attention to the places and times represented in them, but also the period of their composition' in the mid eighteenth century.¹³⁹ As Peter Holland suggests however, many actors felt that further reform was required.¹⁴⁰ John Philip Kemble (1757-1823) and his sister Sarah Siddons are amongst those credited with taking steps to promote reform in costuming, but the classical styles adopted by both, whilst rejecting 'theatrical tradition,' arguably owed more to the contemporary enthusiasm for Neoclassicism, than an in-depth study of the architecture and dress of the classical world.¹⁴¹

The antiquarian James Robinson Planché (1796-1880) played a crucial part in altering attitudes to theatrical costume during the nineteenth century.¹⁴² Writing in 1836 he suggested that Edmund Kean's (1787-1833) productions at Drury Lane (staged between circa 1814 and 1820) should be credited with initiating 'considerable improvements in point of scenery and dress.'¹⁴³ It was, Planché argued, Kean's willingness to consult (if not also follow) the guidance of authorities on historic dress, that established an

¹³⁹ He cites Hogarth's portrait of David Garrick (1717-1779) as Richard III (now in the Walker Art Gallery), painted in circa 1745 as an illustration of the beginning of this 'second phase' and notes that Garrick's successors Edmund Kean and George Frederick Cooke both wore outfits in a similar style to the costume depicted in Hogarth's painting of Garrick. Jackson, *Shakespeare and Costume*, 14. Maclaurin also credit Garrick with an influential role in stage reform and suggest that a shift in approach and attitudes to stage costume occurred from around 1760, See Maclaurin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 49.

¹⁴⁰ Peter Holland, "Performing in the Middle Ages," *Medieval Shakespeare: Past and Presents*, ed. Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper, and Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 208-9. Cummings, Jackson, Laver and De Marly, also recognise the importance of another key challenger of tradition, the Irish actor, Charles Macklin (1699-1797). They attach specific importance to reforms Macklin made to the costumes traditionally worn for the role of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* in 1741 and the title role of *Macbeth* in 1773. These costumes are discussed in further detail by Laver, *Costume in the Theatre*, 98 and Cummings, 'Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?' 119. See also Jackson, *Shakespeare and Costume*, 13 and De Marly, *Costume on the Stage*, 51.

¹⁴¹ For an in depth examination of both Siddons' and Kemble's approaches to theatrical costume see De Marly, *Costume on the stage*, 57-63. J.P. Kemble's approach to costumes was also analysed by James Robinson Planché (1796-1880) in "A Brief History of Stage Costume," *The Book of Table Talk*, eds. Charles Macfarlane, and J.R. Planché (London: Charles Knight, 1836), 172-174.

¹⁴² The important part that Planché played in changing the approach to design for the stage, not least through his six year partnership with Charles Kemble (1775-1854) at Covent Garden, is noted by figures writing on this theme in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including Terry in her autobiography, *The Story of My Life*, and Mrs. Aria in *Costume, Fanciful, Historical and Theatrical* (London, Macmillan and Co Ltd., 1906), 237-8. Subsequent researchers including Paul Reinhardt, "The Costume Designs of James Robinson Planché (1796-1880)," *Educational Theatre Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (December, 1968), 524-544; De Marly, *Costume on the Stage*, 69; Cummings, *Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?*, 119, Jackson, *Shakespeare and Costume*, 14 and Maclaurin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 50-51 and Taylor, *Establishing Dress History*, 25, have reaffirmed its significance.

¹⁴³ Planché, "A Brief History of Stage Costume," 173-4

environment in which Charles Kemble (1775-1854) could ‘set about the reformation of the costume of Shakespeare’s plays in good earnest.’¹⁴⁴

The production of *King John* staged by Kemble in 1823, is cited by Cumming, De Marly, Jackson and McClaurin as marking a major turning point in costume design.¹⁴⁵ This production opened at Covent Garden Theatre, London and Planché was engaged to design the costumes. The production sought to promote ‘an attention to Costume which has never been equalled on the English Stage’ and the playbills promised audiences that ‘Every character will appear in the precise habit of the period – the whole of the Dresses and Decorations being executed from indisputable authorities.’¹⁴⁶

The success of the productions staged by Kemble and Planché during their six year partnership, can be attributed in part to the fact that their efforts to reform theatrical costume were combined, and very probably encouraged by, a burgeoning interest in the history of dress in the late eighteenth century.¹⁴⁷ This interest in the study of past fashions continued through the nineteenth century and by the late 1830s, as Planché declared, the ‘spirit of critical enquiry’ had been sufficiently ‘aroused’ to prompt ‘an entire and complete reformation of [...] theatrical wardrobes.’¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Planché, “A Brief History of Stage Costume,” 174.

¹⁴⁵ Cummings, *Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?*, 119, Jackson, *Shakespeare and Costume*, 14 and Maclaurin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 50-51.

¹⁴⁶ Playbill, *King John*, Covent Garden, 15 November 1823. Covent Garden Theatre, Production Box, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

¹⁴⁷ Taylor refers to publications across Europe, noting however that the emphasis in this period remained ‘on illustration with only brief text’. She notes in particular the four volumes which formed Thomas Jeffreys’ ‘ambitious *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations, ancient and Modern* [which] came out over the 1757-72 period’ and Joseph Strutt’s works *The Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of England* (1773); *Complete View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits etc. of the Inhabitants of England* (1774, 1775 and 1776) and *Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England* (1796 and 1799). Taylor, *Establishing Dress History*, 10, 23.

¹⁴⁸ Planché, “A Brief History of Stage Costume,” 174-5. As Paul Reinhardt has shown, Planché was amongst the figures engaged in the study of historic dress, publishing the results of his research in a range of archaeological journals. In 1834 these articles were brought together in J. R. Planché, *History of British Costume, from the Earliest Period to the Close of the 18th Century* (London: Charles Knight, 1834). Paul Reinhardt, “The Costume Designs of James Robinson Planché (1796-1880),” *Educational Theatre Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (December, 1968), 524-5. By the time Terry was born in 1847, a second edition of this text was already being printed and a copy formed part of the actress’s library. Terry’s copy was the 1847 edition, it is now part of the collection at Smallhythe Place, National Trust Inventory Number 3052812.

This was certainly the spirit in which Charles Kean approached the productions he staged at the Princess Theatre, London, between 1849 and 1859. Indeed, Terry subsequently argued that Kean's 'Shakespearian productions' marked 'the real beginning of a serious attempt to clear the air of anachronisms.'¹⁴⁹

Terry made her first stage appearance the Princess Theatre in 1856. She spent three years working with the Keans and, as her memoirs suggest, this apprenticeship clearly had a formative influence on her attitude towards costume and design for the stage.¹⁵⁰ As Maclaurin suggests, Kean's '[...] emphasis on education as well as entertainment allowed audiences to feel that they could enjoy a visual feast while learning about a real episode in history.'¹⁵¹

'A sense of decorative effect'¹⁵²

By the time Terry joined the Lyceum Company in 1878 the actress had spent a significant period of time living with two leading figures in art and design: between 1864 and 1865, with Watts and between 1868 and 1874, with Godwin. The same committed attention to precise historical details for which Charles Kean's productions were famous characterised Godwin's approach to design both on and off the stage. It was whilst Terry was working with a 'stock company' in Bristol in the 1860s that she received her first introduction to Godwin, whose role in shaping her taste will be discussed in Chapter 6. The commencement of Godwin's impact on the Terry's views regarding design and costume can be traced to the dress that he created for the actress to wear as Titania in *A Midsummer*

¹⁴⁹ Ellen Terry, "Stage Decoration", *The Windsor Magazine* (Copyright by S.S.McClure Company in the United State of America, 1911) 71-2.

¹⁵⁰ Terry describes the succession of productions in which she appeared during this three year period. As she relates even when not performing she was studying the other members of the company and was frequently entranced by the set and costumes of her fellow performers. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 12-29.

¹⁵¹ Maclaurin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 51.

¹⁵² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 150.

Night's Dream in a production which opened at the Theatre Royal Bath in 1863. As Terry recalled in her autobiography

Mr. Godwin designed my dress, and we made it at his house in Bristol. He showed me how to damp it and "wring" it while it was wet, tying up the material as the Orientals do in their "tie and dry [sic]" process, so that when it was dry and untied, it was all crinkled and clinging. This was the first lovely dress that I ever wore, and I learned a great deal from it.¹⁵³

Unfortunately neither the dress, nor an image of Terry in the role survive. Significant similarities can however be traced between this description and first dress created for Terry by her newly appointed costume designer, Comyns-Carr over twenty years later. Worn by the actress as Ellaline in the 1887 Lyceum Company production of *The Amber Heart*, this dress was also 'crinkled' in appearance and draped softly around her figure.¹⁵⁴ [FIGURE 3.14]

Following her return to the stage in 1874, Terry's success had established her position as one of the foremost actresses in London. Her education in art and design, if not complete, had at least reached a point at which Terry could be confident in her ability to bring Irving 'help in pictorial matters,' declaring that,

Judgement about colours, clothes and lighting must be *trained*. I had learned from Mr. Watts, from Mr. Godwin, and from other artists, until a sense of decorative effect had become second nature to me.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 47.

¹⁵⁴ As subsequent discussions will establish, the 1887 production of *The Amber Heart* was the first in which Alice Comyns-Carr took primary responsibility for the design of Terry's costumes and was staged at the height of the Aesthetic Movement.

¹⁵⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 150.

The interest in researching and documenting an accurate ‘archaeology of dress,’ increased throughout the course of Terry’s career. Planché continued to play a leading part in the field, publishing his *Cyclopaedia of Costume* in 1876 but Frederick William Fairholt made an equally significant contribution.¹⁵⁶ Like Planché, Fairholt ‘had strong interests in the theatre,’ having worked for some time as a scene painter. Fairholt adopted a systematic ‘antiquarian’ approach for his book, *Costume in England – a history of dress to the end of the eighteenth century* published in 1860, and accompanied his text with high quality engravings.¹⁵⁷



Figure 3.14 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:413-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁵⁶ J.R.Planché, *Cyclopaedia of Costume* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1876).

¹⁵⁷ Taylor, *Establishing Dress History*, 36. F.W.Fairholt, *Costume in England – a history of dress to the end of the eighteenth century* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1860). Taylor also observed that the quality of the Fairholt’s text was such that his text ‘served to inspire many other dress historians right through to the 1930s.’ Taylor, *Establishing Dress History*, 37. The rise and significance of antiquarianism within Victorian England has been widely discussed elsewhere, not least in Levine, Philippa’s Levine’s important publication on this theme, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians, and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) and, more recently in Susan Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1995).

At the Lyceum Theatre, Irving engaged the actor Walter Lacy (fl.1840-1899), who had worked with Charles Kean when Terry had been a child, as an advisor for his Shakespearian productions.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, in 1888 he employed the antiquarian and painter Charles Cattermole (1832-1900), to design the costumes (with the exception of those worn by Terry) and also the set, for the production of *Macbeth*. Cattermole carried out extensive research, spending over a month seeking out ‘authoritative’ sources for costume, decoration and architecture in London Museums. His commitment to ‘authenticity’ was such that, as Booth records, ‘[...] the vessels in the banquet scene were exact copies of originals in the British Museum, and the patterns for some embroideries came from an eleventh century cope in the South Kensington Museum.’¹⁵⁹

Writing in 1891 in a piece entitled, *The Truth of Masks*, Oscar Wilde reflected upon this ‘desire for archaeological accuracy in dress’ which, he claimed, ‘has distinguished the great actors of our age.’¹⁶⁰ Archaeology was not, Wilde explained ‘a pedantic method, but a method of artistic illusion’ in which ‘costume is a means of displaying character without description, and of producing dramatic situations and dramatic effects.’¹⁶¹ Wilde’s comments draw attention to the role that costume plays in communicating the inner nature of the character being portrayed. His additional observation regarding the need for some harmony between set and costume on the stage as one would demand in a room, or picture, shows further understanding of theatrical practice during this period. As Terry notes in her autobiography, she always took pains to discuss designs with the scene painters, consulting them ‘about the colour, so that I should not look wrong in their

¹⁵⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 156.

¹⁵⁹ Michael Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre 1850-1910* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) 46-7.

¹⁶⁰ Oscar Wilde, “Truth and Masks,” *Intentions: The Decay of Lying. Pen, Pencil, and Poison, The Critic As Artist, The Truth of Masks* (London: Osgood, 1891 [Online edition, Project Gutenberg, Transcribed from the 8th edition published by Methuen and Co. in 1913].) n.p.

¹⁶¹ Oscar Wilde, “Truth and Masks,” n.p.

scenes, nor their scenes wrong with my dresses.’¹⁶² Indeed Terry’s strong sympathy with Wilde’s viewpoint is apparent in her decision to quote directly from Wilde’s article, and to praise his observations regarding theatrical costume, when presenting her own views on ‘Stage Decoration’ twenty years later in 1911.¹⁶³

Much of Wilde’s emphasis on the beauty which results through ‘harmony’, and the desire for dress that is ‘archaeologically correct and artistically appropriate,’ can also be connected with the quest for synaesthesia, or the unity of all the senses, promoted by the Aesthetic Movement. The number and range of productions Wilde is able to cite as exemplifying successful harmonious and archaeologically correct stage costume indicates, however, that this approach to design had spread beyond acolytes of Aestheticism.¹⁶⁴ The Lyceum Theatre is amongst the theatres which Wilde credits with a realisation of this achievement. He reserves particular praise for the 1882 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Terry’s partnership with Irving at Lyceum Theatre clearly provided the actress with the ideal environment within which to capitalise on her experience, and also to refine her own artistic taste. As the actress reflected in 1908:

Neither when I began nor yet later in my career have I ever played under a management where infinite pains were not given to every detail. I think that far from hampering the acting, a beautiful and congruous background and harmonious costumes, representing accurately the spirit of the time in which the play is supposed to move, ought to help and inspire the actor.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 69.

¹⁶³ Ellen Terry, “Stage Decoration”, *The Windsor Magazine*, 90.

¹⁶⁴ Wilde cites the perfect accuracy and beauty of productions ‘[...] such as Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft’s eighteenth-century revivals at the Haymarket, Mr. Irving’s superb production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Mr. Barrett’s *Claudian*’. Wilde also praises Godwin, and his impact of stage design, in particular the production of *As You Like It*, staged in Coombe Wood in 1885. Wilde, “Truth and Masks”, n.p.

¹⁶⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 10.

As Maclaurin observes however, ‘The Victorian quest for accuracy required the costumes to follow the interpretative vision of its pioneering antiquarian researchers [...] and showed scant regard for period cutting and appropriate fabric.’¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, as Chapter 4 will acknowledge, the costumes Terry wore in *Macbeth*, in particular her ‘beetlewing dress,’ though justifiably described by Jackson as ‘one of the most exotic achievements of the costumier’s art,’ also contrasted dramatically with the garments worn by the other members of the cast. In actuality therefore the Lyceum Theatre is more accurately viewed as a ‘Temple of Art,’ dedicated to presenting productions in a ‘grand historical-pictorial style’ which, though inspired by detailed ‘antiquarian’ research, privileged dramatic effect over historical accuracy.¹⁶⁷

The shift in attitude towards costume design during the nineteenth century coincided with the point at which Terry began her stage career. She worked closely with many of the figures, such as Kean and Godwin, who played a leading part in these reforms and they had a lasting impact on her approach to, and views upon, stage design. As Chapter 5 will show, Terry’s privileged position at the Lyceum Theatre allowed her to create costumes that not only achieved the ‘aesthetic harmony’ between set and costume so highly valued by the Aesthetic Movement and Terry herself, but which also fulfilled their dramatic purpose, reinforcing and expressing the characters being represented. The close partnership Terry established with Comyns-Carr from 1887 onwards allowed Terry to create even more ambitious costumes which, though shaped by the narrative and period

¹⁶⁶ Maclaurin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 52. Her views are supported by Walter’s findings regarding the numerous discrepancies between the reality of the costumes worn by Irving when performing the role of *Charles I*, and the portraits and fashions which these garments were popularly believed to replicate. Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage,” 161-179.

¹⁶⁷ Jackson, *Shakespeare in Costume*, 16. Meisel provides a detailed and informative analysis of Lyceum Productions and Irving’s engagement with ‘art’, and ‘artists’ in *Realisations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England*, 402-432.

in which they featured, were frequently adapted to suit her personal taste and views on dress.

3.3 The 'Body' of 'The Actress'

From 'chainmail' to 'gauze and spangles'

Terry was thus a strong advocate of 'harmonious costumes' believing that they could and ought to 'help and inspire the actor.'¹⁶⁸ The financial and artistic freedom she was granted over her costumes both at the Lyceum, and during her later engagements with other theatres was, however, extremely unusual.¹⁶⁹ Star performers, such as Terry, might be able to work with their own costumier to create and control their own garments.¹⁷⁰ Other members of the company, such as those working at the Lyceum Theatre, where there was still an 'in-house' wardrobe, would have had costumes provided for them. In the mid to late nineteenth century however, most actors, particularly those in Stock Companies or those travelling in pursuit of engagements, seem to have built up their own stock of theatrical costume as they were frequently required to provide their own garments for performance.¹⁷¹ Noting the significant costs associated with obtaining such garments, T.C. Davis found evidence that '[...] women 'supers' were only provided with their wardrobes in West End and touring original cast productions.'¹⁷² As the actress and

¹⁶⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 10.

¹⁶⁹ As Chapter 5 will discuss Terry was able to appoint her own costume designer and her costumes. Whilst these generally harmonised with the rest of the company and the set, they were distinct and created separately. When engaged to play Mistress Page in the production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, staged at the Haymarket Theatre by Beerbohm Tree in 1902, Terry employed her daughter, Edith Craig, to provide many of her costumes. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 323.

¹⁷⁰ As Chapter 2 noted, Kaplan and Stowell discuss Mrs. Patrick Campbell's use of costume in *Theatre and Fashion*, 3-4, 94-65. Breward also examines star performers who exercises careful control over their dress in Breward, *Fashioning London*, 87-91. As Breward also shows, women such as Florence Alexander, who gained a role in management, might have the opportunity to determine not only their own dress, but also those of other performers. Breward, "At Home at the St James'." 153-6.

¹⁷¹ Cummings, 'Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?,' 118 and De Marly, *Costume on the Stage*, 25.

¹⁷² T.C. Davis is referring here to 'supernumerary' actors, generally engaged to play small roles stock characters or 'walk-on' and perform 'business' in crowd scenes. T.C. Davis, *Actresses as working women*, 27.

playwright Cicely Hamilton recalled in her autobiography, whilst clothes were often provided for the men in a company, women '[...] often had to find their own.' Furthermore, Hamilton adds, if such dresses were deemed unsuitable, it would be noted by the management, who would look 'askance' at their unfortunate wearers.¹⁷³

The other alternative for actresses, particularly those who, like the anonymous author of *The Diary of An Actress or the Realities of Stage Life* (1885), moved from one company to another, was to submit to wearing whatever costumes were provided by their employers regardless of their own artistic ideals.¹⁷⁴ The author of this account was, for instance, forced to abandon her dreams of 'Shakespeare and black velvet' and think herself 'fortunate to go for a fairy queen in gauze and spangles.'¹⁷⁵

Communicating 'respectability'

As T.C. Davis has shown, another aspect of theatre costume which would have been a particular concern for actresses, was the role it could play in communicating respectability. Commencing from the standpoint that the 'historical meaning of sexuality is assimilated in clothing,' T.C. Davis has examined the evolutions in costume in relation to '[...] the assignment of sexually 'innocent' and 'guilty' body parts.'¹⁷⁶ Looking specifically at the costumes worn by dancers during this period, she contends that their soft 'diaphanous gowns' and freedom from 'stiff-boning' carried undesirable connotations of 'loose morals and easy virtue' that 'fuelled the misapprehensions of performer's accessibility and sexual availability.'¹⁷⁷ As Monks has discussed, this was a

¹⁷³ Cicely Hamilton, *Life Errant* (London: J.M.Dent, 1935) 43.

¹⁷⁴ This diary has been examined in detail by Gardner in "The Three Nobodies," 10-37 As she explains the exact details of the diary's author are not known, but the British Library has attributed the work to Alma Ellersie.

¹⁷⁵ Alma Ellersie[?], ed. H.C.Shuttleworth *Diary of an Actress or the Realities of Stage Life*, (London: Griffin, Farren & Co, 1885), 155,159.

¹⁷⁶ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 108-111.

¹⁷⁷ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 109.

period during which costume was both ‘producing and imagining bodies.’ She suggests that the ‘diaphanous’ and ‘abbreviated’ costumes often worn by dancers and in pantomimes allowed the spectator to ‘[...] vacillate between two kinds of costume – the costume that produces the imaginary body of the [character being] represented, and the scanty costume that displays the ‘real’ body of the girl.’¹⁷⁸ Engaging with Ellersie’s account of her costumes, T.C. Davis pays particular attention to the relief the actress expresses at not having to wear ‘the abbreviated skirts of the ballet,’ arguing that,

Without an impeccably chaste stage appearance [Ellersie] recognised that both her professional and private personae would be compromised. By going on the stage she had lost the good reputation of her private self, so she anxiously sought to retrain the respectability of the half she could control through judicious image-making and co-optation of The Drama’s vestimentary legitimacy.¹⁷⁹

As Ellersie’s recollections suggest, and surviving images and descriptions of performers reveal, different dramatic conventions governed the costumes worn in productions for the ‘illegitimate stage,’ in particular pantomimes and ballets and those worn within theatres who staged ‘legitimate’ drama. In the 1880s and 1890s, for instance, the stars of the Gaiety Theatre (a venue associated with ‘illegitimate drama’), wore costumes which, whilst encasing and containing the upper part of their torso in bodices which followed the fashionable silhouette of the day, provided titillation for their audiences by exposing the lower part of the body, from hip to ankle. A representative example of this is the costume worn by Connie Gilchrist (1865-1946) as Abdallah in *The Forty Thieves* at the Gaiety Theatre, 1888, in which her ‘abbreviated’ tunic follows the then fashionable ‘Princess

¹⁷⁸ Monks, *The Costume Reader*, 104-5.

¹⁷⁹ Ellersie, *Diary of an Actress*, 159 quoted in T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 111.

line' silhouette, before being cut away at the upper thigh.¹⁸⁰ [FIGURE 3.15] During the same period however, most actresses appearing on the legitimate stage would be wearing floor length garments which fulfilled the criteria then required to 'communicate respectability' by covering their wearer's legs and ankles.¹⁸¹ Great excitement was therefore provoked by the appearance of Lillie Langtry (1853-1929) as Rosalind in *As You Like It* (1889) in which her loose fitting costume exposed her leg up to a point just above the knee.¹⁸² [FIGURE 3.16]



Figure 3.15 - Samuel Alex Walker. Connie Gilchrist as Abdallah in *The Forty Thieves* at the Gaiety Theatre, 1888, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.135:398-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁸⁰ An insight into the nature of the productions staged at this theatre can also be gleaned from the *Reminiscences of John Hollingshead* (1827-1904) who ran the theatre for a number of years. See John Hollingshead, *Gaiety Chronicles* (Westminster: A. Constable & Co, 1898) and "*Good Old Gaiety*": *An Historiette and Remembrance* (London: Gaiety Theatre Co, 1903).

¹⁸¹ The conventions which governed dress and the body during this period have been widely discussed elsewhere. Examples of such examinations include Stephen Marcus, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2009); Jill L Matus, *Unstable Bodies: Victorian Representations of Sexuality and Maternity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) and Valerie Steele, *Fetish: Fashion, Sex and Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Specific insights into the manner in which dress, and context, can shape the reaction provided by the 'dressed body' are also offered by Joanne Entwistle in *The Fashioned Body: fashion, dress, and modern social theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

¹⁸² Eltis has argued that Langtry, an actress alert to the important role a careful 'marketing strategy' played in her success, exploited the 'sexual opportunity' of this 'breeches role' deliberately, wearing only a 'short tunic and cross gartered tights.' Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 173.



Figure 3.16 - Lafayette Ltd. Lillie Langtry as Rosalind in *As You Like It*, 1890. Albumen Cabinet Card. 14.5 x 11.1cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG 46489.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

During her time as part of a stock company, Terry was occasionally obliged to wear the ‘abbreviated skirts’ dreaded by Ellersie. A case in point is the ‘short tunic’ which the actress wore as Cupid in *Endymion* in 1862. As surviving images show this tunic finished just above Terry’s knees.¹⁸³ [FIGURE 3.17] Terry was 13, an age at which such costumes could potentially have compromised her respectability. As she recalled, her tunic was ‘[...] considered too scanty to be quite nice.’¹⁸⁴ Whilst Terry does not reveal whether she

¹⁸³ Terry was not the only figure in the production wearing a garment which exposed her legs, and a further image of Terry alongside her sister Kate and the actress Henrietta Hodgson shows all three figures wearing costumes which expose part of their legs, and in Kate’s case, her arms too. See Horatio King, Terry as Cupid, alongside Henrietta Hodgson as Endymion and Kate Terry as Diana in *Endymion*, Theatre Royal, Bristol, ca.1862. Sepia photograph on paper. 9.3 x 5.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:165-2007.

¹⁸⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 45.

felt any degree of apprehension wearing this garment, she does record the care with which her parents guarded the reputation of their daughters.

A particular concern within this thesis is the importance attached to the female body as expressed and emphasised by their costumes. As T.C. Davis notes, ‘In the Victorian theatre, adult female performers were never sexless: sex was always apparent in gendered costume whether through tight breeches, skirts, corseted silhouettes, hairstyles, or headgear.’¹⁸⁵ The result was that

No matter how scrupulous their conduct was as private citizens, actresses had no authority or control over their public sign-making of bodily coverings, gestures and spatial relationships lodged in a separate but symbiotically dependent source.¹⁸⁶



Figure 3.17 - Horatio King, Terry as Cupid in *Endymion*, Theatre Royal, Bristol, ca.1862, Sepia photograph on paper. 9.5 x 5.6cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:164-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁸⁵ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 114.

¹⁸⁶ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 108.

The body of the actress

Much of the concern surrounding female performance stemmed not from the ‘bodily coverings,’ but rather the erotic ‘meanings’ which, as T.C. Davis has argued, ‘the Victorian male playgoer’ had the ‘power’ to ascribe to ‘the objects of his gaze.’¹⁸⁷ For Roach, the ‘actor’s body constitutes his instrument, his medium, his chief means of creative expression.’¹⁸⁸ Bush-Bailey, focusing specifically on female performers, stresses that ‘The actress’s body is the canvas/paper on which she creates, her use of movement, gesture and voice the colours she uses to demonstrate her skills.’ As Bush-Bailey stresses, ‘[...] the objectification of her body has successfully deflected revisionist theatre histories from considering the actress’s body as the essential tool of her craft.’ The shift in emphasis Bush-Bailey advocates is significant, and prompts a re-consideration of the manner in which the professional actress used her body in, what Bailey terms, ‘her public, performed, identity.’¹⁸⁹

Citing evidence from contemporary reviews, Powell argues that whilst critics were ‘[...] concerned with the acting of a man’ they were ‘interested mainly in the appearance of a woman – the pathetic expression of her face, her charming features.’¹⁹⁰ Similarly, in his discussion of *The French Actress and her English Audience*, Stokes, demonstrates that the body of the actress was often a focus of preoccupation and concern for audiences.¹⁹¹ Indeed comparisons between actresses often centred upon ‘specifications of voice (sometimes almost of pure sound) [...] ‘body language’ (grace, pertinence, redundancy),

¹⁸⁷ T.C. Davis, ‘The Actress in Victorian Pornography’ *Theatre Journal*, 41.3, Performance in Context (October, 1989) 294-315, 314.

¹⁸⁸ Joseph Roach, *The Player’s Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (London: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 11-12.

¹⁸⁹ Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds*, 17.

¹⁹⁰ Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre*, 158.

¹⁹¹ Stokes, *The French Actress and her English Audience* (2005).

of rhythm, control and release.¹⁹² Stokes maintains however, that there were benefits to be gained from this intense focus on the body of the actress for, he contends, '[...] by playing to her audience, the actress is rewarded by the most intense scrutiny of her bodily and auditory signs.'¹⁹³ Actresses such as Bernhardt, therefore gained the respect of an audience by presenting a performance of extreme, yet controlled, emotion.¹⁹⁴ Such representations attracted praise because they 'introduced a crucial element of reflexiveness' and demonstrated an actresses' 'skills in controlled self presentation.'¹⁹⁵

Roodenburg's argument that the body is 'socially constituted' and 'culturally shaped in its performances,' illuminates Roach's descriptions of the cultural and intellectual preconceptions that influence both an actor's approach to performance, and the audience's response.¹⁹⁶ As Roach has observed,

When an actor takes his place on a stage [...] and his audience begins to respond to his performance, together they concentrate the complex values of a culture with an intensity that less immediate transactions cannot rival. They embody its shared language of spoken words and expressive gestures, its social expectations and psychological commonplaces, its conventions of truth and beauty, its nuances of

¹⁹² Stokes, *The French Actress and her English Audience*, 16.

¹⁹³ Stokes, *The French Actress and her English Audience*, 17.

¹⁹⁴ The importance attached to the 'control' of emotions throughout both the eighteenth and nineteenth century has been discussed by Joanna Townsend. Using the career of the actress and playwright Elizabeth Robins (1862-1952) as a case study, Townsend considers the impact that the growing influence of Freudian theory, in particular increasing 'diagnoses of hysteria' on attitudes to psychology and 'performance'. Joanna Townsend 'Elizabeth Robins Hysteria, Politics & Performance', *Women, Theatre & Performance: New Histories, New Historiographies*, eds. Maggie B. Gale and Viv Gardner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001)102-20.

¹⁹⁵ Stokes, *The French Actress and her English Audience*, 19.

¹⁹⁶ Roodenburg draws upon and acknowledges the influence of Paul Connerton on this aspect of his work and cites Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Herman Roodenburg, *The Eloquence of the Body*, 18.

prejudice and fear, its erotic fascinations and frequently its sense of humor [sic].¹⁹⁷

Addressing the idea of body on the stage and the theme of ‘Embodiment,’ Shepherd and Wallis contend that ‘While all bodies display their social education, bodies on stage also display their theatrical education.’ They suggest that, ‘[...] even without explicit training the actor makes assumptions about the proper way of moving and standing on the stage.’ These are assumptions which ‘[...] derive both from a conscious sense of theatrical genre and from an unconscious assimilation of what “works”.’¹⁹⁸ As they go on to show, in addition to expressing their own sense of ‘what works,’ the actors’ bodies are also shaped by social expectations and are ‘loaded with social and theatrical *habitus*.’¹⁹⁹ A performance therefore presents the audience with ‘two sets of bodies – the body scripted by society and the body scripted by theatrical practice and value’²⁰⁰

Reading Roodenburg in conjunction with Shepherd and Wallis, and alongside Bratton’s concept of a ‘theatrical aristocracy,’ offers a new perspective from which to examine the terms in which Terry’s performances are described in contemporary reviews. If the ‘actions, gestures and habits’ of performers could be employed to communicate their position within this emerging ‘aristocracy,’ then the frequency with which reviewers remark upon the quality of Terry’s gestures, in particular her ‘graceful movement’ on the stage acquires new significance. The phrases one reviewer employed to describe Terry’s

¹⁹⁷ Roach, *The Player’s Passion*, 11-12.

¹⁹⁸ Shepherd and Wallis, *Drama/Theatre/Performance*, 192.

¹⁹⁹ Shepherd and Wallis, *Drama/Theatre/Performance*, 193. Their use of the term *habitus* draws explicitly on Marcel Mauss’s use of the term in his essay ‘Techniques of the Body’ (1934) (Wallis and Shepherd cite the 1992 translation of this work Crary, Jonathan, and Sanford Kwinter. *Incorporations*. (New York, NY: Zone, 1992) and Nobert Elias’s subsequent employment of the term in *The Civilising Process* (first published in German in 1939, a translated version having been published in a single volume by Blackwell: Oxford, in 1994.)

²⁰⁰ Shepherd and Wallis, *Drama/Theatre/Performance*, 193.

performance as Portia offers an example of the manner in which she was presented to and perceived by the public.

[...] as we watch the slender, swaying figure, passing to and from with long, graceful, gliding steps, the freely extending, bended arms and lightly waving hands[sic], and well manipulated form pointing each airy utterance, we recognise a refined and accomplished comedienne, preserving the valuable traditions of her noble heart, and showing to what perfection it has attained²⁰¹

The emphasis placed on her ‘refined’ and ‘graceful’ gestures which, by implication, establish her as an ‘accomplished comedienne,’ indicates that the importance Terry attached to movement throughout her career. These qualities stemmed not simply from her training, but also from her awareness that gesture could communicate her status as an educated performer, and cement her position within the highest ranks of her profession.

For the same reason, Terry was keenly aware of the risk that her gestures might be misconstrued by her audience. In her autobiography she refers to two specific instances when her ‘sexual identity’ intruded upon and influenced the public responses to her performance. On both occasions it was a misinterpretation of the actress’s body language which provoked criticism.

The first instance Terry discusses is the condemnation attracted by her performance as Portia in 1878-9. Terry’s interpretation of Portia expressed a deeper level of emotion than the restrained performance of actresses such as Helen Faucit (1817-1898) to which

²⁰¹ “Our Biographies: Being brief sketches of the lives of Managers, Authors, Actors and Actresses, No. XV. Ellen Terry,” Garrick Club, London.

audiences had become accustomed.²⁰² Faucit, ‘a leading tragic actress of the middle and late nineteenth century’ first appeared as Portia in 1836 and was still performing the role, aged 54, in 1869.²⁰³ [FIGURE 3.18] Faucit’s Portia had, as James Bulman explains, ‘[...] epitomised traditional Victorian womanhood – mature, not at all girlish’ and ‘emphasised such values as self-sacrifice in love, obedience to her father’s will and righteousness in pleading the Christian cause.’²⁰⁴ Whilst many critics were entranced by the ‘beauty’ of Terry’s ‘charming’ and ‘graceful’ interpretation of the role, the ‘emotional acting in the casket scene’ and the ‘spontaneity’ and ‘naturalness’ of Terry’s approach led others to express disapproval.²⁰⁵ Terry’s ‘natural’ approach was singled out for specific criticism by Henry James in 1881, who expressed his desire to see less ‘nature’ and ‘a little more art’ from the actress. James cited Terry’s interpretation of Portia in support of his argument that Terry’s ‘[...] comprehension of character is sometimes weak,’ declaring that the actress ‘[...] giggles too much, plays too much with her fingers, is too free and familiar, too osculatory in her relations with Bassanio.’ James was particularly critical of Terry’s ‘deportment’ in the Casket Scene in which he protested that the actress failed to enact the role of a ‘splendid spinster’ and struck a ‘false note’ by approaching Bassanio and beginning to ‘pat and stroke him.’ James revealed that this physical contact shocked

²⁰² John W. Mahon, and Ellen M. Mahon. *The Merchant of Venice: New Critical Essays*. New York: Routledge, 2002) 27.

²⁰³ William Baker and Brian Vickers explanation in *The Merchant of Venice* (London: Thoemmes, 2005) 183-4.

²⁰⁴ James C Bulman, *The Merchant of Venice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991) 43. Faucit cemented her legacy and status in 1885, by publishing a long account of her interpretation of Portia and other key Shakespearean roles entitled Lady Helena F. Martin (née Faucit). *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters: Ophelia, Juliet, Portia, Imogen, Desdemona, Rosalind, Beatrice*. (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1885.) See in particular 25-44.

²⁰⁵ *The World*, Nov 5th 1879. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume I, 220, Garrick Club, London. The critic in the *Daily Baltimore* was equally impressed by Terry’s approach to the role. *Daily Baltimore*, ca.1883. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 152, Garrick Club, London. Similarly the author of a review in the *Chicago Herald*, actually singles out the Casket Scene for particular praise. *The Chicago Herald*, 10 January 1884. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 167, Garrick Club, London

one ‘unerring critic’ into making an audible condemnation of Terry’s actions declaring, ‘Good heavens, she’s touching him!’²⁰⁶



Figure 3.18- Siegmund Hildesheimer & Co. Paper scrap depicting Gustavus Vaughan Brooke (1816-1866) as Shylock and Helen Faucit (1914-1898) as Portia, in Act IV, Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice*, ca.1890. Chromolithograph on paper. 14.8 x 13.3 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.1:4-2008.

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The *Blackwood's Magazine* also ‘made a particularly ‘severe attack’ upon Terry’s ‘coquettish’ performance.²⁰⁷ As Bulman shows, however, the condemnatory tone of this review may stem from its author’s strong allegiance to Faucit: it was written by the actress’s husband, Theodore Martin.²⁰⁸ Even Terry’s awareness of the biased nature of

²⁰⁶ James recalls overhearing the exclamation ‘Good heavens she’s touching him.’ He records this, and the related criticism, in an article originally published in ‘The London Theatres,’ *Scribners Monthly*, 31, no.3 January 1881) 354-69. The criticism quoted here is reproduced in William Baker, and Brian Vickers, *The Merchant of Venice* (London: Thoemmes, 2005) 145-146.

²⁰⁷ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 183; Anon, *Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1879, 653.

²⁰⁸ Bulman, *The Merchant of Venice*, 42-43. Terry herself makes a subtle but deliberate reference to this connection, in her autobiography. She includes an extract from a letter the dramatist Tom Taylor, in which he praises her performance as Portia and declares Theodore Martin’s review a ‘[...] foolish article.’ Terry takes care to note that Taylor’s letter was ‘refers to an article which attacked my Portia in *Blackwood's Magazine*’ and also quotes Taylor’s remark that ‘Of course, if — found his ideal in — he must dislike

the criticism could not dispel its power, however, as she confessed in her autobiography. The condemnation of her performance and in particular the suggestion that she ‘[...] showed too much of a “coming-on” disposition in the Casket Scene’, affected her for years, and made [her] self-conscious and uncomfortable.’²⁰⁹

Terry faced comparable criticism on a subsequent occasion, when the author Charles Dodgson (1832-1898), a long-term acquaintance of the actress, wrote to condemn her performance in the 1885 production of *Faust*.²¹⁰ As Terry revealed in her autobiography, Dodgson’s concern related to Act II, Scene 1 in which she, as Margaret, began to undress. He warned Terry of the dismay this action had provoked in the young girl who had accompanied him to the performance and suggested that ‘in consideration that [her performance] had the potential to affect [even] a mere child disagreeably, [Terry] ought to alter [her] business.’ Though emphasising her long friendship with ‘dear Mr. Dodgson,’ Terry admits that she was infuriated by his criticism. This anger stemmed largely from the fact that ‘any suggestion of *indelicacy* in [her] treatment of a part always blighted [her]’ and Dodgson’s insinuations left the actress feeling ‘felt ashamed and shy whenever [she] played that scene.’ For Terry it had become ‘the Casket Scene over again.’²¹¹ The fact that the actress also employs her autobiography to make a determined and deliberate, defence of her interpretation of both characters and did not alter her performance of either role, is however worthy of remark and is an aspect of Terry’s approach to ‘self-fashioning’ which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 6.

you in Portia, or in anything where it is a case of grace and spontaneity and Nature against affectation, over-emphasis, stilt, and false idealism—in short, utter lack of Nature.’ Tom Taylor, quoted in Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 115.

²⁰⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 183.

²¹⁰ Dodgson recalled witnessing Terry’s performance as Mamillius in 1856, and took a series of photographs took Terry and her family in ca.1865 when Terry was 17. Jo Jones and J.F. Gladstone note that, whilst at the Lyceum, Terry took pains to provide Dodgson with seats for performances. Jones, Jo E., and J F. Gladstone, *The Alice Companion: A Guide to Lewis Carroll's Alice Books* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998) 257-8.

²¹¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 183.

‘They love me, you know, not for what I am, but for what they imagine I am’²¹²

As her career progressed Terry grew conscious of additional aspects of ‘the physical body,’ in particular the signs and consequences of ageing that even the most accomplished performance or elaborate costume could not overcome or conceal. In 1889 she had been dismayed and frustrated when ‘[...] in the very noonday of life, fresh from Lady Macbeth and still young enough to play Rosalind, [she was] suddenly called upon to play a rather uninteresting mother in *The Dead Heart*.’²¹³ Three years later therefore, Terry, then aged forty-five, was persuaded to play Cordelia in *King Lear*, even though this was a role her sister Kate, had performed aged fourteen.²¹⁴ [FIGURE 3.19, 3.20] The production required Terry, once again, to undertake the role of a ‘young’ and ‘fair’ heroine but provided a crucial opportunity for Irving to give a performance which was described by actor J.L.Toole (1830-1906) as ‘[...] the finest thing of Irving’s life.’²¹⁵ Despite the discrepancy in age between Terry and her character, her performance earned praise from the critics. One reviewer felt that Terry ‘illuminated the play,’ adding ‘Whether arrayed in pale blue or virgin white, she seemed to have cast away ten or fifteen years of anxious and harassing life. She looked as young as when she played Beatrice [...]’²¹⁶

²¹² Terry, Letter from Ellen Terry to George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), 23rd September 1896. Letter, published in Christopher St. John, ed, *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence* (London: Reinhardt & Evans Ltd.) 70.

²¹³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 308.

²¹⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 21.

²¹⁵ Toole’s praise is reported by Bram Stoker in Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (London: Heinemann, 1906), 356.

²¹⁶ “‘King Lear’ at the Lyceum,’ *Unidentified Periodical*, Dated by hand, November 19 1892. Press cutting mounted in Ruth Canton Album, ‘Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1892-1989’, Garrick Club, London, n.p.



Figure 3.19 - Martin Laroche, Kate Terry as The Boy (right) in *Richard II*, Princess Theatre, 1857. Sepia Photograph on paper. 21.2 x 16.2 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133.5-2007.

No photograph showing Kate Terry as she appeared in the role of Cordelia in 1858 has survived, but this image (taken the year before) conveys a sense of her extreme youth, as contrasted with Terry's maturity.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

By the 1894 tour to America, however, the actress's confidence in her youth was faltering. Writing to W.G. Robertson, Terry, now forty-seven, revealed that she no longer felt able to play 'young parts,' in particular the innocent and virginal Marguerite in *Faust*. She complained that although she 'begged' Irving to 'let Marion [Terry's sister] play 'Margaret' – just that one part,' he refused. Yet, whilst clearly frustrated by this situation, Terry also declared that she was willing to 'go on [...] until [she was] entirely worn out' and to succumb to Irving's demands in order to maintain 'peaceful harmony.'²¹⁷

²¹⁷ W.G. Robertson, *Time Was* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1931), 287.

Sustaining the illusion of ‘eternal youth’ became an increasingly oppressive burden for Terry during her final years as the leading lady of the Lyceum Company.²¹⁸ As previously discussed, it was generally the case that as an actress aged she progressed from leading lady towards ‘heavy business’ in secondary and more mature, female roles, graduating in Shakespeare’s *Othello* from Desdemona to Emilia, and in *Hamlet* from Ophelia to Gertrude.²¹⁹ The fact however, that Terry’s partnership with Irving and their joint success was founded upon Terry’s continuing to perform the role and ‘roles’ of a ‘leading lady’ represented an insurmountable barrier to this traditional career trajectory.



Figure 3.20 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Cordelia in *King Lear*, the Lyceum Theatre, 1892, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133.487-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²¹⁸ Bloodworth touches upon this issue, and also the extent to which Terry was also willing to exploit this element of her celebrity persona in Jenny Bloodworth ‘The Burden of Eternal Youth: Ellen Terry and *The Mistress of the Robes*’, *Ellen Terry: Spheres of Influence*, ed. Katharine Cockin (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011) 49-64.

²¹⁹ Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 22. This was the career path followed by Terry’s contemporaries and role models in their later years, including Ellen Kean, who played Gertrude in the productions of *Hamlet* in which her husband played the title role. Similarly Westland Marston, writing in 1890, describes how the actress Mary Warner (1804-1854) became the ‘[...] recognised Lady Macbeth, Emilia, Gertrude, and Volumnia’ of the Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres. See Westland Marston, *Our Recent Actors: Being Recollections Critical, And, in Many Cases, Personal, of Late Distinguished Performers of Both Sexes, with Some Incidental Notices of Living Actors* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1890) 275. Whilst Terry played Lady Macbeth in 1888, and Volumnia in the 1901 production of *Coriolanus*, she continued to play Desdemona in *Othello* and Ophelia in *Hamlet*.



Figure 3.21 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, 1896, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.2 x 10.1cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:497-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

There were still fleeting moments of brilliance. Terry's performance as Imogen in *Cymbeline* in 1896 was, for instance, 'accounted one of her greatest triumphs' and, though aged fifty, Terry was described as 'full of girlish spirits', 'radiant' and 'a figure that dwells in the memory as one of absolute beauty.'²²⁰ [FIGURE 3.21] Yet, in Terry's view, this production represented her 'only inspired performance of these later years.'²²¹ By 1902, she was conscious that 'the Lyceum reign was dying' and understood the pragmatic motivation that prompted Irving to revive 'his biggest "money-maker"' *Faust*. She was nevertheless determined that 'it was [now] impossible that [she] could play Margaret.'

²²⁰ A.B. Walkley, quoted in Jeffrey Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005), 44. Richards cites Charles Hiatt, *Ellen Terry and her Impersonations*, (London: George Bell & Son, 1898) 242-3, as the source of this quotation. See Jeffrey Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005), 44.

²²¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 316.

There are some young parts that the actress can still play when she is no longer young: Beatrice, Portia, and many others come to mind. But I think that when the character is that of a young girl the betrayal of whose innocence is the main theme of the play, no amount of skill on the part of the actress can make up for the loss of youth.²²²

Marshall attaches specific importance to the emphasis placed on Terry's 'eternal youth' evident in many of the reviews from the later years of the actress's career. She argues that, when faced with the pressure to continue performing these 'young parts,' the '[...]' only way in which she might remain on stage was through the turning back of the theatrical and social clock, which the illusion of an ever-youthful Terry enabled.²²³ Building on this point Marshall suggests that,

[Terry's] perpetual charm is precisely that, a perpetuation of her audiences' initial enamoured response. That stasis begins to explain why it is not only possible, but necessary, for Terry to play the parts of much younger characters, or to reprise some of her earlier successes in later life: it enables the repetition of the terms of her success, reminds her audiences of why they have adored her, and enables them to keep on loving her, and watching her play.²²⁴

As Chapter 2 indicated, Carlson's exploration of the relationship between memory and performance, offers a framework through which to consider Terry's ability to sustain this 'illusion of youth' and, indeed, the audience's willingness to collaborate in and sustain the deception. Carlson contends that 'All theatre is a cultural activity deeply involved

²²² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 313.

²²³ Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 157.

²²⁴ Marshall. *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 155.

with memory and haunted by repetition.’²²⁵ He describes the theatrical experience as a ‘retelling of stories already told, the re-enactment of events already enacted, the re-experience of emotions, already experienced.’²²⁶ In any analysis of a performance, it is therefore essential not to discount the important role played by ‘the audience’s memory and associations’ in the reception of a theatrical event.²²⁷ These ‘memories’ and ‘associations,’ can, Carlson suggests, enable an ‘aging actor’ to overcome the ‘apparent folly and vanity’ of ‘playing youthful roles,’ because

[...] every new performance of these roles will be ghosted by a theatrical recollection of the previous performances, so that audience reception of each new performance is conditioned by inevitable memories of this actor playing similar roles in the past.²²⁸

The ‘power of performance’ is such, Carlson proposes, that ‘the theatrical body, [unlike the physical body] cannot be ‘invalidated by age or decrepitude’ and physical age can be ‘ghosted by years of memory of it in its full vigour.’ In the case of celebrities, such as Terry, this ‘halo effect’ means that all performances are ‘ghosted by fond personal memories of previous high achievement’ and these ‘ghosts’ can ‘mask failing that would be troubling in someone less celebrated.’²²⁹ His comments are borne out by Kelly’s exploration of Terry’s performances in Australia in 1914. As Kelly noted reviews of these performances repeatedly praised the ‘[...] wonderful, superb, alluring, exquisite, grave, endearing Ellen Terry voice,’ which was combined with ‘wonderfully modulated intonation [and] superb gestures.’ This expert manipulation of voice and gesture, skills developed in Terry during her early training, might well have enabled the sixty-seven-

²²⁵ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 8.

²²⁶ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 3.

²²⁷ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 58.

²²⁸ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 58.

²²⁹ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 58-9.

year-old actress to enchant her audiences. As Kelly acknowledges however, Terry's voice would have shown the effects of age and it therefore possible that the praise lavished upon 'the Ellen Terry voice,' may also have been prompted by 'the memory of its power', rather than its current quality.²³⁰ A description of the fifty-year-old actress' performance as Imogen in 1896, lends further weight to Carlson's observations and also reveals the significant part Terry's own 'public identity' and 'celebrity' played in her attraction. It declared that:

[...] Ellen Terry's Imogen is Ellen Terry with twenty years or more off her merry shoulders. We can only describe Ellen Terry's Imogen as her Beatrice, which was mingled with the Rosalind that might have been. No, it was not that, it was Ellen Terry, that peculiar amalgam of witchery, charm and wilfulness which has baffled every critic of her work [...] and she held her audience in the palm of her hand last night.²³¹

Roach has also explored the ability of a charismatic actor to dissolve the boundary between illusion and reality, a capacity which he suggests is all part of 'the *It* effect.'²³² He provides a myriad of definitions and examples of the qualities associated with '*It*,' central to which is the 'strange magnetism, which attracts both sexes.'²³³ As Roach notes, Michael Quinn identified an 'extraordinarily powerful' shift of perception, generated by celebrity in which – 'the audience's attitude shifts from an awareness of the presence of

²³⁰ Kelly, "The After Voice of Ellen Terry," 71.

²³¹ Unidentified paper, ca.1896, Press cutting, Production file, Lyceum Theatre, Cymbeline, 1896. Victoria & Albert Museum. The same reviewer claimed that '[...] in the grand reconciliation scene she [Terry] played with the romance and activity of a girl of eighteen.' Similarly W.G. Robertson recalling Terry's performance, described the forty-nine year old actress as 'a radiant embodiment of youth', and remarked upon the awed silence, followed by 'thunders of applause' which greeted her entrance. W.G. Robertson, *Time Was*, 287.

²³² Roach, *It*, 6.

²³³ Roach, *It*, 4.

fictional illusion to the acceptance of an illusion, however false, of the celebrity's absolute presence.²³⁴ For Roach,

Theatrical performance and social performance that resemble 'It' consist of struggle, the simultaneous experience of mutually exclusive possibilities – truth and illusion, presence and absence, face and mask. Performers are none other than themselves doing a job in which they are always someone else.²³⁵

Roach's statement raises key questions about Terry's self-fashioning, which will be explored further in Chapter 6. The work of all three theorists (Roach, Carlson and Quinn), emphasises the extent to which the 'attraction' that performers exercise over their audience is dependent upon some form of illusion. As Carlson makes apparent, the audience plays a crucial part in the creation and perpetuation of these fantasies. In the case of Terry, her performances were haunted by the 'ghosts' of her past performances. These powerful 'memories' enabled Terry to sustain the illusion of 'eternal youth' but in doing so, they threatened to imprison the actress within the roles which conformed to this reputation for 'ageless beauty and charm.'²³⁶

²³⁴ Michael Quinn, "Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting", *New Theatre Quarterly*, 22, (1990) 156, quoted in, Roach, *It*, 6. Roach also acknowledges the influences Carlson has had upon his work, and references him directly in the text.

²³⁵ Roach, *it*, 9. Roach also discusses the power and significance of illusion in relation to the theatre, in particular the long career of the actor Thomas Betterton (ca.1635-1710) in his earlier work, *Cities of the Dead*, 92-101.

²³⁶ Jenny Bloodworth 'The Burden of Eternal Youth: Ellen Terry and *The Mistress of the Robes*', *Ellen Terry: Spheres of Influence*, ed. Katharine Cockin (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011) 58. Bloodworth's phrase echoes earlier descriptions of Terry from figures such as Marguerite Steen, *Pride of Terrys* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd, 1962) 220 and 232, and 261-5, and descriptions of Terry's 'fascinating fairy-godmother like personality' from her grand-nephew Sir John Gielgud (1904-2000). Foreword to Madeleine Bingham, *Henry Irving and the Victorian Theatre*, 7.

Conclusion

By the time of her death at the age of eighty-one in 1928, Terry had secured her standing as an actress of national and international importance and as a leading figure within the ‘theatrical aristocracy.’ In 1925, she had become only the second actress to be made a Dame Grand Cross of the British Empire, an award which provided an official testament of Terry’s preeminent position. As this chapter has made apparent, the fact that Terry was born into a theatrical family and received a high level of training in her early years played a significant role in this success. It provided Terry with a direct and early entry into the inner ranks of the theatrical profession and enabled her to return to the stage after a six year absence with the skills, confidence, and knowledge to recommence her career. As an experienced actress, trained from birth, Terry had a strong belief in her personal interpretation of roles, however controversial and this self-assurance contributed directly to her eventual success.

The crucial part that Terry’s professional partnership with Irving made to her celebrity must also be acknowledged however. This chapter has challenged previous characterisations of Terry’s partnership with Irving and presented evidence to show that the relationship was founded upon a mutually beneficial compromise, rather than inequality or competition. Terry’s position as leading lady also allowed her to achieve financial independence.²³⁷ Furthermore, as this chapter has revealed, and as Chapter 5 and 6 will discuss in further detail, Terry’s artistic opinion, if not always accepted, was

²³⁷ As Powell has shown, at the peak of her career Terry’s salary was up to ‘£200 a week’ in comparison to the £25 to £40 which was the average weekly income of a leading lady at this time. Kerry Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 7.

clearly valued by Irving. Indeed, by the final years of their partnership, Terry was contributing not only professional, but also financial support to the Lyceum Company.²³⁸

As this chapter has demonstrated, one of the principal constraints on the roles that Terry was able to perform, were the preconceptions and prejudices of her audience. Terry's increasing celebrity placed her 'public' and 'private' life under increasing scrutiny. This was a period during which, as has been discussed, body language communicated and secured status and respectability. As Chapter 6 will show, Terry's continued success was therefore dependent upon the careful management of her 'body,' and of the 'identities' it might communicate, both on and off the stage.

Of central importance to this thesis is the exceptional level of control Terry was able to exercise over the design and creation of her costumes. As this chapter has indicated the nature of Terry's partnership with Irving, together with her position as a celebrated and highly paid actress, placed her in an unusually privileged position. The next two chapters will focus specifically on Terry's stage costumes and will consider the significance of Terry's involvement in their design and creation. This close analysis of Terry's surviving garments will also take into account the social, artistic and theatrical context within which they were created and will highlight the important part such factors can play in shaping their design and public reception.

The primary aim of Chapters 4 and 5 is to demonstrate the important evidence which can be obtained through close engagement with extant costumes and to present methodological approaches through which it is possible to analyse this key information. Chapter 5, in particular, will also engage with the additional challenges presented by

²³⁸ In a letter from sent from Terry to her costumier. Nettleship on the 3rd of June, 1901, Terry explains that as the Lyceum Company cannot no longer afford to pay for new dresses she will 'pay the bill' herself. See THM/14/20/TERRY/7, Letter to Ada Nettleship, dated 3rd June 1901. Autographed Letter Series, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

garments which not only play a part in the biography of the people who wear them, but also have the potential to accumulate complex 'biographies' of their own.

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CHAPTER 4 - 'FASHIONING' A PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL MODEL FOR ANALYSING HISTORIC THEATRE COSTUME

Introduction

This chapter will address the specific challenges posed by the interpretation and study of historic theatre costume. These include: the significance of social, artistic and historic context; parallels and contrasts between on and off-stage dress; the collaborative process of design and making; the function of costume as both performance object and expression of 'identity'; the issue of multiple and complex 'biographies'; and the crucial evidence offered from material culture sources, most importantly, surviving costumes.

As this thesis demonstrates, research into the history of theatrical costume is not dependent upon the existence of extant garments. Evidence gathered through the close analysis of Terry's surviving theatrical costumes carried out in this chapter will, however, establish the key position that theatrical costumes, where they do survive, should occupy in such research. Surviving costumes will be examined not only for the specific details they reveal regarding the life and career of Terry herself but also as an illustration of their ability to illuminate wider issues connected with the history of the actress and the development of costume and dress during the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This thesis presents a methodology which, though employed here for an in depth investigation of a single figure and time period, has wider applicability and which will facilitate the expansion of the discussion to include the study of historic theatre costume more generally, and to address the costumes of other performers and eras. Reference will

therefore be made to the critical debates within which extant theatre costumes are enmeshed.

4.1: Defining Costume

Costume vs. Dress

To create a methodology for the study of historical theatrical costume it is essential to establish the criteria which demarcate theatrical costume as a distinct and unique category of dress. As Nicklas and Pollen have observed, ‘terminology is a perpetual difficulty in the study of dress history’ and it certainly is a pressing concern within this thesis.¹ One of the principal difficulties presented by the existing terminology within dress history is the long standing tradition of referring to historic clothing as ‘costume’ as well as ‘dress.’ Indeed the two terms have often been used interchangeably without any consciousness of the distinction which exists between ‘personal dress’ and ‘theatrical costume’ within the categories of clothing.

‘Dress’ or ‘fashion’

Cumming has shown how, in the past, the perceived congruity between the words ‘dress’ and ‘costume’ was such that ‘dress for performance’ was often called ‘dress or habits’ and seldom explicitly marked out as ‘stage costume.’² The meaning conveyed by the word ‘costume’ has altered over time however, particularly over the past decade, resulting in a growing preference for the terms ‘dress’ or ‘fashion,’ rather than ‘costume,’ within both academic and curatorial practice. This can be seen in the launch of the journal *Fashion Theory* in 1997. Distancing itself from the approaches and language employed by existing journals such as *Costume and Dress*, *Fashion Theory* rejects the terms ‘costume’ and even

¹ Nicklas, and Pollen, *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, 1.

² Cummings, ‘Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?’, 114.

‘dress.’ Instead the journal seeks to promote the ‘critical analysis’ of ‘fashion’ and ‘self-fashioning’ through the body. Defining ‘fashion’ as ‘the cultural construction of the embodied identity’ *Fashion Theory* places a clear emphasis on the role of ‘dress’ as ‘fashionable clothing.’³ In the academic world both ‘fashion’ and ‘dress’ are increasingly used in preference to ‘costume’ within critical theory, publications and course titles.⁴ Within the museum and heritage sector, the term ‘costume’ retains a firmer hold, preserved in job titles, descriptions of museum’s dress and textile collections, and even the names of museum’s themselves.⁵

Negley Harte addressed the ongoing debate surrounding terminology in a review for *Costume* (2009). Harte made the key observation that definitions of ‘*dress, fashion, clothing* and *costume*’ are further complicated by the fact that ‘each of these four words contain intrinsic indicators of different approaches, and each of them can be used to describe the field itself.’⁶ Taylor, writing in *The Handbook of Fashion Studies* (2013), engaged with Harte’s comments to develop this debate further. Of the four terms introduced by Harte, Taylor consistently uses the word ‘dress.’ She notes that this was the term employed by Ruth Barnes and Joanna Eicher in *Dress and Gender* (1992) who proposed a ‘sociocultural approach [to ‘dress’ history], comprehensive, cross-cultural,

³ “Fashion Theory: The journal of dress, body and culture,” *Academic Journal – Fashion Theory*, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2014. [n.d.]

⁴ University courses relating to ‘fashion’ tend to include a practical and practice based element within the degree. A sense of the overlap and distinction between the approaches signified by the two terms can be seen in the title of the BA course offered at the University of Brighton, which is advertised as ‘Fashion and Dress History’ and encompasses the study of both historical dress and contemporary fashion. ‘Course in Brief,” *Fashion and Dress History BA (Hons)*, University of Brighton [n.d.] Similarly, the focus of academic publications on ‘dress’ in its broader historic or ethnographic context, or specifically on ‘fashionable’ clothing, is often signalled by the terminology they employ. Cases in point are Breward’s ‘*A Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress*’ (1995) and *Fashion* (2003) and Taylor’s *The Study of Dress History* (2002) and *Establishing Dress History* (2004).

⁵ The fact that when undertaking the re-branding of the *Museum of Costume* in Bath in 2007 (first opened in 1963) the decision was taken to name it *The Fashion Museum*, marked a significant change within the sector. Replacing ‘costume’ with ‘fashion’ provided a clear statement of the museum’s intentions, reflecting an awareness of current trends within academic study, and a commitment to continual engagement with both historic and contemporary fashion.

⁶ Negley Harte, “Review: John Styles, *The Dress of the People*,” *Costume: The journal of the Costume Society*, 43, (2009) 176.

and grounded in ethnography.’⁷ Taylor also cites Daniel Roche’s work, specifically his use of the term ‘clothing’ in preference to ‘costume.’ As she explains, Roche argues that ‘clothes’ is the word ‘best suited to a social and cultural history of appearances’ and rejects the term ‘costume’ on the grounds that it is ‘too ambiguous in its double meaning of custom and or way of dressing.’⁸ As Taylor demonstrates, Roche’s view is shared by many writers within the field, particularly as further layers of ambiguity arise from the association of costume with ‘exceptional dress’ which is ‘outside the context of everyday life.’⁹

The enduring and negative association of ‘costume,’ with an outdated and undisciplined approach to the study of dress history and consequent rejection of the term within academic research, threatens to undermine efforts to encourage investigations focusing specifically on ‘theatre costumes.’¹⁰ In order for the study of theatrical garments to become established as a distinct and valid area of dress and theatre history, it is therefore vital to reclaim the word ‘costume’ as an academically recognised designation for clothes

⁷ Lou Taylor, ‘Fashion and Dress History: Theoretical and Methodological approaches,’ *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, ed. Sandy Black et al. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013) 27. Taylor has addressed the full extent and history of efforts to establish dress history as a discipline in her books *The Study of Dress History* (2002) and *Establishing Dress History* (2004). The wider use of the term ‘dress history’ can be seen in publications such as Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress: clothes through history 1500-1914* (London: National Trust, 1996); Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson, *Defining Dress: Dress as object, meaning and identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Barbara Burman, and Carole Turbin, *Material Strategies: Dress and Gender in Historical Perspective* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2003) and Styles, *The Dress of the People* (2007), amongst many others.

⁸ Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4.

⁹ Taylor cites the work produced by Suzanne Baizerman, Joanne Eicher and Catherine Cerny, specifically, “Eurocentrism in the Study of Ethnic Dress,” *Dress* 20 (1993) 19-32; and also the research carried out by Emma Tarlo in *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India* (London: Huest, 1996). Taylor, ‘Fashion and Dress History,’ 27.

¹⁰ This is exemplified by the definitions applied to terminology by Tarlo in *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India*, 5. Specifically her association of ‘Costume’ with ‘History’ and ‘Theatre’ and something to be studied in isolation from the dress of ‘everyday living.’ Taylor has also address the history of this long standing struggle in her books *The Study of Dress History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) and *Establishing Dress History* (2004). Indeed, Deborah Landis, when describing her professional identity as a ‘Costume Designer’ suggest, ‘The word “costume” works against us. The word is vulgar when what we do is incredibly refined.’ Deborah N. Landis, *Costume Design* (Waltham, MA: Focal Press, 2012), 8.

designed for stage and film and thus a term specifically reserved for, and relating to, garments used for performance.

A ‘subcategory of dress’?

In seeking to define and reclaim the garments encompassed by the term ‘costume’, ‘costumes’ as garments must be recognised not as distinct from, but as a subcategory of, ‘dress.’ Taking the term ‘dress’ as the overarching designation for all worn garments, regardless of purpose, date or context, it becomes possible to identify distinct subcategories for study and discussion. The range and scope of such categories is a topic which has been debated elsewhere, the focus in this instance however, is upon establishing the status of ‘costume’ as a category in its own right.¹¹

The fact that stage costumes exploit visual codes and cultural references within society to signal and express status, profession, gender, age and character, means that these garments and their related accessories draw upon conventions within many other sub-categories of ‘dress.’¹² These visual codes were, as Cumming explains, particularly important before literacy became widespread. Costumes retain this function as a ‘visual signpost’ within contemporary productions, providing important signals about the

¹¹ One of the first figures to address this debate within academic research and conservation practice was Hilda Mayer Buckley in her initial discussion, “Toward an Operational Definition of Dress,” *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 3.2 March (1985): 1-10. The continued relevance of the debate is evident in publications such as M.E. Roach-Higgins & J.B.Eicher, “Dress and Identity,” *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 10.4 (1992): 1-8; Christopher Breward, “Cultures, Identities, Histories: Fashioning a Cultural Approach to Dress,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 2:4 (1998): 301-313; Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson, eds., *Defining Dress, Dress as object, meaning and identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress, and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000); Efrat Tseëlon, “Fashion Research and its discontents,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 5:4 (2001): 435-451, Peter McNeil, “Conference Report: ‘The Future of Fashion Studies’,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 14:1 (2010): 105-110 and, most recently, Shaun Cole “Costume or Dress? The Use of Clothing in the Gay Pornography of Jim French’s Colt Studio,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 18:2 (2014): 123-148.

¹² Cummings, ‘Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?’, 115. Cummings is not the only researcher to explore these ‘visual codes’. A case in point being Robert Lublin’s 2011 publication *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage: Visual Codes of Representation in Early Modern Theatre and Culture* (London: Ashgate, 2011).

dramatic significance of a character, and often hinting at their inner nature.¹³ There are two categories of dress which are of particular relevance to the study of ‘costume.’ The first is ‘fashionable dress,’ here encompassing all garments influenced by trends and in which seasonal fashion style can, but does not always, take precedence over function. The second is ‘ceremonial dress’, defined here as ensembles and uniforms for which the purpose is explicitly non-practical, and which are worn for formal events, celebrations, rituals, and to indicate membership of a specific group or institution.¹⁴

The connection between ‘costume’ and ‘ceremonial dress’ lies in the fact that specific garments or styles of dress, such as the ‘wedding dress’ or ‘christening robe,’ have come to perform an intrinsic role within religious and cultural ceremonies.¹⁵ It is the potential for cross-fertilisation of trends within fashionable dress and stage costume, however and the fact that, as will be discussed, ‘fashionable dress’ has the potential to become ‘stage costume’, which results in the overlaps and strong connections between these two categories.

‘Costume’ and its relationship to ‘Fashion’

Jackson suggests that “‘clothing’ ‘what gets worn’ and “‘costume” (what is put on for a purpose)’ are both ‘shadowed by the influence of fashion.’ This ‘fashion’ might include

¹³ Deborah Landis has explored this element of ‘costume’ in great detail. See in particular Deborah N. Landis, *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design* (New York: Collins Design, 2007) and Deborah N. Landis and Ellen M. Harrington, *50 Designers, 50 Costumes: Concept to Character* (Beverly Hills, CA: Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 2004).

¹⁴ There are uniforms which fall outside the category of ‘ceremonial dress’, such as those worn for professional work, or specific practical tasks. These fall into the category of ‘functional dress’, which encompasses all garments designed with a specific purpose in mind.

¹⁵ A full discussion of the development of the ‘costumes’ traditionally adopted for such ceremonies, is beyond the scope of this thesis. As the range of articles addressing this theme published in journals such as *Costume* illustrate however, this topic offers strong potential for future debate and research. An indication of the breadth of topics covered can be found in the titles of articles such as: Joan Rendell’s discussion of “Japanese Bridal Custom and Costume,” *Costume Vol. 27:1* (1993), 92-99; Anthea Jarvis’s examination of confirmation robes, “The Dress Must Be White, and Perfectly Plain and Simple: Confirmation and First Communion Dress, 1850–2000,” *Costume Vol. 41:1* (2007), 83-98 and Kimberley Chrisman-Campbell’s contribution, “Mourning and La Mode at the Court of Louis XVI,” *Costume Vol. 39:1* (2005), 64-78.

‘theatrical fashion (how plays usually get performed in a given era),’ or ‘fashion as a conscious pursuit of aesthetic goals in clothing, both in our own time and in that represented.’¹⁶ Deborah Landis’ work, though focussing on film costume, has much to contribute to the discussions surrounding costume for the stage. Landis argues that ‘Fashion and costume are not synonymous; they are antithetical.’ She also acknowledges however that the two categories of dress have features in common, not least their ability to ‘express identity.’¹⁷ As descriptions of fashionable society promenading along Rotten Row in London, or the Bois de Boulogne in Paris from the mid to late nineteenth century suggest, within specific environments and social circles ‘fashionable dress’, as with theatre costume, can also fulfil a ‘performative’ function.¹⁸ Accounts of the splendour of court rituals and ecclesiastical ceremonies convey the role that sumptuous garments play within this atmosphere of excessive and lavish display.¹⁹ Maria Hayward, who has published widely on dress worn at the Tudor Court, has drawn attention to the ‘distinction’ drawn between ‘everyday work clothes and the robes of court’ and the crucial part these carefully regulated garments played in defining an individual’s place in society during this period.²⁰

¹⁶ Jackson, “Brief Overview: A Stage History of Shakespeare in Costume,” 11.

¹⁷ Landis and Harrington, *50 Designers, 50 Costumes: Concept to Character* (Beverly Hills, CA: Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 2004), 6 and Landis, *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design*, xxi.

¹⁸ When considering the role of ‘Fashion’ in ‘the city’ Elizabeth Wilson refers to the ‘fashion parade’ on the Bois de Boulogne and important place of dress within public spaces during this period. Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd: 2011), 135-8. Breward’s *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis* (2004), offers an equally thought provoking discussion of the dynamic relationship which exists between fashion and the city and the role of ‘dress’ within this urban context.

¹⁹ A useful exploration of the important part ceremonial dress can play in such rituals was offered by Bruna Niccoli in her contribution to J R. Mulryne, *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), entitled “Official Dress and Courtly Fashion in Genoese Entries.”

²⁰ Hayward, though recognizing that the sumptuary laws governing dress during this period were not always obeyed, notes the important part they play in regulating dress and communicating status. Maria Hayward “Dressed to rule: Henry VIII’s wardrobe and his equipment for horse, hawk and hound”, *The Inventory of King Henry VIII: Volume II*, eds. David Starkey, Maria Hayward, and Philip Ward (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2012), 67-8. Hayward’s publications on a similar theme include: *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII* (Leeds: Maney, 2007) and *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII’s England* (Farnham: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2009).

Laver addressed this potential ‘blurring’ of the distinction between what he terms ‘theatrical’ and ‘ordinary’ clothes in the introduction to *Costume in the Theatre* (1964). He concluded that ‘So soon as clothes are anything more than a mere device of decency of a protection against the weather they inevitably assume a dramatic quality of some kind.’²¹ His observations are echoed in a telling reference Wilson makes to the role that dress has played and continues to perform, ‘in the theatre of life.’²² It is, as both writers suggest, precisely the elements of ‘performance’ and ‘spectacle’ both associated with and cultivated by ‘fashionable’ and ‘ceremonial’ dress, which creates the close links between these categories of attire and ‘costumes’ created for the stage. As many commentators have recognised, this ‘dramatic quality’ is particularly evident on ‘the catwalk.’ Chapter 2 addressed the recent research, drawing attention to the profitable partnerships which developed between the theatrical world and high fashion in the late nineteenth century.²³ Whilst, as Chapter 6 will discuss, Terry rejected the offers of couturiers to make her garments, her contemporaries, Langtry, Bernhardt and Duse, worked closely with fashionable dressmakers, and in the case of Langtry, her partnership with Worth played a crucial part in her success. Elizabeth A. Coleman discusses such partnerships in *The Opulent Era: Fashions of Worth, Douvet and Pingat*. As she notes amongst the performers who are known to have patronised the House of Worth are Cora Pearl (1835-1886), Adelaide Ristori (1822-1906) and Duse. Coleman also discusses Bernhardt’s engagement of Worth to design a series of costumes for her role in Sardou’s *Fedora* in

²¹ Laver, *Costume in the Theatre*, 15. Laver’s interest in ‘stage costume’ may stem in part from his professional career as a museum curator, during which time he worked with both theatrical material and fashionable dress.

²² Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 248.

²³ As discussed in Chapter 2, the partnerships between theatres and couturiers were particularly important at the turn of the century and important initial research has been carried out by Kaplan and Stowell in *Theatre and Fashion: Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes* (1994) and developed by Troy, ‘The Theatre of Fashion: Staging Haute-Couture in Early 20th Century France’ (2001) and, most recently, Majer, eds., *Staging Fashion, 1880-1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, Billie Burke* (2012). Cumming also drew particular attention to the connections between theatre and fashion in ‘Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?’ 114.

1882-3. Their partnership was short lived however as in the event Bernhardt chose to wear only two of the five dresses created for the production, and, to ensure that she seemed never to appear in the same gown twice, had the garments slightly altered, adding additional flounces, or fichus and drapes, each evening.²⁴ As Laura Beatty explained in her biography of Lillie Langtry, Langtry's partnership with Worth proved satisfactory for both parties. Indeed the actress wore gowns by 'her favourite designer' both on and off the stage and 'cleverly negotiated acknowledgement in her programme as part payment.'²⁵

'Costume'

Whilst recognising the evident connections between 'costume' and other categories of 'dress', it is important to remain conscious of what Cumming termed 'the disjuncture between clothing for performance and personal clothing.'²⁶ As Landis stresses, 'Costumes are never clothes,' and 'Unlike real-clothes costumes are required to meet extraordinary physical demands without restricting the actor or showing up badly on camera [or on the stage].'²⁷ It is therefore necessary to specify exactly which type of garments and related accessories will be encompassed by this term.

The most obvious area of distinction between 'costume' and other categories of dress, lies in the context within which the garments are worn. A garment originally intended as a piece of 'fashionable dress' can, for instance, become a piece of theatrical costume if worn on the stage. Such a transformation occurred in the case of the large collection

²⁴ Elizabeth A. Coleman, *The Opulent Era: Fashions of Worth, Doucet and Pingat* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989) 106.

²⁵ Laura Beatty, *Lillie Langtry: Manners, Masks, and Morals* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1999), 254.. Pierre Sichel also discusses this mutually beneficial partnership in *The Jersey Lily: The Story of the Fabulous Mrs. Langtry* (London: W.H. Allen, 1958) 202.

²⁶ Cummings, 'Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?,' 117.

²⁷ Landis, *50 Designers, 50 Costumes*, 6 and Landis, *Dressed*, xx.

historic dress and textiles now held by Petersfield Museum. These garments, all originally items of everyday and fashionable dress which were worn by, or belonged to, families and individuals connected with Bedales School, were donated to the school's drama department specifically to be used for theatrical productions. Modifications made to fastenings and trimmings, together with areas of wear, testify to the years these garments spent as stage costumes. A large number of garments within the collection exhibit modifications undertaken, or components added, to adjust the fit and length of garments or to replace fastenings with twentieth century alternatives. The impact of these modifications can be seen in a bodice and skirt, from circa 1890-1895, where the drawstring fastening originally present at the waist of the skirt has been replaced by a pair of plastic buttons ensuring the secure and adjustable fit required for multiple wearers. [FIGURE 4.1] Trimmings have also frequently been added to cuffs and bodices as appears to be the case in the bodice which forms part of an ensemble from circa 1883.²⁸ [FIGURE 4.2] Their recent donation to the museum collection however, returned those garments which were not fundamentally and irreparably altered, to their previous position, and privileged historic status, within the category of 'fashionable garments.'²⁹ The fact that 'fashionable dress' has the potential to become 'stage costume,' whether temporarily or permanently, indicates that it is the 'function' of these garments and the context within which they are worn, rather than their 'physical form,' which distinguishes a stage costume from other forms of dress.

²⁸ Further information about 'The Bedales Collection' is available on the museum website, "Historic Costume," Petersfield Museum [n.d].

²⁹ Roach refers to a garments undertaking a comparable temporary 'transition' from 'fashionable dress' and 'stage costume' in *it*. He describes a production of *Henry V* in which the actors performed in genuine coronations robes loaned to them for this purpose by the then King, Charles II (1630-1685), and members of his court. As Roach discusses Thomas Betterton (1635-1710) performed the title role, and wore the King's robes. Whilst worn by Betterton these robes, although still representing ceremonial garments, took on a new identity. They became a 'stage costumes' fulfilling a practical function in a theatrical performance. Roach, *it*, 229.

As the modifications identified in the garments held by Petersfield Museum demonstrate, the physical characteristics of the clothes themselves offer a further route through which to identify more precise characteristics of ‘costumes’ as garments. One clear difference between ‘fashionable dress’ and ‘costume,’ for example, lies in the fact that rather than fastidiously replicating the reality, costumes may seek to capture the essence of a style or era. ‘Fashionable dress’ being subject to closer scrutiny and commercial constraints, is inevitably bound by, and promotes, the practical and seasonal stylistic conventions of the day.



Figure 4.1 - Evidence of modification to the waistband of a skirt from circa 1890-1895, Bedales Collection, Petersfield Museum. Personal photograph by the author. 8 April 2013. Museum Number 2007.4854.2.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The fact that ‘costumes’ specifically created for performance are designed to take into account the impact of lighting, distance and the physical demands of the performance, has a clear impact upon their design. With quick changes and restricted budgets to consider, visual impact often take precedence over quality of materials and finish,

particularly as lighting effects and clever trompe l'oeil, make it possible to create the impression of splendour and lavishness for the distant audience, even when the reality is far less glamorous.³⁰ There are of course exceptions to this rule, and many extant costumes which reveal that, where budget permits and designers demand, a costume can be constructed to the same high standard as an example of 'fashionable' or even, 'couture', dress. Indeed the quality of finish demanded from 'costumes' is becoming a more pressing concern with the recent expansion of 'live' recording and screening of theatre and opera productions, as cameras now bring the audience's gaze far closer to garments than would be possible even in the front row of the stalls.³¹ As this thesis will discuss, the views and demands of the actors for which they are being created is another factor which has the potential to influence the design and fit of stage costumes.³² There are, for instance, methods of construction and cutting which can be used to flatter the wearer and deceive the eye. Terry was keenly aware of and took care to exploit these techniques, noting in circa 1895 (and then aged forty-eight) that whilst, a 'waistband

³⁰ Costumes created for the Ballets Russes production of the *Rite of Spring (Sacre de Printemps)* 1913 by Nicholas Roerich relied on painted and stencilled decoration for their effect. See, for instance, Costume for an Ancestor, Scene 2, Museum Number S.685-1980, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Similarly the large 'jewels' which feature on Terry's costumes in *Cymbeline* (1896) and *King Arthur* (1892) are 'paste' gems rather than genuine precious stones. These both form part of the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Imogen, *Cymbeline*, SMA.TC.105, 1118830 and Ellen Terry, Guinevere, *King Arthur*, SMA.TC.118, 1118843. Further examples are also discussed in 'Decoration in Stage Costume,' *Theatre and Performance Galleries*, Victoria and Albert Museum [n.d.].

³¹ Such proximity may lie behind the commissioning of ever more elaborate garments for theatrical and operatic productions, including the Metropolitan Opera New York's 2011 production of Gaetano Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*. The costume designer Jenny Tiramani, already known for her "Original Practice" Productions at the Globe Theatre, London, in which the costumes were produced using carefully researched and reproduced Elizabethan techniques, was engaged by the MET to create costumes for the production. Tiramani's brief was that the construction, design and fabrics reflected those techniques and fashions of the sixteenth century as accurately as possible. The only sacrifice to 'accuracy' was the restricted red, black, grey and white colour palette adopted for the production. Jenny Tiramani, "Anna Bolena (c.1536) at the MET." *Exploring the Art and Narrative of Dress*, 15 July 2010. Nottingham Trent University. Conference Paper.

³² Landis also discussed the crucial part costumes play in creating character – not only for the viewer, but also for the actors who wear them. Landis, *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design*, xviii – xxii and Landis, *50 Costumes, 50 Characters*, 4-6.

sloping downwards doesn't do for me at all, a 'velvet band straight round & the front soft stuff falling over [...] makes me look half the size.'³³



Figure 4.2 - Detail of a wool and silk velvet bodice from circa 1883 showing the oversized ceramic and metal buttons added at the centre front fastening. Bedales Collection, Petersfield Museum. Personal photograph by the author. 21 March 2013. Museum Number 2007.4843.1.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

'Stage' costume

The range of environments and art forms encompassed by the field of live performance necessitates a recognition of the diverse types of 'costumes' which are created and used for performance. With this in mind, the term 'stage costume,' as introduced by Cumming in 2004, will be employed as the overarching designation for all costumes which were specifically created for live performance. Within the category of 'stage costume' there

³³ Letter from Terry to Nettleship, Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/5, the date of July 1895 has been subsequently added in pencil.

are clearly types of costume which are specific to certain types of performance including, but not restricted to, theatre, opera and dance.

This thesis employs the term 'stage costume' specifically to signify: a garment, or associated accessory, specifically created to be used, or worn, in a live performance before an audience. The type of performance in which the 'stage costume' is worn is not restricted to, but will in most cases be connected with, a production in a theatre or equivalent arena, be this spoken theatre or opera. While the garment in question may have been designed to replicate the fashions associated with a particular country or historic period, in this instance 'stage costume' will also be taken to encompass dress with no distinctive historic or regional features. It will exclude any garments that were not used for a live performance, but outside the bounds of this thesis, the term 'live performance' could be expanded to include costumes created for twentieth- and twenty-first century Rock and Pop performance and also the masques and private theatricals staged in courts and private houses from the late sixteenth century onwards. This definition of 'stage costume' deliberately excludes costumes created for film or television, which represent a separate sphere and style of costume with its own unique conventions.³⁴

Having established a clear definition of the garments encompassed by the term 'stage costume', this chapter will now focus specifically on 'theatre costumes' and the particular challenges associated with the analysis of such garments. The practical application of a

³⁴ This is an area of dress which has received much attention in recent years, a notable contribution to the field being Deborah's Landis's 2012-3 exhibition and accompanying publication Deborah N. Landis, *Hollywood Costume* (London: V&A Publishing, 2012). Landis also published *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design* (2007). Other significant publications include Susan P. Prichard, *Film Costume, an Annotated Bibliography* (Metuchen N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1981); Sue Harper, *Picturing the Past: The Rise and Fall of the British Costume Film* (London: British Film Institute, 1994); Sarah Street, *Costume and Cinema: Dress Codes in Popular Film* (London: Wallflower, 2001) and Tamar J. McDonald, *Hollywood Catwalk: Exploring Costume and Transformation in American Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

methodology for the study and analysis of ‘theatre costume’, will then be demonstrated through the close analysis of series of theatre costumes worn by the actress Ellen Terry.



Figure 4.3 - Detail of the under-tunic showing contrasting fabric. Part of a costume worn by Terry as Desdemona in *Othello*, 1881. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 29 Oct 2010. Museum Number 67.89.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

4.2: Working with Historic Theatrical Costumes

‘A thing of shreds and patches’³⁵

A crucial barrier to research using historic stage costume lies in the fact that the surviving costumes seldom conform to the researcher’s vision of the original production. Not only are they likely to be damaged through use or faded and tarnished over time, they also rarely live up to the exotic and dramatic images suggested in the original designs, or preserved in intricate drawings and souvenir programmes. To mitigate the risk of

³⁵ W.S. Gilbert, *The Mikado: or the town of Titipu*, (London: Bell & Sons, 1911), 2.

disillusionment and to fully understand stage costumes, it is therefore essential to maintain an awareness of the original purpose of these garments.

Stage costumes are constructed to project an illusion which, while effective under stage lights, was never intended to be subject to close and sustained inspection. Restricted budgets and time, mean that the more elaborate decoration and costly materials are often reserved for the section of the costumes visible to the audience, with panels of plain cheaper fabric being used for areas that could be concealed under cloaks, skirts, and jackets. An example of this can be seen in a costume worn by Terry as Desdemona in 1881 within the Museum of London collections. The bodice of the under-tunic was masked by a jacket and whilst the skirt of the tunic is made from a ribbed cream silk and decorated with appliqué, a plain, lightweight silk has been used for the bodice [FIGURE 4.3].³⁶ Re-imagining the effect that scale, distance and lighting have on a costume is a challenge that all those analysing such garments have to confront. Researchers must also consider the practical accommodations costume designers are obliged to make to assist movement on stage, to facilitate the athletic art of singing and voice projection, to flatter the wearer, and to appeal to contemporary taste and imagination.

Moreover, the stage costumes that do become part of a historic costume collection after a production are an exception to the norm. Indeed, the majority of costumes are either discarded or returned to the wardrobe to be recycled and adapted at a future date. For costume designers and makers the key considerations are therefore the short term visual impact of the garment, together with its ability to withstand hard and repeated wear. Designers such as Oliver Messel (1904-1978), battling with the shortage of fabrics in the year following the Second World War, were therefore content to employ materials such

³⁶ For full details see Appendix 2, Museum of London Collection, Desdemona, *Othello*, Museum Number 67.89.

as sweet wrappers, dishcloths, and gilded pipe cleaners to achieve the desired effect for their stage costumes and gave little thought to the eventual fate of garments that were never intended to be retained for a long period of time.³⁷ It is the curators, conservators and researchers, rather than the original creators and wearers, who are concerned about the long term stability of the materials used and the fact that paste stones and synthetic fabrics look stunning from a distance or under dramatic lighting, but are often something of a disappointment when inspected at close range.

All historic dress and textiles are also vulnerable to the damage that can result from long term exposure to light, dust, and fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity. Perspiration also breaks down fibres and stains fabric. This is a particular problem in garments which were worn under hot stage lights and, in the case of dance costumes, used in physically demanding performances. A production that proves particularly successful is likely to have a long run of performances and possibly remain within a company's repertoire for an extended period. Indeed, as Terry notes, she and Irving performed *Charles I* together for the first time in 1879 and by the last time the piece was staged, in 1902, Irving's 'clothes were really threadbare' and would 'have been consigned to the dust-bin' by most actors.³⁸

For this reason, costumes for both chorus members and leading performers will often need to be repaired and frequently re-made, particularly if a role is re-cast or a costume is especially fragile. Furthermore, whilst, as surviving costumes from the Bolshoi Ballet's 1901 production of *Swan Lake* demonstrate, several almost identical versions of the same

³⁷ The costume Oliver Messel designed for an attendant on the Queen of the Waters in Frederick Ashton's ballet *Homage to the Queen* in 1953, for instance, used the newly invented material 'sellotape' to replicate the effect of water. This costume is held by the V&A Museum, Museum Number S.648-1981. For further details see Sarah Woodcock, "Messel on Stage" in *Oliver Messel: In the Theatre of Design*, Thomas Messel (New York: Rizzoli, 2011) 80-81.

³⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 180.

outfit might be made for members of the chorus, makers generally only create one, or perhaps two, versions of a costume intended for a leading role. Several groups of ‘duplicate’ costumes survive from this production of *Swan Lake*. Two examples from one such group were worn by female dancers in the Mazurka in *Swan Lake* and were designed by Alexandre Golovine, Moscow 1901 [FIGURE 4.4 & 4.5]. They both have carmine yellow silk velvet dresses, decorated with applique motifs at the sleeves and across the close fitting bodice. The flared skirts of the dresses are supported on vivid orange and magenta tarlatan skirts. Both dresses were worn with matching hats and shoulder capes.³⁹ As a result the costumes associated with principal roles often accumulate much more significant structural damage than those used by members of the chorus or in smaller parts.



Figure 4.4 - Costume for a female dancer in the Mazurka in *Swan Lake* designed by Alexandre Golovine, Moscow 1901. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. 14 April 2016. Museum Number S.107-1977.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

³⁹ These costumes form part of the collection held by the Department of Theatre and Performance at the V&A Museum. Their museum numbers are S.90-1977 and S.107-1977.



Figure 4.5 - Costume for a female dancer in the Mazurka in *Swan Lake* designed by Alexandre Golovine, Moscow 1901. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. 14 April 2016. Museum Number S.90-1977.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Deliberate damage

Another issue with which curators, conservators and researchers working with stage costume have to contend, is the damage that designers and makers inflict upon costumes for dramatic effect. Surviving costumes from the 1892 production of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* at the Lyceum Theatre, in which Irving played the title role, exemplify the impact of this deliberate 'distressing' or 'breaking-down' of fabrics. In fact, the garments which Irving wore in the storm scene (Act III, Scene 2) are 'broken down' versions of the elaborate tunics and cloaks used in previous acts of the play [FIGURE 4.6]. These 'duplicate robes' are made from much rougher and less expensive fabrics, the body of the costumes being constructed from terry cotton cloth, rather than finely woven wool, on which lines of paint have been used to represent decorative details that were

embroidered and appliquéd on the earlier costume [FIGURE 4.7].⁴⁰ Comparable strategies were employed when creating two of the costumes Terry wore as Marguerite in *Faust* (1885). A dramatic contrast to the feminine dresses and delicate fabrics used in earlier scenes, these two costumes are loosely cut, t-shaped tunics, gathered with a drawstring at the neck, and have been made from woollen flannel blankets. Worn by Terry in the prison scene, they have been deliberately kept plain and were roughly stitched together to reflect Marguerite's poverty and distress at this stage in the play [FIGURE 4.8]⁴¹



Figure 4.6 - Part of a costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. 14 April 2016. Museum Number S.2742:1-3-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁴⁰These costumes survive in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the ensemble encompassed by the Museum Number S.2742:1 to 3-2010 is a broken down version of the costume with the Museum Number S.2741:1 to 6-2010.

⁴¹ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Marguerite, *Faust*, SMA.TC.169, 1118894 and SMA.COST.102.



Figure 4.7 - Part of a costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. 14 April 2016. Museum Number S.2741:1-3-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.8 - Detail of a costume worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 4 September 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.102.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

One role, several costumes

An additional challenge faced when researching and documenting extant costumes stems from the fact that not only were costumes seldom reserved for a single scene within a production, but that they also frequently reappeared in other works within a performer's or company's repertoire. The damage which occurs through wear and travel is inescapable and clearly visible in surviving garments in the form of tears, fabric breakdown at hems and seams, and the loss and damage to fastenings and decorative detailing. The fact that Terry, described by her dresser as 'the worst tear girl I ever knowed,' habitually arrived late, dashing on to the stage with moments to spare, suggests that her garments would have required particularly frequent repairs and replacements.⁴² In the case of Terry's costumes, further complications arise in the process of identification as several productions in which she appeared were repeatedly revived, both in London and on tours, and remained in the Lyceum Company repertoire for decades. Correspondence between Terry and her costume maker, Nettleship, alongside evidence gathered from the costumes themselves, reveals that the costumes Terry wore in long running productions were often altered in response to damage or re-made altogether.⁴³ There were also some occasions on which certain garments were re-designed to reflect a new aesthetic and to suit Terry's changing figure.⁴⁴

⁴² Alice Comyns-Carr, *Mrs. J. Comyns Carr's Reminiscences* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1926) 209-210.

⁴³ Letter from Terry to Nettleship, 14th June 1901, Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/7.

⁴⁴ A costume created for a revival of *Much Ado About Nothing*, in 1903, is a case in point, designed and made by Terry's daughter and both the colour palette and elements of the silhouette differ from the aesthetic adopted for Terry's costumes in the Lyceum productions. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, SMA.TC.107, 1118832.

Case studies in Chapter 5 will explore this issue further, but there are, for instance, at least two surviving versions of a costume she wore as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*.⁴⁵ Similarly, the conservation treatment carried out on Terry's costume for Act I, Scene 5 costume of *Macbeth* revealed that at least two different bodices for the dress had survived.⁴⁶ The existence of multiple costumes for the same role is not surprising given the fact that both productions remained in the company's repertoire for over ten years and were frequently revived in London and on tours throughout the United Kingdom and America. Establishing whether the 'duplicate costumes' were part of a group of costumes made for the original production, or created for a revival is challenging. One point of comparison can be the level of wear evident in a costume and, where a performer's body shape has altered over the course of their career, size can also offer a guideline. With costumes from the late nineteenth century however, the disproportionate level of deterioration which occurs in many silk fabrics, or fur and feather trims from this period means that level of wear cannot be regarded as definitive evidence of an authentic connection with the 'original' production.⁴⁷

For instance, at least three versions of the crimson silk robes which Irving wore as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII* (1892) survive. Designed by the artist Seymour Lucas (1849-1923) and made by the court and theatrical costumiers L & H Nathan, 17 Coventry Street, London, the complete costume consists of: two short capes; a full length cassock,

⁴⁵ The first, museum number SMA.COST.110, 1118835 survives in the Ellen Terry Collection at Smallhythe Place (see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*), the second, though listed as a costume for Hero, rather than Beatrice, is directly comparable to the costume in Smallhythe and is held by the Museum of London, Museum Number 65.90/4a-c (See Appendix 2).

⁴⁶ Zenzie Tinker, Interim report on the conservation of the Lady Macbeth beetle wing dress, July 2009. Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studio Ltd. Unpublished, private report. 2-4.

⁴⁷ Fur, feathers and silk and cotton velvets are particularly vulnerable to pest damage. Silk, particularly that used in garments made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, often 'shatters' over time. This 'shattering' is the result of the breakdown of the fibres within the fabric and often occurs because during this period many fabric producers chemically bonded metal salts to the silk fibres. At this time silk was sold by weight and the metal salts gave the fabric more body, giving cheaper silk the drape and weight of higher quality silk.

with a vertical row of covered buttons running up the centre front; a wide ribbed silk sash and a matching crimson biretta and boots. As Terry noted in her autobiography, Irving's attention to detail was such that the silk from which the vivid crimson robes were made was sent to the Cardinal's College in Rome to be dyed.⁴⁸ One such ensemble, in the Museum of London, is in very good condition, complete, and exhibits comparatively little signs of wear [FIGURE 4.9].⁴⁹ The other two costumes survive at the V&A and at Smallhythe.⁵⁰ The set held by the V&A is complete but in extremely poor condition, exhibiting not only signs of past repair, but also extensive shattering and breakdown to the fabric, particularly in the fabric used for the cassock [FIGURE 4.10]. At Smallhythe a full length cassock, and cape survive, though in a slightly better condition than those held at the V&A [FIGURE 4.11].⁵¹



Figure 4.9 - Catherine Leonard. Costume worn by Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Record Photograph, 4 March 2013. Museum Number 46.61.1.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁴⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 311.

⁴⁹ This costume is held by the Museum of London, Museum Number 46.46/1.a-1.

⁵⁰ The robes are held by V&A Museum and have the Museum Number, S.2718:1 to 8-2010.

⁵¹ Smallhythe References, Robe, Appendix 1, Other Performers, Henry Irving, Cardinal Wolsey, *Henry VIII*, SMA.TC.177a, 1118902.1 and the matching cape, SMA.TC.188a 1118913.1. At Smallhythe they also hold the lining connected with a version of Irving's Cardinal Robes the National Trust Inventory Number for which is [1118913].



Figure 4.10 - Museum Record Photograph. Costume worn by Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S. 2718:1 to 8-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.11 - Costume worn by Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 6 April 2016. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.177a

[1118902.1]. [ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.12 - W&D Downey Photographers Ltd. Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, 1892, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.1 x 9.9 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.145:710-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.13 - W&D Downey Photographers Ltd. Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, 1897 (published 1899), Photogravure. 13.5 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax41235.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The Lyceum Company production of *Henry VIII* opened in January 1892 [FIGURE 4.12]. It ran for several months, both before and after a summer intermission, but was not revived. Wolsey dies at the end of Act 3, Scene 2, two acts before the conclusion of the play, so the survival of at least three versions of his robes is slightly surprising. The poor condition of those in the V&A and Smallhythe collections implies heavy wear, or a predisposition within the fabric towards breakdown, yet this surmise is challenged by the good condition of robes held by the Museum of London. One strong hypothesis for the contrasting condition however, is that whilst the V&A and Smallhythe hold costumes used for performance, the robes in the Museum of London might have been reserved, and possibly created, for a very specific occasion; the Devonshire House Ball of 1897 [FIGURE 4.13]. Photographs record, and Terry recalled, the impression Irving created when he

[...] swept up the staircase, his long train held magnificently over his arm, a sudden wave of reality seemed to sweep upstairs with him, and reduce to the prettiest make-believe all the aristocratic masquerade that surrounded him.⁵²

Whilst no documentation survives to prove this theory, the existence of a large amount of excess fabric can be substantiated in a letter Terry sent to Nettleship in which she commissioned the dressmaker to transform remnants from Irving's robes into a cape.⁵³

'Haunted by the absent body'

Hodgdon has described how as objects 'haunted by the absent body,' stage costumes '[...] work to remember, if not restore the bodies that inhabited them.'⁵⁴ As her observations suggest, material traces of wear, original construction, and modifications, preserved

⁵² Terry, *Story of My life*, 313.

⁵³ Letter from Terry to Nettleship, July 1892. Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/5.

⁵⁴ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 137, 143.

within extant garments, whether fashionable dress, or stage costume, all provide evidence of how these clothes were worn and used. These traces also offer a route through which to reconstruct an outline of the, now absent, body for which they were originally created.

Until recently the only more precise record of Terry's height is in the form of annotation on the rear of a photograph taken of her in 1862. This records the actress's height, then fifteen, as five foot, five inches, which equates to approximately one hundred and sixty-five centimetres.⁵⁵ When mounting the one surviving example of Terry's personal dress within the collection conservators therefore set the mannequin at a height of about five feet, five inches (about 165 centimetres), basing their decision on the measurements taken for the shoulder to front hem of this garment, together with what little information is known about Terry's height. As they acknowledged however, it was likely that Terry was taller and this hypothesis would fit with the greater height suggested by her surviving costumes.⁵⁶

It was thought that Terry's adult height had never been formally recorded but a from information discovered on a passenger list for a journey she made to New York in 1907, it has been possible to confirm that she was 5 feet 10 inches tall.⁵⁷ This explains contemporary descriptions of Terry as unusually tall and is substantiated by measurements taken from her surviving garments.⁵⁸ It is clear therefore that Terry was a

⁵⁵ The photograph, reference NT/SMA/PH/3278, actually shows Terry's sister Kate, as Diana in *Endymion* at the Theatre Royal, Bristol. Terry appeared alongside Kate as Cupid and it was at this time that Terry first met Godwin. The annotation on the rear, written by Godwin, is dated to the 21st of December 1862.

⁵⁶ Zenzie Tinker (the conservator responsible for treating and mounting the dress, SMA.TC.201), Personal communication with the author. 11 March 2014. Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios, Brighton.

⁵⁷ n.a. "Passenger list for the SS Philadelphia leaving Southampton Jan 12th 1907 – arriving Port of New York Jan 19th 1907." Microform Serial T715, 1897-1957, Microfilm Roll: 0821, Line: 1, Page Number: 2.

⁵⁸ It is recognised that measurements taken from garments can only provide a guide to Terry's height and that allowances must be made for the manner which the weight of decorations and the fabric can cause garments to stretch and distort over time. Even allowing for these factors however, average measurements taken from surviving costumes consistently indicate that Terry was between five feet, eight inches and up to five feet, ten inches, in height.

tall woman, and when young appears to have been very conscious of this fact. Recalling the training which she received from a French actress, Madam de Rhona, Terry, then aged thirteen, explains how

When I watched the way she moved her hands and feet, despair entered my soul. It was all so precise, so “express and admirable.” Her limbs were so dainty and graceful—mine so big and unmanageable! “How long and gaunt I am,” I used to say to myself.⁵⁹

Bram Stoker (1847-1912), Irving’s business manager at the Lyceum, made similar observations regarding Terry’s height. He describing Terry as a ‘fine, tall woman’ and in his *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, recalled how Irving both sought to exploit and minimise the actress’s height, depending on the role and production. Stoker refers specifically to both *Madame Sans Gene* (1897) and *Cymbeline* (1896). In *Madame Sans Gene* Terry’s height was an advantage, helping Irving, playing Napoleon, to minimise his own height in comparison. In *Cymbeline* however, Terry had to represent ‘a timid young girl’:

Matters had therefore to be so arranged that size should be made a comparative and not an absolute matter. To this end Imogen was surrounded by the tallest and biggest women obtainable. [...] The towering height and girth of the trees and the architecture and stonework lent themselves to the illusion. All the men too were tall and of massive build, so that the illusions of size and helplessness were perfect.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Terry, *Story of My Life*, 37.

⁶⁰ Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (London: William Heinemann, 1907), 170.

Extant garments can also provide an insight into alterations in Terry's body shape visible in surviving photographs. These images illustrate her transition from extreme slimness in youth and her early thirties, to the fuller figure which was the joint result of aging and, in all likelihood, a better diet and more reliable income.⁶¹ On first examination the surviving costumes appeared to exhibit relatively little evidence of the kind of modification at the seams which would indicate alterations to accommodate Terry's changing figure. What became clear through analysing Terry's correspondence however, is that many of the costumes she wore in long running productions were replaced, with additional costumes being added to the wardrobe for touring productions.⁶²

Furthermore, comparing waist measurements for productions from early in her career, with those from a later stage, has provided some indication of these physical changes. A dress reputedly worn by Terry aged thirty-one when playing Ophelia for the first time, provides a key starting point for this process.⁶³ Evidence supporting the link between this costume and the original 1878 production of *Hamlet* can be found in Terry's own observation that,

My Ophelia dress was made of material which could not have cost more than 2s. a yard, and not many yards were wanted [...] I have the dress still, and, looking at it the other day, I wondered what leading lady now would consent to wear it.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Terry remained extremely slim until her early thirties, even after the birth of her two children (the first in 1869 when she was 22 and the second three years later in 1872 when Terry was 25). Terry was increasingly conscious of her changing figure, as is evident in correspondence and exchanges with her dresser recorded in her autobiography. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 222.

⁶² Of particular relevance to this discussion are the letters, sent by Terry to her dressmaker, Nettleship, which are part of the Autographed Letters Series THM/14/20/TERRY in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

⁶³ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Ophelia, *Hamlet*, SMA.TC.168, 1118893.

⁶⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 129-130.

The garment which survives at Smallhythe, is a pale salmon pink asymmetrical surcoat, worn over a long sleeved, rose pink, bodice [FIGURE 4.14]. The surcoat and undergarment are made from a damask silk and wool blend fabric woven with a stylised floral pattern and trimmed with lines of white rabbit fur, dyed to resemble ermine, at the neckline and cuffs. Bands of pale cream linen have been used to create a sleeve cuffs and an integral collar for the undertunic. These have been softly gathered to fit the wrist and neck [FIGURE 4.15 and 4.16]. The colour of the garment certainly fits the palette originally outlined by Terry, in particular the ‘pinkish dress’ which Terry intended to wear in the first scene.⁶⁵ The measurements taken for this costume suggests an extremely small waist size of only slightly over sixty centimetres, or about 23 ½ inches.



Figure 4.14 - Costume worn by Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 26 August 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.168 [1118893].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁶⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 156.



Figure 4.15 - Detail of the costume worn by Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 26 August 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.168 [1118893].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.16 - Detail of the costume worn by Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 26 August 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.168 [1118893].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Also amongst the earliest surviving examples of Terry's theatrical costume in the collection are the costumes for Henrietta Maria in the 1879 Lyceum Company production of *Charles I*.⁶⁶ The costumes created for this production were inspired by Van Dyck portraits of the Monarch and his family.⁶⁷ Terry's surviving costumes include a deep brown and bronze silk bodice and skirt [FIGURE 4.17] and a deep blue/black silk velvet bodice and skirt [FIGURE 4.18], both have full sleeved, waist length bodices and the skirts are wide, flaring out towards the hem.⁶⁸ The internal waist measurements for the costumes worn by Terry in this production range between sixty-four centimetres (25 inches) and sixty-nine and a half centimetres (27 inches); a range in measurements which could be accounted for by the length of time which the production remained in the repertoire of the Lyceum Company, during which time some of Terry's costumes were replaced.⁶⁹ These measurements would indicate a waist measurement of about sixty-five centimetres (25 ½ inches) and this accords with Terry's description of herself at this time as, 'thin to vanishing point.'⁷⁰

Terry's preference for loose fitting garments makes it harder to establish a reliable waist measurement from the costumes worn by the actress later in her career. The closer fit of the ca.1750-1780 inspired styles which characterised Terry's costumes in *Nance Oldfield* (1891) and *The Dead Heart* (staged in 1889) does however offer a clearer sense of Terry's changing figure, and a comparable 'fit' to the costumes worn by the actress in *Charles I* [FIGURE 4.19] and [FIGURE 4.20]. The integral bodice which forms part of the Watteau

⁶⁶ It must be noted however, that this production remained in the Lyceum Company's repertoire into the 1900s so the possibility that some of these garments are later remakes cannot be discounted.

⁶⁷ Clement Scott, *From the Bells to King Arthur* (London: John MacQueen, 1897), 17-18.

⁶⁸ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, *Charles I*, SMA.COST.147a&b, 1118872.1 & 2 and SMA.TC.139a & b, 1118864.1 & 2.

⁶⁹ In a letter from Terry to Ada Nettleship dated 14th June 1901, Terry notes that 'My first dress must be replaced!' Letter from Terry to Nettleship, 14th June 1901, Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/Terry/7.

⁷⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 129.

back style costume from *Nance Oldfield* (held by the Museum of London), has an internal waist measurement of approximately sixty-seven centimetres (26 inches). The costumes from *The Dead Heart* follow a comparable silhouette for the bodice, but are softer and looser in fabric and fit. The internal waist measurement for these costumes was between seventy-four and seventy-eight centimetres (29 and 30 inches).⁷¹ This general increase in the waist measurement would be in line with what can be seen and is recorded, of Terry's shifting figure.

Whilst not providing definitive measurements for the actress, the details gathered through close analysis offer an important insight into Terry's theatrical wardrobe. They confirm her unusual height, and exemplify the physical changes which were shaping Terry's attitude to design later in her career.



Figure 4.17 - Bodice, part of a costume worn by Terry as Queen Henrietta Maria in *Charles I*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 4 March 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.147a [1118872.1]

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁷¹ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, *Nance Oldfield*, SMA.TC.109 a & b, *The Dead Heart*, SMA.TC.161a&b, 111886.1&2.



Figure 4.18 - Bodice, part of a costume worn by Terry as Queen Henrietta Maria in *Charles I*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 4 March 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.139a [1118864.1]

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.19 - Bodice, part of a costume worn by Terry as Catherine Duval in *The Dead Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1889, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 May 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.161a [111886.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.20 - Bodice, part of a costume worn by Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Authenticity

The existence of multiple versions of ‘a costume’ raises important questions regarding the perceived ‘authenticity’ of surviving garments. Particularly when, as will be discussed later, modification, repair, re-use and replacement are inherent stages in the traditional biography of a stage costume. What is the historical significance of a costume which, whilst known to have used by a performer in the role, was not worn in the ‘original’ production in which they first created the part? Should researchers question the ‘authenticity’ of a costume which, whilst an exact replica of the costume used in the ‘original production’ and worn by the same performer, was created and used at a later date?

To respond to such questions it is first necessary to establish exactly what ‘authenticity’ signifies in relation to the analysis and interpretation of theatre costume. As Philip Vannini and J.P. Williams demonstrate in *Authenticity in Culture, Self and Society* (2009), ‘authenticity’ is a malleable concept which ‘[...] refers to a set of qualities that people in a particular time and place have come to agree represent and ideal or exemplar.’⁷² Their definition of authenticity as a ‘[...] cyclical process rather than a static characteristic [and] once constructed it is used to build or validate its very own manifestations and performances,’ is particularly pertinent to this thesis and the study of stage costume more widely.⁷³ Terry revived many of her most famous roles within different contexts and often wore different costumes for the same part over the course of her career.⁷⁴ Her costumes therefore offer an ideal case study through which to address the implications of these debates and to illustrate the relevance of Vannini and William’s definition.

Further problems for researchers stem from the fact that many surviving costumes have reputed, but unsubstantiated, links to performers. Within the V&A collections, for instance, are a pair of elbow length gloves, embroidered with an ‘S’ at each cuff, reputedly worn by the actress Sarah Siddons, but with no substantiated provenance to connect them to the actress. They also hold a dress ‘reputedly worn by Terry as Juliet’ [FIGURE 4.21]. Terry performed this role in 1882 and surviving photographs and sketches provide a clear sense of the costumes worn [FIGURE 4.22]. None of the full length heavy silk brocade gowns that Terry is depicted wearing in these images resemble this surviving garment; a

⁷² Phillip Vannini and J P. Williams, *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society* (Farnham: Ashgate Pub, 2009), 3

⁷³ Vannini and Williams, *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society*, 12

⁷⁴ Terry revived the role of Portia, first played in 1875, in 1879 and throughout her subsequent career. The role of Beatrice was another favoured character, and was a part Terry revived in 1903 to recovered finances after the failure of her production of *The Vikings* at the Imperial Theatre. The actress also first played the role of Olivia in 1878 at the Royal Court, but revived the part at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885. Similarly Terry played the part of Nance Oldfield in 1891 at the Lyceum, but revived this role as part of the in *A Pageant of Great Women* staged by the Pioneer Players in 1909.

calf length dress, made from a cream silk fringed Cantonese shawl embroidered with a floral design in cream silk and with long cream chiffon sleeves. Whether or not the surviving garment was ever worn by Terry is difficult to prove or disprove, but the silhouette is clearly influenced by the fashions of the 1920s, and differs so greatly from the garments worn by Terry as Juliet in 1882, that any link between this costume and the original production is extremely unlikely.⁷⁵



Figure 4.21 - Costume reputedly worn by Terry in *Romeo and Juliet*, in 1882, but probably dating from 1920 and not worn by Terry. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author 14 April 2016. Museum Number, S.9-1976.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁷⁵ Both items are held by the V&A Museum. The elbow length gloves reputedly worn by Siddons have the Museum number, S.188-1978. The dress 'reputedly worn by Terry as Juliet' has the Museum Number S.9-1976.



Figure 4.22- Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, 1882, Sepia Photograph on paper. 13.8 x10.4 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:326-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

There are similar issues in determining the provenance of some items within the Ellen Terry Collection itself. As discussed the collection had not been fully catalogued before this research was undertaken, and includes several unidentified garments which are recorded as having ‘possible connections to Terry’ (See Appendix 1). Such cases make apparent the importance of charting internal measurements and recording evidence of damage through wear, as distinctions between Terry’s measurements, and the size of the garments supposedly connected with Terry, may immediately rule out the actress as a potential wearer. A costume in the collection which demonstrates this point is a fine wool

mustard yellow dress, wearer unknown, for which the inner waist measurement is approximately fifty-eight centimetres (22 inches) [FIGURE 4.23]. This measurement is smaller than that recorded for any of Terry's surviving garments and therefore makes it very unlikely the garment was originally worn by the actress.⁷⁶



Figure 4.23 - Detail of costume previously thought to have been worn by Terry, production and date unknown, circa 1890-1900. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 20 July 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.150 [1118875]

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Doubts could also be raised about a costume, reputedly worn by Terry as Desdemona, within the Museum of London collections. Both the museum catalogue records, and the associated acquisition files date the costume to 1916.⁷⁷ This date (late in Terry's career)

⁷⁶ See Appendix 1, Theatre Costume, Wearer Unknown, *Production Unknown*, SMA.TC.150 a+b, 1118875.1+2. Another dress where the size and also the associated history, seems to undermine the reputed links to Terry survives in the Leeds Discovery Museum Collections. The provenance which accompanied the pale gold brocaded silk dress was that it was 'originally designed for Ellen Terry' but was actually worn by the actress K.L.Langstaffe (fl.1898) when playing Desdemona in 1898 at the Grand Theatre in Leeds (For further details of this item see Appendix 2, Leeds Discovery Museum, Museum Number, LEEDM.E.2002.0011.0003).

⁷⁷ This dress is part of the Museum of London collection, See Appendix 2, Museum of London, Desdemona, *Othello*, Museum Number 67.89 and 67.89a. This date is recorded on the museum catalogue record, and in the related acquisition documents. Personal communication with Sarah Demb, Museum Archivist & Records Manager, Museum of London, 14 May 2014.

immediately calls into question the costume's 'authenticity,' as the actress is only known to have played the role of Desdemona in 1881, and the production was not revived by the Lyceum Company.⁷⁸ As the following analysis will show, a detailed examination of the surviving costume alongside surviving images, has revealed key information about its possible origins and 'authenticity.'



Figure 4.24 - Part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Desdemona in *Othello*, dated 1916, but probably 1881. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2010. Museum Number 67.89 and 67.89a.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁷⁸ Terry records in her autobiography how on the final night of the production, Irving, felt he had failed in the role of Othello 'rolled up the clothes that he had worn as the Moor one by one, carefully laying one garment on top of the other, and then, half-humorously and very deliberately said, "*Never again!*"' Terry, *Story of My Life*, 207. No biographies record any future performances of Terry in the role, but an undated letter from circa 1901 sent by Terry to her brother Fred Terry and his wife, Julia Neilson, describing her preparations for *Coriolanus* does however include the phrase 'but first, more Desdemona' with, unfortunately, no additional details to illuminate the reference. Letter from Terry to Fred Terry and Julia Neilson (undated), Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/3.



Figure 4.25 - Part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Desdemona in *Othello*, dated 1916, but probably 1881. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2010. Museum Number 67.89 and 67.89a.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

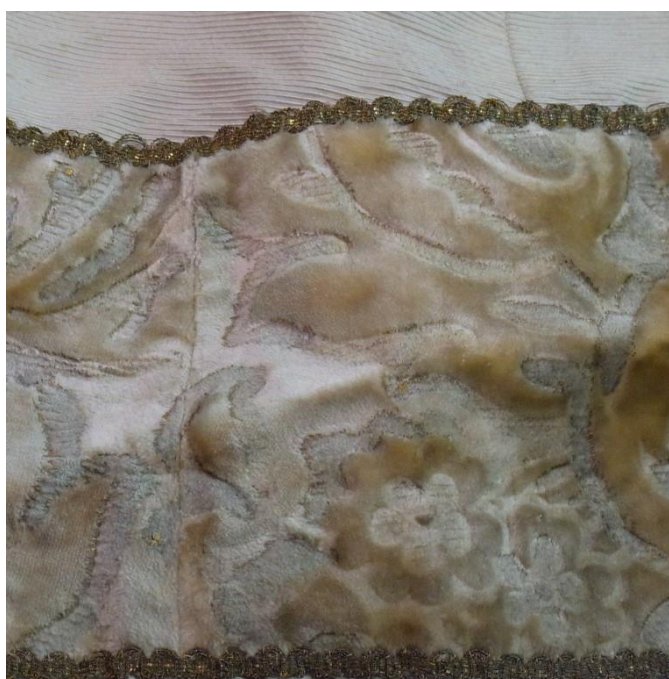


Figure 4.26 - Detail of the applied decoration used on the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Desdemona in *Othello*, dated 1916, but probably 1881. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2010. Museum Number 67.89 and 67.89a.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.27 - Detail of fabric used for a costume worn in the Lyceum Production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, circa 1882. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 29 October 2010. Museum Number 65.90/4a-c.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.28 - Detail of the decoration used on the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Desdemona in *Othello*, dated 1916, but probably 1881. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2010. Museum Number 67.89 and 67.89a.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.29 - W. Palmer. Line drawing of Terry as she appeared in the role of Desdemona. This drawing was originally published as W. Palmer, "Theatrical Sketches Othello at the Lyceum Theatre" in 1881. Press cutting mounted in the Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume 5, 258. Garrick Club Collection, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.30 - W. Palmer. Line drawing of Terry as she appeared in the role of Desdemona. This drawing was originally published as W. Palmer, "Theatrical Sketches Othello at the Lyceum Theatre" in 1881. Press cutting mounted in the Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume 5, 258. Garrick Club Collection, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The costume consists of a sleeveless floor-length undertunic, worn with a long sleeved coat [FIGURE 4.24 and 4.25]. The sleeves are full at the top, but fit closely to the arm after this point and the tunic extends into a slight train at the rear. Both the high upright collar of the coat, and the sleeve cuffs are edged with gold metallic braid, and panels of gold silk velvet have been added to the undertunic. The gold silk velvet used for the appliquéd decoration strongly resembles the fabric used on the costume Terry wore at Beatrice in 1882 (the year after staging *Othello*) [FIGURE 4.26 and 4.27]. The measurements for this second dress are also much closer to other garments known to have been worn by the actress. The full length (collar to hem) is one hundred and fifty centimetres (equating to a height of about 5 foot, 9 inches), and the internal waist measurement is approximately sixty-eight centimetres (26 inches). These measurements fit within what is known about Terry's size during the earlier part of her career and, specifically, the period during which she played the role of Desdemona (1881). The reason for assigning the later date to the dress is unclear, the only recorded provenance for the dress being that it was donated by a great granddaughter of the actress (unnamed) in 1967, who stated that the costume was worn by Terry as Desdemona in 1916.⁷⁹ Terry's last full stage appearance was when she played the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* in 1919, but by 1916 the actress' eyesight was beginning to fail.⁸⁰ It is therefore unlikely that in 1916 a sixty-nine year old Terry would have been capable of playing such a major role and, moreover, the part of a young, naive girl.

⁷⁹ The acquisition record for this garment includes a letter from the curator than the donor (unnamed for Data Protection Reasons, but identified as a descendent of the actress) from November of 1967. Transcript of the Acquisition Records for Museum of London items, Reference 67.89 and 67.89a. Sarah Demb (Museum Archivist and Records Manager, Museum of London), Personal communication with the author (email), 16 May 2014.

⁸⁰ Terry's final stage appearance was in 1925, when she played Susan Wildersham in *Crossings* at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith in 1925. It was a non-speaking role and she was by then almost entirely blind.

In cases such as this, where a link to Terry seems more probable, one of the most reliable means of identification is to compare the surviving costume with contemporary photographs and illustrations. The majority of Terry's roles are well documented in both photographs, sketches, and contemporary reviews. Furthermore, the fact that these images can generally be linked to specific dates, greatly aids this process of comparative dating. Unfortunately the 1881 production of *Othello* is amongst the least well documented production from Terry's career. The only surviving photograph of her in role is of the final act, in which she is wearing the nightdress in which Desdemona is murdered. Surviving sketches by W. Palmer however, make it possible to trace clearer details of the costumes Terry wore earlier in the play. Whilst none of these sketches appear to depict an exact match for the dress, the bands of gold silk velvet appliquéd to the undertunic recall the striped detailing visible on Terry's gown in [FIGURE 4.28 and 4.29].⁸¹ The same series of sketches also reveal similarities in elements of the detailing used at the cuffs and the collar of the jacket, and close parallels in the sleeve shape [FIGURE 4.30]. On the basis of these images, together with the details discovered within the surviving costume, a strong argument can be made for confirming the identification of the dress as one of the costumes worn by Terry as Desdemona, but in 1881, not 1916.

'Indelibly imprinted with performance'

There are many challenges specific to research employing extant costume and this discussion has focussed upon the inescapable challenges and disappointments that can result during the analysis of extant stage costumes. As Hodgdon declared however, 'one of the pleasures of the archive is the thrill of touching a costume's fabric, feeling its

⁸¹ These sketches are part of a series of drawings created by W.Palmer and published as W.Palmer, "Theatrical Sketches Othello at the Lyceum Theatre", Press Cutting, Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume 5: 258, Garrick Club, London.

weight and drape in one's hand.'⁸² The opportunity to study such garments closely not only exposes evidence of wear, but also makes apparent the skill of their creators which manifests itself in the construction and decoration of these garments. A direct encounter with costume, such as that worn by Irving in the title role of *Vanderdecken* in 1878, can, for example, reveal evidence of the manner in which fabrics have been combined for theatrical effect. The faceted beads that were sewn across the surface of the cloak have been covered in a layer of black gauze. This muffling layer of gauze rendered the actor invisible when lurking at the rear of the stage and meant that he could emerge dramatically from the shadows when the beads were illuminated by a beam of gaslight, to great effect.⁸³

Similarly, the costumes Terry and Irving wore as Beatrice and Benedick in the 1882 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, make evident the skill of the costumiers who created them and the money the Lyceum Company invested in their stage garments. One of Irving's costumes for the role was decorated with in excess of one thousand tiny seed pearls, each pearl hand sewn to the pale blue silk beneath [FIGURE 4.31].⁸⁴ Equal care was devoted to the gold stamped velvet gown Terry wore as Beatrice, each section of the meandering pattern appliqued to the skirt and stomacher being outlined in glass bugle beads [FIGURE 4.32].⁸⁵ Both the pearls and bugle beads would have looked spectacular under limelight. Although comparable effects could have been achieved with much more simplistic detailing, and at far lower cost, the decision was clearly made to use these expensive beads and this time consuming method of decoration. The damage which is an inevitable consequence of wear and time has tarnished the metallic braid used on both costumes and many of the original beads and pearls are now lost, but in spite of this, their

⁸² Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives," 140.

⁸³ This costume is held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2762:1 to 3-2010.

⁸⁴ The costume is now held by the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2761:1-4-2010.

⁸⁵ This example of Terry's costume survives at Smallhythe Place. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1881, SMA.COST.110, 1118835.

original splendour remains apparent. Surviving theatre costumes are all, as Hodgdon observes, ‘indelibly imprinted with performance,’ but as the case studies which follow will show, it is these material traces which make them such a valuable source for researchers.⁸⁶



Figure 4.31 - Museum Record Photograph. Detail of the costume worn by Henry Irving as Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S. 2761:1 to 4-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.32 - Detail of the bead embellishment used on a costume worn in *Much Ado About Nothing*, circa 1882 (possibly later). Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 29 October 2010. Museum Number 65.90/4a-c.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁸⁶ Hodgdon, “Shopping in the Archives” 140.

4.3- Making and Designing

Terry's costumes

This section of the chapter focuses specifically on the theatre costumes worn by Terry and will examine the process of making and designing specific to her stage dress. It concentrates directly upon the 'indelible evidence of performance' imprinted within Terry's surviving costumes. Paying particular attention to the construction, fabric choices, decorative effects and fit of these garments, it will consider what these elements of Terry's extant costumes reveal about her personal taste, approach to design and movement patterns on the stage. This close examination will demonstrate the extent and significance of the material evidence preserved within these garments and their ability to illuminate and inform wider discussions within this thesis relating to dress, fashion, art, design, performance, and self-fashioning.

A sense of what is 'right for the scene'

Terry first performed with the Lyceum Company in the 1878 production of *Hamlet*. The play opened on December 20th with Irving in the title role and Terry as Ophelia. Terry's descriptions of the preparations she made for the production make it apparent that, even at this early stage in their partnership, Irving allowed her a significant degree of control over the designs of her costumes.

As she explains in her autobiography, Terry's original intention was that the colours and fabrics of the costumes would reflect her character's deteriorating state of mind. Ophelia, confident that she was loved by Hamlet, would therefore be introduced in pink, to show that 'it's all rose coloured with her,' with 'a pale, gold amber dress' selected for the 'nunnery scene,' a colour chosen to signal a subtle shift in mood, and also, to 'tone down' Terry's hair. In Ophelia's last scene however, the heroine's decline would be reflected in

the transition to ‘a transparent black dress.’ Terry’s decision to choose black, rather than the ‘red’ which she had discovered to be ‘the mourning colour of the period,’ was prompted by her sense that black would express both Ophelia’s character and situation.⁸⁷ So confident had Terry been in her decisions that this black dress of ‘crêpe de Chine and miniver’ was made before an initial consultation with Irving.⁸⁸ Terry soon became aware however, that, when designing costumes for the Lyceum Company it was crucial to consider not only the historic context and narrative of the play but also the aesthetic of the production as a whole. Of equal importance, particularly in this production, was the foregrounding of the protagonist. As Irving’s production advisor, Walter Lacy, explained to the actress, ‘there must be only one black figure in this play, and that’s Hamlet!’ This realisation laid the foundations for the mutual respect and willingness to compromise upon which Terry’s professional partnership with Irving was predicated. As the actress later recalled

[...] After this he always consulted me about the costumes but if he said:

“I want such and such a scene to be kept dark and mysterious”, I knew better than to try and introduce pale-coloured dresses into it.⁸⁹

No wanton extravagance

When narrating this anecdote, Terry was careful to express her concern at ‘having been the cause of needless expense’ and notes that the replacement ‘Ophelia dress’ was made from ‘Bolton sheeting’ (one of the cheapest types of cotton furnishing fabric) and was trimmed with ‘rabbit fur’, rather than the ‘miniver’ used for the previous costume.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 156-157.

⁸⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 157.

⁸⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 157.

⁹⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 157. Phyllis G. Tortora and Ingrid Johnson define Bolton Sheeting as ‘A coarse unbleached twilled English cotton fabric, sometimes dyed a cream colour, originally it was woven. 72in (80cmm) wide. Uses: ground for crewel embroidery, also dresses, aprons, draperies.’ Phyllis G.

Though by the late 1890s up to £150 might be spent on a single costume, Terry stresses that in contrast to comparable theatres ‘At the Lyceum *wanton* extravagance was unknown.’⁹¹ Terry’s pride in the ability shown by designers and makers to achieve stunning visual effects at minimal financial cost is evident throughout her writing and in many of her garments. As she remarked in 1911

[...] it is not always necessary to spend a great deal of money. I think I may say, without boasting, that I have always been well dressed on the stage, but I doubt if there has ever been a more cheaply dressed actress.’⁹²

The use of rabbit fur to imitate ermine is a case in point and was a common theatrical device in this period. Surviving costumes worn by both Terry and Irving exemplify this practice, which is also referred to in Terry’s correspondence with her costumier Nettleship [FIGURE 4.33].⁹³ Scrap materials and costumes might also be recycled. W.G. Robertson was particularly struck by the ‘rich gown’ in which Terry made her first entrance in *Becket* in 1893 which conveyed a ‘wondered Rossettian effect of dim gold and glowing colour veiled in black, her masses of bright hair in a net of gold and golden hearts embroidered on her robe.’ As W.G. Robertson reveals however, this costume was actually formed from ‘[...] an old pink gown, worn with stage service [...] the mysterious veiling was the coarsest and cheapest black net,’ ‘the glory of hair through golden meshes was a bag of

Tortora and Ingrid Johnson, *The Fairchild Books Dictionary of Textiles* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc, 2014) 66.

⁹¹ *New Zealand Herald*, 25 November 1900: 2. See also Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 171.

⁹² Ellen Terry, “Some Ideas on Stage Decoration,” *McClures Magazine*, (January, 1911), 293.

⁹³ The same effect was used for the Archbishopal pallium worn by Irving in the title role of *Becket* (1893), now in the V&A Museum, Museum Number S.2752:2-2010. In a letter sent by Terry to Nettleship in ca.1895, Terry she asks for a ‘cheap cloak, looking like Ermine, but really innocent bunny rabbit.’ Letter from Terry to Nettleship, sent from 22 Barkston Gardens at one o’clock in the morning. (the letter is not dated but mentions Miss Gibson and Miss Brenda Gibson played Estelle in *The Corsican Brothers* in 1895). Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/5.

gold tinsel stuffed with crumpled paper’ and ‘the broidered hearts were cut out of gold paper and gummed on.’⁹⁴



Figure 4.33 - Detail of fur trim on costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *King Lear* Lyceum Theatre, 1892. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. 14 April 2016. Museum number S.2743:1-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

More sophisticated techniques were also employed when required however, as was the case when Terry discovered ‘a saffron silk with a design woven into it by hand with many-coloured threads and little jewels’ perfectly suited to a costume required for the 1881 production of *The Cup*. Unfortunately this silk was being sold in Libertys for ‘twelve guineas a yard,’ a price which Terry declared prohibitive. A solution was found by Mr. Arnott (the Stage Carpenter and Property Manager) however, who proved able to reproduce the effect by having ‘some raw silk dyed the exact saffron’ and creating two printing blocks, ‘one red and the other black’ to print the pattern. With the addition of ‘a few cheap spangles...to replace the real jewels’ the ‘toga looked beautiful.’⁹⁵ Whilst the

⁹⁴ W.G.Robertson, *Time Was*, 154. Valerie Cumming provides further instances of Terry’s frugality in Cumming, ‘Ellen Terry: An Aesthetic Actress and her Costumes’, *Costume* 21 (1987): 72-73.

⁹⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 170-171.

original costume has not survived, Terry's description can be matched to photographs of the production, and these images illustrate the visual impact of Arnott's fabric [FIGURE 4.34]. Newspaper reviews offer a further insight into the colour and weight of the material, in their descriptions of Terry's 'classical draperies and sea green robes' which were 'seemingly spun from gossamer.'⁹⁶



Figure 4.34 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup*, Lyceum Theatre, 1881. Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x10.1cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:312-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁹⁶ *The Daily Telegraph*, 4th January, 1881. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume I: 141-143, Garrick Collection, London.

Patience Harris

Terry's friend, couturier Lucile (Lady Duff Gordon, 1863-1935), declared the actress 'intensely particular' about her 'theatre clothes' and described how Terry '[...] would spend hours choosing her costumes, and studying her make up.'⁹⁷ This observation is borne out in surviving correspondence and interviews and also in the attention Terry herself made to recording details about her costumes in her autobiography and her personal scripts for Lyceum productions.⁹⁸ Whilst taking a leading role in the design of her costumes, she also relied upon the skill of artists, costume designers and dressmakers in their creation.

For much of the first decade of Terry's career at the Lyceum Theatre Patience Harris (1857-1901) is credited with overseeing the creation of Terry's costumes.⁹⁹ Very little has been written about Harris. It is known that she was the sister of Sir Augustus Glossop Harris (1852-1896), manager of the Drury Lane theatre between 1879 and 1896 and at the time of her death she was working as theatrical costumier under the name Auguste et Cie (maker's labels woven this name appear in costumes worn by both Terry and Irving).¹⁰⁰ Harris appears to have worked with Terry until circa 1887 but very little information has survived relating to their professional relationship.¹⁰¹ Terry makes no

⁹⁷ Lady Duff Gordon, *Discretions and Indiscretions* (London: Jarolds, 1932), 33-4.

⁹⁸ The annotations and images contained within Terry's private copies of *Macbeth* now held at Smallhythe Place, are a case in point and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Terry holds at least two copies of the script, National Trust Inventory Number 3119096 and National Trust Inventory Number 3119105. Also part of the library at Smallhythe, Terry's copy of J.R.Planché, *British History of Costume* (London: C.Cox, 1847) is also heavily annotated. Two copies of this book survive in the library National Trust Inventory Number 3052812 and National Trust Inventory Number 3052813.

⁹⁹ Whilst, as is discussed, little information survives relating to Patience Harris, she is known to have been the sister of Augustus Harris (1852-1896), and actor and dramatist who also acted as Manager of the Drury Theatre from 1879. Both were the children of the dramatic Augustus Harris and his wife, neé Maria Ann Bone, who had also worked as a theatrical costumier.

¹⁰⁰ Reports into the inquest provoked by Harris's death in December 1901 suggest that she may have died from alcoholism. They also allege that, though unmarried, she had a 'male companion' who was also the primary beneficiary in her will. "Death of Miss Patience Glossop Harris," *The Derbyshire Times*, Saturday 4 January 1902. [n.d].

¹⁰¹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 79.

reference to Harris in her autobiography and the only information regarding her role as Terry's costume designer yet discovered, is in Comyn-Carr's description of the disagreement between herself and Harris over Terry's costumes for *The Amber Heart*, 1887 and Harris' subsequent resignation. The only real route into discovering more about the impact Harris had upon Terry's on stage dress is therefore through the costumes themselves.

The fact that the specific individuals responsible for designing or making costumes are rarely credited in the theatre programmes presents a challenge when seeking to identify costumes for which Harris had specific responsibility. Another barrier to determining precise identification, is the frequent absence of maker's labels in the costumes themselves. By examining photographs and surviving garments from the 1878 to 1887 period of Terry's career however, it is possible to identify clear patterns within the style and fit of Terry's on stage garments between these years. During this period Terry played leading roles in: *Hamlet*; *Charles I*; *The Merchant of Venice*; *Iolanthe*; *The Cup*; *Othello*; *The Belles Stratagem*; *Romeo and Juliet*; *Much Ado About Nothing*; *Olivia* and *Faust*.¹⁰² Of these productions, costumes Terry wore as Ophelia, Henrietta Maria, Portia, Iolanthe, Beatrice, Olivia and Marguerite survive. Amongst these, only the costumes for Ophelia, Iolanthe and Olivia can be reliably matched with photographs documenting the original productions. The other productions were frequently revived, and related correspondence and images, together with the level of wear, indicates that the surviving costumes are copies or adaptations of the garments which featured in the original production. Comparing the surviving costumes and photographs from this period reveals key details

¹⁰² Lists of the productions in which Terry appeared can be found in biographies of the actress, including Manvell, *Ellen Terry*, 367-268 (though he only lists her roles whilst in the Lyceum Company) and Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 262-264.

regarding the fabric choices for, and construction of, these garments, all which are likely to have been overseen by Harris.



Figure 4.35 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Sepia Photograph on paper. 8.9 x 5.9 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:277-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The robes Terry is depicted wearing in the photographs connected with original, 1879, Lyceum production of *The Merchant of Venice* provide a clear illustration of the more elaborate styles favoured by Harris. Whilst these robes have not survived, the images of Terry in the robes from Act IV, Scene One, make apparent the weight, quality and weave of the silk from which they were made [FIGURE 4.35]. This fabric is particularly significant as it can be traced to the offices of a specific textile company, Watts of Westminster, which had opened just five years earlier. Remarkably little information survives documenting where and when the actress purchased items for her on or off stage attire. The account books in the archive of Watts confirm both that Terry was a customer

of the firm and the amount of money she spent there. They therefore represent a unique insight in the actress's purchasing choices.

Still operating today, Watts of Westminster was the joint venture of three architects, George Frederick Bodley, George Gilbert Scott the Younger and Thomas Garner. The firm supplied fittings and furnishings for both ecclesiastical and domestic interiors and advertised their ability to supply items of,

Artistic character. Embroidery and Textile Fabrics, such as Damask, Silks, Velvets, Woollen and other Hangings, still be included in the List of Goods, which will also comprise Wall Papers and Stained Glass, together with all the usual articles of Household Furniture.¹⁰³

The three founders formed a limited company in 1874 and opened an outlet 30 Baker Street in 1879. Surviving account books from this period record that Terry purchased fabric from Watts between 1878 and 1882, a period which marks the peak of her partnership with Harris and pre-dates the recruitment of Comyns-Carr. Unfortunately, these account books record only the amount spent by Terry and contain no precise details of what she was buying from the company. However, by comparing the dates when Terry is recorded as spending substantial amounts, with the productions in which she was performing, it has proved possible to develop some hypotheses regarding the nature and purpose of Terry's purchases. The photographic record of Terry's costumes have proved crucial to this process, in particular an image of Terry as Portia taken by Window & Grove in 1879 [FIGURE 4.36]. David Gazeley (Creative Director of the Watts Company) identified the fabric in this image as most likely to be 'Abbey', a silk brocade woven by

¹⁰³ "Watts History and Timeline," *Watts of Westminster*. [n.d.]

Perkins [FIGURE 4.37].¹⁰⁴ In 1881 Terry spent a total of £39 on materials from Watts, and these later purchases coincide with the productions of *Romeo and Juliet* (1881) and *Much Ado About Nothing* (1882).¹⁰⁵



Figure 4.36 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Woodburytype. 14.6 x 9.7 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax7705.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁰⁴Uthra Rajgopal, then Archivist at Watts of Westminster has confirmed that Watts had a trade account with Perkins this period and is investigating whether further information can be found in the stock books of the period (though not all such purchases were recorded).

¹⁰⁵ These figures are recorded in the surviving Account Books and are part of the Watts of Westminster Company Archive, London.

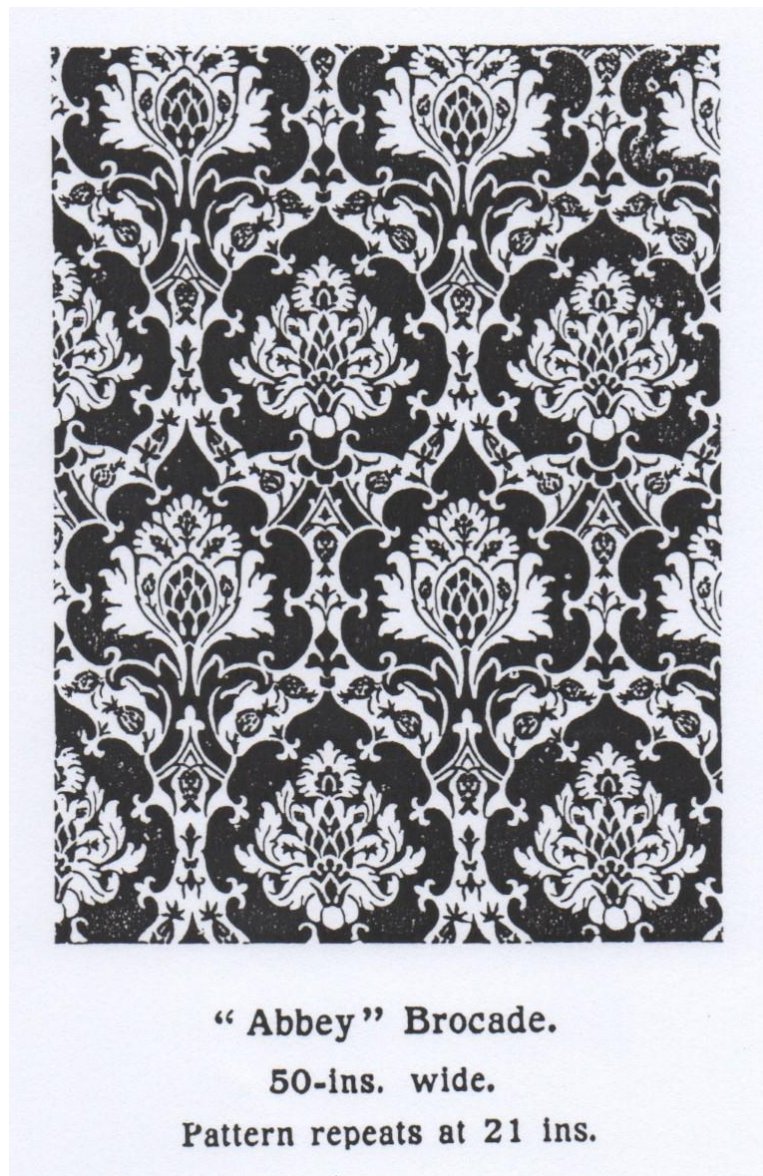


Figure 4.37 - Image of the design for the “Abbey” Brocade pattern, courtesy of Watts of Westminster, Archive, London. Courtesy of Uthra Rajgopal. Watts of Westminster, Archive, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry described the production of *Romeo and Juliet* as ‘very sumptuous, impressive and Italian’ and declared that it ‘was the most *elaborate* of all the Lyceum productions’ and one in which all the scenes ‘[...] were all treated with a marvellous sense of pictorial effect.’¹⁰⁶ Her costumes, which appear to have been Renaissance in their inspiration, were designed in accordance with this aim. Though the fabric of one is plain, the sleeves are

¹⁰⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 208.

pleated to create a puffed ‘mameluke’ effect, and are decorated with strands of beads, as is the bodice [FIGURE 4.38]. Another has simpler, close fitting sleeves, with a pleated lace cuff at the wrist, but is formed from a fabric woven with a design of stylised leaves, with a further band of darker material woven with a pattern of large closed flowers, added at the hem [FIGURE 4.39].



Figure 4.38 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14 x 9.6 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:336-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.39 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14 x 9.6 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:343-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The spectacular setting of *Romeo and Juliet* was eclipsed by that of *Much Ado About Nothing* the following year, and Terry’s costumes created by Harris were even more elaborate. At least three costumes worn by Terry as Beatrice whilst part of the Lyceum Company have survived. Whether or not they date from the original production is open to debate, as the success of the 1882 production was such that the play was frequently revived and became a favourite role for Terry for the remainder of her career. Labels present in the interior of two of the surviving costumes, both identical and constructed

from a pale gold stamped velvet, offer a partial insight into their respective dates.¹⁰⁷ The first, part of the collection at Smallhythe, has a maker's label reading 'Auguste et Cie' at the interior waist, the second is labelled 'Edith Craig.' [FIGURE 4.40 and FIGURE 4.41]. The 'Auguste et Cie' label indicates an association with Harris, and that this garment was either made for the original 1882 production, or at least before Terry's professional relationship with Harris ended in 1887. The presence of Craig's name in the second garment, suggests that this costume was a re-make, created by Craig for Terry after 1899 when Craig first began producing costumes for the Lyceum Company.¹⁰⁸ Regardless of the date on which they were originally made however, these surviving garments exemplify both the silhouette and key decorative features which characterised the costumes Terry wore in this role. Photographic records show that Terry wore a number of different dresses during the production. All the costumes shared the same close fitting bodice however, which had a wide, square neckline, and extended into a slight point at the centre front waist [FIGURE 4.42 and FIGURE 4.43]. The skirts of the dresses were wide and full, spreading out into a train at the rear [FIGURE 4.44]. The sleeves of each costume are distinct, but all were equally elaborate and were generally full from the shoulder to the elbow, fitting closely from this point to finish in a tight cuff at the wrist [FIGURE 4.45]. Of the surviving costumes, two are virtually identical, being made from the same pale gold stamped velvet fabric and consisting of a bodice and skirt with a separate stomacher. The front panel of the underskirts and the stomacher used in both dresses are decorated with a stylised pattern formed from interconnecting lines and shapes and outlined with bugle beads [FIGURE 4.46 and FIGURE 4.47]. The other two

¹⁰⁷ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, SMA.COST.110 [1118835] and Appendix 2, Museum of London, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Museum Number 65.90/4a-c.

¹⁰⁸ Craig worked as director, designer and theatrical costumier. For part of her career she operated a business making theatre costumes, Edith & Co, in Henrietta Street, London. For further information see Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 171-2 and Ann Rachlin, *Edy was a Lady* (Leicester: Matador, 2011) 142-158.

costumes which can be connected with the Lyceum productions of *Much Ado About Nothing*, share many of the decorative features present in the stamped velvet dresses, but are made from silk damask, one in a deep rose pink, the other in a vivid yellow.¹⁰⁹



Figure 4.40 - Detail of a maker's stamp, woven waistband of skirt, part of a costume worn by Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 5 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.110 [1118835].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.41 - Detail of a label in a waistband of the skirt which forms part of a costume worn in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, probably after 1899. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 29 October 2010. Museum Number 65.90/a-c.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁰⁹ See Appendix 1, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1882, SMA.TC.149a&b [1118874.1] and SMA.TC.157 [1118882] A further costume from a revival in 1903, after Terry left the Lyceum Theatre, SMA/TC/107 [1118832] also survives in the collection at Smallhythe.



Figure 4.42 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.6 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:369-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.43 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:383-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.44 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:367-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.45 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Albumen Cabinet Card. 14 x 9.9 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number, NPG 16981.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.46 - Detail of a costume worn by Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 5 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.110 [1118835].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.47 - Detail of a costume worn by Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 5 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.110 [1118835].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.48 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.2 x 10.1 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:375-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Many of Terry's costumes in this production featured a distinctive, Elizabethan inspired, upstanding collar [FIGURE 4.48].¹¹⁰ Formed from lace and supported on a wire frame, the visual impact of this collar is immediately apparent both in the surviving garments and in the photographs. The use of a stiffened collar, rather than the starched ruffs also worn during this period, may have been prompted by the desire to ensure that Terry's expressions were visible to the audience and that her movement was not impeded by her clothing. Nevertheless, Terry had clearly been persuaded by Harris to sacrifice some degree of comfort and freedom when wearing these heavy costumes, with their long trains, and close fitting, boned, bodices.

The weight of the silk damasks and silk velvets chosen for *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* contrasts starkly with the 'gossamer' style draperies worn by Terry in *The Cup* in 1881. The extent to which Harris contributed to the creation of these robes, formed from 'stuff that seems spun out of the wings of a dragon fly,' is unclear. Neither she nor Godwin (whose involvement in the design of her costumes Terry acknowledged in her autobiography), are mentioned in the programmes for the production.¹¹¹ The hypothesis that Godwin, rather than Harris, played the leading role in designing Terry's costumes for this production, would certainly explain this stylistic departure from the stately and ornate gowns seen in her earlier Shakespearian roles. As Chapter 6 will discuss, Godwin was an established costume designer and advocate of Aesthetic Dress. His writing on dress emphasised the importance of 'beauty of form', 'the gift of colour' and 'the element of motion.'¹¹² These qualities were clearly a high priority when

¹¹⁰ See for instance 'The Ditchley Portrait of Elizabeth I', NPG 2561, National Portrait Gallery, London.

¹¹¹The programme only records that 'The Costumes [were] executed by Mrs. White, Mrs. Reid, and Mons. Alias. The armour by Leblanc-granger.' Theatre Programme, '*Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883*', Ruth Canton Album I, Garrick Collection, London, (1879) n.p.

¹¹² Godwin discusses these ideals in his introduction to *Dress and its Relation to Health* (London: William Clawes & Sons Ltd., 1884) 1-3.

designing the softly draping robes Terry wore for this production and which the actress praised as ‘simple, fine and free.’¹¹³



Figure 4.49 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Bromide postcard print. 13.9 x 8.7 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number, NGP 197942.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.50 - Bodice worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 15 August 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.145 [1118870].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹¹³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 198.



Figure 4.51 - Bodice, part of a costume worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 23 May 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.144 a+b [1118869].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.52 - Detail of a costume worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre circa 1885. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 29 October 2010. Museum Number 57.20/1.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.53 - Costume worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 24 May 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.170.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Alice Comyns-Carr

Describing Terry and her approach to costume, the actress's friend, and subsequent biographer, Marguerite Steen (1894-1975) declared,

In whatever she wore for the stage, Ellen Terry gave the impression of being authentic 'to the skin' – which is not to say she carried her passion for archaeological perfection so far as the cotton shift, the padded and pocketed petticoat worn over nothing at all [...] Ellen Terry never confined her lithe expressive body in a corset; when necessary for the period, her bodices were boned to give her more bust and waist than were

hers by nature. She knew that an actress's physical equipment did not stop short at face, hands and feet, but included spine and ribs and things [...]¹¹⁴

As Steen's declaration suggests, whilst Terry was willing to wear heavier and more restrictive garments where the production or period demanded it, her preference was always for lighter costumes that facilitated graceful and easy movement on the stage and this influenced the actress' approach to design.¹¹⁵ It was arguably in pursuit of this aim Terry engaged Alice Comyns-Carr (1850-1927), a known advocate and wearer of Aesthetic Dress, to assist with the design of her costumes in circa 1882.¹¹⁶ Comyns-Carr initially worked alongside Harris, but the collaboration was not a success. Comyns-Carr implies that the main cause of the disharmony between herself and Harris lay in the fact that, 'Patience was always in favour of elaborate and pretentious gowns and had but little use for the simple designs I suggested.'¹¹⁷ Though their working relationship seems to have been tense, it endured until 1887, at which point Harris left the Lyceum and Comyns-Carr was given primary responsibility for Terry's costumes. Terry continued to work closely with Comyns-Carr for nearly twenty years; their partnership ending when Terry left the Lyceum Company in 1902.

Early indications of Comyns-Carr's influence on Terry's costumes can be identified in the 1885 production of *Faust*. The extensive research carried out before the production,

¹¹⁴ Marguerite Steen, *A Pride of Terrys: Family Saga* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd, 1962) 290.

¹¹⁵ Comyns-Carr remarked upon Terry's preference for 'comfort' over historical accuracy and the actress's complaints at 'fashions which she fancied might interfere with her movement while acting.' Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 214-216.

¹¹⁶ Comyns-Carr notes that she was first engaged by Terry shortly after she designed costumes for Terry's sister, Marion, to wear in a production of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which was staged at The Prince of Wales Theatre in 1882. Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 79. Images showing Marion Terry as she appeared in the production survive in the V&A Collections. See Museum Numbers S.133:569-2007 and S.133:607-2007. Comyns-Carr also describes how in the Wedding Gown she wore in 1873 she '[...] struck a Bohemian note myself by abandoning the paths of fashion and appearing in an unconventional wedding gown of soft, uncrinolined cream brocade' Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 26.

¹¹⁷ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 79.

included a trip to Nuremburg with Irving and Terry.¹¹⁸ As Comyns-Carr recalled in her *Reminiscences*, she and Terry sought out ‘[...] jewellery or characteristic material which would heighten the realistic effect of the Faust costumes’ and actually discovered ‘[...] a beautiful old bonnet, thickly embroidered in tinsel’ which Terry wore in the ‘church scene.’¹¹⁹ The aesthetic adopted for Terry’s costumes in this production departed from ‘the traditional trailing blue and white robe which up to this time had been considered inseparable from the role.’¹²⁰ In their search for something ‘realistic,’ Comyns-Carr looked for images of the ‘types of dress which the real Gretchen, whom [she] imagined to be a fifteenth century burgess’s daughter, would have worn’ and based her designs upon the ‘tightly kilted full skirts, plain bodices laced across the chest, and bell sleeves’ she found depicted in ‘old German books.’ [FIGURE 4.49] In fact the catalogue record for the dress from Faust, which is in the Museum of London collection, describes the dress as an ‘imitation of German Dress, Kronach, c.1520-30.’¹²¹ Of the dresses which survive, four realise the design outlined by Comyns-Carr. Each costume is differentiated from one another by slight variations in decoration, sleeve shape and colour.¹²² Comparing the garments reveals further subtle variations in the tones of blue silk blend damask bodices, and in the finely woven blue wool used to create the pleated skirts [FIGURE 4.50, 4.51 and 4.52].¹²³ The fourth costume in this group is deep yellow in colour, and the skirt is joined to the bodice at the slightly raised waistline [FIGURE 4.53].¹²⁴ The success of the dresses in the 1885 production was such that, as Comyns-Carr

¹¹⁸ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 149.

¹¹⁹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 151.

¹²⁰ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 149.

¹²¹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 149-150 and, in Appendix 2, the catalogue record Marguerite, *Faust*, Museum of London, 57.20/1.

¹²² As discussed earlier, two further costumes from *Faust* survive in the collection at Smallhythe. These were worn by Terry in the prison scene and their construction and materials are far rougher. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Marguerite, *Faust*, 1885, SMA.TC.169 1118894 and SMA.T.C/COST.102

¹²³ For further details of these garments see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Marguerite, *Faust*, 1885, SMA.TC.145, 1118870 and SMA.TC.144 a&b, 1118869 and also Appendix 2, Marguerite, *Faust*, 1885, Museum of London, 57.20/1.

¹²⁴ For further details see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Marguerite, *Faust*, 1885, SMA.TC.170.

claimed, ‘the full kilted skirts were so much in demand amongst women of fashion that machines were set up to make what became known as ‘accordion pleating.’¹²⁵ As discussed in Chapter 3, the costumes also set fashions within stage costumes and Terry observed that ‘Two operatic stars did me the honour to copy my Margaret dress—Madame Albani and Madame Melba.’¹²⁶

The Amber Heart

Comyns-Carr’s promotion to a position as the lead designer of Terry’s costumes took place in 1887. This coincided with Terry’s appearance as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart* and the introduction of a new approach to Terry’s stage costumes is immediately evident in the dress Terry wore in this production. According to Comyns-Carr, it was an example of her own personal dress which first inspired the design. As she explains, Terry came to dine at home with the Comyns-Carrs and ‘happened to admire a simple, unstarched muslin frock [she] was wearing.’ Looking more closely at the fabric Terry asked Comyns-Carr to ‘tell Pattie Harris just how to get than crinkly effect, and let her make me up one at once.’¹²⁷ Comyns-Carr confessed to having employed the rather unorthodox method of twisting the fabric of the dress ‘up into a ball and boil[ing] it in a potato steamer to get the crinkles.’¹²⁸ This was not a method approved of by Harris, but Terry, already accustomed to unorthodox approaches through her past collaborations with Godwin, proved willing to sanction any technique necessary to achieve the required effect and,

¹²⁵ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 150.

¹²⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 243. Dame Emma Albani, DBE (1847–1930) was a leading Canadian soprano who established an International career, and Dame Nellie Melba GBE (1861–1931), born Helen ‘Nellie’ Porter Mitchell, was an equally successful and influential Australian operatic soprano.

¹²⁷ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 79.

¹²⁸ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 79.

upon Harris's subsequent departure, invited Comyns-Carr 'to undertake the designing of all her stage clothes.'¹²⁹

Until recently existing records at Smallhythe suggested that the dress Comyns-Carr eventually created for the production survived in the collection [FIGURE 4.54]. This surviving costume does strongly resemble the photographs of Terry in the costume she wore for *The Amber Heart*, 1887. These images also document the 'crinkly effect' described by Comyns-Carr [FIGURE 4.55 and 4.56]. Examining the surviving costume more closely however, raised the possibility that it was actually worn by Terry in as Fair Rosamund in the 1893 production of *Becket* [FIGURE 4.57 and 4.58]. Even if made for this later production, the costume would have been designed for Terry by Comyns-Carr. Furthermore, the strong similarities between the 1887 and 1893 costumes reveals that this was a design and fit in line with Terry's taste, and a costume which Terry deemed successful enough to return to, and re-work, six years after it was originally devised. The surviving dress is made from very fine translucent silk through which the inner tunic, made from a pale yellow silk and fitting slightly closer to the body than the loose outer dress, is visible. Decoration has been added at the 'V' shaped neckline, at the edges of the cuffs of the wide, 'angel' sleeves, and at the hem, using metallic braid, spangles and cut glass beads [FIGURE 4.59 and 4.60].¹³⁰ Much of the stitching has been carried out by hand and, whilst the construction of the garment is based around a comparatively simple T-shape, weights added at the centre front bodice and at the interior hem of the inner tunic have been used to control the fall of the garment [FIGURE 4.61]. In both productions the style of Terry's costumes and the photographs taken in role, highlight Terry's prominent position within the Aesthetic movement and the extent to which her

¹²⁹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 80.

¹³⁰ For further details see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Ellaline/Rosamund, *Amber Heart/ Becket*, SMA.TC.160, a,b,c [1118885].

approach to design, both on and off the stage, was shaped by the values of Aestheticism. Close stylistic links can, for instance, be traced between these costumes and the pale silver blue gowns with their soft pleats and raised waistline which are depicted in the work of leading artists within the Aesthetic movement, in particular *The Golden Stairs* painted by Edward Burne-Jones in 1880 [FIGURE 4.62].¹³¹ Terry's Aesthetic sensibilities are made particularly apparent in another image of Terry in the role (Figure 3.14) in which she was shown positioned next to a lily, a prominent symbol of the movement that recurred within Aesthetic designs for dress and interior décor. The manner in which Terry's costumes advertised her status within the Aesthetic Movement will be explored further in Chapter 6.



Figure 4.54 - Costume previously thought to have been worn by Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 18 June 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.160 [1118885].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹³¹This painting is now part of the collection at Tate Britain, Museum Number N04005.



Figure 4.55 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Albumen cabinet card. 14.5 x 10.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number, NPG x16973.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.56 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.2 x 10.4 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:411-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.57 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Fair Rosamund in *Becket*, Lyceum Theatre, 1893, published by J. Beagles & Co 1900s. Bromide postcard print. 12.3 x 8.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x26804.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.58 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Rosamund in *Becket*, Lyceum Theatre, 1893, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:484-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.59 - Detail of the neckline of a costume previously thought to have been worn by Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 18 June 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.160 [1118885].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.60 - Detail of decoration used on the hanging sleeves of a costume previously thought to have been worn by Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 18 June 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.160 [1118885].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.61 - Detail of the weights used to control the fall and fit of a costume previously thought to have been worn by Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 18 June 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.160 [1118885].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.62- Edward Burne Jones, *The Golden Stairs*, 1880. Oil on canvas, 316.2 x 163.7 x 122 cm. Tate Britain, London. Museum Number N04005.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The 'Art' of Costume

As her *Reminiscences* make clear, Comyns-Carr, though playing a leading role in the design of Terry's costumes and working closely with the actress, was also guided by the artists Irving engaged to assist with the set and costume design for Lyceum productions. For the 1895 production of *King Arthur*, Irving asked the painter Burne-Jones to design both the scenery and the costumes. Burne-Jones agreed, '[...] stipulating only that he should not be required to superintend the carrying out of his designs in detail.'¹³² For this production Comyns-Carr was required to produce designs for Terry's dress, based upon the 'coloured sketches showing his ideas for the costumes' which Burne-Jones had produced. She was soon given a relatively 'free hand' by the artist however, who, recognising the value of Comyns-Carr's experience with designing for the theatre, approved the substitutions the designer made with regard to the colour and fabric selected for Terry's costumes.¹³³

Through a comparison of Burne-Jones' original sketches with a surviving costume in the collection at Smallhythe, it is possible to explore the manner in which Comyns-Carr translated his ideas into a finished costume [FIGURE 4.63].¹³⁴ The extant dress has an olive green silk ground, overlaid with panels of crochet in varying tones of the same olive green on the bodice, sleeves and skirt [FIGURE 4.64 and 4.65]. The cuffs fit more closely than those suggested by Burne-Jones and Comyns-Carr has introduced panels of bronze gauze, shaped into a fretwork of diamonds and decorated with cut glass jewels, at the upper arm of the sleeves, to capture the detailing the artist included at this point. The neckline of the dress is higher than the gentle 'V' suggested by Burne-Jones, but this may

¹³² Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 205.

¹³³ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 206.

¹³⁴ Both the sketches (National Trust Inventory Number 1117135 and 1117135.2), and the costume are part of the collection at Smallhythe, See Appendix 1, Guinevere, *King Arthur*, SMA/TC/118, 1118843.

reflect the preference for high collars identifiable in Terry's personal dress, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. Comyns-Carr has achieved a clever compromise between these two styles by introducing a 'V' shaped cream silk infill at the centre front of the dress [FIGURE 4.66].



Figure 4.63 - Edward Burne Jones, Detail from a costume design for Ellen Terry as Guinevere in *King Arthur*, Lyceum Theatre, 1895. Personal photograph by the author. 4 April 2016. National Trust, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1117135.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.64 - Upper section of costume worn by Ellen Terry as Guinevere in *King Arthur*, Lyceum Theatre, 1895. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.118 [1118843].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.65 - Skirt of the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Guinevere in *King Arthur*, Lyceum Theatre, 1895. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.118 [1118843].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.66 -Detail of collar on the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Guinevere in *King Arthur*, Lyceum Theatre, 1895. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.118 [1118843].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The 'Beetlewing Dress'

Strong parallels exist between the construction and fit of Terry costumes for *King Arthur* (1895) and those she had worn seven years earlier in the production of *Macbeth* (1888).¹³⁵ In particular the iridescent green and silver/blue gown covered with beetle wing cases worn by Terry in Act I discussed in Chapter 3, which is now known as 'the beetlewing dress.'¹³⁶ [FIGURE 4.67] Terry clearly appreciated the dramatic impact of her costumes and was particularly pleased by the 'beetlewing dress.' Describing the costume as a 'lovely robe', she explained to an interviewer: 'It is so easy and one does not have to wear corsets', demonstrating her point by 'making a few delightfully graceful movements to show with what ease she could move.'¹³⁷ The distinctive feature of this costume is the internal knitted silk jersey bodice which provides the foundation for the dress and also acts as a support for the body of the wearer [FIGURE 4.68]. The internal support provided by this knitted structure and the addition of a hanging weight at the centre front hem to control the fall of the bodice, made it possible to create a costume which did not rely upon internal boning or a corset to achieve the desired silhouette [FIGURE 4.69].

Whilst this internal bodice was not replicated in Terry's costume for *King Arthur*, the dropped waistline, emphasised by a hanging belt (See Figure 4.65), which lengthened and flattered Terry's torso, did reappear [FIGURE 4.70]. Similarities can also be traced between the colour palettes of the two dresses, though the green fabric used for the

¹³⁵ Zenzie Tinker. Personal communication with the author. 14 July 2010. Zenzie Tinker's Conservation Studio, Brighton. Zenzie operates under the name of Zenzie Tinker Ltd and intends to publish a full report on the discoveries she made during the complex treatment carried out on the 'Beetlewing Dress' in the future. Zenzie Tinker. Personal communication with the author. 28 October 2011.

¹³⁶ Several of the costumes worn by Terry in this production have survived, see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Lady Macbeth, *Macbeth*: SMA.TC/COST.115a, 1118840.1; SMA.TC.115b, 1118843; NT/SMA/TC/114a, 1118839.1 and NT/SMA/TC/114b, 1118839.2.

¹³⁷ The actress actually inserted a copy of this interview entitled 'How I Sketched Mrs. Siddons Shoes, A visit to Miss Ellen Terry's Dressing Room' into the final page of a copy of the script for this production. The name of the author and title of the publication are not recorded. See Terry's copy of *Macbeth*, National Trust Inventory Number 3119105.

Macbeth costume is bluer in tone. The most striking parallel lies in the use of crocheted yarns on the bodices and skirts of both gowns. As both Comyns-Carr and Terry would have been aware, the strands of metal thread running through this crochet made the dresses particularly magnificent when illuminated by gaslight [FIGURE 4.71].



Figure 4.67 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.1 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:427-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The visual impact of the costumes worn by Terry in *Macbeth* was also evident in contemporary reviews, which remarked upon ‘the marvellous costumes designed by Mrs. Comyns-Carr’ and declared Terry’s performance to be ‘a continual feast to the eye.’¹³⁸ For many reviewers the ‘beauty’ and ‘picturesque’ qualities of the scenery and costumes actually led them to soften their criticism of Terry’s performance, as one reviewer noted

¹³⁸ *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 31 1888: 4. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V: 330, Garrick Club, London.

[...] difficult to deal with is the Lady Macbeth of Miss Ellen Terry. That it is convincing few will maintain. It is, however, divinely beautiful. The woman who, in a quaint and indescribably beautiful costume, read by the light of the fire the letter of her husband [...] might have stood in the Court at Camelot, and gained the wondering homage and obeisance of Sir Galahad, as well as Sir Lancelot [...] ¹³⁹



Figure 4.68 - Exterior of bodice, part of the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Image taken during conservation treatment at Zenzie Tinker Ltd, Brighton. Personal photograph by the author. 14 July 2010. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹³⁹ *Morning Post*, December 31 1888, Press cutting, Lyceum Theatre, Production Box, *Macbeth*, 1888, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 4.69 - Interior of bodice, part of the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Image taken during conservation treatment at Zenzie Tinker Ltd, Brighton. Personal photograph by the author. 14 July 2010. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Much attention is given to Terry's controversial interpretation of the role, which, as discussed in Chapter 3, 'emphasise[d] the feminine side of Lady Macbeth's nature.'¹⁴⁰ Indeed one reviewer comments specifically upon the '[...] red wig and long plaits descending almost to the ground [which Terry wore] in place of the customary dark locks and sobriety of personal adornment,' suggesting that this element of the costume could be read as 'the outward and visible tokens of the inward change that has been wrought in the accepted reading of Lady Macbeth.'¹⁴¹ The most striking aspect of Comyns-Carr's designs, however, is the contrast between the lavishness of Terry's garments and the simpler, more subdued, tones of the costumes of other performers, Irving included. This discrepancy did not pass unremarked, and is made apparent in Wilde's pointed

¹⁴⁰ *Gazette*, n.d.: 4. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V: 312, Garrick Club, London.

¹⁴¹ *The Standard, Monday December – Macbeth at the Lyceum*, n.d., ca.1888, Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V: 334, Garrick Collection, London.

observation that whilst ‘Lady Macbeth seems to be an economical housekeeper and evidently patronises local industries for her husband's clothes and servant's liveries,’ ‘[...] she takes care to do all her own shopping in Byzantium.’¹⁴² The same contrast is evident in sketches and photographs of Irving and Terry as they appeared in the play. The fact that costumes worn by Irving in the role of Macbeth also survive, makes it possible to compare the actual garments worn by the two performers.



Figure 4.70 - Overview of the costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888 as now mounted at Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 15 March 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁴² Wilde's statement was recalled and quoted by W.G. Robertson in *Time Was*, 151

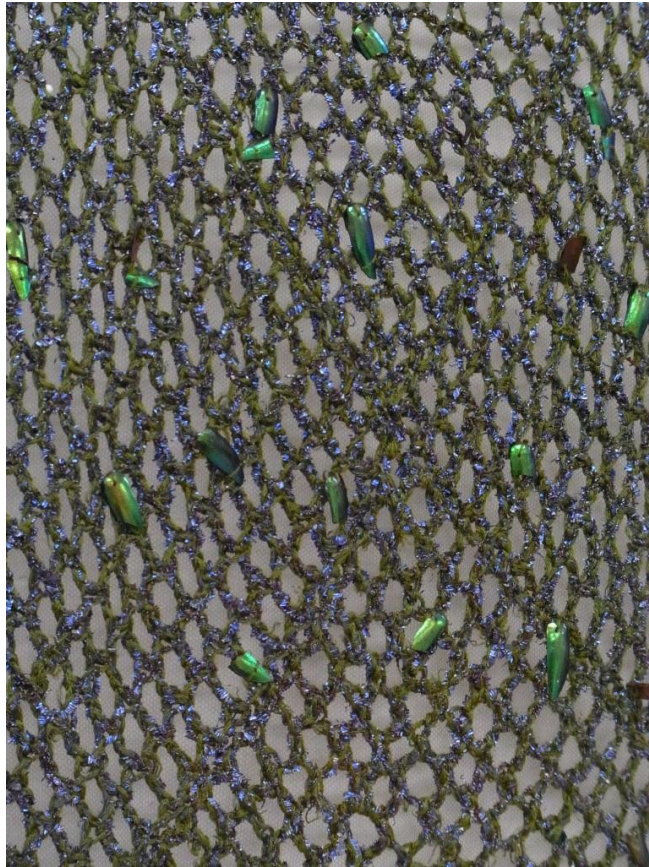


Figure 4.71 - Detail of the crochet structure of the skirt showing the beetlewing cases and strands of metal thread which form part of the structure. Part of the costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Image taken during conservation treatment at Zenzie Tinker Ltd, Brighton. Personal photograph by the author. 14 July 2010. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry's costumes also included a crimson silk velvet cloak appliquéd with green silk velvet griffins, each outlined with gold braid, and a further pale gold cloak, decorated with cut glass jewels and appliqué [FIGURE 4.72 and 4.73]. The 'regal robes' worn by Terry in the banquet scene, which were woven with strips of gold metal braid and decorated with further embroidery and cut glass jewels, were described by one reviewer as 'the crowning achievement. Beside [which] Sarah Bernhardt's Byzantine stole pales in ineffectual splendour' [FIGURE 4.74].¹⁴³ The majority of Irving costumes are simple knee-length asymmetrical tunics, cut in a wrap-over style and were worn with semi-

¹⁴³ *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 31 1888: 4. Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V: 330, Garrick Club, London.

circular wool cloaks.¹⁴⁴ Most are drawn from an earthy colour palette of deep purples and browns, the one exception being the robes worn by Irving in the banquet scene. These were designed to harmonise with the cream and gold tones of Terry's costume for this scene, and consisted of an under-doublet formed from cloth-of-gold style silk brocade, trimmed with gold braid and imitation 'ruby' glass jewels set on a burgundy ground [FIGURE 4.75].¹⁴⁵ Though his costumes in this production remained comparatively plain, Irving was conscious of the importance of spectacle and the dramatic effect of colour on the stage. Witnessing the effect of a vivid blood red' cloak Comyns-Carr had designed for Terry at a dress rehearsal, the actor/manager had remarked upon the 'wonderful splash of colour.' As Comyns-Carr recorded, 'when the first night came it was he [Irving] who was wrapped in that scarlet cloak, whilst Nell wore the less striking [...] heather coloured wrap which I had hurriedly designed at the last moment.'¹⁴⁶

Neither Terry nor Comyns-Carr discuss the contrast between Terry's costumes and those worn by the rest of the cast. One explanation could lie however, in the public interest attached to Terry's performance as Lady Macbeth. Audiences had already seen and formed their judgement of Irving's characterisation of Macbeth in 1875. For Terry however, this production marked her debut in the role of Lady Macbeth, and, as Chapter 3 established, a dramatic departure from the womanly characters portrayed by the actress in previous roles. Surviving reviews, whether criticising or praising her interpretation, attest to the impact of the theatrical event and the important role Terry's costumes played in heightening the effect of her performance.

¹⁴⁴ Irving's surviving costumes include an ensemble consisting of two cloaks, tunic, under-doublet and boots in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2722:1 to 6-2010 and a further ensemble consisting of cloak, tunic, jerkin/underdoublet, pair of boots and brooch, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum number S.2724:1 to 6-2010.

¹⁴⁵ The ensemble, which included red silk velvet slippers is also in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2723:1 to 3-2010.

¹⁴⁶ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 213.



Figure 4.72 - Museum Record Photograph. Crimson silk velvet cloak part of a costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114b [1118839.2].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.73 - Pale gold cloak part of a costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Personal photograph by the author. 16 April 2013. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.115b.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.74 - Dress, part of a costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.115a.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.75 - Museum Record Photograph. Part of a costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.2723:1-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Engagement in design

As has become apparent in this chapter, Terry engaged closely in the design of costumes. Emma Slocombe has drawn attention to the wealth of evidence relating to Terry's involvement in the design process which is preserved within the collection at Smallhythe.¹⁴⁷ Examining texts from Terry's library, Slocombe discovered extensive annotation within the actress's personal copy of Planché's *History of British Costume* (1847 edition). This included distinct 'crosses' next to two engravings of costumes from the early medieval period (c.1100–1300); an 11th century setting having been chosen for the Lyceum Production as research had revealed that 'Macbeth was slain by Macduff on December 5, 1056' [FIGURE 4.76].¹⁴⁸ Slocombe also discovered parallels between the style of the dress and a further engraving of a brass of Clothilde, Queen of the Franks, in the Notre Dame Cathedral (attributed to the architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc), inserted into the back pages of one of Terry's personal copies of *Macbeth* [FIGURE 4.77].¹⁴⁹ As Slocombe noted, Comyns-Carr acknowledged that she had actually 'cut out the patterns [for the dress] from the diagrams in the wonderful costume book of Viollet le Duc' and then crocheted the fine yarn 'a twist of soft green silk and blue tinsel' purchased by Nettleship in Bohemia, 'to match them.'¹⁵⁰ Her aim was to create a dress as 'like soft chain armour as [she] could, and yet have something that would give the appearance of the scales of a serpent.'¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷Emma Slocombe currently acts as Regional Curator for the National Trust in the South East. Her findings were published in Emma Slocombe, "Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum," *National Trust Historic Houses and Collections Annual 2011* (London: National Trust in association with *Apollo*, 2011), 4–11.

¹⁴⁸ Slocombe, 'Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum,' 10. The book is part of Terry's library, National Trust Inventory Number – 3052813. Similarly, the production designer Charles Cattermole discussed this setting in an interview, published as an "Interview with Charles Cattermole," *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 31st 1888: 5. Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V: 317, Garrick Club, London.

¹⁴⁹ Slocombe, 'Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum', 10.

¹⁵⁰ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 211-212.

¹⁵¹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 211-212.

Despite the eerie glow offered by the crocheted soft green silk and blue tinsel bodice however, the dress was still not felt to be ‘brilliant enough.’¹⁵² Cumming, who has also examined the costumes in the Lyceum production of *Macbeth*, suggested that it was at this point that contemporary fashions also provided crucial ideas for the design. Cumming cites the fact that Terry’s recalled telling Comyns-Carr how impressed she had been by the effect of a dress worn by Lady Randolph Churchill, the bodice of which was ‘trimmed all over with green beetle's wings.’¹⁵³ It was, Terry claims, the remembrance of this earlier discussion which prompted Comyns-Carr to decide to sew the costume ‘all over with real green beetlewings,’ with the further addition of ‘a narrow border in Celtic designs, worked out in rubies and diamonds’ at the hem and sleeve cuffs.¹⁵⁴

One of the factors which has helped to secure the dress’s continued fame is the pictorial record provided by the portrait of Terry as Lady Macbeth painted by John Singer Sargent (1856-1925).¹⁵⁵ [FIGURE 4.78] Sargent was amongst the spectators present at the opening night of the production. Comyns-Carr claims that it was upon witnessing Terry’s striking entrance, together with the moment in the next scene when Terry re-appeared with a heather velvet cloak embroidered with fiery griffins and swept out of the castle keep to greet the old King, that Sargent first conceived the original idea for the portrait.¹⁵⁶ [FIGURE 4.79 and 4.80] This portrait captures elements of the costume missing from the

¹⁵² Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 211–212.

¹⁵³ Cumming, “Macbeth at the Lyceum”, 58.

¹⁵⁴ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 211–212.

¹⁵⁵ Now in the collection of Tate Britain, Museum Number N02053, this portrait was originally exhibition at The New Gallery in 1888, This ‘New Gallery’ was the successor to The Grosvenor Gallery, the decline of which began in 1887, and opened in 1888. Like the Grosvenor Gallery it was a central meeting point for leading figures within the Aesthetic Movement and exhibition work by artists whose work was often rejected by traditional institutions such as the Royal Academy.

¹⁵⁶ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 299–300. Sargent presented a version of the preparatory sketch that this scene inspired to Terry and it now survives in the collection at Smallhythe. The style and composition of the sketch contains a much greater sense of movement and pace than the finished portrait but does lack the menace of the pose in which Terry was eventually shown. Sargent also produced a further version of this sketch for Terry’s 1906 Jubilee. This second version now survives in the National Portrait Gallery, Museum Reference NPG 2273 (Figure 4.81).

photographs which, as Terry stated in a letter to her daughter, ‘give no idea of it at all, for it is in colour that it is so splendid.’ Although the finished painting lacks the movement and pace present in Sargent’s preparatory sketches, and in fact depicts a scene which never appeared in the play, it does record ‘the dark red hair ... [and] Rossetti-rich stained-glass effects’ which Terry loved. Most significantly for the actress however, the finished portrait suggested ‘all that [she] should like to have conveyed in [her] performance of Lady Macbeth.’¹⁵⁷

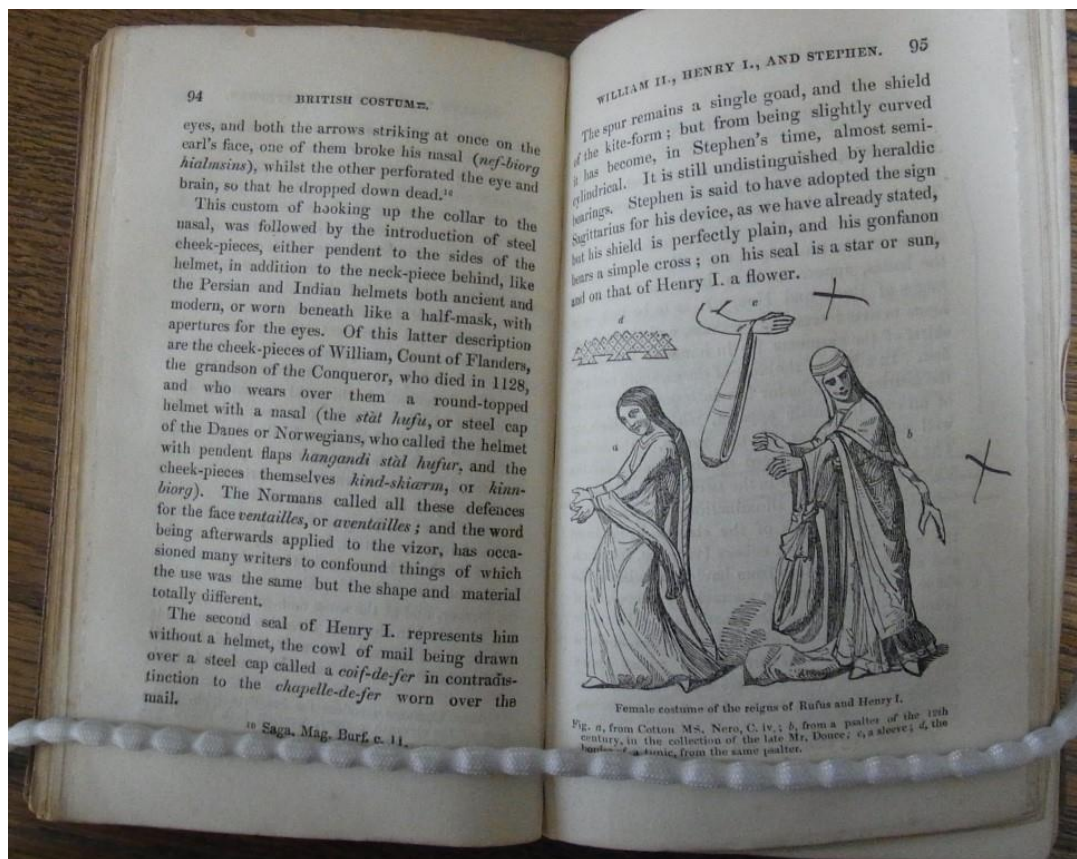


Figure 4.76 - Annotation in Terry’s personal copy of James Robinson Planché’s *History of British Costume* (1847 edition). National Trust, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author, 23 March 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [3052813].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁵⁷Terry, *Story of My Life*, 293–4.

Figure 4.77 - Engraving of a brass of Clothilde, Queen of the Franks, in the Notre Dame Cathedral (attributed to the architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc), inserted into the back pages of one of Terry's personal copies of the script for *Macbeth*. Personal photograph by the author, 23 March 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [3119105].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

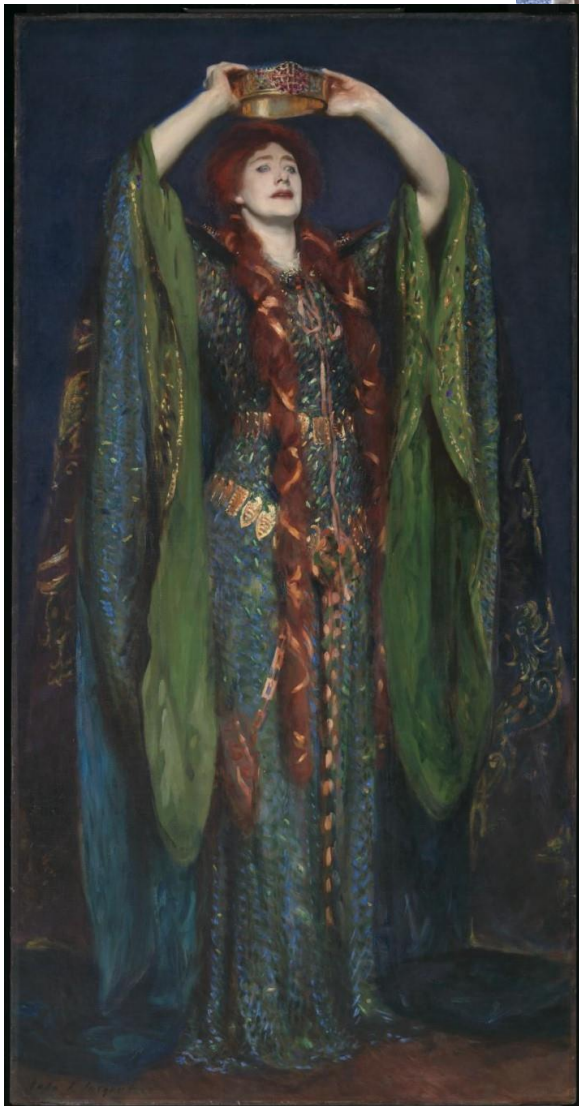
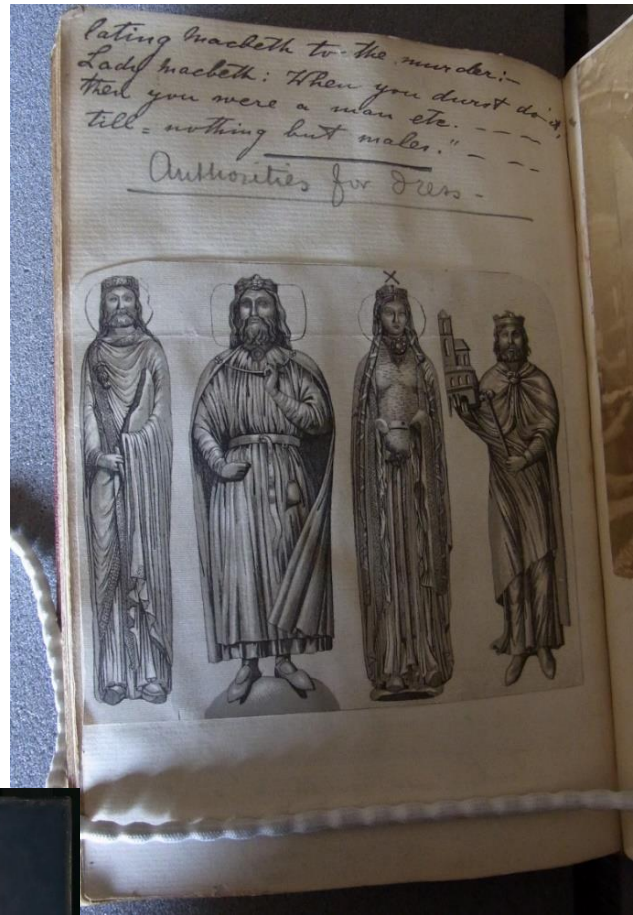


Figure 4.78 - John Singer Sargent, *Portrait of Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 221 x 114.3cms. Tate Britain, London. Museum Number N02053.



Figure 4.79 - John Jellicoe and Herbert Railton 'Scenes from "Macbeth" at the Lyceum Theatre, No.3 – Act 1, Scene 5.' Line drawing, 1888. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. Lyceum Theatre, Production box, Macbeth, 1888.



Figure 4.80 - John Singer Sargent, *Replica of a preparatory sketch for Portrait of Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth*, ca. 1906. Oil on canvas. 86.3 x 72.5cms. National Portrait Gallery Collection, London. Museum Number NPG 2273.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Engagement in creation

Although not credited in many of the surviving programmes, Terry's primary costume maker from 1887 onwards was Ada Nettleship (1856-1932). Described by Comyns-Carr merely as '[...] the wife of a well known animal painter, an old friend of mine, and an extremely clever dressmaker, who was anxious to find some means of adding to a slender income;' the origins and career of Nettleship have yet to be fully explored.¹⁵⁸ It is known however that she had a particular specialism in embroidery, both designing her own patterns, and training her staff to carry out such work under her supervision.¹⁵⁹ An article published in the *Boston Evening Transcript* in 1893 sheds some light on her career. Originally '[...] distinguished as an art embroiderer in the style of William Morris' daughter,' in response to the pleas of her clients, she expanded into dressmaking and has since established a reputation in publications such as *Harper's Bazaar* as 'perhaps the most unique dressmaker in the world.'¹⁶⁰

By the mid to late 1890s Nettleship had clearly built a reputation for herself in London as a woman capable of producing both fashionable and theatrical attire.¹⁶¹ Terry's prominent place among Nettleship's clientele is emphasised in much of the press coverage with one reporter suggesting Nettleship that '[...] makes all Miss Terry's official gowns and many

¹⁵⁸ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 80. Mrs. Ada Nettleship was married to the artist Mr. J. T. Nettleship, particularly known for his paintings of animals. His work was exhibited at The Grosvenor Gallery in 1883, The New Gallery in 1891 and at the Winter Exhibition of the Watercolour Society in 1894. "Grosvenor Gallery Exhibition," *Illustrated London News* (London, 19 May 1883), 490; "The New Gallery," *Illustrated London News* (London, 9 May 1891), 607 and "Art Notes," *Illustrated London News* (London, 8 Dec. 1894), n.p.

¹⁵⁹ *The Queenslander*, Saturday 3 April 1897: 747.

¹⁶⁰ *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 16 1897: 16.

¹⁶¹ Terry was not the only actress who commissioned costumes from the dressmaker, whose theatrical clients included Marie Tempest, Winifred Emery and Sarah Bernhardt. *New Zealand Herald*, 25th November 1900: 2. Pamela Maude, the daughter of Winifred Emery, recalled frequent visits made by her mother to Mrs. Nettleship's workrooms in her autobiography, Pamela Maude, *Worlds Away: Recollections of a Victorian Childhood* (London: John Baker, 1964) 80. Similarly, in 1898 Nettleship was commissioned to create Mrs. Patrick Campbell's costumes for *Macbeth*, "Theatrical Gossip," *The Era*, Saturday, September 24, 1898, Issue 3131.

of those which are unofficial.’¹⁶²This claim is substantiated by surviving correspondence between Terry and Nettleship in the V&A Collections, in which the actress commissions Nettleship to make garments for her personal wardrobe as well as her stage attire.¹⁶³ The success of their collaboration is evident in the praise lavished upon the creations ‘which have now become the most beautiful and artistic dresses in the world – for what they are – picturesque stage representations.’¹⁶⁴

The sums invested in these ‘beautiful and artistic dresses’ also attracted attention. In an article for the *New Zealand Herald*, published in 1900, Nettleship revealed that ‘many of Miss Terry’s dresses have cost £100.’ Nettleship went on to admit that over £150 was spent on one dress, ‘twilled by [her] girls entirely of gold thread’ for the actress to wear as Guinevere in *King Arthur* (1895), with the same amount charged for the dress and amber necklace made for Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline* (1896).¹⁶⁵ In comparison the £47 and £49 that Nettleship claims were paid by Miss Marie Tempest (1864-1942) for costumes worn in *The Greek Slave* seem very modest. As the dressmaker notes however, Miss Emery (1861-1924) paid £300 for the costumes created for her role in *A Marriage of Convenience* and Miss Brown Potter (1857-1936) who has ‘all her clothes made in Paris’ is widely accepted as the ‘most extravagant stage dresser.’¹⁶⁶

An insight into the extremely high level of investment in stage costume during this period can be gathered from a comparison with the sums wealthy shoppers were willing to invest in couture and high quality garments. For instance, the diaries and accounts of Marion

¹⁶² *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 16 1897: 16.

¹⁶³ Examples include THM/14/20/TERRY/5, Letter from Terry to Nettleship, 12th January 1895 and July 1895 and also THM/14/20/TERRY/7, Letter from Terry to Nettleship, July 15th 1898 (date added in hand by pencil, June 16th 1900). Both are part of the Autographed Letter Series and held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

¹⁶⁴ *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 16 1897: 16.

¹⁶⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, 25 November 1900: 2.

¹⁶⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 25 November 1900: 2.

Sambourne (1851-1914), a member of the ‘rising middle class,’ who had an annual dress allowance of about £80, record that in 1897 she invested £38 in a ‘blue evening dress’ from her favoured designer ‘Madame Bouquet.’¹⁶⁷ Similarly an analysis of the wardrobe of Heather Firbank (1888-1954), a member of fashionable London society, revealed that whilst in 1909 she spent £1,063 on clothes, she paid £25, 4s for the ‘pink satin evening gown’ she purchased from John Redfern & Sons (a specialist tailor and supplier of couture clothing).¹⁶⁸ Equally, in 1910, an ‘evening dress trimmed with jet and “white diamonds”’ and created by the leading Paris courtier Worth cost 950 francs (approximately £37 10s).¹⁶⁹ As these examples illustrate, even the ‘legendary prices’ charged for a couture dress from Worth in 1910 are less than half those paid by Terry for a single dress in 1895.

Examining the costumes themselves provides a further insight Nettleship’s contribution to Terry’s stage wardrobe. As with Harris, it is possible to identify specific costumes which Nettleship worked on and several garments contain maker’s labels, marked Mrs. Nettleship, 58 Wigmore Street [FIGURE 4.81]. Several such labels in items worn by Irving in the title role of the 1892 production of *King Lear*, reveal that, in this instance, Nettleship made costumes for both Irving and Terry.¹⁷⁰ [FIGURE 4.82] Terry played Lear’s youngest daughter, Cordelia. Unfortunately only the cloak associated with this role has survived and conservation treatment carried out in 1988, in which the lining was

¹⁶⁷ Amy de la Haye, Lou Taylor and Eleanor Thompson. *A Family of Fashion, The Messels: Six Generations of Dress* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2005) 37. As the authors note, a more detailed insight into life at Sambourne Terrace can be gained from the transcriptions of Sambourne’s diaries and related documents in Shirley Nicholson, *A Victorian Household* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988).

¹⁶⁸ As the authors note, Firbank generally received an annual clothing allowance of £525. They also record that although initially specialising in tailoring Redfern had by this point expanded into all fashionable clothing including court dress. Cassie Davies-Strodder, Jenny Lister, and Lou Taylor, *London Society Fashion 1905-1925: The Wardrobe of Heather Firbank* (London: V & A Publishing, 2015) 39, 111, 142.

¹⁶⁹ This sum is quoted in a letter from a private collection and is cited in Davies-Strodder, Lister, and Taylor, *London Society Fashion 1905-1925*, 114.

¹⁷⁰ This costume survives in the collection at Smallhythe Place, See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Cordelia, *King Lear*, SMA.TC.104, 1118829

completely replaced, has masked much of the internal construction [FIGURE 4.83].¹⁷¹ Even so, being able to compare this cloak with Irving's surviving costumes brings to light details regarding the colours, materials and decorative effects employed for the costumes which it would not have been possible to trace in surviving black and white images. Terry's cloak can be seen clearly in a contemporary photograph and the similarities between the costumes worn by the two performers is also evident in a print from the period [FIGURE 4.84, 4.85]. The extant garments reveal parallels in the colour palette (tones of yellow, cream and gold, as compared to the leaf greens and browns of Irving's ensemble) and also the fabrics, (both are made from wool based fabrics and decorated with appliqué, gold spangles and metallic braid). The presence of the maker's labels in the interior of both garments confirms that, as discussed, both garments were made by Nettleship.



Figure 4.81 - Detail of maker's label in the cloak worn by Ellen Terry as Cordelia in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Personal photograph by the author. 16 August 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.104 [1118829].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁷¹As notes from a conservation report for the garment, produced by Blicking Conservation Studios in 1998 record, the treatment carried out in 1988 was unfortunately not fully documented and was far more interventive than current practice would advocate.



Figure 4.82 - Detail of maker's label in the costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Personal Photograph by the author 14 April 2016. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.2740:1 to 5-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.83 - Cloak worn by Ellen Terry as Cordelia in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Personal photograph by the author. 16 August 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.104 [1118829].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.84 - Bernard Partridge. Ellen Terry as Cordelia and Henry Irving as King Lear in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Print on paper. 24.4 x 32.2cms. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.160-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.85 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Cordelia in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax131317.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The importance of colour

As Terry's plans for the costumes she was to wear as Ophelia suggest, the actress was extremely conscious of the impact that colour could have on the stage, both for visual effect and as a signifier of mood and character. A letter from Terry to Nettleship regarding costumes for the 1892 production of *King Lear*, provides further evidence of the manner in which Terry used colour when devising designs for garments. Terry corresponded directly with Nettleship regarding not only her own costumes but also those required for other performers. In this instance she provides directions for the costumes required for Regan and Goneril. Her instructions are brief and written almost in note form, but the emphasis on colour as an expression of inner nature is clear. For each of the three acts in which the characters appear, she makes a suggestion regarding colour, requesting bright tones for Regan's first gown, perhaps 'Helio-parma – Violet Colour.' Goneril is to be dressed in a defiant red and this colour is to recur in her later costumes, which will be 'finer' to reflect her rising wealth and power. By the second act Regan is to appear in a 'blue snakey' gown, with 'tight sleeves, round and round' and a 'silver-green skirt,' whilst Goneril will be wearing an asymmetrical dress of 'Yellow and Purple' teamed with a 'green skirt' and elements of red.¹⁷² The colours of Goneril's ensemble are particularly striking, the red and yellow recalling long established associations with poison. Further signals of the shared corruption of the sisters are provided by the green which has been introduced into both costumes by the second act. The silver-green of Regan's skirt also recalling the snake-like characteristics Comyns-Carr sought to evoke in Terry's costume for Lady Macbeth.

¹⁷² Terry, letter to Nettleship, dated added by hand in pencil, 10th November 1892. Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/5.

A review of the production published in *The Colonies and India* in November of 1892, testifies to the successful realisation of Terry's plans, declaring 'Strong colouring goes with strong passions, and Goneril (Miss Dyas) is gorgeous in the third act in ruby and gold.'¹⁷³ The descriptions of Terry's costumes are equally illuminating, illustrating a development in colour palette similar to that which Terry had intended for Ophelia in 1878. In this instance Terry's costumes for Cordelia begin with 'a Greek-seeming arrangement of sea-green China crepe, trimmed with silver balls and pearls, a gold and silver circlet set on her flowing hair.' Garments worn by a princess secure in her position at court, and confident of her father's love. Cordelia's new status as an innocent exile is marked by the exchange of the first gown for one of '[...] of white crepe, cut square at the throat and embroidered in gold' worn with a 'cloak of pale yellow silk, worked with a quaint old pattern in gold' (Figure 4.84). By the tragic conclusion of the play, however, the impending death of Cordelia is signaled by garments which, as the description implies, foreshadow the mourning that is to come. The actress appeared 'shrouded in grey draperies, and her head half hidden in a picturesque veil.'¹⁷⁴

Terry's interventions regarding colour on the stage did not, however, only relate to mood. Practical considerations also shaped her choices and lighting was a factor that needed to be taken into account. As the actress recalled, 'One has heart breaking disappointments in colours, such as I had with my hyacinth-coloured dress in "Becket" which the lights turned an uninteresting drab grey.'¹⁷⁵ Lighting effects could also be exploited however and this is apparent in the annotation Terry made on an 1888 prompt copy for *The Amber*

¹⁷³ "King Lear," *The Colonies and India*, 19 November 1892: 28.

¹⁷⁴ "King Lear," *The Colonies and India*, 19 November 1892: 28.

¹⁷⁵ Ellen Terry, "Some Ideas on Stage Decoration," 294.

Heart, in which she noted ‘change light slowly to blue (keeping white floats on – shock them).’¹⁷⁶

The actress was also aware of the importance of visual harmony on the ‘pictorial stage’ for which Lyceum Company production had become renowned.¹⁷⁷ An instance of such an intervention can be seen in a letter to Nettleship in 1895. Writing at ‘one o’clock in the morning,’ Terry asks her ‘Sweet Little Nettle’ to ‘run up a new dress for ‘Miss Gibson’ for tonight’s wear in *The Corsican Brothers*.’ Terry enclosed a sample of the required material within her letter (now lost) to illustrate her point, and explained that the current dress was much ‘too funereal’ and that there was ‘already white satin dress on the stage so that won’t do.’¹⁷⁸ Both the timing of the note and informality of the greeting, indicate that Terry had implicit trust in Nettleship’s ability to fulfil the commission and that this was not the first such last minute demand the dressmaker had received.

Terry’s descriptions of her costumes also make apparent the degree to which colour influenced her approach to performance. When, in 1902, Terry was asked by a costume designer ‘to play Mrs. Page, in “The Merry Wives of Windsor” in black panne velvet!,’ the actress protested that ‘Rollicking, farcical comedy would be impossible in such a dress’ and turned to her daughter, Edith Craig, for assistance.¹⁷⁹ Craig had already proven her ability as a costumier, producing several garments for Lyceum productions, and, with

¹⁷⁶ This annotation has been added to a prompt copy printed in 1888. This is not Terry’s original prompt copy, as pencil annotation in her own hand records that the play was “acted for the first time, at a morning performance, 7 June 87, at the Lyceum Theatre, London.” Further annotation on the following pages includes further notes about lighting changes. Prompt copy of Alfred C. Calmour, Alfred C. *The Amber Heart: A Poetic Fancy in Three Acts* (London: W.S. Johnson, 1888). 36-7. Garrick Collection, London.

¹⁷⁷ This aspect of Lyceum productions was referred to in Chapters 3 and will be discussed further in Chapter 6. Martin Meisel has made a particular study of Irving’s ‘pictorial approach’ to stage design, published in Martin Meisel, ‘Irving and the Artists,’ *Realisations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) 402-432.

¹⁷⁸ Terry, Letter to Nettleship, ca.1895. Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/5.

¹⁷⁹ Terry was still working at the Lyceum Company at this point, and had obtained Irving’s permission to appear in the production at His Majesty’s Theatre. She discusses this arrangement in her autobiography. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 323.

Terry's help, had established her own premises at Number 13, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden in circa 1900.¹⁸⁰ Craig designed both garments and accessories for Terry to wear in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and, as Terry stated, 'I know better than anyone how much the flame coloured dress I eventually wore helped me in Mrs. Page. Reds and yellows for comedy!'¹⁸¹ At least one dress and three caps survive and provide a sense of the bold colours which are absent from the black and white photographs of Terry in the role [FIGURE 4.86, 4.87, 4.88 and 4.89].¹⁸² The success of Craig's efforts can be seen in Terry's subsequent observation that 'Edy has real genius for dresses for the stage.' As the actress explained, 'My dress for Mrs. Page was such a *real* thing—it helped me enormously—and I was never more grateful for my daughter's gift than when I played Mrs. Page.'¹⁸³

Terry's experienced comparable problems with the costumes suggested for the 1906 production of *A Winter's Tale* at His Majesty's Theatre, complaining that,

For the trial scene in "A Winter's Tale" the artist designed a dress of heavy purple cloth for Hermione, which, whatever it may have been as a dress, was quite unexpressive of the situation [...] How play the scene in a matronly, respectable, prosperous, amethyst coloured dress? Finally I wore draperies of white tableau-net, which I think well conveyed on the

¹⁸⁰ Terry records several instances upon which Craig assisted with costumes in Lyceum productions. This include a scarf Craig created for Irving to add to his costume as Shylock. Terry, *The Story of my Life*, 187-188. The turning point in Craig's career as a costumier appears to have been the 1899 production of *Robespierre*, for which she was asked by Irving to make a large number of the costumes. Craig's involvement in the production was recorded in the press. "Robespierre," *The Era*, Saturday, April 22, 1899, Issue 3161. Katharine Cockin has also written extensively about Craig and her work with the theatre, see particularly Katharine Cockin, *Edith Craig (1869-1947): Dramatic Lives* (London: Cassell, 1998) 40-2.

¹⁸¹ Ellen Terry, "Stage Decoration," *The Windsor Magazine* (S.S.McClure Company, United State of America, 1911) 89.

¹⁸² One of the three surviving caps is in the Museum of London collection, Museum Number 53.94/1 and 2. The dress and the other two caps are in the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, *Mistress Page, Merry Wives of Windsor*, SMA.TC.113a-c, 1118838.1-3 and SMA.TC.233, 1118958.

¹⁸³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 323.

one side Hermione's physical weakness, on the other her stainless purity.¹⁸⁴

The 'draperies of white tableau net' were again designed by Terry's daughter, and survive in the collection at Smallhythe. The dress, which had wide hanging sleeves, with weights at the cuffs, is formed from over lapping layers of net [FIGURE 4.90].¹⁸⁵ Surviving photographs of a fifty-nine-year-old Terry in the costume show that these layers of net fell in flattering soft folds across the body, running in wide bands from the shoulder to hem, where the dress extends into a point at the rear [FIGURE 4.91]. Terry had 'a very firm belief' in Craig's talents and her daughter's status as a woman who has '[...] shown again and again that she can design and make clothes for the stage that are both lovely and effective.' The actress employed her daughter to design many of the garments she wore after leaving the Lyceum and in her autobiography, Terry declared that,

In all my most successful stage dresses lately she has had a hand, and if I had anything to do with a national theatre, I should, without prejudice, put her in charge of the wardrobe at once!¹⁸⁶

As this section has demonstrated, Terry played a leading role in the design and creation of her costumes. She attached particular importance to colour and movement when developing designs for garments. The degree to which Terry valued, and was willing to acknowledge, the formative role that leading artists had played in shaping her approach to design has also become apparent. Equally, Terry clearly had respect for, and recognised, the key contribution specialists in costume design and making, such as Comyns-Carr and Nettleship, made to the process of creation. The core elements of

¹⁸⁴ Ellen Terry, "Some Ideas on Stage Decoration," 293.

¹⁸⁵ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Hermione, *Winters Tale*, SMA.COST.150b, 1118881.

¹⁸⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 84-85.

Terry's aesthetic and recurring styles introduced here, will be explored further in Chapter 6, which will explore the manner in which the actress's style evolved over the course of her career. First however, the focus will turn to how and why so many of Terry's costumes survived, and the shift which has occurred in the purpose and identity of these garments as a result of their transition from the Lyceum stage to the museum store.



Figure 4.86 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.9 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax131327.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.87 - Cap worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal photograph by the author. 3 June 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.233 [1118958].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.88 - Tunic, part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal photograph by the author. 26 July 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.113a [1118838.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.89 - Underdress, part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal photograph by the author. 26 July 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.113b [1118838.2].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.90 - Costume worn by Ellen Terry as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906. Personal photograph by the author. 5 March 2013. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.156 [1118881].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.91 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.1 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:514-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Conclusion

This chapter has validated the use of the term 'costume' when referring to dress used specifically on the stage and has established theatre costume as a distinct category of dress. It has also demonstrated the valuable evidence that can be obtained through a close analysis of these unique garments. Using Terry's costumes as case studies, it has begun to address the challenges such garments, which are often damaged through wear, deliberate intervention, or modified for multiple wearers and productions, present for researchers.

As this chapter recognises and Terry's costumes reveal, the costumes which survive are not always those created for the 'original' run of a production, even if they are exact replicas of the 'original' garments. They may also have been worn by several different performers. This chapter has illustrated how a close analysis of surviving costumes can offer crucial evidence through which to address concerns about 'authenticity' that may result from these complex histories. Evidence of wear, though it cannot be taken as definitive evidence of a link to the 'original' production, can, for instance, provide an indication of the manner and extent to which a costume was used. Similarly, measurements taken from extant costumes, can also provide a route through which to suggest, or question, a link to specific performers.

As has been made apparent, theatrical costumes have the ability to accumulate multiple and complex 'identities,' and a layered, rather than single, history. The criteria upon which their 'authenticity' and 'historical significance' is assessed must therefore extend beyond conclusive evidence of their use in the 'original' production, to address the multiple narratives present within historic stage costume. With this aim in view, Chapter 5 will examine routes through which it becomes possible to interpret and articulate the complex 'biographies' of garments whose life cycle commonly includes re-use, re-fashioning, and re-definition, both on, and off, the stage.

**‘DRESSING THE PART:’ ELLEN
TERRY (1847-1928) – TOWARDS A
METHODOLOGY FOR ANALYSING
HISTORIC THEATRE COSTUME**

VERONICA TETLEY ISAAC

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Brighton
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Volume 2

December 2016

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CHAPTER 5 – COSTUME: A ‘CARRIER OF IDENTITY AND MEMORY’

Introduction

This chapter uses the collection of costumes worn by Terry to explore the complex ‘biographies’ which historic theatre costumes have the potential to accumulate, and the degree to which these ‘biographies’ can evolve over time. It analyses the significance and implications of their transition from their original context and purpose as dynamic stage costumes to their current status as static museum objects and considers the role that context plays in shaping the ‘meaning’ and ‘identities’ attributed to these garments.

This discussion takes Hodgdon’s suggestion that costumes have the ability to act as a material ‘connection’ between performers and performances, becoming a ‘carrier of memory’ for both audiences and performers as its starting point.¹ Building upon Hodgdon’s work, it will consider the influential part that the wearer(s) of these costumes play in shaping their ‘biographies’ and the degree to which this intimate connection between costume and wearer results, as Barbieri has suggested, in the garment becoming a ‘re-embodiment’ of the individual(s) who have worn it.²

Engaging with the theoretical and methodological approaches proposed by Barbieri, Hodgdon, Pearce and Roach, discussed in Chapter 2, this chapter also interrogates the role of costume as a ‘carrier of memory.’³ It draws upon their work to argue that historic theatre costumes can come to function as a ‘surrogate’ for lost performers and productions and considers the significance of this potential. It concludes by presenting a biographical

¹ Hodgdon, “Shopping in the Archives,” 160-1.

² Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 295.

³ It will draw specifically upon Roach’s discussions of ‘effigies’ in Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36 and *It*, 46-7 and Pearce’s explorations of ‘chains of meanings’ in Pearce, “Objects as meaning; or narrating the past,” 19-29.

based methodology, founded upon the work of Kopytoff and Pearce, through which to analyse and articulate the complex biographies which historic theatre costumes have the potential to accumulate and the ‘chains of meaning’ within which they become enmeshed.⁴

The foundations for this discussion will be laid by first considering the extent to which the practical and narrative function of costume as a signifier of character works in harmony with, and has the potential to be overshadowed by, the ‘character’ of the performer: not only during the original production, but also throughout the ‘afterlife’ of the costume.

5.1 Carrying and Communicating Identity

Costume as a signifier of character

In theatre productions costumes are generally required to establish the temporal, geographical and historical setting and mood of the production. The costumes of individual performers also frequently provide a visual signal of their character’s dramatic significance within the production. They may also express something of their wearer’s inner nature. Any analysis of the character, or indeed the dramatic significance, suggested by a specific stage costume must, however, take into account the personal off-stage identity of the original wearer (where known) and allow for the potential impact this has had, on the design of their on-stage garments. As case studies in Chapter 4 demonstrated, actors can have a significant influence over the creation of their theatrical costumes. Some performers, Terry included, play an active role in the design process, with the actor’s personal preferences informing decisions regarding the cut, colour and construction of

⁴ Kopytoff, “The cultural biography of things,” 64-91 and Pearce, “Objects as meaning; or narrating the past,” 19-29.

their costumes. Costumes can therefore play a dual role, expressing not only the character being performed on stage by the wearer, but also communicating elements of their 'private' off-stage persona.

In certain instances the connection between a costume and the original wearer is so powerful that, as Stallybrass and Jones and Hodgdon have suggested, theatrical costumes become imbued with both the physicality and personality of their original wearer. Such costumes thus become 'carriers of identity' with the potential to preserve and re-create a shared memory of both the original wearer and their performance.⁵ This chapter will consequently consider the significance of a theatrical costume's ability to function as a 'carrier of identity' and assess the central part this facility plays in shaping the 'biography' of specific theatrical costumes. The 'chains of meaning' within which theatrical costumes become enmeshed in the course of their 'life cycle' will also play a central part in this discussion, particularly with regard to perceptions surrounding the historical significance of these garments.⁶

Costume, character or performer?

Views expressed by Terry in her personal writing, and in interviews, clarify the degree to which the actress felt costume could, and should, express the character being portrayed.

In 1892, Henry How recorded that,

⁵ Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 177.

⁶ Susan Pearce, "Objects as meaning; or narrating the past," *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994) 19-29.

Miss Terry thinks - and rightly too - that a dress should do much to indicate the character of the woman who is wearing it, as witness the dress she wears as *Lady Macbeth*, which looks like a coiling snake.⁷

Two years later Ethel Mackenzie McKenna also remarked upon Terry's '[...] strong theories on the subject of wherewithal she shall be clothed.' As McKenna explained, Terry felt that '[...]the character should find expression in the costume' and therefore '[...] bestow[ed] endless thought upon the introduction of apparent trifles, notes in harmony with the individuality of the woman she portray[ed]...'.⁸ When playing Margarite in *Faust* (1885) for instance, Terry learned to spin and although, as she confessed '[Her] thread always broke, and at last [she] had to "fake" [her] spinning to a certain extent,' she was confident that she 'worked [her] wheel right, and gave an impression that [she] could spin [her] pound of thread a day with the best.'⁹

Terry also took pains to encourage designers to consider the physical body of the performer when creating their designs. Declaring,

It is no use putting the right dress on the wrong actor or actress. The physical appearance of the person who is going to wear the dress must be borne in mind; so must the dramatic situation in which it is to be worn. Besides realising the character of the period to which they belong, the

⁷ Henry How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, *The Strand Magazine* (London: George Newnes Ltd, November 1892), 501. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box THM/117-8, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

⁸ Ethel Mackenzie McKenna, "Ellen Terry," *McClure's Magazine* (New York: S.S. McClure, Limited, 1894), 459.

⁹ Terry describes this training in her autobiography, noting that her instructor was 'Mr. Albert Fleming, who, at the suggestion of Ruskin, had recently revived hand-spinning and hand-weaving in the North of England.' Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 243.

dresses must be appropriate to the emotions of the play, and must have a beauty relative *to each other* as well as an individual excellence.¹⁰

Writing on the same theme in 1891, Wilde observed that even in most ‘archaeologically correct costume,’ the body of the performer had the potential to mar the intended effect. On these grounds he advised:

[...] there should be far more dress rehearsals than there are now. Actors such as Mr. Forbes-Robertson, Mr. Conway, Mr. George Alexander, and others, not to mention older artists, can move with ease and elegance in the attire of any century; but there are not a few who seem dreadfully embarrassed about their hands if they have no side pockets, and who always wear their dresses as if they were costumes. Costumes, of course, they are to the designer; but dresses they should be to those that wear them.¹¹

Terry’s description of Charles Kean’s 1856 production of *The Winter’s Tale*, in which she made her stage debut, provides an instance of this incongruity. Playbills for the production emphasise the extensive research undertaken by the designers. Kean published his own ‘book of the play’ with ‘historical and explanatory notes.’¹² The production was set partly in ‘Sicilia [and] sometimes in Bithynia (Bohemia)’ and, as Terry recalled, the

¹⁰ Ellen Terry, “Stage Decoration,” *The Windsor Magazine* (Copyright by S.S. McClure Company in the United State of America, 1911)75.

¹¹ Oscar Wilde, *Intentions: The Decay of Lying. Pen, Pencil, and Poison, The Critic As Artist, The Truth of Masks*, (London: Osgood, 1891) Web. n.p.

¹² On playbills promoting the production, for instance, it notes that in Act 2, Scene 3 (a room in the palace) ‘The designs of the tapestries [...] are taken from some of the richest compositions on cases discovered in the South of Italy.’ Playbill, Monday 2nd June 1856, Production Box, Princess Theatre, 1856, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Charles Kean reaffirmed the historical authenticity of the production by publishing his own ‘book of the play’ accompanied by detailed historical notes. Charles Kean, and William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare’s Play of The Winter’s Tale, Arranged for Representation at the Princess’s Theatre, with Historical and Explanatory Notes* (London: John K. Chapman and Co, 1856).

‘designs of the dresses were purely classic.’¹³ In spite of this careful research however, Terry notes that ‘[...] then, as now, actors and actresses seemed unable to keep their own period and their own individuality out of the clothes directly they got them on their backs. In some cases the original design was quite swamped.’¹⁴



Figure 5.1 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup*, Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.2 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:320-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

In 1881 Terry played the role of Camma in *The Cup*, a play inspired by Lord Alfred Tennyson’s (1809-1892) poem, *The Cup: A Tragedy*. The production sought to recreate the imagined classical Greek setting of the original verse [FIGURE 5.1]. Reviews of Terry’s performance reveal her swift adaptation to these classical costumes, with one

¹³ Playbill, Monday 2nd June 1856, Production Box, Princess Theatre, 1856, Victoria and Albert Museum, London and Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14.

¹⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14.

critic declaring that Terry ‘[wore] the Greek costume as naturally as though she had been born to it.’¹⁵ Terry’s ability to appear at ease in her costume can be attributed in part to her self-proclaimed preference for garments cut in this style.¹⁶ As Chapter 3 showed however, Terry had been taught to adapt her movements to the costumes and the mood of the play, and the ‘natural’ and ‘graceful’ movement for which the actress was so frequently praised were the result of this professional training.¹⁷ Terry, though not the only actress appearing in classical robes during this period, was one of the pioneers of this form of stage costume. Godwin, who had designed Terry’s costumes for *The Cup*, also played an important part in promoting ‘archaeologically correct’ dress on the stage, not least through the ‘Pastoral Plays’ which he produced in collaboration with Lady Archibald Campbell (1847-1923).¹⁸ Further evidence that classical dress was becoming established as the preferred costume for certain Shakespearean productions can be found in Lillie Langtry’s decision to make her 1882 stage debut as Rosalind in *As You Like It* wearing garments in this style [FIGURE 5.2]. Langtry’s classically inspired costume also capitalised on her status within the Aesthetic movement as an embodiment of the ideal ‘Grecian’ beauty.¹⁹ The American actress, Mary Anderson (1859-1940) was, like Terry,

¹⁵ “Our Biographies: Being brief sketches of the lives of Managers, Authors, Actors and Actresses’ No. XV. Ellen Terry,’ Press cutting, ca.1881, Ruth Canton Album: ‘Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883’, Garrick Club, London, n.p.

¹⁶ Terry’s personal dress and remarks in interviews are testaments to her preference for dress in the ‘Japanese’ and ‘Greek’ style. See, for instance, Ellen Terry, “Stage Decoration,” 88.

¹⁷ As Chapter 3 discussed Terry received training in movement from figures such as the dancing master Oscar Bryn (fl.1856) from an early age. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 20-21.

¹⁸ Godwin took chief responsibility for designing and directing these open air performances. Designs for the costumes were founded upon painstaking research and key members of the Aesthetic movement appeared in, and watched the productions. For a full, illustrated discussion of Godwin’s involvement in these productions and in designing for the theatre, see Fanny Baldwin ‘Godwin and Design for the Theatre,’ *E.W. Godwin: Aesthetic Movement Architect and Designer*, eds. E W. Godwin, Susan W. Soros, and Catherine Arbuthnott (New Haven: Yale University Press published for the Bard Graduate Center Studies in the Decorative Arts, New York, 1999) 313-353.

¹⁹ Oscar Wilde played an important role in establishing Langtry’s status as a Greek Beauty, presenting her as the muse who inspired poems such as his work, *The New Helen*, in 1879 and describing of Langtry as like a ‘Greek Bronze’ and See, for instance, the commentary on ‘*The New Helen*’ in Oscar Wilde et al. *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 272 and also interviews with Wilde quoted in Oscar Wilde, Matthew Hofer, and Gary Scharnhorst, *Oscar Wilde in America: The Interviews* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 93.

determined to abandon ‘[...] the velvet gowns, heels, wigs and stays commonly worn in classical roles.’ She therefore made her London debut as Parthenia in *Ingomar*, in 1883, wearing ‘simple flowing draperies,’ the empire line cut and cross over style bodice of her costume deliberately referencing ‘classical dress.’²⁰ [FIGURE 5.3] Similarly, when returning to London in 1887, to perform in a production of *The Winter’s Tale* four years later, in 1887, Anderson again chose to wear ‘authentic’ classical robes.²¹ [FIGURE 5.4]



Figure 5.2 - Henry Frederick Van Der Wedye. Mary Anderson as Panthenia in *Ingomar*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1883, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 9.6 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.140:33-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²⁰ Mary Anderson De Navarro, *A Few Memories* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1896) 117-9. Lucy Oakley discusses Anderson’s career in more detail in her article Lucy Oakley, ‘The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais’ Portia,’ *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 16, (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1982), 189-191.

²¹ Anderson appeared as both Hermione and Perdita in production of *The Winters Tale* in 1887. She sought advice from ‘F.D.Millet, Alma Tadema, both painters of classicising subjects’ and also E.A.Abbey ‘who collected period clothes and books on costume history’ regarding the ‘classical’ costumes. Mary Anderson De Navarro, *A Few Memories* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1896) 148.



Figure 5.3 - W&D Downey. Lillie Langtry as Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Imperial Theatre, 1886, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.3 x 10cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.143:309-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.4 - Henry Frederick Van Der Wedye. Mary Anderson as Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.9 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.140:130-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

As Chapter 6 will discuss, the 1881 production of *The Cup* was staged at the peak of the Aesthetic movement and the fact that classical garments were promoted as the form of dress most ideally suited to display the beauty of the natural form, may have contributed to the success of the costumes.²² Whilst the short term impact of the production did owe much to the rise of the Aesthetic movement, the play's impact extended beyond 1881. Specific evidence of the long term significance of the Lyceum production can be found in George Du Maurier's 1894 novel *Trilby* in which he makes a direct comparison between his heroine's costume and general appearance, and Terry's earlier performance as 'the priestess of Artemis in the late laureate's play, *The Cup*.²³ Du Maurier's confidence that his reference to a play staged 13 years before his book was published, would be understood by his readers, indicates the enduring presence of this production within public consciousness.

Though clearly attaching great importance to effective and appropriate costume, Terry was also willing to acknowledge that the quality of the performance could, occasionally, overcome even the most absurd garments. To support her argument, Terry presented the example of Mrs. Charles Kean [née Ellen Tree], an actress who, as Chapter 3 showed, had a formative influence on her career. Ellen Kean was, Terry declared, a performer who '[...] possessed the personality and force to chain the attention and indelibly imprint her rendering of a part on the imagination.'²⁴ Commenting specifically on the costume Ellen Kean wore as Hermione in the 1856 production of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, Terry explained:

²² See, for example, E.W.Godwin, *Dress, and Its Relation to Health and Climate* (London: W. Clowes, 1884) 75 and "Letters from Artists on Ladies Dress," *The Strand Magazine*, ed. George Newnes (London: George Newnes, 1891): 162-173.

²³ George Du Maurier, *Trilby* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 209.

²⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14.

No matter what the character that Mrs. Kean was assuming, she always used to wear her hair drawn flat over her forehead and twisted tight round her ears in a kind of circular sweep—such as the old writing-masters used to make when they attempted an extra grand flourish. And then the amount of petticoats she wore! Even as Hermione she was always bunched out by layer upon layer of petticoats, in defiance of the fact that classical parts should not be dressed in a superfluity of raiment.²⁵

Fortunately Ellen Kean's talent was able to overcome the incongruity of her costumes and even '[...] if the petticoats were full of starch, the voice was full of pathos—and the dignity, simplicity, and womanliness of Mrs. Charles Kean's Hermione could not have been marred by a far more grotesque costume.'²⁶ [FIGURE 5.5]



Figure 5.5 - Photographer Unknown. Ellen Kean (née Tree) as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, Princess Theatre, ca. 1856, Sepia photograph on paper. 18.8 x 12.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.139:47-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14.

²⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14.

Unlike Ellen Kean, Terry sought to achieve a balance between her individual taste in dress and the aesthetic demands of the stage, even, on occasion, sacrificing personal comfort for visual and dramatic effect. Her partnership with her designer, Comyns-Carr, frequently allowed Terry to appear in the ‘sinuous, flowing garments’ she preferred but, as Cumming stresses, the actress ensured that such costumes were, ‘a natural extension of her art, not a superimposition upon it.’²⁷ Indeed, as Terry affirmed, even though ‘[her] preference [was] for a loose, diaphanous dress’ which she always felt ‘happy in,’ when in 1892 she played Queen Katherine in *Henry VIII*, she paid her ‘[...] tribute to archaeology in those awful stays, and added thick brocade dresses with fur sleeves of tremendous weight.’²⁸

Personality vs. Performance

With Terry’s growing success, however, came the constant threat that Terry’s ‘celebrity’ and past stage roles would overshadow her current performance. As Melville observed ‘The parts Ellen played were very much identified with her.’²⁹ Her statement echoes a review of Terry’s performance as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart* by Sir Alfred Calmour which declared ‘Ellaline is Miss Ellen Terry, and Miss Ellen Terry is Ellaline.’³⁰ Similarly, McKenna praised the manner in which ‘Every part [Terry] plays, she imbues with her own irresistible personality.’³¹ Though clearly intended as a compliment,

²⁷ Cumming, ‘Ellen Terry: An Aesthetic Actress and her Costumes,’ 73.

²⁸ Ellen Terry, “Stage Decoration,” 88.

²⁹ Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 130.

³⁰ This production was described as ‘a poetical fantasy in three acts’ and was set in a mythical ‘medieval’ period. Jeffrey Richards provides a brief outline of the production in *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, 53.54. The review appears in an album with the Garrick Club Collection, see Press cutting, dated by hand 29 December 1888, Ruth Canton Album: ‘Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1884-1892’, Garrick Club, London, n.p.

³¹ McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” 457-465.

McKenna's remark highlights the extent to which the audience came to see 'Terry' as 'celebrity' rather than the role being performed or indeed the costume in which the actress appeared. Many reviews of Lyceum productions provide instances of this phenomena. The confusion and potential contradiction between 'celebrity identity' and 'stage character' were a particular problem on opening nights when Terry's nerves often impacted on her performance.³² The impact of the interconnection between the 'on' and 'off-stage' elements of her identity on perceptions of Terry, is apparent in a review of response to *Faust* from December of 1885. The writer argues that

Two things mitigated against its [*Faust's*] success. First the natural and inevitable nervousness of the actress; second, the equally natural and inevitable reception of Miss Ellen Terry. She looked better now, and to the end, than any Margaret who has ever appeared on the English stage. She well and truly realised Mephisto's subsequent description [...] But the actress was unnerved - she was bound to be Miss Terry to an enthusiastic house. She could not recover Margaret in two short lines. All ideas of church, confession, surprise, innocence, and simplicity vanished. It was Ellen Terry received with enthusiasm at the expense of the play.³³

Chapter 3 addressed the manner in which Terry's celebrity identity, in particular her reputation for 'charm' and 'grace' placed limitations on the roles deemed suitable for, and suited to, the actress. The controversy provoked by Terry's efforts to transgress such

³² Terry openly admitted her dread of opening nights in her autobiography confessing that '[...] even now, after fifty years of stage-life, I never play a new part without being overcome by a terrible nervousness and a torturing dread of forgetting my lines. Every nerve in my body seems to be dancing an independent jig on its own account.' Terry, *Story of My Life*, 40. W.G. Robertson also remarked upon Terry's nerves, and recalled Terry's premonition, subsequently proved correct, that she would 'dry up-dead' on the opening night of *Henry VIII*. W.G. Robertson, *Time Was*, 152.

³³ Press cutting, 19 December 1885, Ruth Canton Album: 'Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1884-1892', Garrick Club, London, n.p.

boundaries can be seen in reviews of Terry's performance as the murderous Lady Macbeth in 1888, with critics declaring that,

Despite the great charm of Miss Terry's manner, or perhaps in consequence of it, we must confess that there is something almost shocking in suggestions of cold-blooded murder from such lips as hers, and even in her display of blind affection for her sinister looking lord and this impression is deepened in the murder scene, where, snatching the dagger from Macbeth's faltering hand, she goes to complete his ghastly work.³⁴

Terry's decision, in her fifties, to cast herself as Hjordis, the ruthless and passionate protagonist of Henrik Ibsen's play *The Vikings at Helgeland* in 1903, proved equally contentious. Indeed, one reviewer proclaimed:

She looks every inch a Viking's bride, but we do not think she is at her best as a virago. Her womanly wiles, her rippling laughter, her sense of fun have no proper chance of employment. Nor is she yet by any means perfect in her words.³⁵

Chapter 3 touched upon the significant part which Terry's costume played in expressing and reinforcing the identity adopted by the actress in this production, the first staged under her own management at the Imperial Theatre. Chapter 6 will build upon these discussions to examine the motivations behind Terry's resolution to mark her break from the Lyceum and to establish her position as an independent actor/manager by staging such a controversial, and confrontational play.

³⁴ Press cutting, ca. December 1888, Ruth Canton Album: 'Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1884-1892', Garrick Club, London, n.p.

³⁵ "A review of *The Viking at Helgeland*," *The Times*, London, 16 April 1903.

Carriers of Identity and Memory

Chapter 4 showed how examining a theatrical costume at first hand makes a researcher increasingly aware of the body which once inhabited the garments. The real people who inhabited theatrical costumes often develop a celebrated association with the surviving garments and in such cases the original wearer shapes not only the physical form of the costume, but also its historical identity. Extant theatrical costumes have often outlived their original purpose and as they are passed from one production, or wearer, to another, they acquire an altered appearance, a new meaning and a different owner, accruing, as they do so, their own complex ‘identities’ or, as Kopytoff argued, ‘biographies.’ Any analysis of theatrical costume must therefore take into account not only the provenance and physical form of the surviving garment but also the personality, and persona, of the original wearer and subsequent wearers, where this information is known. As Chapter 4 illustrated, information about the original wearer(s) can illuminate elements of the construction and design, which might otherwise remain obscure. It can also, as this chapter will discuss, provide an insight into why certain costumes are preserved, whilst others are re-used, re-cycled and, ultimately, discarded.

Hodgdon’s work on this theme offers further insights into the qualities which single out the costumes which are selected for preservation. She has focussed on the part that certain theatrical costumes can play in creating connections between performers and performance. In its most basic form, this link might be achieved through the self-conscious referencing of a past costume.³⁶ As she shows however, where an ‘original’

³⁶ Hodgdon cites the clear parallels which exist between the dress worn by Terry as Lady Macbeth and the costume Vivien Leigh (1913-1967) wore in the 1955 Royal Shakespeare Company production. As she notes ‘Vivien Leigh’s costume tangibly echoes Terry’s’ with clear parallels evident in the colour, silhouette, and even accessories, which form part of the two costumes. Preparatory designs and photographs of Leigh in the role survive in the Royal Shakespeare Company Collections, together with the costumes themselves. Images of this source material can be found online. See: “Dress and cloak worn by Vivien Leigh as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, 1955,” *What’s in the Collection?* Royal Shakespeare Company [n.d.] and “Vivien

costume survives, it has the potential to function as an actual material connection between performers. Evidence that Terry shared this view, can be found in her desire to assemble a private collection of theatrical ephemera which both documented her own professional career and established a connection between her performances and those of her illustrious predecessors. She also drew inspiration from costumes connected with respected performers during her performances and, when playing Lady Macbeth, kept a pair of the shoes, reputedly worn by Sarah Siddons in the same role, in her dressing room at the Lyceum Theatre.

Terry emphasises the fact that the shoes, given to her by ‘an actress’ who she does not name, were sent ‘not to wear, but to keep with [her].’³⁷ As Hodgdon shows however, surviving costumes do not simply offer an important psychological link with past productions and actors. When worn again they can provide a direct material connection between past and present. Hodgdon selects a ‘[...] rat coloured cardigan with pockets, an everyday sort of garment, an index of practicality – less a costume than *clothes*,’ as a case study through which to explore this function.³⁸ Translated from clothing to theatrical costume by the act of performance, the significance of this specific cardigan lies in the fact that it was originally worn by Peggy Ashcroft (1907-1991) when playing the Countess of Rossillion in the 1982 Royal Shakespeare Company production of *All’s Well that Ends Well* (her last Shakespearean role). By 1999, the cardigan had been given a

Leigh as Lady Macbeth 1955,” *Do the Clothes make the (Wo)man?*, Royal Shakespeare Company [n.d]. Leigh was not the only actress whose Lady Macbeth dress echoed the design of Terry’s ‘Beetlewing Dress.’ Surviving illustrations and photographs indicate that the costumes worn by Terry in the role also clearly informed the designs selected for the dresses worn by Mrs Patrick Campbell when performing the part in 1898. This can be seen in illustrations featured in *The Sketch*, September 28 1898, 438.

³⁷ This remark was made by Terry in a letter sent to the critic Clement Scott in 1888. Clement Scott, quoted in Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in our Time*, 259. Proof that Terry did actually keep the shoes in her dressing room can be found in the title of an interview conducted with Terry at the time of the original production. As noted in Chapter 4, a copy of this interview, entitled ‘How I sketched Mrs. Siddon’s Shoes, A visit to Miss Ellen Terry’s Dressing Room’ is bound within Terry’s copy of *Macbeth*, National Trust Inventory Number 3119105. Slocombe, *Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum*, 10.

³⁸ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 160.

name 'The Peggy' and become part of 'material memory system' in which, as Hodgdon explains, performers, resurrected and wore the garment, simultaneously referencing the previous wearers and productions, and adding to its history.³⁹

Hodgdon suggests that when a costume '[...]' moves through successive performances it figures in a system of give and take that resembles gift giving.' As a consequence of this process the original 'gift' (costume) is transformed, and 'carries new meanings, a new dynamic.'⁴⁰

Stallybrass and Jones touched upon comparable ideas during their research into the range of 'clothing' and 'costumes' used for performance during the Renaissance. Looking specifically at Medieval Guild Theatre, for instance, they examined accounts which documented payments made for the repair and hire of these costumes between 1563-4. Within this material they discovered that the costumes were regularly referred to using the name of the character they represented, with payments recorded for 'Ihesus sleues' or 'a Coate for god.' Such terminology, they argued, suggested '[...]' the ability of the clothes to absorb the very identity of the actors.'⁴¹

As they discuss, clothes, and by extension costumes, represented 'an enormous investment.' Indeed, the value of these garments was such that many theatrical companies were '[...]' dependent upon the accumulation and dispersal of costume.'⁴² The theatre therefore played an important role in the clothing trade, buying and selling both new, and second hand, garments. Within theatrical companies therefore, performers frequently

³⁹ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 160-1. Though, as Hodgdon notes, the cardigan may have had 'an interim resurrection' she found definite evidence that it was worn by Estelle Kohler as Paulina in the 1999 production of *The Winter's Tale* and again by Alexandra Gilbreath (who played Hermione in the 1999 *Winter's Tale*) as Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew* in 2003.

⁴⁰ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 164.

⁴¹ Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 178-9.

⁴² Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 177.

revived old costumes or ‘took existing [second hand] clothing and “translated” them’ into a new role.⁴³ Although, as Jones and Stallybrass stress, it is clear that ‘new costumes’ were continually mixed with the ‘existing stock of clothes’ theatrical inventories repeatedly designate certain garments as ‘Tamberlaine’s coat with copper lace; Vortigern’s robes of rich taffeta’ or ‘Henry V’s velvet gown and his satin doublet embroidered with gold lace.’⁴⁴

Their analysis resonates with Amanda Vickery’s subsequent consideration of the ‘sentimental associations’ and ‘talismanic properties of material things’ in *The Gentleman’s Daughter* (2003).⁴⁵ As Stallybrass and Jones’ research demonstrates, it is not simply the financial value, but also the ‘talismanic properties’ with which certain costumes are perceived to be endowed, that establishes their enduring importance and ensures their preservation. Significantly for this thesis, Stallybrass and Jones suggest that it is precisely ‘because the costume can endure after a performance is ended that it can take a curious precedence over the actor, as if through the donning of a costume the actor puts on Christ, or Satan, or a Roman soldier, or whomever.’⁴⁶

In the case of ‘The Peggy’ the costume is clearly felt to be channelling the original wearer, participating in, to use Hodgdon’s words, ‘[...] a form of surrogation’ in which the costume is called upon to recapture and represent the power of the previous performance.⁴⁷ As Chapter 2 discussed, Hodgdon’s descriptions of this process of ‘surrogation’ resonate with Barbieri’s examination of a costume’s ability to function as a ‘substitute’ for the body of the performer.⁴⁸ Reading Hodgdon and Barbieri in conjunction

⁴³ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 183.

⁴⁴ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 182-3.

⁴⁵ Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2003), 23, 39.

⁴⁶ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 177.

⁴⁷ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 159.

⁴⁸ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 297.

with Roach's theories surrounding 'effigies' and their connection with performance, offers a framework through which to analyse the status and power of 'resurrected' theatre costumes. Such garments, whether used in performance or mounted for display, take on the role of the 'effigy,' perpetuating 'memory' of the lost production, and literally, 'remembering,' the absent performer.⁴⁹ Through their participation in this act of 'surrogation' costumes become carriers of 'memory' and 'identity' with the ability to conjure up the 'ghosts,' not only of an interlinked cycle of performances, but also of specific performers.

This framework can be applied to analyse and explain the actress Sybil Thorndike's (1882-1976) description of the 'power' attributed to Terry's costumes. As Thorndike related in 1960:

Ellen's stage clothes became such a part of her that some magic seemed to belong to them. I know her daughter Edith Craig never liked them being cleaned, she said it spoilt them and the magic went out of them.⁵⁰

After her death, and during her lifetime, many of Terry's costumes were worn by other performers, including Thorndike, in 1921. Learning that Thorndike was to play Lady Macbeth at an important celebration in Paris, Edith Craig insisted that she borrow Terry's costumes for the role declaring, 'Oh, you must wear mother's dresses, beetle wing, the great cloak, sleepwalking blankets the lot. They'll play the part for you.'⁵¹ Thorndike, who eagerly agreed to the loan, was certain that the beetlewing dress, in particular, played a transformative role in her performance. Recalling the incident in 1960 she explained:

⁴⁹ Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36.

⁵⁰ Sybil Thorndike, Transcript of Audio Recording, Smallhythe Place, 1960. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

⁵¹ Edith Craig, quoted in Thorndike, Audio Recording.

[...] on those grand formal occasions I'm always terribly nervous, paralytic in fact. The moment I put on Ellen's dress, something happened, not a tremor, not a quake, I waltzed through the play on air. When it came to the banquet scene the fine American star lost himself, his nerve went. But the beetlewing dress came to the rescue. I wasn't a very hefty girl in those days but something pushed me from behind and I took hold of that huge man and I hurled him across the stage, whispering his words in his ear. And all was well again, afterwards he said to me 'Oh thank you my dear, I was lost, you saved me.' I said don't thank me that was Ellen Terry's dress, she pushed me on. That's what Ellen did to her dresses.⁵²

5.2 'Translating' costumes and transforming 'meaning'

The 'Significance' of 'Context'

Pearce, whose own theories are founded upon her distillation of Ferdinand de Saussure's work on the '*langue*' and Roland Barthes' discussions of semiotics, offers an additional framework through which to explore the multiple histories accumulated by many theatrical costumes. Using a military jacket as a case study, Pearce demonstrates that an object has the potential to be 'polysemantic,' acting 'as a signifier for much signification, with each one of which the meaning of *signe* [the object] changes.'⁵³ The jacket or '*signe*' is therefore viewed differently as perceptions of the event or period (in this instance the battle of Waterloo) in which it was originally used alter. As her analysis shows a *signe* will therefore also carry differing levels of both and emotional and historical significance for every viewer, each of whom will be interpret the garment slightly differently.

⁵² Thorndike, Audio Recording.

⁵³ Pearce, 'Objects as meaning; or narrating the past', 25.

By unpicking the complex histories and associations embodied by the jacket, Pearce is also able to shed light on what she terms ‘the power of “the actual object.”’ It lies, Pearce suggests, in the fact that unlike the researcher, curator, or independent viewer, ‘who must die,’ the object is able to ‘carry meaning’ because it bears ‘an “eternal” relationship to the receding past.’⁵⁴ In the case of a theatrical costume, the power of the garment can therefore be traced to its role as an intrinsic part of an unrecorded, ephemeral performance, which, whilst remembered, is eternally lost.

For Pearce the ‘meaning’ of any museum object is never fixed because all such items are part of an eternally growing and mutable ‘chain of meaning.’⁵⁵ As Hodgdon showed, historic theatrical costumes have the potential to become part of an evolving ‘chain of meaning’ in which they carry the identity and memories of a succession of performances and performers. The transfer of theatre costumes from their original performance context to a museum collection however, has a significant impact on the ‘meaning’ and ‘status’ of these garments. These privileged garments are deliberately removed from an established and continuous system of re-use and re-cycling and become static objects, representing the end of an established and frozen ‘chain of meaning.’ Such was the case with a pair of leather trousers worn by the actor David Tennant (b.1971) in 2000 when playing Romeo in the Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Romeo and Juliet* in 2000. Transferred to the Hire Wardrobe after the close of the production, they were reclaimed when Tennant rose to fame in the title role of BBC Television series, *Doctor Who*.⁵⁶ The trousers therefore form part of a ‘chain of meaning’ in which their identity

⁵⁴ Pearce, ‘Objects as meaning; or narrating the past’, 25.

⁵⁵ Pearce, ‘Objects as meaning; or narrating the past’, 28.

⁵⁶ As the Curator of the collection David Howells explained in 2008, the majority of costumes from productions are either re-used or transferred to the Hire Wardrobe, with only a small selection being retained for the Company’s archive collection. There is however potential for this process of ‘reclamation’ to occur when, as Howell’s phrased it, ‘an actor’s career develops unexpectedly.’ David Howells, Curator of the *Royal Shakespeare Company Collection*, Personal Interview, 20 March 2008. This process was discussed further in Veronica Isaac, ‘From Ellen Terry’s ‘Beetlewing Dress’ to David Tennant’s Leather Trousers:

shifted from a dynamic theatrical costume created for a specific role and wearer, to a generic garment available for public hire, to their current and potentially final iconic celebrity status as ‘David Tennant’s Leather trousers’ and, as such, a museum object with the potential to carry the identity of, and act as a surrogate for, their original wearer.

As the fate of Tennant’s costume shows, and Pearce’s work highlights, the context within which an item is used plays an important role in determining perceptions of its ‘meaning.’ Stallybrass and Jones have also investigated the manner in which context, in particular changing contexts, shape and re-shape the ‘character’ of a costume. Examining Henslowe’s 1598 inventories of the Admiral’s Men, they discovered that actors intermingled ‘[...] their own fabrications with the cast-off paraphernalia of courtiers and citizens.’ Performers therefore often acquired second hand, high quality aristocratic robes ‘faced with ermine’ or made from cloth of gold, but then intermixed these magnificent garments with other ‘costumes,’ faced and embroidered with the cheaper ‘copper lace’ that became specifically associated with the theatre during this period.⁵⁷ As Stallybrass and Jones observe, the previous ‘identity’ of these luxurious pieces of ‘clothing,’ which had formally been associated with and restricted to, royalty and members of the court, was ‘displaced’ through this ‘transmission’ into a theatrical space and they became ‘costumes,’ ‘dishonoured’ and ‘soiled’ by their circulation among ‘the meanest sort of men [sic].’⁵⁸ This process of ‘dislocation’ was not limited to secular clothes, and after the Reformation, Protestant churches rented out or sold the ornate Catholic vestments which they no longer required to actors and theatrical companies. Whilst, as Stallybrass and Jones note, church vestments had previously been used in the miracle plays, ‘[...] the

An Investigation of the Preservation and Presentation of Theatrical Costume in British Theatres and Museums” (University of Southampton, Unpublished MA Dissertation, 2008).

⁵⁷ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 190-1.

⁵⁸ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 190-1.

restaging of actual ecclesiastical garments upon the secular stage' had more significant implications, not least, the potential that a 'sacred garment from the theatre of God' might come to 'represent a "heathen" religion on the secular stage.'⁵⁹

Nance Oldfield: Professional, Political and Personal

The manner in which the 'identity' of a garment can be 'displaced' when 'translated' into a new theatrical context is exemplified by the shifting 'meaning' of the costumes worn by Terry when playing the title role of *Nance Oldfield*. This was a play inspired by the career of the seventeenth century actress Anne 'Nance' Oldfield (1683-1730) and Terry first performed the role at the Lyceum in 1891.⁶⁰ As she related in her autobiography, the production marked her 'first speculation in play-buying.' Having seen it acted, she 'thought [she] could do something with it' and when Irving refused to buy it, she purchased it instead. To Terry's evident satisfaction, the play was 'a great success' and she went on to play the role 'hundreds of times.'⁶¹ The significance of this role lies not however in the original Lyceum productions, but in the manner in which Terry's performance of, and association with, the character and costume of Nance Oldfield was exploited and re-interpreted after the actress left the Lyceum Company in 1902.

In 1909, seven years after leaving the Lyceum Company, Terry reappeared in the character of Nance Oldfield in a production of *A Pageant of Great Women* at the Scala Theatre, London.⁶² Written by Cicely Hamilton, the play was staged to raised awareness

⁵⁹ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 193.

⁶⁰ Oldfield was an extremely successful actress in both comic and tragic roles. She is amongst the actresses featured in Helen Brooks, *Actresses, Gender, and the Eighteenth-Century Stage: Playing Women*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

⁶¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 311.

⁶² Many leading actresses and theatrical figures, including Terry's sister Marion Terry, and her daughter Edith Craig, appeared in the first production, but during the tour local women were deliberately recruited to appear in the Pageant. Katharine Cockin discusses the significance of this production, and *The Pioneer Players* in Katharine Cockin, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

of, and funding for, women's enfranchisement. It had a significant impact not only in London, but also across the United Kingdom during the tour which followed.

Over fifty local women's suffrage activists performed the great women of the past appearing in groups: the saintly women, the rulers, the learned women, the artists, the heroic women and finally, the warriors. They gathered on stage, silently building up a powerful, visual body of evidence in the debate on women's enfranchisement between *Woman and Prejudice*, presided over by Justice.⁶³

As Chapter 2 noted, Terry's interaction with the suffrage movement has been explored by Cockin.⁶⁴ A key connection the actress had with the movement was through her involvement with *The Pioneer Players*. This theatrical company, formed from members of the Actresses' Franchise League, was established in 1911, and Terry's daughter Edith Craig was appointed as Honorary Managing Director. Whilst Terry did not remain actively involved with the society throughout its existence, she was appointed Honorary President of the Pioneer Players upon its inception in 1911 and retained her position until the company's dissolution in 1920. She also formed part of the advisory committee and played a leading part in some of the company's early productions.⁶⁵

Many of the figures who would later form part of *The Pioneer Players* were involved in the first production of a *Pageant of Great Women* in 1909. The figures who appeared in this original production at the Scala Theatre, London, included several famous actresses,

⁶³ Katharine Cockin, "Cicely Hamilton's warriors: dramatic reinventions of militancy in the British women's suffrage movement," *Women's History Review*, 14, Issue 304, (2005) 527.

⁶⁴ See, for instance, Katharine Cockin, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000) and "Ellen Terry and Women's Suffrage Agitation", *Gender and Politics in the Age of Letter-writing 1750-2000*. "Caroline Bland and Máire Cross eds. (London: Ashgate, 2004).

⁶⁵ Terry's roles included Nell Gywn in *The First Actress* (1911) Kniertje in Christopher St-John's translation of *The Good Hope* by Hermann Heijerman in 1912. She also gave several lectures on behalf of the society.

Terry amongst them.⁶⁶ Whilst all the women who appeared on the stage (whether famous or not) spoke couplets which established their character's historical significance, the lines given to Terry's were particularly significant, explicitly positioning not only Nance Oldfield, but also Terry herself, amongst the ranks of the 'Great Women' who filled the stage:

By your leave,

Nance Oldfield does her talking for herself!

If you, Sir Prejudice, had had your way,

There would be never an actress on the boards.

Some lanky, squeaky boy would play my parts:

And, though I say it, there'd have been a loss!

The Stage would be as dull as now 'tis merry-

No Oldfield, Woffington, or – Ellen Terry!⁶⁷

An image of Terry wearing the costume in which she appeared in this characterisation of Oldfield, featured in an illustrated copy of *A Pageant of Great Women* published by The Suffrage Shop in 1910 [FIGURE 5.6]. This image, taken by Miss Lena Connell, was distinct from the publicity photographs produced by Window and Grove when Terry first performed the role at the Lyceum [See FIGURE 5.7, 5.8, 5.9]. It shows Terry alone, with

⁶⁶ Amongst the well-known actresses in the cast were also Terry's younger sister Marion Terry (1853-1930) and Terry's friend Pauline Chase (1885-1962). Leading figures from the arts, education and society were also seen in many of the performances of the play outside London. Many of those who performed, including Winifred Mayo (1870-1967) and Adeline Bourne (1873-1965), were part of the Actresses' Franchise League and active supporters of women's suffrage.

⁶⁷ Cicely M. Hamilton, *A Pageant of Great Women* (London: The Suffrage Shop, 1910), 31

her back to the viewer and, significantly, wearing a different costume to that seen in the earlier photographs.⁶⁸ It therefore marked what may have been an intentional departure from the context of Terry's previous characterisation of Nance Oldfield in Charles Reade's light hearted comedy.⁶⁹

A review in the *Birmingham Daily Post* captures the mood of this original 1891 production, reporting that Terry's 'irresistible charm' was such that 'before the play was over the majority of the audience were in the same plight as poor young Alexander Oldworthy [the protagonist] – hopelessly in love with the bewitching actress.'⁷⁰ Terry's re-appearance as the same character within the very different context of a politically charged suffrage drama significantly altered the 'meaning' conveyed by both Terry's performance and costumes. In the *Pageant of Great Women* men and romance were entirely absent from the stage, and Terry was presented as a leading figure within a group of women, explicitly challenging the contemporary attitude to female suffrage. This second performance transformed Oldfield, and Terry; challenging their previous

⁶⁸ This attribution is acknowledged in the preface to the book. Lena Connell (fl.1910) was a member and photographer of the Suffragette Movement, and also ran a successful photographic studio in London. See index to Elizabeth Crawford. *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide, 1866-1928*. London: University College London Press, 1999. 548.

⁶⁹ As Richards explains 'The play dramatises a fictional episode in the career of the real-life eighteenth century actress Anne Oldfield (1683-1730).' It centres upon a love story in which 'a young poet and dramatist Alexander Oldworthy' (played in the original production by Terry's son, Edward Gordon Craig) falls in love with Oldfield to the dismay of his father. Although the father seeks to oppose the match and to persuade Oldfield to destroy his son's love for her, the couple are eventually reconciled and the play ends happily. See Richards, *Sir Henry Irving a Victorian Actor and His World*, 53.

⁷⁰ The review was published on 29 September 1891 and is quoted in Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: a Victorian Actor and His World*, 53.

characterisations as ‘charming’ and ‘comic’ figures and presenting them as inspirational female role models.



Photograph by Miss Lena Connell, 50, Grove End Road, N.W. Copyright.

Ellen Terry as Nance Oldfield.

Figure 5.6 - Lena Connell, photograph of Terry as appeared in the role of Nance Oldfield in *A Pageant of Great Women*, 1910. Published in Cicely M. Hamilton, *A Pageant of Great Women* (London: The Suffrage Shop, 1910), 31.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.7 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.4 cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:474-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.8 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax131315.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.9 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax160593.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Relatively few images survive of Terry in the Lyceum productions of *Nance Oldfield*, possibly because it was a one act piece in which Irving had no role. The surviving photographs, all taken by Window & Grove, depict Terry wearing three contrasting and distinctive garments. The first set of images show the actress dressed in a costume influenced by the fashions of the mid to late eighteenth century (rather than those of circa 1700, which marked the peak of Oldfield's career) (See Figures 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9). The neckline of the stiff and close fitting bodice is low and straight and Terry wears a translucent 1780s style fichu draped around her shoulders. The open gown, and matching petticoat, appear to be formed from a lightweight cotton fabric woven with a pattern of small dots and vertical scalloped lines. The edges of the gown's front opening are trimmed with a vertical band of pleated fabric and the elbow length sleeves have, what appear to be, cotton lawn cuffs edged with lace. Terry's hair is covered with a soft lace edged cap.



Figure 5.10 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Albumen Cabinet Card. 14.5 x 10.5 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax16978.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.11 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:472-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.12 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.1 cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:473-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The second set of Window and Grove images show Terry wearing a garment which is formed from a heavy cotton velvet and with a heavy jewelled collar, and is worn with a roughly shaped pointed crown, an ensemble which was intended to look deliberately ‘theatrical,’ replicating a ‘stage costume’ rather than a late eighteenth century style dress.

[See FIGURE 5.10, 5.11, 5.12] This ‘costume’ is loosely cut, with a soft, round, pleated, neckline and long hanging sleeves.

The final costume of the three recorded in photographs is harder to interpret from the surviving images. The focal point of the scene is the figures, and their garments are therefore slightly out of focus. The pose Terry has adopted (she is sitting on the top part of a sofa, her body turned away from the viewer, and towards the figure beside her) also

renders the construction of her garments indistinct [FIGURE 5.13].⁷¹ By comparing Figure 5.13 with a further image at Smallhythe Place however [FIGURE 5.14], it is possible to deduce that Terry is wearing a loosely cut gown, possibly cut in the draped, informal style of sack-back robe from which the more formal, closer fitting gown robe à l'anglaise worn by circa 1750 evolved.⁷² The trimmings and details of the fabric are not clear, but a floral pattern, which resembles that on the costume surviving at Smallhythe is just visible [FIGURE 5.15]. In Figures 5.13 and 5.14 Terry is wearing the same pointed crown seen in Figures 5.10-5.12. An image, painted by Pamela Coleman Smith (1878-1951) appears to show Terry wearing a gown which may be the costume worn in Figures 5.13 and 5.14, and which, like these photographs, indicates that it was worn as a 'dressing gown' and in an informal state of 'undress.'⁷³ [FIGURE 5.16]

What is apparent from all three sets of images however, is that the costume Terry was photographed wearing when playing Nance Oldfield in *A Pageant of Great Women* in 1909, does not match any of the costumes depicted in the photographs taken of her when she originally performed the role at the Lyceum in 1891. There are several potential reasons for this discrepancy, among them the fact that Terry will have had, a number of costume changes during *Nance Oldfield*, and not all of the costumes which she wore will have been photographed. Furthermore, given the popularity of the play, it is likely that the costume may have been re-made, or altered at a later date.⁷⁴

⁷¹ A copy of this photograph is held by both the Victoria & Albert Museum, S.133:550-2007 and at Smallhythe Place, NT/SMA/PH/2136.

⁷² As noted, this second image is held in the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe, National Trust Inventory Number, 1122390.

⁷³ Pamela Coleman Smith (1878-1951) was an artist and illustrator who became closely involved with the Lyceum Theatre Company, and Terry in particular, from the late 1890s. She was best known for her work as an illustrator but she also worked in the field of stage design and exhibited her paintings. Coleman-Smith also created a second image of Terry in the role in which the actress wears a similar, open robe, in this instance decorated with alternating pale blue and flower patterned vertical stripes. This image is held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum number S.907-2012.

⁷⁴ This was the case with the costumes worn by Terry in *Madame Sans Gene*. Originally staged in 1897, the popularity of the piece was such that by June 1901 Terry had commissioned her daughter Edith Craig



Figure 5.13 - Window & Grove. Edward Gordon Craig as Alexander Oldworthy and Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:550-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.14 - Window & Grove. Edward Gordon Craig as Alexander Oldworthy and Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Photographic paper on card mount. Measurements not recorded. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [1122390].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Of the two extant costumes, one is held by Smallhythe. This costume, a sackback style dress inspired by the fashions of the mid to late eighteenth century, is made from dull gold silk brocade woven with flowers. [See FIGURES 5.15, 5.17 and 5.18] There are no maker's labels. This is not the garment in which Terry appeared in the 1909 Pageant but it does strongly resemble a painting the artist James Ferrier Pryde (1866-1941) made of the actress in 1894 [FIGURE 5.19].⁷⁵

to create some new costumes for the role. Terry relates this fact in a letter to her costumier Ada Nettleship. Terry, letter to Nettleship, June 3rd 1901, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/7.

⁷⁵ Terry refers to this 'admirable portrait' in her autobiography. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 348.



Figure 5.15- Outer gown which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109a [1118834.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.16- Pamela Coleman Smith. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1900, Hand tinted print on paper. 31.3 x 26 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.908-2012.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.17- Inner dress which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109b [1118834.2].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.18- Detail of the inner dress which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109b [1118834.2].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.19- James Ferrier Pyrde. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891. Oil and varnish on card. 56 x 35.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG 6568.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

A further costume associated with the role of Nance Oldfield survives at the Museum of London. Whilst this costume differs from those worn by Terry in the photographs associated with the 1891 Lyceum production, it does match the photograph showing Terry as she appeared in the 1909 Pageant. The full history of this second costume is not known as, but it was donated to the Museum of London in 1947.⁷⁶ This garment, again modelled on the fashions of the mid to late eighteenth century, is in two parts, a cream ribbed silk open robe woven pale pink, lilac and yellow roses and a separate, sleeveless, underdress. [FIGURE 5.20 and 5.21] The robe has an integral bodice, stiffened with boning, to the base of which a ‘half apron’ formed from a cream, openwork, lace has been

⁷⁶ This version of Terry’s Nance Oldfield costume, museum number 47.1, was donated to the museum in 1947 by the actress and singer Jean Sterling Mackinlay (1882-1958). Mackinlay, who gave a range of her garments to the Museum of London, was known to both Terry and her daughter both as a professional colleague and, subsequently, a friend.

stitched. The interior is lined with a vivid pink silk and the same fabric has been used to make the integral bodice and also the bodice of the underdress. This bodice is also boned and the base of the dress is formed from layers of the same cream lace used for the ‘apron’ attached to the open robe.



Figure 5.20- Costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1891. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2011. Museum Number 47.11.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.21- Detail of costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1891, Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2011. Museum Number 47.11.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.22- Photographer Unknown, Ellen Terry with her granddaughter Nellie, 1919. Terry is wearing the costume she wore as Nance Oldfield, possibly in the *Pageant of Great Women* in 1909. Photographic postcard. Measurements not recorded. National Trust, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number, NT 1120250.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

As a photograph of Terry in the collection at Smallhythe Place records, this second costume, originally associated with a confrontational, political, production and a leading role, was ‘translated’ to an entirely different, domestic, environment ten years later. Taken in the garden at Smallhythe in 1919, the image shows Terry wearing this costume whilst her granddaughter, Nellie, (who is not wearing a theatrical costume), holds the train of the dress.⁷⁷ [FIGURE 5.22] The ‘function’ of these garments has not changed. They remain ‘costumes’ and are still being used for a ‘performance’, albeit a private one. They are also still being worn by and carry the identity of their original wearer, Terry. What has altered significantly, however, is the ‘context’ within which the costume is being used. In 1909 the costume was part of a public performance with an overtly political message and purpose. The costume provided a visual link between Terry and her

⁷⁷ As noted, this image is held in the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe. The National Trust Inventory Number is NT 1120250.

celebrated predecessor, Anne Oldfield, enabling Terry to 'perform' and to re-assert her identity as a leading actress of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In its second incarnation however, whilst the costume retained its function as a tool for performance and as a reminder to Terry's professional identity and status, it was no longer politically charged. The atmosphere in this 'private', domestic space is intimate and the costume is transformed by this new 'off-stage' context, functioning now as a theatrical property in Terry's performance of a domestic and maternal role.

As this photograph illustrates, the context within which a costume is used plays a significant part in shaping the 'meaning' of these garments. The costumes connected with Terry's original performances as Nance Oldfield in 1891 recall the comedy and charm that contributed to the success of the original production, and which were also an integral part of Terry's professional identity when the leading lady of the Lyceum Company. The ensemble worn by Terry when she revived this role in the *Pageant of Great Women* in 1909 however, conveyed a deeply political and confrontational meaning to the audience. It also signalled a shift in Terry's status, and her adoption of a new role as an independent professional who had earned her status as an inspirational role model for women, both on and off the stage. When this second costume was used again in 1919, its meaning had shifted again however. Whilst it continued to carry the 'ghost' of Terry's professional identity, it no longer carried a 'political' meaning, and now communicated her 'personal' identity as a grandmother, and domestic figure.

Masquerading as Portia

Another costume which exemplifies both the development of a role across the career of one performer and the manner in which costumes can be 'given a new identity' through

their participation in a ‘new performance,’ are the robes worn by Terry in the role of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*.⁷⁸

Terry played this part in a number of different theatres in both England, and America. Her first appearance as Portia was in 1875 in a production at the Prince of Wales Theatre for which the costumes and set were designed by Godwin.⁷⁹ She revived the role four years later, performing opposite Henry Irving as Shylock. As she noted in her autobiography

The Lyceum production of “The Merchant of Venice” was not so strictly archaeological as the Bancrofts’ had been, but it was very gravely beautiful and effective. If less attention was paid to details of costumes and scenery, the play itself was arranged and acted very attractively and always went with a swing. To the end of my partnership with Henry Irving it was a safe “draw” both in England and America. By this time I must have played Portia over a thousand times.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 159.

⁷⁹ As discussed, Godwin had an established reputation as a designer for the stage. He cemented his status as an expert on the history of dress when he became a founder member of the Costume Society in 1882, a society which sought to establish a systematic study of the dress of the past. Godwin, Soros and Arbuthnott, *E.W. Godwin: Aesthetic Movement Architect and Designer*, 58-62. Although Godwin clearly worked on designs for this production (sketches survive in the Godwin Archive at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, THM/3) the extent of his contribution has since been disputed. Indeed a notice published in *The Times* in April 1875, included a note to the effect that ‘Mr Godwin thinks it right, in justice to the person who designed the costumes, and in fairness to himself, to say that he is in no way responsible for the dresses, as his opinion was neither asked nor given on this subject.’ Press cutting, *The Times*, April 23 1875, dated in ink by Godwin. Press Cutting, Godwin Archive, THM/3, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Richard Foulkes has addressed this debate in “‘A truer peep at *Old Venice*’: *The Merchant of Venice* on the Victorian Stage,’ *Ruskin, the Theatre and Victorian Visual Culture*, ed. Anselm Heinrich, Katherine Newey and Jeffrey Richards (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 179.

⁸⁰ Terry’s use of the term ‘archaeology’ to designate the ‘history’ of dress, is consistent with the use of this term in texts from the mid to late nineteenth century. The term ‘archaeology’ is, for instance, used by Planché in *History of British Costume, from the Earliest Period to the Close of the 18th Century* (1834); Godwin in *Dress and its Relation to Health* (1884) and Wilde in *The Truth of Masks* (1891). It was used here by Terry in 1908, in *The Story of My Life*, 183. Terry’s praise for the archaeological correctness of the 1875 production also acknowledges the detailed research Godwin undertook when designed the production the results of which he published as an article printed in *The Architect* in 1875 and entitled ‘The Architecture and Costumes of *The Merchant of Venice*.’ Godwin’s and Terry’s son, Craig subsequently reprinted this article, and others written by Godwin on a similar theme in his own periodical, *The Mask* in 1908. See, for

The popularity of Terry's performance as Portia, in particular 'The Quality of Mercy' speech, was such that she continued to enact scenes from the play long after leaving the Lyceum Company.⁸¹ The resulting range of surviving visual and written evidence, together with the extant costume in the collection at Smallhythe, make it possible to identify and analyse the changes which occurred in the design of the costumes worn by Terry during the forty year period over which she performed the role. The impact and significance of these changes is particularly apparent in the evolution of the 'legal robes' worn by Terry for Portia's 'disguise' in Act IV, Scene 2.

Sadly no costumes survive from the productions of 1875 and 1879 in which Terry first performed the role of Portia. Whilst surviving, sepia toned, photographs provide a sense of the style and fit of these costumes, it is only through contemporary descriptions of the costumes that it is possible to get a sense of their original colour. Reviews of both the short running 1875, and more commercially successful, 1879 production, indicate that Terry wore black robes in Act IV, Scene 2. Comyns-Carr was amongst those who witnessed Terry's first appearance in the role and recalled how

[...] as the curtain rose upon Nell's [Ellen's] tall and slender figure in a china blue and white brocaded dress, with one crimson rose at her breast, the whole house bust forth in rapturous applause. But her greatest effect was when she walked into the court in her black robes of justice [...]⁸²

instance, E.W.Godwin, "The Architecture and Costumes of The Merchant of Venice," *The Mask*, 1.5 (July 1908): 91-95.

⁸¹ The 'Quality of Mercy' speech actually formed the conclusion of one of Terry's four lectures on '*The Triumphant Women*.' As Chapter 6 will discuss, these lectures survive in both note, and published form, having originally been part of a lecture tour undertaken by the actress between circa 1911 and 1921. Ellen Terry and Christopher St. John, eds, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare* (London: Martin Hopkinson Ltd, 1932), 122. Both Melville and St John record how, engaged to perform the speech at the Coliseum in 1918, Terry, unlike her fellow performers, was unmoved by the air raid which interrupted the performance. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 222-5.

⁸² Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 31.

The sonnet Wilde wrote in praise of Terry's performance in 1879 also captures details of Terry's garments. Wilde reserved particular praise for the actress's 'gorgeous dress of beaten gold, Which is more golden than the golden sun,' but also remarked upon also the effect of her 'sober-suited lawyer's gown.'⁸³

Interestingly, the costumes Terry wore as Portia throughout the forty year period she spent performing this role included the same constituent parts: an open gown, with wide, or open sleeves, worn over a fitted underdress with a high collar and matched with high crowned cap with a high brim. Comparing photographs of Terry as she appeared in the 1875 and 1879 productions however, exposes the subtle differences between the robes designed by Godwin and those worn by Terry in the 1879 Lyceum production. [FIGURE 5.23 and 5.24]



Figure 5.23- Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:230-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.24 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879. Albumen Cabinet Card. 14.1 x 10.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x16988.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁸³ Terry includes the sonnet in her autobiography, Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 182.

Looking at Figure 5.23, which shows Terry's 1875 costume, there is a clear sheen to the actress's silk velvet cap, as opposed to the matt fabrics used subsequently. The cap also has higher crown than the examples worn later in her career. The underdress has the high collar which remained part of the costume and is decorated at the centre with the pair of acorns, which were also retained. Also present is the additional slim white scalloped collar detailing at the top edge of the neckline. The open gown is formed from a heavy watered silk damask fabric, the pattern of which is difficult to distinguish. The sleeves of the gown are full length and open out into a wide cuff at the wrist. A vertical fold running down the centre front indicates a masked fastening at this point. The robes were gathered at the waist with a softly pleated belt in the same fabric. The actress is also pictured with the gloves which evidently formed part of the ensemble.

Figure 5.24 depicts the robes worn by Terry three years later in 1879, this time designed by Harris. They closely resemble those from the production at the Princess of Wales Theatre but there is no front pleat and the belt has been replaced with soft horizontal pleats which run from the waist to the bustline. The open gown has shorter, open sleeves which finish at the elbow, but is still made from a heavy silk damask, possibly, as discussed in Chapter 4, purchased from Watts & Co. The underdress has a slightly lower neckline, but the acorns are present at the centre front, and the narrow white scalloped inner collar is also present. The seams of the panels from which this underdress was made are clearly visible in several of the photographs.

The reasons for the similarities and differences between the two costumes was not remarked upon by Terry in her autobiography, but it is likely that the costumes she wore in 1875 were retained by the Bancroft's who funded and managed the costly production. Replacement garments would therefore have been required for the Lyceum production in 1879. As Richards notes, whilst Irving's production had a reputation for 'archaeological

accuracy' and this was part of the actor/manager's 'gospel of the stage as a vehicle for education,' Irving was willing to sacrifice accuracy for theatrical effect.⁸⁴ It is therefore likely that Irving, although appreciating the 'authenticity' of Godwin's designs and willing to draw inspiration from this original costume, also recognised and insisted upon the need to adapt and alter elements of these to suit his own vision for the play.



Figure 5.25- Museum Record Photograph. Detail of the darned repairs visible on the cuff of a robe worn by Irving as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1879, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2796:1-8-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The production, which had 'an unbroken run of two hundred and fifty nights,' remained in the Lyceum Company's repertoire for over twenty years and was also revived on tours to America and across the United Kingdom.⁸⁵ Despite the fact that Irving's Shylock costume was, accordingly to the actress, 'never replaced, and only once cleaned by Henry's dresser and valet, Walter Collinson,' it is clear that Terry's costumes, and those

⁸⁴ As Richards records Irving's pragmatism is apparent in the actor/manager's own observation that although 'Correctness of costume is admirable and necessary to a certain point,' when 'it ceases to be "as wholesome as sweet" it should be sacrificed.' Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, 221.

⁸⁵ Although, as Bram Stoker records, the decision to add *The Merchant of Venice* to the 1879 season came unexpectedly and with little over three weeks to paint the scenery and prepare costumes, it remained in the Lyceum Company repertoire for some twenty-six years. Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (London: W. Heinemann, 1907) 53-55.

of other performers, would have had to be repaired and, in many instances, replaced.⁸⁶ The level of wear and extensive darned repairs visible on Irving's surviving costume would support this claim. [FIGURE 5.25]

Although there are clear similarities between the robes worn by Terry in 1875 and 1879, neither match the robes which survive in the collection at Smallhythe, nor an 1883 painting showing her in the role. These surviving robes, like those depicted in the painting, are a dark rust red in colour and formed from a heavy ribbed silk.⁸⁷ Lucy Oakley has traced the change in the colour of Terry's robes to circa 1883. She cites a review of Terry's performance during the Lyceum Company's 1883 American tour which described Terry's entry in Act IV, Scene I wearing,

an undergarment of pomegranate –colored [sic] silk, made like a dressing-robe, and girdled above the waist with a broad band of the same; her dainty cap [...] of the same hue and texture; and an over-dress, made like a doublet, of rich crimson plush, with deep sleeves lined with the lighter color [sic].⁸⁸

Examining the surviving costume has revealed that it follows a similar silhouette and design as the earlier versions. The underdress, made from a ribbed silk, has the same high, upright collar, fitting closely at the neck, and was lined with an additional small curved white collar at the top edge. [FIGURE 5.26] The acorns present at the centre front collar of the surviving red version, are silver. As was the case in 1879, the sleeves of

⁸⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 182.

⁸⁷ One complete set of robes associated with Terry's performance as Portia survive in the collection at Smallhythe. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Portia, *Merchant of Venice*, SMA.COST.112, a, b & c [1118837.1,2,3]. In addition to this complete costume, the collection also includes off-cuts of material matching the robes in SMA.COST.112 and, interestingly, the remains of another robe, collar and sash which strongly resemble the surviving costume. This second robe is in poor condition and may well have been an earlier or duplicate version of SMA.COST.112.

⁸⁸ Article published in the *Boston Herald*, 13 December 1883. The article is, as Lucy Oakley notes, quoted in Alan Hughes, "Henry Irving's Tragedy of Shylock," *Educational Theatre Journal* 24 (1972): 248-264, 261. Hughes does not record a page reference. Lucy Oakley, "The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 16, (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1982): 181-194, 183.

underdress fit closely to the arm, and are edged with a band of white at the cuffs. It is highly probable that these light cuffs and collars (which appear in many of Terry's costumes) may have been added to draw attention to the expression and movements of Terry's face and hands. Surviving costumes worn by Irving, also frequently feature white bands at the edge of the sleeve cuffs, and, when examining these garments, Martin Holmes suggested,

His [Irving's] sleeves, too, were habitually cut a little shorter than might have been expected, to give free play to his thin, expressive hands. A movement of the hand - or indeed an absence of movement, a tense and significant stillness - is much more impressive when the whole line of the hand is visible, from fingertip to wrist, than when the cuff cuts it short just at the starting-point of the tension.⁸⁹



Figure 5.26 - Costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁸⁹ M.R. Holmes, *Stage Costumes and Accessories in the London Museum* (London: HMSO, 1968), 15.



Figure 5.27 - Detail of the costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.28- Cap, part of the costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

In Terry's surviving costume long, hanging, outer sleeves, in a plain, rust red crepe, (not a feature of the earlier costumes), are present at each shoulder. A band of the same fabric, shaped with horizontal ruched pleats, and secured with a vertical row of hooks and eyes, runs across the centre front of the bodice. [FIGURE 5.27] The open gown has been retained. It is now sleeveless but has the same raised and stiffened collar and is formed from a plain red silk, which contrasts with the ornate silk damask previously used. Weights have been used in both the underdress and open robe to control the fall of the fabric. The matching round cap has low crown, it is formed from a soft red silk crepe de chine, which has been pleated to shape around the brim. [FIGURE 5.28]

As this new design was introduced in 1883, it is possible that Comyns-Carr, now working in collaboration with Harris, may have encouraged a simplification of the previous design, or, indeed, that the changes occurred as the result of practical considerations. The pliable crepe and robust ribbed silk would seem to be more suited to the rigours of an American tour, than the heavy and rigid silk damask of Terry's previous costume, which by then was already four years old. The decision to change to red could also have been motivated by a desire for dramatic effect and additionally, as Oakley discovered, this new colour matches the gowns then worn by Doctors of Civil Laws at Oxford and Cambridge.⁹⁰

These, later, crimson robes are also documented in three paintings. However, whilst they all depict a version of 'Portia' presented in this striking costume, Terry only features as the sitter in one out of the three. Though Terry herself is absent from the two other paintings, her distinctive costume provides a direct link to the Lyceum production. This costume therefore not only carries the 'memories' of the Lyceum Company performances

⁹⁰ Oakley, "The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia," 185.

in which it was originally used, it also acts as a surrogate for a specific character (Portia) and a celebrated actress (Terry).



Figure 5.29- G.W.Baldry, *Ellen Terry as Portia*, ca.1883. Garrick Club London. Image Courtesy of The Garrick Club, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The portrait of Terry wearing these robes was painted in 1883 by G.W. Baldry. [FIGURE 5.29]. Whilst it has proved difficult to discover more about the composition of this portrait, it is potentially significant that this date coincides with, and potentially commemorates, the introduction of this new red costume.⁹¹ Three years later, in 1886, Terry's costume featured in another portrait of 'Portia,' this time by Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896) [FIGURE 5.30]. Oakley's investigations into the history of this portrait, in particular the long standing misidentification of the subject as Terry,

⁹¹ The G.W Baldry portrait now forms part of the Garrick Club Collections. Louise Jopling also painted a portrait of Terry in the role, which was exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery. A review of the exhibition, published in 1883, notes that Terry was depicted in crimson robes in which, they declare, 'she [Terry] never played the part.' "Art in London, The Grosvenor Gallery and its pictures," *New-York Tribune*, 27 May 1883: 3.

confirmed that whilst the crimson robes depicted were identifiable as those worn by Terry when painted by Baldry in 1883, Terry was not the sitter in this Millais' painting.⁹² Yet, whilst Oakley has proved that Terry herself is missing from the painting, she has also suggested that even in her absence, Terry's costumes 'not only served as an appropriate period costume for Portia' but also '[...] evoked a connection in the nineteenth century viewer's mind between Millais' picture and the popular actress in one of her best known roles.'⁹³



Figure 5.30 -John Everett Millias, Portia, ca.1885-6, Oil on canvas. 125.1 x 83.8 cm. MET Museum, New York. Accession Number 06.1328.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁹² The mistaken identification of Terry as the sitter persisted, as Oakley notes, until circa 1944. Whilst Oakley is not able to make a concrete identification of the model, she presents a strong case for her suggestion that it shows a blend of sitters. The original image was, she argues, the American actress Mary Anderson (1859-1940), with Kate Dolan acting as stand in for later sittings and Terry's performance inspiring the original portrait. Oakley, "The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia," 183-4, 188, 189, 191.

⁹³ Oakley is able to confirm the loan of the costumes to Millais, through a letter sent by Terry to the painter agreeing to the loan and apologising that '[...] the dress was away in Scotland being clear for storing or I should have sent it to you before.' Letter from Terry to Millais sent on the 30th of March 1886, quoted in Oakley, 'The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia,' 185. This letter is held as part of the Millais papers in the Pierpont Morgan Library, reference MA 1475 K713. Oakley, "The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia," 185.



Figure 5.31 - Clare Atwood. *Vita Sackville-West as Portia*, ca.1910. Oil on canvas. 34.1 x 24.1 cm National Trust, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [1118225].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry's willingness to both 'sit' for a portrait in her costume, and loan her robes to another model for the same purpose, also offers valuable information regarding the manner in which she used, and presented this costume 'off-stage.' The sitter in Millais' portrait was not the only model to borrow Terry's crimson robes. A portrait of Vita Sackville West (1892-1962), not dated, but potentially painted in the 1930s by Clare Atwood (1866-1962), shows the writer dressed in Terry's Portia costume [FIGURE 5.31]. The event which inspired the portrait was very probably the occasion when Terry lent Sackville-West the robes to wear at a Shakespeare Masque staged at Knole on the 3rd of July 1910.⁹⁴ The masque was staged in the park of Knole house in aid of the Shakespeare Memorial

⁹⁴ Vita Sackville West, though not a close friend of Terry was acquainted with the actress and in diary entry from circa 1910 described her as 'quite charming.' This diary entry is quoted in Vita Sackville-West and Mary A. Caws, *Selected Writings* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 26.

Theatre Fund and included a performance by Terry.⁹⁵ Whilst the history of the painting has not been documented it is known that Atwood was Edith Craig's lover and companion and that she, Craig, and the writer Christopher St-John (née Christabel Marshall 1871-1960), were long term residents at the Priest's House which adjoined Terry's home, Smallhythe Place. It was not until the 1930s, that all three women began to socialise with Sackville-West but, through her relationship with Craig, Atwood had already become a close friend of Terry, and remained so until Terry's death in 1928.⁹⁶ This friendship with both mother and daughter would have given Atwood access to the Portia costume which formed part of Terry's personal collection.⁹⁷ It is likely that the portrait was painted in the 1930s and after Terry's death. As this portrait demonstrates, however, in spite of Terry's absence, the costume continued to carry the 'identity' of Portia and the 'memories' of past performances. These surviving robes were therefore able to facilitate this additional 'performance,' transforming' Sackville-West into 'Portia,' and enabling Atwood to commemorate and re-create Sackville-West's previous performance, some twenty years before.

This was not the only, or first, time that Terry's robes had been 'translated' to a different context. Comyns-Carr describes how, when attending a *bal masqué* in the house of the artist Alma Tadema on Regents Canal, she 'borrowed Ellen Terry's doctor's robes and masqueraded as Portia.'⁹⁸ Comyns-Carr does not record the date of the ball, but it was

⁹⁵ Lady Sackville West includes a description of the ball, or masque, which, as she notes, was disrupted by a heavy rain storm in which both the costume, and its temporary wearer became very wet. Lady Sackville West, diary entry for 30th June and 2nd July 1910. Unpublished transcription, 2011, Sissinghurst, National Trust.

⁹⁶ Sackville-West's meetings with Atwood, St-John and Craig are discussed in Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 253-4.

⁹⁷ Many of the paintings created by Atwood whilst living with Terry and her daughter show Terry and Craig at Smallhythe. Similarly a grey woollen checked cycling suit, consisting of long trousers, and matching fitted bodice or jacket with small upright collar, previously worn by Atwood is actually now part of the dress collection. As Chapter 6 will discuss, this item is likely to have been collected by Craig, rather than Terry. See Appendix 1, Atwood, *Cycling Suit*, SMA.TC.238.

⁹⁸ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 31.

certainly after the refurbishment of Townsend House, Titchfield Terrace, Regent's Park in 1874 and before the artist moved to 17 Grove End Road, St John's Wood, in 1885.⁹⁹ It is therefore not certain whether Comyns-Carr wore the black robes associated with Terry's first performances between 1879 and 1882, or the red robes created for Terry in 1883. Whichever of the robes were worn by Comyns-Carr, what is evident is Terry's willingness to loan her 'costumes' to others whether this was to be used for a painting (as was the case with Millais); for a public performance (to be worn by Sackville West), or for a fancy dress ball (which prompted the loan to Comyns-Carr). The fact that Terry was so ready to agree to allow her costume to serve so many different figures and purposes, indicates that for her these 'theatrical costumes' were garments which had been designed for a practical purpose and should therefore be used rather than carefully preserved and protected. In her 1911 article on 'Stage Decoration,' for instance, the actress recalls wearing one of her Lady Macbeth costumes for an impromptu performance of the sleep walking scene in the 'village town hall' near her home in Kent.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, as a sketch of Terry's appearance at the Actor's Benevolent Fund 'Shakespeare Ball' in 1905 reveals, the actress herself also wore her costumes 'off-stage,' on this occasion putting on her lawyer's robes and, like Comyns-Carr, 'masquerading as Portia' for an evening [FIGURE 5.32 and 5.33].

The 'translation' of Terry's robes to these new contexts adds an important element to their history. Whether worn by an artist's model, by a friend at a ball, or by Terry herself, the robes continued to re-enact their original function as a 'stage costume.' Even though their presence within the Millais portrait arguably elevates them, by association at least, to the status of an artwork, an important further quality or specific theatrical context seems to

⁹⁹ Gere, *Artistic Circles*, 195.

¹⁰⁰ Terry, 'Some Ideas on Stage Decoration,' *McClures Magazine* (January, 1911): 293.

have been required to recapture the power of the original performance, and, significantly, the qualities of their celebrated wearer. Indeed, as Comyns-Carr's recollections of her experience at the *bal masqué* indicate, appearing in the costume did not automatically bestow grace and status upon the wearer. She recalled how her

[...] disguise was speedily discovered by Edmund Yates, the dreaded and famous editor of that malicious society journal, *The World*, and as he whispered in Italian, "Mrs. Comyns-Carr should cover her little hand if she wishes to remain incognita," I wondered if the easy compliment did not carry with in an implied rebuke because so diminutive and insignificant a person as myself had attempted so stately a role.¹⁰¹

Building upon these ideas, the next case study will consider another model through which to examine and record these additional 'wearers' and 'performances' and the further layer they add to the already complex biography of these garments.

Figure 5.32 - Sketch of Terry as she appeared as the 'Shakespeare Ball in aid of the Actor's Benevolent Fund', 13th May 1905, unidentified publication. Personal photograph by the author, 14 April 2016. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Ellen Terry Collection, Press cuttings of Ellen Terry relating to her role in *The Merchant of Venice*, THM/384/32/17.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



¹⁰¹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 31.



Figure 5.33 - H.M.Brook 'Sketches of the Shakespeare Ball in aid of the Actor's Benevolent Fund', 13th May 1905. Pen and ink drawing on paper. 34.2 x 44.5 cm. Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection. Digital Image File Name 37555.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

5.3 – Multiple Identities

A biographical approach

As discussed in Chapter 1, the biographical approach to analysis proposed by Kopytoff offers another framework through which to interrogate and document the complex 'biography' of theatrical costumes.¹⁰² Although the research focused upon the anthropological implications of 'cultural redefinition', his biographical method of

¹⁰² Kopytoff, "The cultural biography of things," 67.

analysis is equally applicable to theatrical costume. In the case of the costumes that now survive in museum collections, for instance, the formal acquisition of these costume by a museum has transformed them from ‘ephemeral garments’ into ‘museum objects’ deemed worthy of long term preservation, expert care and conservation. Constructing the ‘biography’ of a theatre costume offers a means through which to explore the numerous ‘associations’ and ‘identities’ it can accumulate during a life cycle which, as has been discussed, often includes not only damage, repair and alteration, but potentially ‘translation’ to different performers and productions. Most significantly, as Eastop has demonstrated, this mode of analysis ‘allows the different values attributed to these “life stages” to be brought into sharper focus.’¹⁰³

A ‘Typical’ Biography

An insight into the typical biography of a stage costume at the turn of the twentieth century can be gleaned from a newspaper article published in the *Wellington Evening Post* in 1903. Entitled ‘Discarded Stage Costume,’ the author spoke to a range of costumiers, including ‘the famous’ M. Alias, to investigate the fate of garments worn on the stage.¹⁰⁴ As the author discovered ‘modern stage costumes,’ (presumably those which replicated ‘fashionable dress’), are easy to dispose of and ‘Secondhand costumiers do a regular trade in soiled costumes, not only among middle class actresses, but also among the great middle-class public in private life’ for whom they offer a means to ‘dress fashionably and economically.’¹⁰⁵ The life cycle of ‘Pantomime dress, and character dress

¹⁰³ Eastop, “The biography of objects: a tool for analysing an object’s significance”, 107.

¹⁰⁴ Charles Alias owned a successful costume business based in Soho Square. His firm produced costumes for the ballet, pantomime and theatre. The name ‘Mons. Alias’ is frequently listed in amongst the costume makers in programme for the Lyceum Company productions. A case in point being the programme for the production of *Othello* staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1881. His company remained in business into the late twentieth century but by 2000 had been taken over by Morris Angel and his company, Morris Angel & Sons Ltd.

¹⁰⁵ “Discarded Stage Costumes,” *Evening Post*, Volume LXVI, Issue 64 (12 September 1903), 10. The Papers Past. [n.d].

and the costumes of ball performers' is however, as they record, far more complex. Most of these costumes have been gradually and in some instances completely, 'renewed' during the run of a production. If, thanks to this 'constant renovation,' costumes survive in good condition by the close of a production there is strong probability that, after first being sent to 'the cleaner,' they will then be packed away. Barring a revival, they are retained to be sold, often as part of a complete 'set' to use in a production elsewhere. Many theatrical costumes are, the author suggests, of such quality that there are 'regular sales of second-hand and disused music-hall and pantomime costumes in London.' These sales are comparatively profitable and prices are high with a dress originally worth £70 fetching '£40' if sold in a condition which is 'as good as new.'¹⁰⁶ In some instances however, generous theatrical managers and performers 'make the dresses a free gift to poorer performers.' Whether by gift, sale or purchase, a theatre costume was often passed 'down the social scale of artistes' until 'it brings merely a few shillings to brighten up the "turn" at some small town variety saloon or rural "fit up."'¹⁰⁷

As this account makes apparent, very few stage costumes survive intact or with a clear link to a single and identifiable original wearer and production. Furthermore, as T.C. Davis discovered, 'by the early 1870s the costumiers [offering costumes for hire] had become so successful that few London theatres constructed their own garments.'¹⁰⁸ The Lyceum Company was therefore one of the few theatres which still retained a 'wardrobe store' and continued to make and retain costumes created specifically for their lavish productions. A collection of costumes as complete as that preserved at Smallhythe is

¹⁰⁶ As Chapter 4 showed, these prices are as much, if not more, than might be charged for couture garments in the early twentieth century.

¹⁰⁷ "Discarded Stage Costumes," 10.

¹⁰⁸ T.C. Davis examined trade directories and contracts between the independent costumiers and theatres and discovered that from circa 1856 onwards it became increasingly common, and much more economical, for theatres to hire costumes, rather than construct these costly garments, whose value 'depreciated to between one-fifth and two thirds of their cost after a single season.' T.C. Davis, *Economics of the British Stage*, 317-319.

therefore exceptionally rare and the costumes it contains have an equally unusual 'biography' which has diverted from the typical 'life cycle' of theatrical costumes.

When introducing the concept of an 'object biography' Kopytoff suggests,

In doing the biography of a thing, one would ask questions similar to those one asks about people: What, sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its "status" and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realised? Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things? What are the recognised "ages" or periods in the thing's "life," and what are the cultural markers for them?¹⁰⁹

Drawing upon the information which is known about the typical fate of stage costume at the height of Terry's career, it is possible to employ the model and approach presented by Kopytoff to chart the 'typical biography' of a stage costume in the late nineteenth century. This 'typical biography' breaks down an intentionally simplified outline of a costume's 'life cycle' into Kopytoff's model of 'recognised "ages" or periods' which, in this instance, are delineated as the six 'periods' outlined below:

'Typical Biography' of a stage costume:

Period 1: 'Design and creation'

Period 2: First Performance

¹⁰⁹ An initial example of this 'Typical Biography' and subsequent work with Kopytoff appeared in Isaac, "From Ellen Terry's 'Beetlewing Dress' to David Tennant's Leather Trousers" 6-13.

Period 3: Return to Wardrobe

Period 4: ‘Repair’ or ‘Adaptation’ for the same, or a new, wearer (repair and adaptation might also occur during the run of the original production)

Period 5: Second Performance (in the same, or an alternative production)

Period 6: ‘Disposal’ through sale, gift or destruction

At every stage in this life cycle the costume is shaped by, and subject to, current taste and fashions represented by what Kopytoff terms, ‘cultural markers.’ These factors will influence the visual appearance and fit of the garment and also, potentially, its long term fate. As the *Evening Post* article showed, a costume inspired by current fashions or appealing to popular taste is more likely to feature in revivals, or to survive in a new role as a piece of fashionable dress.¹¹⁰

Although founded upon the financial and practical factors governing patterns in alteration, retention and disposal of theatrical costume in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the model also holds true for contemporary stage costume. The only adaptation required is the addition of a further ‘life cycle period’ which takes into account the current possibility that, as discussed previously, the costume might be transferred to a ‘Hire Wardrobe’, as is the case in institutions such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, Cosprop and Angels.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ “Discarded Stage Costumes,” 10.

¹¹¹ The ‘Hire Wardrobe’ of Cosprop, Angels, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre all contain costumes which were previously used on the stage (and in the case of Cosprop and Angels in film and television). They are available for hire by theatre companies, film, television, and for school and university productions as well as amateur dramatic societies. In the case of the National Theatre they are also available for fancy dress or parties. This is an important source of income for both the theatrical companies and costumiers and is advertised online. See, for instance, “Costume and Prop Hire,” National Theatre [n.d]. and “Costume Hire,” *RSC Costume Hire*. Royal Shakespeare Company [n.d].



Figure 5.34 - Zenzie Tinker. Image of the first of two surviving bodices associated with the 'Beetlewing Dress.' On this bodice the silk at the hem matches that present in the remainder of the costume. Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.35- Zenzie Tinker. Second of the two surviving bodices associated with the 'Beetlewing Dress.' On this bodice remains of the originally attached crochet skirt are visible at the hips. Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.36 - Zenzie Tinker. A detail of the bodice (National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114a [1118839.1]), as mounted, and without the separate sleeves, Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

An ‘Actual’ Biography

Whilst the life cycle model created for a ‘typical biography’ offers a useful starting point for research, the varied histories of Terry’s surviving garments show that certain costumes have the potential to accumulate much more complex biographies. It is in such instances, however, that the biographical approach to analysis becomes increasingly useful, as the following example of an ‘Actual Biography’ will show.

Terry’s most famous costume, the green crocheted ‘Beetlewing Dress’ she wore in Act 1 of the 1888 production of *Macbeth* has accumulated a particularly complex history. Recent conservation treatment on the costume which survives in the collection at Smallhythe has revealed that this surviving dress is actually one of a number of different incarnations of the original costume.¹¹² Two separate bodices survive, the sleeves, which were discovered to be separate from these bodices (with no evidence regarding how they were originally attached, if at all), had been altered, as had the length of the skirt [FIGURE 5.34 and 5.35]. The complex process of conservation carried out by conservator Zenzie Tinker and her colleagues therefore entailed a carefully researched, recreation, and reassembly, of the ‘original costume.’¹¹³ [FIGURE 5.36].

The figures involved in the design and creation of the costume were discussed in Chapter 4. As this discussion made apparent, this was a garment which was strongly influenced by the values and tastes of Aestheticism. Terry’s preference for garments which did not

¹¹² See Appendix 1, Lady Macbeth, *Macbeth*, NT/SMA/TC/114a, 1118839.1.

¹¹³ As Tinker noted, the decisions made during the conservation process were based upon evidence from original photographs and the details that could be gathered from the surviving garments. A further challenge faced by Tinker was the fact that previous, interventive conservation treatment carried out on the costume had not been fully documented. The work carried out by Tinker and her staff was carefully documented, and rendered in a manner that made apparent the distinction between the ‘conserved’ and ‘surviving’ elements of the costume. Personal interview with Zenzie Tinker, 8 March 2011 and Zenzie Tinker, “Interim report on the conservation of the Lady Macbeth beetle wing dress,” Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studio Ltd, July 2009. Unpublished, private report.

constrict her movement on stage influenced the external design and also the internal construction. Furthermore, the fabric and decorative effects selected for the costume were shaped by the fact that gas-light, rather than electricity, was used to illuminate the stage at the Lyceum. As Terry noted, ‘The thick softness of gaslight, with the lovely specks and motes in it, so like *natural* light, gave illusion to many a scene which is now revealed in all its naked trashiness by electricity.’¹¹⁴

Macbeth remained in the repertoire of the Lyceum Company long after the first production in 1888. It was performed in London, on tour, and Terry also wore many of her costumes when called upon to re-enact scenes from the play in a variety of contexts through until the early 1920s.¹¹⁵ After Terry had ceased to use the costume herself, evidence survives which shows that it was loaned performers such as Thorndike, and, reportedly, in some of the costume pageants organised by Terry’s daughter, Edith Craig.¹¹⁶

An additional element was added to the biography of Terry’s costumes when they were loaned for exhibition in public display, outside Smallhythe Place. Photographs and clippings within the collection at Smallhythe record their presence as part of the display created for the British Theatrical Loan Exhibition, Dudley House, Park Lane, 1933 [FIGURE 5.37]. The examples of Terry’s costumes on display include a pale yellow dress the actress wore in *Faust* (1885) and the red robes created for *The Merchant of Venice* discussed previously. They were displayed on 1930s style mannequins and, in the case of

¹¹⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 173.

¹¹⁵ Terry, ‘Stage Decoration,’ 89.

¹¹⁶ Documentary evidence relating to these Costume Pageants is held within the section of the Ellen Terry Collection which is on long term loan to the British Library. These records include some photographs of such events, though regrettably none showing the ‘Beetlewing Dress.’ Some costumes made by Craig specifically for these Pageants do survive in the collection however. They include a replica of the costume Terry wore in the role of Mamillius in *The Winter’s Tale*, 1856. See Appendix 1, Theatre Costumes for other performers, Wearer Unknown, Mamillius, *Winter’s Tale*, SMA.TC.234, 1118959.

the costume from *Faust*, with inaccurate, replicated, accessories [FIGURE 5.38].¹¹⁷ Whilst the ‘Beetlewing Dress’ did not feature in this 1933 exhibition, the fact that other costumes from the collection did, raises the possibility that the ‘Beetlewing Dress’ may also have been on display outside Smallhythe Place.



Figure 5.37- An image of the British Theatrical Loan Exhibition, Dudley House, Park Lane, 1933. This image appears to have been a cutting clipped from a newspaper and has been pasted into the exhibition catalogue. Personal photograph by the author. 3 November 2014. National Trust, Smallhythe Place. This exhibition catalogue is part of the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

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Figure 5.38- Detail of the 1933 exhibition showing Edith Craig adjusting the dress worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, (National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.170). The dress is displayed with an apron not used during the original production, or retained within the collection. The image features in the exhibition catalogue. Personal photograph by the author. 3 November 2014. This exhibition catalogue is part of the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

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¹¹⁷ The dress from *Faust* See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Marguerite, *Faust*, SMA.TC.170 is shown with an apron which does not match any photographs from the original production and which has not been retained in the collection.

When the National Trust acquired the property and the collection in 1939, the costume became part of the Ellen Terry Collection.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately no photographs have survived to record the manner in which the costumes were displayed before the 1980s. Anecdotal evidence suggests that they may have been draped around the house and stored on rails and Melville credits Craig (who remained custodian of the property until 1947) with ‘arranging the Costume Room.’¹¹⁹ By the 1980s a ‘Costume Room’ had certainly been created and the ‘Beetlewing Dress’ formed a central part in the display presented within this space. This dress, and the other costumes in the ‘Costume Room’ were left on display for an extended period [FIGURE 5.39].



Figure 5.39- Detail of the Beetlewing as displayed in the ‘Costume Room’ before it was re-designed in 2011. Personal Photograph by the author, 17 September 2008.

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¹¹⁸ As Melville discusses Craig remained custodian of the collection until 1947, and did create a range of displays during her time at the property. The handwritten labels (still used in the property have been created to replicate the original style of Craig’s displays). Joy Melville, *Ellen Terry and Smallhythe Place* (Kent: The National Trust, 2006) 18-19.

¹¹⁹ Sally Gibbons (1934-2015). Personal interview with the author, 5 February 2015. Gibbons visited Smallhythe as a child and met Craig. She recalled ‘running in and out of the costumes’ which were on rails, and ‘visiting Terry’s bedroom which had been preserved exactly as it had been on the day the actress died.’ Susannah Mayor, the current House Steward at Smallhythe Place, noted the lack of documentation recording past display practices but suggested that interior photographs indicated they that may ‘just have been draped around the house.’ Susannah Mayor. Personal communication with the author. 9 February 2016. See also Melville, *Ellen Terry and Smallhythe Place*, 18.

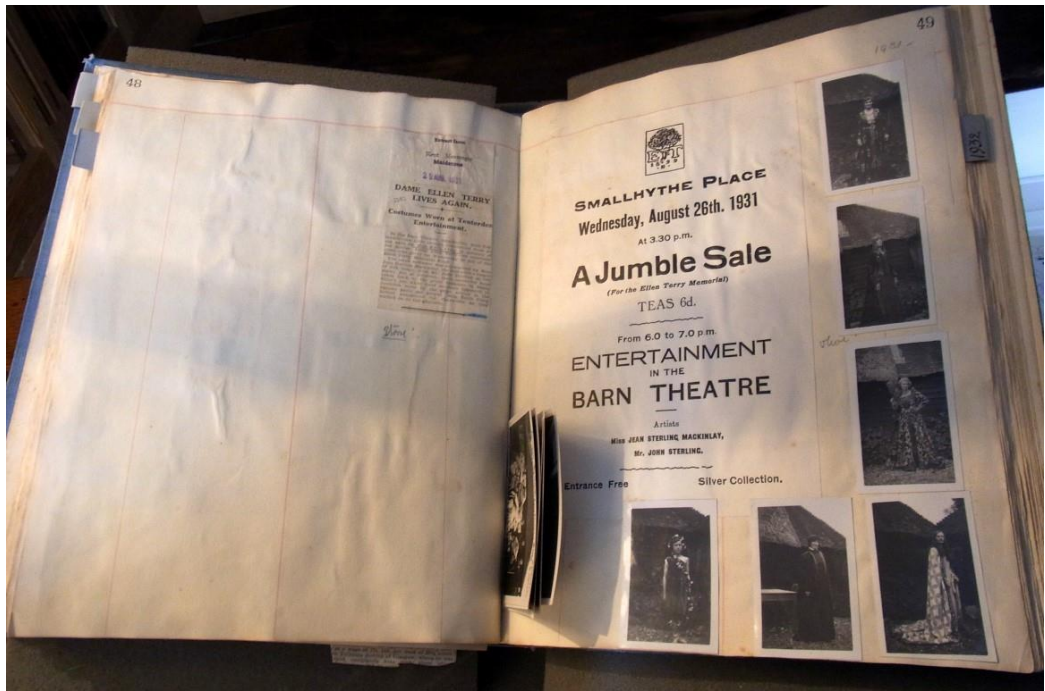


Figure 5.40 - A page from the first of two scrapbooks created by Edith Craig between 1929 and 1947. This page features photographs and a flyer associated with a Jumble Sale to raise funds for the Ellen Terry Memorial in August 1931. Personal photograph by the author. 4 April 2016. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

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Figure 5.41 - A detail of the photograph of Olive Chaplin (née Terry) wearing the Beetlewing Dress at a Jumble Sale to raise funds for the Ellen Terry Memorial in August 1931. Photograph mounted in first of two scrapbooks created by Edith Craig between 1929 and 1947. Personal photograph by the author. 4 April 2016. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

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There were also occasions when the dress returned to its original function as a costume, including the time when Olive Chaplin (née Terry) (1885-1969), who served as Curator of the Ellen Terry Museum from 1949, was photographed for publicity purposes wearing the dress at a jumble sale organised to raise funds for the collection in 1931 [FIGURE 5.40 and 5.41].¹²⁰

During 2009 and 2010 extensive conservation work was undertaken on the ‘Beetlewing Dress,’ and the exhibition design company Easy Tiger Creative were then engaged to re-design the ‘Costume Room’ in which the dress had previously been displayed.¹²¹ The conserved dress is now on semi-permanent display in this space. Significantly for the biography of this costume, the dress has been mounted on a mannequin which re-creates the pose depicted in the Singer-Sargent portrait (*See Figure 4.70 and 4.78*). As such the display references the part that this painting has played in securing the enduring power and fame of this costume. It also reproduces a pose and imagined scene which were never part of the original performance.

As will have become apparent therefore, there are many additional periods within the life cycle of this costume which diverge beyond the biographical model created for a ‘typical’ stage costume. With this in mind a new model, adapted to document the ‘Actual Biography’ of the ‘Beetlewing Dress’ is outlined below.

An Actual Biography for the ‘Beetlewing Dress’

Period 1: ‘Creation’ (circa 1887-8) – The dress designed by Comyns-Carr in collaboration with Terry and made by Nettleship and, possibly with assistance from her

¹²⁰ Olive Chaplin was the daughter of Terry’s sister Florence (1855-1896).

¹²¹ As noted, this conservation treatment was carried out by Zenzie Tinker and her colleagues. Tinker and her team carried out extensive research and analysis of the surviving costume components and related images to establish sleeve length, to create sections of replica crochet and to re-create missing parts on the belt which had been damaged. Zenzie Tinker. Personal interview with the author. 14 July 2010.

staff. The original cost of the costume is unknown, but given the price Terry paid for comparable garments in the 1892 production of *King Arthur* it is likely to have been between £100 and £150.¹²²

Period 2: First Performance (1888-9) –The production opened on the 29th of December of 1888 and ran for one hundred and fifty nights.¹²³ Terry’s performance inspired the portrait by Singer Sargent (1889).¹²⁴

Period 3: Return to Wardrobe/ Stock Costume (1889-1902) – The production remained in the Lyceum repertoire and the costume remained in use until Terry left the company in 1902. *Macbeth* was revived both on tour and in London and, as the two surviving bodices indicate, at least one ‘copy’ of the costume was made.

Period 4: Personal ‘Costume’ and Private ‘Performance’ (1902-1928) – After 1902 the costume was removed from the Lyceum wardrobe and became part of Terry’s private collection. It is likely that Terry wore this costume, as she did other costumes from the production, for other informal performances outside the context of the Lyceum Theatre.

Period 5: Public ‘Costume’ (1928-1939) – After Terry’s death in 1928 her daughter inherited the house and collection. Whilst in Craig’s ownership, and to an extent during Terry’s lifetime, the costumes, including the ‘Beetlewing Dress,’ were lent to a number of actresses for stage performances and worn in a variety of other contexts. In some

¹²² As Nettleship’s success grew she would employ a large body of staff at her premises in Wigmore Street, but Comyns-Carr’s *Reminiscences* imply that the commission to create the ‘Beetlewing Dress’ occurred relatively early in Nettleship’s career and at which point the dressmaker ‘was anxious to find some means of adding to a slender income.’ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 80. These prices were quoted in an article in the *New Zealand Herald*, 25 November 1900: 2.

¹²³ Manvell, *Ellen Terry*, 196-7.

¹²⁴ This portrait was exhibited in the summer exhibition at the New Gallery in 1889 and subsequently at the Société Nationale des Neaux-Artes, Paris in 1890. It was also displayed in Chicago in 1893 as part of the *World’s Columbian Exhibition*. For a full history of public display up to 1964 See Chamot, Mary, Dennis Farr, and Martin Butlin, *The Modern British Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture* (London: Oldbourne Press, 1964) 589.

instances, they were modified and adapted.¹²⁵ At this stage in its life cycle the commercial value of the costume had greatly diminished, though it remained one of Terry's most famous costumes.¹²⁶

Period 6: 'Museum Artefact' (1939-Present)– As Chapter 6 will discuss in more detail, Terry's existing collection, was not subject to disposal or sale but instead expanded and re-presented by Craig who established a Memorial Museum at Smallhythe Place. Pieces from the collection were lent for public display, and when the property passed to the National Trust in 1939 the costumes were officially established as part of a museum collection. Since the 1980s the 'Beetlewing Dress' has been altered and adapted for display, but not for wear.¹²⁷ Following the £110,000 conservation treatment completed in 2011, the costume has been 'conserved' and is now presented in a manner which is as close to its original appearance as was possible to achieve.¹²⁸

Conclusion

This example of an 'Actual Biography' demonstrates that the model created for a 'Typical Biography' can be successfully adapted to reflect the life cycle of an individual costume. Comparing the 'Actual' and 'Typical' biography brings to light significant diversions

¹²⁵Amongst these 'off-stage' contexts, it is very possible that the 'Beetlewing Dress' was amongst the costumes from Terry's collection used by Craig in the Costume Pageants which she used to direct and for which she often created additional costumes. An additional length of crocheted fabric matching that used for the 'Beetlewing Dress' and previously thought to have been trimmed from the hem (though since discovered not to match the hem of the surviving costume) provides one instance of such modifications. Zenie Tinker, Personal Communication with the author, 14 July 2010.

¹²⁶ As discussed the value of costumes, even if sold when in a condition which was 'as good as new' was reduced by almost half. "Discarded Stage Costumes," 10.

¹²⁷ Olive Chaplin retired as Curator of Smallhythe in 1969 and was replaced by Molly Thomas, as this point there was a significant change in Museum Practice and a consequent alteration in the attitude towards Terry's costumes. A conservator called Judith Doré carried out conservation work and modifications to the Beetlewing Dress during the 1980s but as Tinker noted, this treatment was not formally recorded or documented. Zenie Tinker, Personal Communication with the author, 14 July 2010.

¹²⁸ This figure was widely quoted in the press, which also publicised the fact that over 700 hours were spent conserving the costume. Maev Kennedy, "Ellen Terry's beetlewing dress back in the limelight after £110,000 restoration," *Guardian*, 11 March 2011.

from the normal pattern and enables the researcher to identify the factors or 'cultural markers' which resulted in the adaptation, loss, destruction or preservation of a garment.

The biographical mode of analysis also provides a means through which to establish which 'periods' and 'individuals' have played an important role in shaping the biography of a surviving costume and why. This method is therefore of particular value for researchers endeavouring to explore and document what Pearce termed the 'chains of meaning' within which such garments are enmeshed. The biographical model offered here also draws attention to another issue of significance: 'Context.' As this chapter has shown, the identities of costumes are shaped not only by 'context' within which they were originally created, but also evolve in response to the 'contexts' in which they are subsequently used. In the case of the 'Beetlewing Dress,' its current 'context,' as the dominant feature within a specially constructed display case reaffirms and signals the costume's shift from an ephemeral garment, subject to re-use and disposal, to its present status as an important museum object, worthy of preservation. This display also acts as a testament not simply to the historical significance of this specific costume, but also to that of its original wearer, Terry, for whom it continues to act as a 'surrogate.'

This status confirms Stallybrass and Jones theories surrounding the emotional function that certain costumes perform as 'carriers of identity.' As Hodgdon has discussed, and the case studies of Terry's theatre costumes have shown, this function can have a significant impact on perceptions surrounding the historical status of a costume. An association with a famous performer or performance, also has the potential to imbue a surviving costume with an emotional resonance which has an identifiable impact on any interaction with their physical remains.

Another element of the costume's identity exposed through this biographical approach to analysis, is its fluctuating financial value. As Chapter 4 discussed, when first created elaborate costumes such as the beetlewing dress could cost as much as £150, a price which exceeded that charged for couture garments of the same period. When a production ended or a performer retired however, their value was greatly diminished, particularly if, as was the case with many of Terry's costumes, they were damaged through use over an extended period. As the biography of the beetlewing dress demonstrates however, translation to a museum context, transforms this evidence of wear into a characteristic which is often valued as evidence of the 'authenticity' and 'significance' of the costume. The money and time invested in conserving this specific costume provides an indication of the value now attached to the costume and its status as an iconic symbol of Terry's original 1888 performance.¹²⁹

Both this chapter and Chapter 4 have also demonstrated the central part that evidence gathered through a close material examination of these 'physical remains' can play in research. The case studies discussed have illustrated the range of details including, fabric weight, colour, construction and modifications which can be discovered through a close engagement with surviving costumes. Chapter 2 touched upon what Roach described as the 'kinesthetic imagination' a 'faculty of memory' which, he suggests, provides 'a way of thinking about movements - at once remembered and reinvented - the otherwise unthinkable.'¹³⁰ The analysis of Terry's surviving costumes has demonstrated the degree to which evidence of wear, damage, and even the construction of surviving theatre

¹²⁹ When assessing the 'value' of items in the collections within Britain, many institutions employ the 'Waverley Criteria'. These consider the status of an object in relation to three criteria: first 'History - Is it closely connected with our history and national life?'; second 'Aesthetics - Is it of outstanding aesthetic importance?', and third, 'Scholarship - Is it of outstanding significance for study of some particular branch of art, learning or history.' As this thesis has shown, the beetlewing dress scores highly against all three criteria. Arts Council England, *UK export Licensing for Cultural Goods - Procedures and guidance for exports of works of art and other cultural goods*, Issue 3 (Arts Council England, 2015) 12-13.

¹³⁰ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 16-17

costumes, can reveal information regarding the physical body and movement patterns of their original wearers, which is rarely recorded in written and visual sources. As such these garments represent an important research source, which can be used alongside and in addition to the textual and visual evidence employed by Roach, to engage with, and activate, this 'kinesthetic imagination.'

Whilst the range of surviving costumes directly connected with Terry, and the level of supporting material is exceptional the methodology proposed here is not dependent on a comparable quantity of data. Scope therefore exists for applying this biographical mode of analysis to other performers and also to those costumes which survive only in photographs, film or text and not in actuality.

Thus, although this thesis emphasises the important role that extant garments should play in research, it does not reject an analysis of a stage costume in the absence of a surviving garment. Indeed, as the 'Typical Biography' demonstrates, the garments worn in production are rarely preserved or available for study. With this challenge in mind, Chapter 6 will present a methodology which illustrates the manner in which supporting evidence, in the form of images, correspondence and contemporary descriptions, can be used to investigate costumes which have not survived in a physical form. Focussing particularly on the extant visual record of Terry and her career, this next chapter will also consider the extent to which Terry actively 'fashioned' her 'celebrity' and 'private' persona, and the role which her dress, both on and off the stage, played in this process of self-fashioning.

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CHAPTER 6 - ELLEN TERRY (1847-1928): 'FASHIONING' AN IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

The historical and theatrical context within which Terry was living and working have now been established. Chapter 4 and 5 have also demonstrated the important evidence that Terry's extant theatre costume can contribute to an examination of her life and career. They also revealed the part that these garments played in reinforcing Terry's off-stage identity, whilst still communicating her on-stage character. Building upon these foundations, this chapter now considers the part that Terry's dress (both on and off the stage) played in a wider process of self-fashioning through which she sought to control her public and private 'identities,' not only during her lifetime, but also after her death.

Engaging with the concept that, as Stephen Greenblatt argues, 'human identity' can be 'fashioned' as part of a 'manipulable, artful process,' this chapter will consider the extent to which Terry's conscious efforts at self-fashioning contributed to her professional and social success.¹ Following Greenblatt's lead, it will consider the cultural and social forces which shaped the 'selves' Terry presented to her 'audience,' and will analyse the manner in which Terry constructed 'a distinctive personality' to win public affection and respect.² Particular attention will be paid to the artistic context within which Terry operated, specifically her engagement with the Aesthetic movement.

Surviving photographs, illustrations and paintings of Terry, will be central to a discussion which will examine both the 'public' and 'private' 'identities' Terry formed for herself. Of equal importance is the evidence preserved in her correspondence and the annotation

¹ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, 2-3.

² Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, 2-3.

with which she filled her books. The significant role dress played in Terry's efforts to 'fashion' her identity has been largely overlooked by Terry scholars. As this chapter will reveal, Terry employed her garments to construct, and reinforce the 'identities' she adopted both on and off the stage.

Whilst this chapter focuses upon the 'public' and 'private' identity Terry fashioned during the peak of her fame, it will also confirm that she attached equal importance to the image which would survive after her death. It will therefore conclude by examining the means through which Terry sought to secure her status among the 'theatrical aristocracy' and will discuss the individuals who assisted in securing her 'legacy.'

6.1 'PUBLIC' IDENTITY

Chapter 3 established the theatrical context within which Terry was trained and the figures who influenced her approach to performance and stage design. It also touched upon the constraints Terry faced regarding the roles she was 'permitted' to perform both as a woman and a professional actress. This chapter will build upon this discussion, to consider the extent and nature of Terry's agency over her 'professional' and 'private, 'self.' It will also examine the 'identities' she adopted, willingly or otherwise, to sustain her popular appeal.

The focus will be upon the years in Terry's career after her return to the stage in 1874 and before her mental and physical decline in the 1920s. During this period Terry was financially independent and therefore no longer reliant upon the support or guidance of the family and professionals who had shaped her early career. This was also arguably when she had the greatest potential opportunity and ability to exercise control over her professional and private life.

Actress and mother

When financial necessity compelled Terry to return to London and the stage in 1874, she did so as a 'fallen woman' and a mother of two illegitimate children. By 1875 Terry's relationship with Godwin had collapsed and her earnings were the sole source of income for her household. It was therefore essential for Terry to achieve stable employment and ideally, professional success. To achieve this, however, she needed to earn the support not only of the theatrical profession but also the public as a whole.

As someone who was already challenging social morals by undertaking a professional career, Terry also have been conscious of the additional controversy attracted by her personal life. Yet, unlike many of her contemporaries, including Langtry, she never sought to conceal the origins or existence of her two children.³ Like Bernhardt, Terry publicly acknowledged her children, and even appeared alongside them on the stage.⁴ Indeed, whilst her professional commitments often necessitated her absence, and they were both sent away to school, Terry remained closely involved with both her children throughout her life.⁵

³ In her biography of the actress Laura Beatty describes the measures taken to conceal Langtry's pregnancy and the extent to which her daughter, Jeanne Marie (1881-1964) was kept in ignorance of her true relationship with her 'Tante.' Beatty, *Lillie Langtry Manners, Masks and Morals*, 176-184, 272-3, 303-4.

⁴ They first appeared on stage in 1878, 'walking on' in the Royal Court production of *Olivia* in which Terry played the title role. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 10. Bernhardt's son, Maurice Bernhardt, was born 1864. His father was rumoured to have been the Belgian Prince Charles Joseph Henri de Ligne (1837-1914). Though she rarely refers to him in her autobiography, Bernhardt never hid Maurice's existence and both the contemporary press, and Bernhardt's biographers, stress the actress's devotion to her son. She continued to support her son throughout his life, and appointed him to manage two of her theatres. Further discussion of their relationship can be found in Ruth Braddon, *Being Devine, A Biography of Sarah Bernhardt* (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1991), 89-90, 305-8, 327 and Robert Gottlieb, *Sarah: The Life of Sarah Bernhardt* (London: Yale University Press, 2010) 38-89, 149-152.

⁵ As surviving letters demonstrate, and biographies of Terry discuss, the actress remained closely involved in the lives of both her children, providing financial support for both at various stages in their professional careers. See for instance, Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 56-60, 164-167, 184-186, and Michael Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History, The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving and their Remarkable Families* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2008) 202-211, 303-317.

Challenging ‘The idea of Terry [...] as fallen woman and outcast exile, securing tolerance and sympathy from artistic and theatre folk,’ Cockin proposes that this characterisation, ‘needs to be qualified,’ contending that ‘the visibility of such “fallen women” on the stage [...] receiving the admiration of the public, to some extent undermined the category “fallen woman.”’⁶ The extent of Terry’s popular appeal lends weight to Cockin’s assertion, but it is essential not to disregard the dominance of a moral code which, as Vicinus identifies, prescribed ‘fierce condemnation’ of such women, and promoted the dominant ideal of ‘the perfect lady’: submissive, innocent and maternal.⁷

Marriage to a theatrical spouse combined with a professional partnership, offered one route for actresses such as Marie Bancroft (1839-1921), Madge Kendal (1848-1935) and Maud Tree (1863-1937) to achieve respectability and success.⁸ Terry also married a fellow actor, Charles Wardell (1839-1885) in 1878, shortly before her engagement at the Lyceum Theatre. This relationship, though short lived, provided both Terry and her children with legitimacy at a crucial point in Terry’s career.⁹ As Chapter 3 suggested, Terry’s professional partnership with Irving offered her a ‘stage husband’ and

⁶ Katharine Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the Relics and Creating the Brand,” *Ellen Terry Spheres of Influence*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), 144.

⁷ Martha Vicinus addresses this issue in her introduction to *Suffer and be Still, Women in the Victorian Age*, x-xv.

⁸ All three actresses initially worked independently, but spent much of their career working alongside and in partnership with, their husbands, Marie Bancroft and Squire Bancroft achieving joint success at the Prince of Wales Theatre; Madge Kendal managing the St James’s Theatre with her husband, and Maud Tree with Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree at the Haymarket and His Majesty’s Theatre. Similarly, Jacky Bratton discussing the period between 1830-1870, argues that ‘The most obviously hidden influence on the development of the West End is that of Ellen Tree (1805-80), a successful actress whose fame was - quite deliberately - entirely subsumed into her choice of role and title of Mrs. Kean’. Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage: Marriage, Management and the Mapping of Gender in London, 1830-1870*, 159.

⁹ As noted in Chapter 3, Terry met Wardell whilst working for Charles Reade at the Court Theatre. Charles Clavering Wardell (1839-1885) acted under the name Kelly. Terry’s first husband, G.F. Watts filed for divorce in 1877 and Terry’s marriage to Wardell took place later the same year. They separated in 1881; significantly, the same year in which the Married Women’s Property Act was passed. Roger Manvell notes that it was not until the actress’ second marriage that Terry was reconciled with her parents and siblings. Manvell, *Ellen Terry*, 100. Auerbach has challenged Manvell’s description of the union as a ‘concession to respectability,’ however, suggesting that sexual attraction may also have motivated the marriage. Manvell, *Ellen Terry*, 137-8; Auerbach, *Ellen Terry, Player in Her Time*, 183-5 and Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 80-86.

professional stability, nevertheless her personal life remained vulnerable to scandal.¹⁰ Terry therefore sought an alternative route through which achieve public acceptance, foregrounding her role as a ‘mother’ in her efforts to re-establish her ‘private’ respectability.

Addressing this struggle for ‘respectability’ T.C. Davis suggests that ‘[...] to counteract negative judgements about their public existence’ many actresses ‘endeavoured to make the propriety of their private lives visible and accepted.’¹¹ Terry was not the first, or only, actress to purposely highlight her ‘maternal identity’ in an effort to ‘counteract’ condemnation of her career and ‘private’ life.¹² As Jan MacDonald has argued Sarah Siddons ‘deliberately exploited [her family] to further her theatrical career.’¹³ This approach enabled Siddons to distance herself from ‘the common perception of the actress as whore,’ by

[...] presenting herself, on stage as well as off, as a good caring mother who in happier circumstances would have shunned public life and relished domesticity, but whom financial constraints had forced into employment in the theatre in order to support the offspring she adored.¹⁴

Mrs Patrick Campbell (1865-1940) adopted a similar attitude and, as Eltis records,

¹⁰ In her memoirs, Duff Gordon, recalled that ‘It seems incredible that in those days there were many people who looked askance at Ellen Terry, and I was often warned that I should damage my own reputation by being seen so often in her company.’ Duff Gordon, *Discretions and Indiscretions*, 34.

¹¹ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 69.

¹² It is important to note that, as T.C. Davis records, not all actresses portray marriage and motherhood in a positive light, and the impact on their professional careers was a serious dilemma for many. T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Woman*, 55-57.

¹³ MacDonald describes how, when leaving Bath to perform in London for instance, Siddons presented her three children on stage in a tableau which illustrated the ‘Three Reasons’ which compelled her to abandon the city. Jan MacDonald, “Sarah Siddons Performs Maternity,” *Extraordinary Actors: Essays on Popular Performers: Studies in Honour of Peter Thomson*, eds. Jane Milling and Martin Banham (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), 62-3.

¹⁴ Jan MacDonald, “Sarah Siddons Performs Maternity,” 58, 62-3.

Her children regularly joined her on tour. Similarly, when both Campbell's children chose acting careers, they frequently became part of her supporting cast on as well as off stage, reminding Campbell's audiences that in addition to being a successful actress, she was also a wife and mother.¹⁵



Figure 6.1 - Window & Grove, Edward Gordon Craig as Joey, the gardening boy, in *Eugene Aram* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.6cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:548-2007.

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In 1885, Terry introduced American audiences to her son, Edward Gordon Craig. Having joined her on the tour, Craig (then 13) performed the role of Joey, the Gardener's boy, in the Chicago production of *Eugene Aram*. Whether consciously or not, Gordon Craig's public appearance, which coincided with Christmas celebrations, provided a cleverly judged advertisement of Terry's 'private' role as mother and, importantly, demonstrated

¹⁵ Sos Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 177.

her maternal affection.¹⁶ Gordon Craig's theatrical performance was commemorated in commercial photographs and by Terry in her autobiography.¹⁷ [FIGURE 6.1]



Figure 6.2 - Frederick Hollyer, Ellen Terry with her children Edith Ailsa Craig and Edward Gordon Craig, Platinum Print from *Portraits of Many Persons of Note*, (Volume 3) 1886. 15.4 x 10.3cm. Museum Number 7862.1938.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.3 - Frederick Hollyer, Ellen Terry with her children Edith Ailsa Craig and Edward Gordon Craig, Platinum Print from *Portraits of Many Persons of Note*, (Volume 3) 1886. 15.4 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number 7865.1938.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁶ Melville notes that Terry missing her children, but knowing that she could not look after both, had '[...] cabled some friends who were about to leave for New York, to "bring one of the children" thereby avoiding favouritism'. Meville, *Ellen and Edy*, 115.

¹⁷ Terry describes her pride in her son's performance in her autobiography *The Story of My Life*, 178-9.

Two photographs, from 1886, confirm the success with which Terry presented herself in this maternal role. Terry's celebrity on both sides of the Atlantic was sufficient to merit her inclusion in Frederick Hollyer's series of photograph albums *Portraits of Many Persons of Note*, alongside leading artists, writers and actors of the period.¹⁸ Two of Hollyer's photographs show Terry alongside her children.¹⁹ In both these portraits the three figures are positioned close to one another, connected either by a direct embrace or the touch of a hand [FIGURE 6.2 and 6.3]. Both Richard Brilliant and Graham Clarke have commented on the degree to which the '[...] pressure to conform to social norms' shapes the composition of a portrait.²⁰ Indeed, as Clarke notes, 'The photographic image contains a "photographic message" and forms part of a "practice of signification" which reflects the codes, values and beliefs of the culture as a whole.'²¹ Interestingly, the body language and positioning depicted in these images does not make any allusions to Terry's professional career. Instead these portraits portray her in a role and setting which conforms to 'codes and values' of the society within which they were produced: presenting her as a caring mother and emphasising her 'private identity' as the head and centre of a close and affectionate family.²² Although the lack of documentation surrounding their composition makes it impossible to determine who played the leading

¹⁸ As John Hannavay records Hollyer's subjects included the artists William Morris, Edward Burne Jones, Ford Madox Brown, William Holman Hunt, G.F. Watts. Lawrence Alma Tadema, Aubrey Beardsley and Walter Crane; leading writers amongst whom were H.G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw and W.B. Yeats and actors such as Mrs. Patrick Campbell. John Hannavay, *Encyclopaedia of Nineteenth Century Photography* (London: Routledge, 2013) 710-11.

¹⁹ Frederick Hollyer's *Portraits of Many Persons of Note* fills three volumes with nearly 200 portraits in total. Hollyer took at least five images of Terry for these volumes, two of the five show Terry with her children, two show Terry alone, another shows Terry with an, as yet, unidentified young woman in the shirt, necktie and tailored jacket which would come to characterise the dress of the 'New Woman.' Copies of all five images are held by the Prints and Drawings department of the V&A, Reference numbers 7861-1938, 7862-1938, 7863-1938, 7864-1938 and 7865-1938.

²⁰ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 11.

²¹ Clarke, *The Photograph*, 28.

²² Bernhardt also featured in images showing her in a comparable maternal, and affectionate role. Two such images, both showing Bernhardt alongside, and in the first instance actually embracing, her son, feature as Figure 9 and 10 in Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, *The Divine Sarah: A Life of Sarah Bernhardt* (London: HarperCollins, 1992).

part in their composition, the ‘photographic message’ conveyed by their content is significant and demonstrates the willingness of Terry’s audience to accept her ‘public performance’ of this ‘private’ maternal identity.

As interviews and images attest, Terry’s children remained part of her ‘public’ and ‘private’ life throughout her career.²³ [FIGURE 6.4 and 6.5] By not merely acknowledging and instead highlighting the existence of her children, Terry was able to create a narrative that reaffirmed her identity as a caring mother who possessed the ‘feminine’ virtues associated with this ‘domestic’ and ‘womanly’ role. The public presentation of her children on the stage, and in commercial photographs, established their role as part of, and the motivation for, her professional career. This allowed Terry to present her entry into the ‘male,’ ‘public,’ sphere as an unavoidable sacrifice made through necessity rather than any personal ambition.



Figure 6.4 - Photographer Unknown, Ellen Terry and Edith Craig on the Lyceum Company tour to America, 1895-6, Sepia photograph on paper. 13.7 x 9.6 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:511-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²³ Both children feature frequently in her autobiography, and, as Chapter 3 and 5 discussed, Terry also worked with Edy when creating her costumes and with Gordon Craig during her brief period as an Actor/Manager in 1903. When, as adults, both children spent some time as part of the Lyceum Company, Terry appeared alongside both in a number of productions.



Figure 6.5- Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Catherine Duval and Edward Gordon Craig Arthur de St Valery in *The Dead Heart* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1889, Sepia photograph on paper. 8.6 x 5.8 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:397-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

6.2 CELEBRITY

Personality or Art?

Terry's international fame also owed much to her partnership with Irving, but it was also founded upon the affection Terry inspired in the public. Central to her appeal was her 'charm,' the potency of which, as Chapter 3 discussed, was repeatedly remarked upon by critics.²⁴ The magnetism of Terry's stage 'identity' was such that one critic suggested that 'Her genius is that of personality as opposed to acquired knowledge in her art.'²⁵ Not all critics attributed Terry's success solely to her 'charm' however, with one arguing that

²⁴ Christopher St John observed Terry's charm was not affected by age, because the 'eloquent magnetism' of her personality 'owed little to the sexual allure to which time is merciless.' Terry, Craig and St John, *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, 286.

²⁵ "Miss Ellen Terry – A pictorial record of fifty years on the stage. With portraits of the family of players to which she belongs," *The Sphere*, April 28th 1906: iv. Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 57, SC2-G22, British Library, London.

[...] It would be, [...] foolish to assert that personal charm and grace alone account for Miss Terry's success [...] Ellen Terry is a highly competent and conscientious stage artist who has worked hard all her life, and who, in my judgement, has been quite as much hindered, as helped, by her personality [...] I put her success down, therefore, to a triumph over her personality, rather than an easy ascension because of it.²⁶

The restrictions Terry's reputation for 'charm' and 'femininity' threatened to place on the stage 'identities' she was deemed capable of undertaking were made apparent in Chapter 3. As this chapter showed, Terry's performance as Lady Macbeth in 1888 provoked particular controversy and led one critic to declare that:

[...] the effect is of a woman trying to assume a character against which Nature protests. [...] She is playing at being a bad woman; she cannot be one. The Ellen Terry personality is unconquerable and asserts itself at every turn.²⁷

There were other instances, however, when Terry's 'personality' worked to her advantage, encouraging audiences to forgive errors and to accept Terry's interpretation of a role. An assessment of Terry's performance as Imogen in *Cymbeline* (1896), for example, declared '[...] Is this the Imogen of Shakespeare? Who cares? What matters it to the audience? It is the Imogen of Ellen Terry [...].'²⁸

²⁶ "Description of Terry's career and personality, in a revival of *Much Ado About Nothing*," ca. 1899, Press Cutting, Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883*, Garrick Club, London.

²⁷ *Unidentified Periodical*, ca.1888, Press cutting, Production file Lyceum Theatre, Macbeth, 1888. Victoria and Albert Museum.

²⁸ *Unidentified Periodical*, ca.1896, Press cutting, Production file, Lyceum Theatre, *Cymbeline*, 1896, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Eltis suggests that Terry's 'celebrity' persona '[...]' became an entity in itself, not her 'veridical' self but a persona that usefully complemented her on stage repertoire.'²⁹ The extent to which Terry's performances became dominated by this 'celebrity persona' is apparent in one critic's declaration that '[...] Ellen Terry was something more than an exceedingly competent actress. She was a glowing personality.' Indeed, they contend that '[...] divine fire of her personality and poetic intuition' was such that, for her audiences, Terry became 'ageless' and was therefore able, even in later life, to appear, 'as young as the jaunty *Portia* [...] or the blithe charmer that was *Nance Oldfield*.'³⁰

This characterisation of Terry's performances exemplifies Carlson's description of the 'halo effect,' explored in Chapter 3, in which 'fond memories' of these 'previous performances' enable actors to overcome the physical effects of age. In Terry's case however, the repeated emphasis on her 'personality' indicates that the powerful 'halo' which surrounded her performances, though heightened by memories of her past success, was also founded upon the affection which her 'public persona' continued to inspire in her audiences.

Rejecting 'ambition'

Terry frequently downplayed the part ambition played in her success, though she did emphasise the amount of hard, gruelling work required to progress in her profession. In her autobiography she declared

[...] I have been happiest in my work when I was working for some one else. I admire those impersonal people who care for nothing outside their own ambition, yet I detest them at the same time, and I have the simplest

²⁹ Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 179.

³⁰ "Letters and Art: Ellen Terry" *The Literary Digest*, New York City: Funk & Wagnalls., August 11th 1928), 20-21. Ellen Terry Collection (125/8), Box 14, EC Photos 1, British Library, London.

faith that absolute devotion to another human being means the greatest *happiness*.³¹

She also deliberately crossed out a description of her ‘ambition’ in her copy of *Charles Hiatt’s Ellen Terry and her Impersonations* (1898) adding ‘[...] not at all. I was a paid servant and had at least to try to do it’ and signing this annotation ‘E.T.’³² As a result, whilst at one point ‘perhaps the best paid woman in England,’ Terry was still perceived as an unambitious woman who would never ‘[...] have worked alone [or] worked selfishly for her own aggrandisement, and her own financial benefit in a manner of the properly constituted “star” actress’ and would always ‘[...] have served someone.’³³ This assessment of her status, written in 1907, contrasts starkly with contemporary perceptions of the equally successful Bernhardt, who Henry James maintained was ‘[...] not, to my sense, a celebrity because she is an artist. She is a celebrity because, apparently, she desires with an intensity that has rarely been equalled to be one [...].’³⁴ It also illustrates Terry’s ability to present a ‘professional identity’ which conformed to the ‘feminine,’ ‘womanly,’ ideal advocated by society. Yet, as this chapter will go on to discuss, this ‘feminine identity’ was contradicted by the ‘independent’ career Terry pursued after leaving the Lyceum, in particular her period in management (1903) and the lecture tours she would undertake between 1910 and 1915. Furthermore, as this chapter will show, both Terry’s published writings and ‘private’ annotations within her library, document

³¹ It is important to note however, that this statement is made in part to justify and explain her decision to abandon the stage, and society, to live with Godwin. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 77-8.

³² Charles Hiatt, *Ellen Terry and her Impersonations* (George Bell and Sons, 1898), 265. This book forms part of the library at Smallhythe, reference E.V.4.10.

³³ As discussed in Chapter 3, Powell notes that Terry earned up to £200 a week at the peak of her career. Kerry Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 7. An untitled review of Christopher St. John’s Biography, published in *The Daily Graphic*, 10th May 1907, Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 78, SCB5-G28, British Library, London. Similarly, in 1894, Ethel Mackenzie McKenna felt that ‘Miss Terry is not one of those actresses who can find nothing to admire in the other great ones of her profession. She is above the pretty jealousies that so often mark actresses.’ Ethel Mackenzie McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” (*McClures Magazine*, 1894), 458.

³⁴ Henry James, ‘The Comédie-Française in London,’ *The Scenic Art: Notes on Acting & the Drama: 1872-1901*. Ed. Henry James and Allan Wade (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1948), 128.

her willingness to challenge Irving and to voice strong opinions regarding the direction and design of the productions in which she performed.



Figure 6.6 - Window & Grove, Ellen Terry, ca. 1890s. Matte hand coloured bromide postcard print. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x 160594.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Public image

Terry's ability to sustain a 'public image' which, Cockin argues, 'exploited her beauty' and conformed to 'conventional gender roles,' stems from her understanding of the communicative power and importance of the visual image.³⁵ Many paintings of Terry were publicly displayed and have made a significant contribution to shaping her legacy, not least the enduring fame of the 'Beetlewing dress.' It was Terry's photographic image,

³⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 45, 48, 150; Although Terry's autobiography describes her experience as a model for artists such as Watts and Singer-Sargent, it makes no reference to the many hours she also spent posing in photographer's studios Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 53, 305-7.

however, that was circulated amongst the majority of her original audience, as, from the 1860s onwards, the ‘[...] acquisition, collecting and hoarding of *cartes de visites* [...] became an international obsession.’³⁶

An object ‘valued for its own sake,’ Chapter 1 addressed the extent to which the photograph’s function as a physical object, is, ‘central to its function as a socially salient object.’³⁷ Whilst Mayer situates these images at ‘the core of an intricate commercial transaction’ between sitters, photographer, seller and consumer,³⁸ Gardner considers how consumers engaged with photographs, ‘individualising’ their images with hand tinting, ‘jewelling’ and ‘tinselling.’³⁸ [FIGURE 6.6] This tactile engagement with these images resonates with the emphasis Elizabeth Edwards placed on the important part physical engagement plays in the creation and consumption of photographs.³⁹ Whether by placing them in albums, or through physically altering the colours and adding detailing, every consumer was ‘individualising’ the images in their collections. This was a process in which, as Edward’s has shown, photographs could be used by collectors, including Terry

³⁶ Terry’s career is documented in thousands of surviving *cartes de visites* and cabinet card photographs and picture postcards, and as David Mayer notes, the nine year old Terry was amongst the first actresses to appear in photographic print. As Mayer also writes, as the century progressed technological innovations in photographic practices and printing processes made it possible to increase production and reduce prices, widening the circulation further. Mayer, “The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film,” 78-80. Viv Gardner provides a useful analysis of the various types of picture postcard being created by the early twentieth century. Gardner, ‘Gertie Millar and the “Rules for Actresses and Vicars’ Wives,”’ 102-106; as does Gail Marshall in “Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress and her international audiences.”

³⁷ Elizabeth Edwards. “Photographs as Objects of Memory,” *Material Memories: Design and Evocation*, ed. M.Kwint, C.Breward, J.Aynsley (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 221-222.

³⁸ Mayer, “The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film,” 83 and Gardner, ‘Gertie Millar and the “Rules for Actresses and Vicars’ Wives,”’ 104-5.

³⁹ Edwards, “Photographs as Objects of Memory”, 227-8.

herself, to construct a new narrative and ‘meaning’ over which the subjects of the images had no control.⁴⁰



Figure 6.7 - Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:218-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

As has been established, Terry was conscious of the importance of conveying an appropriate ‘message’ through her ‘photographic self,’ and demonstrated an ability to use such images to express very ‘specific’ identities. Though sitters exercised relatively limited control over the composition of the photograph, these collectable images became an increasingly vital tool for actors, providing their subject with a means through which

⁴⁰ Edwards cites Bourdieu’s, *Photography: A Middle Brow Art*, trans. S. Whiteside (Cambridge, 1990) and *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1986 [1979]). Edwards. “Photographs as Objects of Memory”, 224-5. The potential implications of this process of ‘re-construction’ are made apparent in Gardner’s examination of the expanding production of picture postcards in the early twentieth century and the part they played in ‘the commodification of the actress.’ Gardner ‘Gertie Millar and the “Rules for Actresses and Vicars’ Wives,” 98-101. Similarly, Penny Farfan and Veronica Kelly have made important contributions to research on this theme. See, for instance, Penny Farfan, ““The Picture Postcard is a sign of the times”: Theatre Postcards and Modernism.” *Theatre History Studies*, 32.1 (2012): 93-119 and Kelly, Veronica. “Beauty and the market: Actress postcards and their senders in early twentieth-century Australia.” *New Theatre Quarterly* 20.78 (May 2004): 99-116. Web. 14 March 2016.

to generate publicity, seek work, and, most importantly, to establish a relationship with the public.⁴¹ Terry's participation in this self-promotion can be identified in the large number of extant photograph of the actress, many of them signed directly or even with a facsimile of Terry's signature.⁴² [FIGURE 6.7] As Cockin has shown, Terry's willingness to embrace the financial benefits of celebrity for both public and private gain, extended beyond the creation of commercial photographs. In 1893, for instance, Terry chose to sell her autograph to raise funds for the Queen's Jubilee Hospital. Significantly however, by 1903, her decision to promote her 'photographic self' was compelled by personal financial need, rather than a public, charitable, initiative.⁴³ As Cockin notes 'The Ellen Terry brand became allied to various products.'⁴⁴ [FIGURE 6.8] Aware of the negative taint that could arise from such mercenary activities however, Terry offset her commercial actions by using her international profile to raise further funds for charitable causes,

⁴¹ The restrictions that technology and the approach favoured by the photographer placed over the control the sitter exercised on the content of an image must also be considered. Particularly given that until the 1890s the settings in which performers were photographed, though replicating those seen on the stage were generally often provided by the photographer, and many elements of the image, including the poses adopted, were dictated by the sophistication, or otherwise, of the photographic equipment used. Mayer, for example, identifies a number of tropes in the poses and size of the photographs produced of actresses which evolved in response to developments in photographic technology. Mayer. "The actress as photographic icon," *Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, 80-3.

⁴² Dedications on some of the images in the collection at Smallhythe and the V&A, reveal that the actress also distributed these images among her friends. See, for example, NT/SMA/PH/1d and S.47-2008. Further evidence can also be found in passing references Terry makes in autobiography. A letter sent to Terry by the playwright and critic Tom Taylor in circa 1879, which Terry quotes in her autobiography, for instance, expresses "A thousand thanks for the photographs. I like the profile best. It is most Paolo Veronesish and gives the right notion of your Portia, although the colour hardly suggests the golden gorgeousness of your dress and the blonde glory of the hair and complexion..." Letter from Tom Taylor to Ellen Terry, ca.1879, quoted by Terry in *The Story of My Life*, 115.

⁴³ As letters and documents within the papers on loan from Smallhythe to the British Library show (Reference Ellen Terry Collection [125]) the money lost through the productions at the Imperial Theatre were only partially recouped through subsequent tours, and even the funds raised at Terry's 1906 Jubilee celebrations proved insufficient to sustain the actress and her dependents in Terry's later years. See also Cockin, "Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand," 134, 139 and Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History*, 303-317, 492-495.

⁴⁴ These included Hindes Ellen Terry hairpins, Odol's toothpaste and Symington's soups. Cockin, "Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand," 186. Terry was not the only celebrity whose image was used for marketing purposes, both Bernhardt and Langtry were amongst who endorsed toiletries and other products. Catherine Hindson examines this aspect of celebrity in "'Mrs. Langtry seems to be on the way to a fortune': The Jersey Lily and Models of Late Nineteenth Century Fame," *In the Limelight and Under the Microscope: Forms and Functions of Female Celebrity*. Ed. Holmes, Su, and Diane Negra (New York: Continuum, 2011).

focusing her attention on the ‘Servers of the Blind League’ and ‘mothers’, both causes which were compatible with her identity as a feminine and caring figure.⁴⁵



Figure 6.8 - Artist unknown. Advertisement for Hinde's (Patent) "Ellen Terry" Hair pins. Published in *The Illustrated London News*, 23 May 1885. Engraving on paper. Record photograph courtesy of Uthra Rajgopal. 5 February 2012.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Private record

As the photographs preserved at Smallhythe reveal, Terry also employed her ‘public’ image for ‘personal’ purposes. Many of the photographs in the collection have been annotated by Terry offering an insight not only into her opinions on the success of individual photographs, but also the degree to which she employed these images to create a record of her life and career. The numerous images of Terry’s houses within the collection, not only those produced as public ‘picture postcards’ but also other ‘private’ images, illustrate Terry’s efforts to document her life. One image showing the exterior of

⁴⁵ Cockin explains that Terry worked for the ‘[...] Servers of the Blind League and the League of Service for Motherhood’ and became ‘[...] the public face of the St Pancras School for Mothers.’ Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,” 139.

the pub Terry rented in Uxbridge, for instance, has been covered with annotation by the actress. On the front Terry has written her name, and added details about the rooms and surrounding area, whilst on the rear she records ‘Uxbridge – 21 Feb’, ‘My 1st Cottage.’ Recalling the ‘3 old ladies on ground floor’ and the ‘jug of beer or lemon on the counter only.’⁴⁶ [FIGURE 6.9] Terry made comparable notes on many images of her past homes and a photograph of The Red House, Gustard Wood (where Terry lived with Godwin) is labelled ‘No.II, Where Edy was born in 1869.’ As this annotation suggests, Terry has recorded when she lived at the house depicted and at what stage in her life.⁴⁷ [FIGURE 6.10]

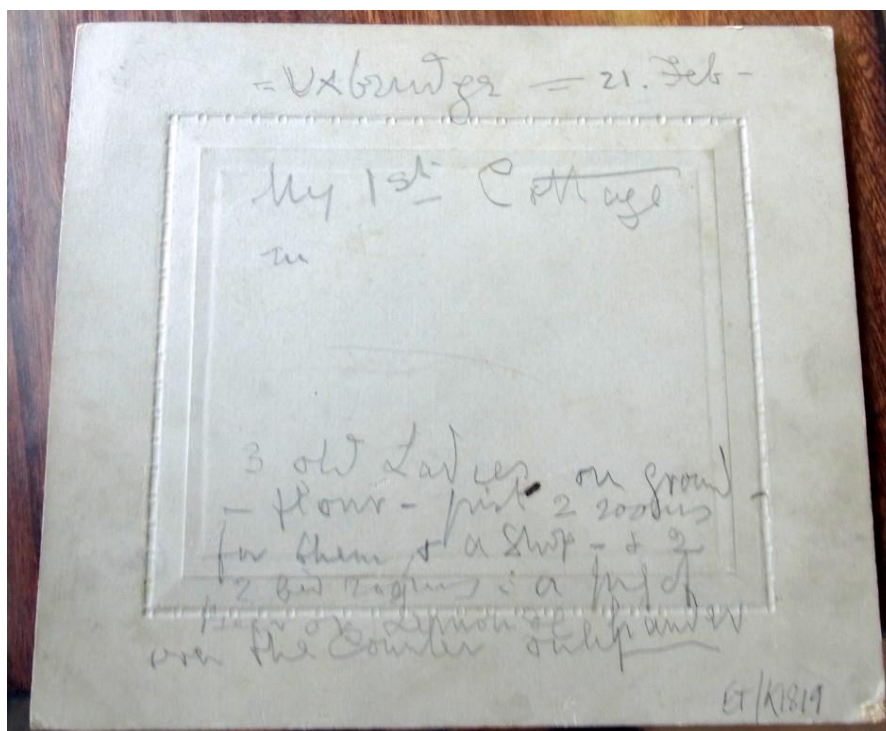


Figure 6.9 - Detail of the rear of a photograph of the Aubrey Arms, Uxbridge. A cottage rented by Terry in ca.1889. Personal photograph by the author, 1 September 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/250.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁴⁶ Handwritten annotation in pen and ink on photograph in the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place, Image Reference NT/SMA/PH/250.

⁴⁷ Handwritten annotation in pencil and ink on photograph in the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place, Image Reference NT/SMA/PH/264.

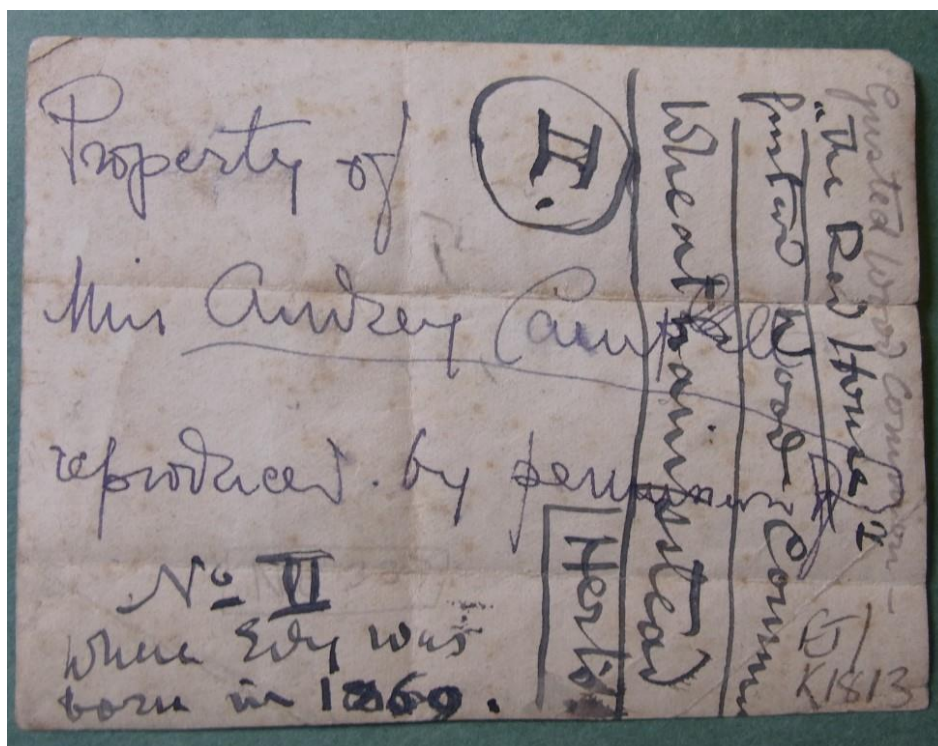


Figure 6.10 - Detail of the rear of a photograph of the Red House, Gustard Common. A house Terry shared with Godwin in 1869. Personal photograph by the author, 1 September 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/264.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry also used copies of photographs to illustrate records of her performances. As Chapter 4 explained, Terry marked up the copy of her script for *Macbeth* with contact sheet sized photographs and documenting her costume changes by inserting the relevant images alongside the text. [FIGURE 6.11]. The original contact sheet for this production also shows Terry's engagement with her image, with three images out of a sheet of thirty thumbnails marked 'yes' by the actress, one of these with an additional cross.⁴⁸ [FIGURE 6.12] Further evidence of the actress's close scrutiny of her public image can be identified in annotation she added to a photograph of herself as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, taken in 1906.⁴⁹ The full length image features Terry in the simple, elegant costume

⁴⁸ Emma Slocombe, 'Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum' *Apollo Magazine*, (London: National Trust Historic Houses and Collections Annual in association with Apollo, 2011) 4-12.

⁴⁹ The photograph is currently roughly mounted on dark paper between an image showing Terry as Mamillius in 1856 and Portia in 1879 and appears either to have been, or originally intended as, a gift it is signed 'Yours Truly, Ellen Terry.' The annotation added below this text however, together with the supplementary, informal and abbreviated signature, suggests that Terry knew the recipient. It is possible

which Craig designed for her. Its significance lies arguably in the fact that it does not attempt to capture the ‘ageless’ and ‘charming’ identity within which Terry was frequently confined. Instead it depicts a serene woman, possessed of a gracefulness which is not dependent on either youth or beauty. It is not surprising therefore that Terry was moved to write “I consider this an excellent photograph = E.T.’, nor that, after her death, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) reaffirmed her judgement, adding ‘So do I.’⁵⁰

[FIGURE 6.13]

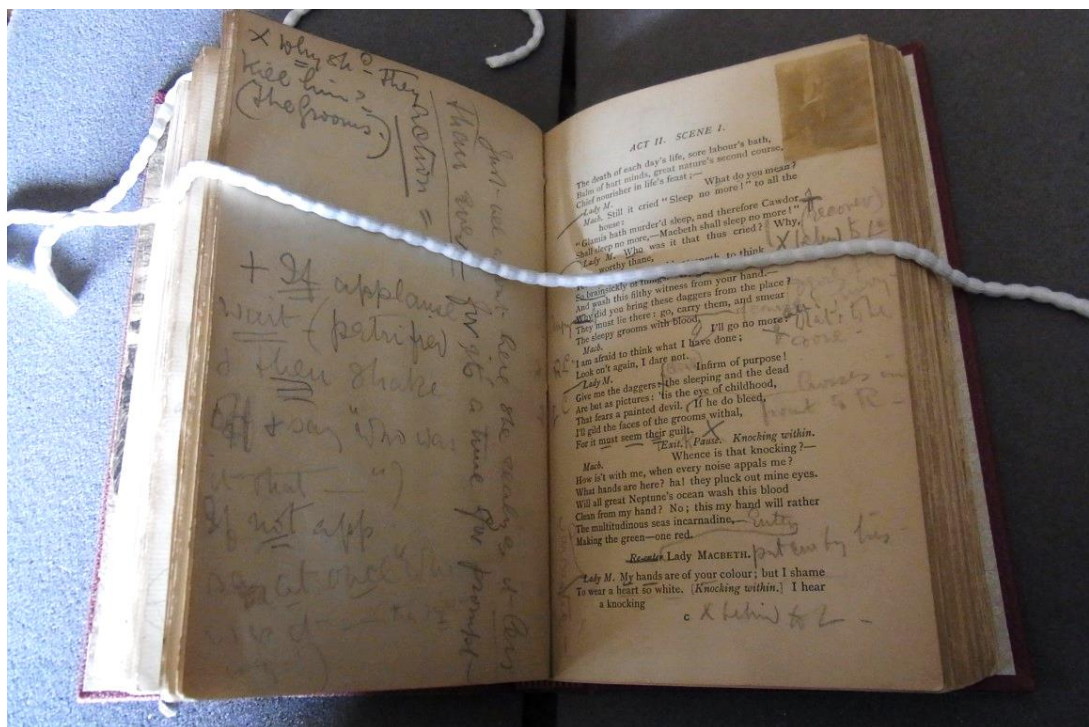


Figure 6.11 - Contact sheet photograph inserted in Terry’s copy of J.Comyns-Carr, *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: An Essay* London: Bickers & Son, Leicester Square, 1889.) Personal photograph by the author, 13 April 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number E.V.2.18.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

that the photograph, now part of the collection at Smallhythe Place, may have been returned in response to Edith Craig’s appeal for donations in the years which followed Terry’s death in 1928. Photograph, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe, Image reference NT/SMA/PH/2003.

⁵⁰ Shaw’s annotation is initially and dated 1935 (four years after the publication of Ellen Terry, *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence*, Ed. Christopher St. John (London: Constable and Co, 1931. See Photograph, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe, Image reference NT/SMA/PH/2003.



Figure 6.12 - Detail from a contact sheet of photographs by Window and Grove documenting Terry's appearance as Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Personal photograph by the author, 4 December 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/2001.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.13 - Composite sheet of images showing Terry as she appeared as Mamillius in *The Winters Tale* (1856), Hermione in *The Winters Tale* (1906) and Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* (1879). Personal photograph by the author, 4 December 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/2003.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The frequency with which Terry signs her annotations, whether on her image or in texts, supports their designation by Cockin as ‘interventionist marginalia.’⁵¹ Regardless of whether Terry intended this writing to be subject to public scrutiny or not, it is clear that she wanted to retain some degree of control over the ‘message’ communicated through these records. Further evidence of Terry’s intervention in the narrative preserved for posterity can be seen at the base of a sheet of composite images entitled ‘Ellen Terry at the Lyceum.’ Here Terry has added the signed observation that, ‘And one man in his time plays many part (and so does a woman).’ (See Figure 6.13). Terry also employed this aphorism for her Jubilee programme in 1906.⁵² Her appropriation of Shakespeare’s words to foreground the status of women within the theatre astutely references both her reputation as a ‘Shakespearean Actress’ and her status as a leading member of the ‘theatrical aristocracy.’⁵³ This was a position which, as Terry’s remarks imply, did not receive official recognition until 1925, thirty years after her stage partner, Henry Irving, had been awarded his knighthood.

6.3 ‘PRIVATE IDENTITY’

‘A woman’

Terry’s celebrity brought her financial and commercial success but, as Chapter 3 showed, in order to preserve her ‘public reputation,’ she was conscious that her ‘private life’ had

⁵¹ Cockin, ‘Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,’ 135.

⁵² Auerbach, *Player in her time*, 17. Terry also liked to employ quotes associated with her most famous roles, often signed images, as the case with a head and shoulders profile photograph of Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* (within the collection at Smallhythe), with Beatrice’s famous declaration, “a star danced & under/that I was born =.” Photograph, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place, Image Reference NT/SMA/PH/2078.

⁵³ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage: Marriage, Management and the Mapping of Gender in London, 1830-1870*, 148 and Gardner, “The Three Nobodies,” 33.

to be carefully managed. As a result she was constantly ‘performing,’ even in ‘private,’ and her surroundings and dress were carefully selected to sustain her on stage identity.

One manner in which she sustained her reputation as a ‘charming,’ ‘womanly woman’ was by creating a clear distinction between the professional and public life which she led in London and the private and domestic existence she enjoyed in her country ‘cottages.’⁵⁴ Terry owned several ‘cottages’ during her career. She spent the longest period living at Tower Cottage, Winchelsea (1896-1906), and in Smallhythe, Kent (1906-1928).⁵⁵ Terry purchased Smallhythe just before 1900, annotating the auction sale notice “I bought this in 1899.”⁵⁶ The property was known as “The Farm” and Terry continued to use this name.⁵⁷ Both Tower Cottage and ‘The Farm’ provided Terry with a vital and stable retreat from the increasing pressure and pace of life in London.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ As Chapter 3 showed, reviews repeatedly dwell on the womanly charm, grace and fragility of Terry. The emphasis placed on Terry’s feminine qualities is particularly apparent in the discussion of her performance as Lady Macbeth in 1888. See, for instance, “The Real Macbeth,” *Unidentified Periodical*, ca. December 1888, Press Cutting, Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume V: 311, Garrick Collection, London and “Macbeth at the Lyceum,” *The Standard*, December 1888, Press Cutting, Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume V: 333, Garrick Collection, London. One of several articles discussing Terry’s cottages was published in the *Daily Graphic* on 10th May 1907. Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125/60) Box 78, SCB5-G28, British Library, London.

⁵⁵ Terry first visited Winchelsea in 1884, when she stayed in a cottage next door to Tower Cottage (then owned by Comyns-Carr). She subsequently returned to Winchelsea on a regular basis and in 1896 bought Tower Cottage from the Comyns-Carrs. She continued to spend part of her time there until her permanent move to Smallhythe in 1906. Terry did actually not sell Tower Cottage until 1914. “Smallhythe Place – History 1514 – 1939.” National Trust. n.d.

⁵⁶ Terry also rented, and later purchased, the land and nearby buildings including a pair of Elizabethan cottages. These were combined into single house which became known as The Priest’s House and given to Edith Craig who lived there until her death in 1947. Terry’s gradual accumulation of land and property can be traced in auction leaflets preserved within the collection at Smallhythe, many of which Terry annotated to record the purchases. For instance, Terry annotated the 1899 sale notice for *The Priest’s House*, with the text, - “First rented one, afterwards bought one, for Edy and then gave her both.” “Smallhythe Place – History 1514 – 1939.” National Trust. See also, Joy Melville, *Ellen Terry and Smallhythe Place*, (London: National Trust, 2006).

⁵⁷ This is the name which Terry uses in many of her surviving letters when referring to Smallhythe Place, and also the name marked in an example of Terry’s personal clothing in the collection of the Museum of London. This interior of this cream cotton collarless, double breasted jacket (Museum of London Reference 64.154) has been marked in black ink with the phrase ‘E.T., The Farm, 1912.’

⁵⁸ Comyns-Carr describes how “[...] Ellen Terry passed happy, unmolested holidays’ in Winchelsea and also Terry’s fondness for the countryside in general. Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 110-113. Cockin found repeated evidence in Terry’s letters of the actress’s ill health and exhaustion, and her resultant need, and desire for rest. Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,” 139, and Cockin, ‘Introduction,’ *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry: Volume 3* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), xiii-xvii.

Although there were obvious and important connections between Terry’s public and private selves, she succeeded in creating a division between the two.⁵⁹ This dichotomy between Terry’s urban and rural identities is repeatedly conveyed in her interviews.⁶⁰ Profiling Terry in 1892, Harry How declared ‘If Ellen Terry impresses one on the stage as an actress, how much more does she do so when sitting surrounded by one of the fairest of nature’s scenes, as a woman!’⁶¹ This portrayal of Terry is reinforced by the sketches used to illustrate the article, many depicting the actress in her garden or framed by flowers. [FIGURE 6.14]

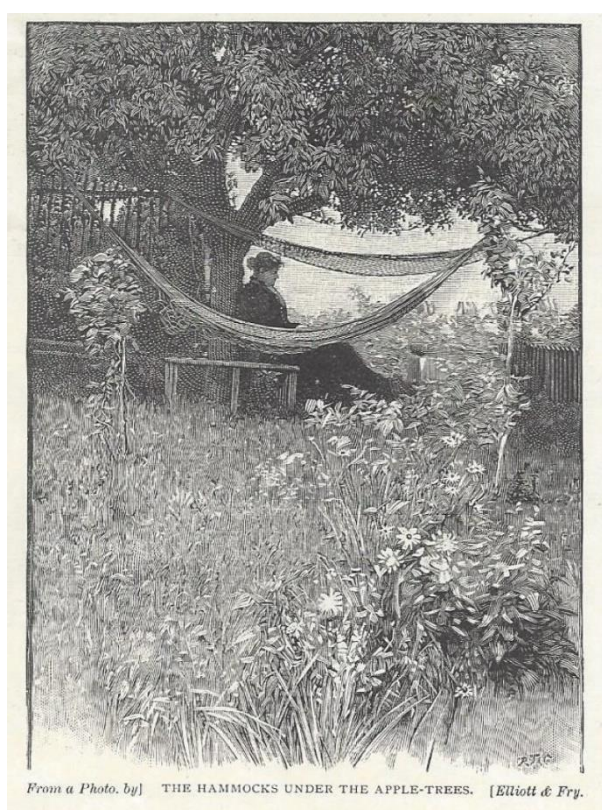


Figure 6.14 - Unknown artist. ‘The Hammocks Under the Apple Tree.’ Line drawn image from an original photograph by Elliot and Fry, featured in Henry How, *Illustrated Interview*, No, XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 1892, 492. Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁵⁹ Eltis characterises Terry as ‘[...] an amalgam of contradictions [...] Who ‘[...] thus confounded attempts at constructing a straightforward public/private divide in her life, especially for those clinging to conventional notions of femininity.’ Eltis, “Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress,” 183.

⁶⁰ Another interview praises the private, off-stage, personality of the actress, noting that ‘[...] if Miss Ellen Terry is delightful on the stage, she is ten times more charming off. For Society-in its wider sense-she cares not at all; but among those whom she loves and counts as friends all the sweetness and joyousness of her essentially youthful nature are displayed.’ *St Pauls*, January 9 1897, Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 62, SC9-G12, British Library, London.

⁶¹ How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII, 492.



Figure 6.15 - Photographer unknown, Tower Cottage, Winchelsea, Photographic postcard. (Publisher unknown, early twentieth century). Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box, THM 117-118. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.16 - Photographer unknown, Smallhythe Place, Photographic postcard. (Everett and Ashdown publishers, early twentieth century). Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box, THM 117-118. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

As How reveals, even Terry's flat in London was covered with flowers of 'the simplest and homeliest kind, the tiny blue bell, marguerite and the cottage nasturtium.'⁶² In 1894, Ethel Mackenzie McKenna offered a similar description of Terry's London home, describing how 'The front is always bright with flowers, for flowers are one of the chief joys of the great actress's life.'⁶³ This characterisation of Terry as a simple and modest figure, in sympathy with nature, reappears in many description of the actress.⁶⁴

Terry's own remarks reinforced this distinction between her rural life, and her professional career. Declaring of Winchelsea that, 'To my mind there is no more restful or romantic spot anywhere than this. You can't even remember there exists such a thing as theatre here!'⁶⁵ Her autobiography cemented this narrative in the public consciousness and portrays the years she spent with Godwin in the guise of a Rural Idyll, during which she '[...] was very happy, leading a quiet, domestic life in the heart of the country' and hardly '[...] thought of the stage' as her children 'absorbed all [her] time, all [her] interest, all [her] love.'⁶⁶

Photographs and picture postcards of her 'country cottages' offered Terry an additional means through which to illustrate the distinction between her 'public,' urban, celebrity, and her 'private' rural existence. These glimpses of her domestic environment focus upon the buildings, interiors and gardens, and Terry herself generally appears only as a secondary figure, if at all. [FIGURE 6.15 and 6.16] By departing from the dominant

⁶² How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII, 489.

⁶³ Mackenzie McKenna, "Ellen Terry," 457.

⁶⁴ Another reporter described how "In the country [Terry] [...] gains far more repose of manner. She is quick to feel in sympathy with her surroundings; not overwhelmed with engagements. In town her callers begin about 8.30am and continue until about 11.30pm; a heavy strain on even her remarkable vitality." "Miss Ellen Terry – A pictorial record of fifty years on the stage. With portraits of the family of players to which she belongs," iv. Similarly Ethel Mackenzie McKenna informed her readers that Terry was '[...] an ardent lover of rural life, and has hardly ever been without her cottage in the country, whither she could fly for a breath of fresh air.' Mackenzie McKenna, "Ellen Terry," 462.

⁶⁵ How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 1892, 495

⁶⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 75.

position she occupied in the photographs which record her stage roles and ‘public’ identity, and remaining at the rear of the ‘stage,’ Terry highlighted the division between her urban and rural identity. Within this ‘private’ domestic world she presented herself as an unambitious figure in the midst of her family and nature, content to perform the feminine role which accorded with Victorian traditions. The success with which Terry sustained this domestic identity can be seen in McKenna’s summary of Terry’s rural existence. Following an interview with Terry in 1894 she informed her readers that ‘Miss Terry’s life is always a quiet one [...] she is an admirable housekeeper and takes genuine pleasure in all the little trifles connected with this important business [...]’⁶⁷

These images and interviews formed an integral part of the careful process through which Terry constructed a ‘private identity’ as a woman compelled to sacrifice peace and privacy in order to support her children, and satisfy the public. This enabled Terry to maintain a clear division between her ‘professional identity’ as ‘The Urban Star,’ and her, ‘private identity’ as a domestic, ‘womanly woman,’ who was as ‘natural’ as the gardens which encircled her ‘country cottages.’⁶⁸

‘Public intimacy’

Roach has demonstrated the significant part ‘It’ plays in generating, and sustaining the appeal of celebrities, and Terry’s ‘charm’ was certainly another key factor in her success.⁶⁹ The actress’ ability to endear herself to ‘on’ and ‘off-stage’ audiences becomes clear in one writer’s assertion:

⁶⁷ McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” 464.

⁶⁸ McKenna describing Terry’s cottage in Winchelsea declared that the garden was ‘[...]as natural as its owner’ McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” 462.

⁶⁹ Joseph Roach, *It* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2007) 3-4.

[...] if Miss Ellen Terry is delightful on the stage, she is ten times more charming off. For Society - in its wider sense - she cares not at all; but among those whom she loves and counts as friends all the sweetness and joyousness of her essentially youthful nature are displayed.⁷⁰

The descriptions of Terry provided by friends of the actress lay equal stress on the affection Terry inspired in others. Nettleship, reported that '[...] of all her customers, [Terry was] the sweetest tempered, the gayest, and the most easily pleased: in fact, what she seems on the stage, she is in private life – adorable.'⁷¹ Similarly, Duff Gordon, declared:

I never knew any woman who possessed in such a degree the art of inspiring affection in her own sex. She was not a young woman then, but she was the friend and confidante of dozens of girls, who adored her and loved to serve her in all sorts of little ways.⁷²

It was not only young women who sought Terry's company: Comyns-Carr also described how in Winchelsea "Nellen Terry": 'was a tremendous favourite with all young people, and in Winchelsea the pony-trap which she drove about the country-side was always full to overflowing with children and dogs.'⁷³

Like Roach, Luckhurst and Moody attach great importance to the part that the illusion of 'public intimacy' plays in mediating 'the relationship between stars and their

⁷⁰ *St Pauls*, January 9 1897, Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 62, SC9-G12, British Library, London.

⁷¹ "Ellen Terry's Gowns and the Woman who makes them," *The Queenslander*, Saturday 3 April 1897: 747.

⁷² Lady Duff Gordon. *Discretions and Indiscretions* (Jarolds, London, 1932), 32-3

⁷³ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 112. How also remarked upon Terry's popularity in Winchelsea explained how 'For half an hour-while Miss Terry rested a little-...I walked and talked with the village children. And I found out that Miss Terry's loving kindness to the little ones is known in Winchelsea, as everywhere else' How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII, 496-7. McKenna also noted Terry's central role within the community at Winchelsea McKenna, "Ellen Terry," 462-3.

audiences.’⁷⁴ As Roach demonstrates, this ‘illusion’ of ‘public intimacy’ plays an important role in sustaining ‘the charisma of a celebrated performer’ or, what he terms, the allure and power of ‘it.’⁷⁵ The success with which Terry cultivated this ‘illusion of public intimacy’ both on and off the stage is conveyed in reviews of her performances and personal interviews with the actress. It is particularly apparent in a special feature, published to mark 1906 Terry’s stage jubilee, which included ‘A personal impression of Ellen Terry at Home.’ Drawing a clear distinction between her professional and private self, they refer to Terry as ‘Our Ellen’ throughout the description of her life ‘at home.’ As they stress, this possessive pronoun is employed to highlight the fact they are speaking here not of ‘Ellen Terry the actress’ but of “*our Ellen*”, the woman.’ It also exemplifies the ‘personal,’ ‘intimate’ relationship felt to exist between Terry and her audience.⁷⁶

6.4 AN ICON OF AESTHETICISM

Art for Art’s Sake

During the decades which mark the peak of Terry’s career ‘The Aesthetic movement’ was a dominant force within British Art and Design.⁷⁷ As Chapter 2 established, Aestheticism and its impact on art and design has been thoroughly researched over the past sixty years.⁷⁸ Many of the existing texts refer to Terry and her connections with the movement,

⁷⁴ Luckhurst and Moody, *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 5.

⁷⁵ Luckhurst and Moody, *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*, 5 and Roach, *It*, 3,

⁷⁶ “Miss Ellen Terry – A pictorial record of fifty years on the stage. With portraits of the family of players to which she belongs,” iv.

⁷⁷ Though most would argue that Aestheticism as concept and design Aesthetic evolved over the course of several years rather than ‘arriving’ on a specific date, there is a clear sense that it became established as movement by the late 1860s and early 1870s. This is the period suggested by early writers on the theme such as William Gaunt in *The Aesthetic Adventure* (London: Sphere Books Ltd, 1945), the same date period is suggested in more recent texts including Stephen Calloway, Lynn F. Orr, and Esmé Whittaker. *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic movement, 1860-1900* (London: V&A Publishing, 2011) and Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Art for Art’s Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

⁷⁸ It was also the focus of the 2011 exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum, *The Cult of Beauty* curated by Stephen Calloway of the V&A and Dr Lynn Federle Orr at The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Early writers on the theme include Gaunt, *The Aesthetic Adventure* (1945). Amongst more recent

none however have fully explored her personal significance as a leading exponent of Aestheticism, not only in the eyes of the public, but most specifically within her home, on the stage, and through her dress.

As Stephen Calloway explains, figures united within this ‘Cult of Beauty’ promoted an ‘art’ which was ‘self-consciously absorbed in itself, aware of the past but created for the present age, and existing only in order to be beautiful.’⁷⁹ This new ‘enthusiasm for anything beautiful’ was to play a key part in Terry’s initial success. It inspired the Bancroft’s lavish production of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1875 (discussed in Chapter 4) which, though a commercial disaster, was declared an artistic triumph. Terry, who appeared as Portia, received particular critical acclaim and public attention.⁸⁰ [FIGURE 6.17]

Terry’s marriage to Watts in 1864, provided the sixteen-year-old actress with her first introduction to Aestheticism and, significantly, a domestic environment which, as Caroline Dakers shows, ‘presented an Aesthetic “wholeness”, in which pictures, furniture, colours and textures blended together, Nothing jarred.’⁸¹ [FIGURE 6.18] In the early 1860s, Aestheticism was only just becoming established as a cultural force within art and society. Terry’s subsequent relationship with Godwin (between circa 1867-1874),

explorations of the movement Elizabeth Prettejohn and Charlotte Gere have published work which is particular relevant to the themes under discussion in this thesis. Prettejohn, *Art for Art’s Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (2007) and Charlotte Gere, *Aesthetic Circles, Design & Decoration in the Aesthetic movement* (London: V&A Publishing, 2010).

⁷⁹ Stephen Calloway, ‘The Search for a new beauty’, *The Cult of Beauty*, 11.

⁸⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 104-108.

⁸¹ Whilst at Holland Park, Terry socialised with figures who played a leading part in the art world during the 1850s and 1860s. They included the pioneering female photographer, Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879) who took several photographs of Terry and Watts. Dakers has explored the significance of the circles brought together in the ‘salons’ at Holland Park and includes contemporary descriptions of the house from Georgiana Burne Jones (1840-1920) and the granddaughter of Sara Prinsep, Laura Troubridge (1888-1929). Caroline Dakers, *The Holland Park Circle: Artists and Victorian Society* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1999), 27. Terry also lists some of the figures she met in her autobiography. These included the poet Sir Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892). She also notes how little she, as the ‘girl wife of a famous painter’ was able to appreciate or take advantage of, this opportunity. Terry, *The Story of My life*, 52-4.

cemented Terry's taste, and brought her into close association with key figures within the burgeoning 'Aesthetic movement.' As will be discussed, Godwin had a lasting impact on Terry's views on art, design and dress both for the stage and within her private life.

Calloway has described Aestheticism as movement whose 'adherents [...] aspired above all to live 'artistically' and, through the worship of beauty, to create new kinds of art set free from stale patterns of thought, outworn establishment ideas and confining Victorian rules of propriety and bourgeois morality.'⁸² Similarly, Wilson, discussing 'Bohemian' social circles, has suggested that 'Bohemia,' as represented in this instance by Aestheticism, 'attracted its self-chosen citizens for many different reasons. It was a refuge, a way station, a stage.'⁸³ Both interpretations make apparent the attraction which the Aesthetic movement held for Terry. By adopting an allegiance to Aestheticism, Terry was provided with both a 'refuge,' and a 'stage,' as she immersed herself in a section of society within which 'Art', including the art of the stage, was paramount and her personal conduct would not be condemned.⁸⁴

⁸² Calloway, 'The Search for a new beauty,' *The Cult of Beauty*, 11.

⁸³ Commencing from the stance that 'Bohemia is the name for the attempt by nineteenth and twentieth century artists, writers, intellectual and radicals to create an alternative world within Western society (and possibly elsewhere).' Wilson offers a nuanced analysis of the evolution of the groups and ideas encompassed by this evolving 'term' in her publication Elizabeth Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts* (London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2000), 73.

⁸⁴ As Elizabeth Wilson observes, 'From its earliest days Bohemia had appeared to offer women freedom from the social restrictions of respectable society, and recognition as autonomous individuals in their own right. Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 85.



Figure 6.17 - Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:218-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.18 - Thomas Matthews Rooke, *The Studio, Little Holland House*, London, 1904. Watercolour on paper, Measurements not recorded. Watts Gallery, Surrey. Copyright © Trustees of Watts Gallery, Surrey. Source Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number TWG114700.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Aesthetic circles

As Wilson observes, ‘Friendship and personal relationships played an important role in Bohemia.’⁸⁵ Terry’s increasing importance within the Aesthetic movement reinforced and expanded the social and artistic connections originally made during her relationships with Watts and Godwin and by the mid-1870s she had established an independent position as part of an exclusive circle of ‘artists and designers.’⁸⁶

The growing influence and importance of the Aesthetic movement was made apparent to the wider public through the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery in Bond Street, London in 1877.⁸⁷ This gallery represented a direct challenge to the traditions established by The Royal Academy, both in terms of the approach to display, and the nature of the paintings which were exhibited.⁸⁸ It also ‘[...] provided the setting for a new and reverent attitude to the arts’ and, as Christopher Newall writes, ‘[...] became a temple for those who sought edification through Aesthetic delight.’⁸⁹ Increasing public awareness of, and enthusiasm for, the ‘philosophy of art for art’s sake,’ is also evident in the long running series of satirical cartoons ridiculing the movement which George Du Maurier (1834-1896) published in *Punch* magazine, the first of which appeared in 1877.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 25.

⁸⁶ Alison Adburgham, ‘The Early Years,’ *The House of Liberty Masters of Style and Decoration*, ed. Stephen Calloway (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) 34.

⁸⁷ A number of texts have explored the gallery’s impact and history, these include Christopher Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions: Change and Continuity in the Victorian Art World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and Susan P. Casteras and Colleen Denney, *The Grosvenor Gallery: A Palace of Art in Victorian England* (London: Yale University Press, 1996).

⁸⁸ It was described by Walford Graham Robertson (1866-1948) as ‘a genuine offering at the shrine of Beauty, a gallant blow struck in the cause of Art.’ Robertson was himself an artist, and part of a circle of people associated with the Aesthetic movement. He was an avid fan of Terry and was also painted by John Singer Sargent (1856-1924) in 1894. Robertson, *Time Was*, 46.

⁸⁹ Few illustration of the gallery have survived but Newall provides a vivid account of the interior of the gallery, which was decorated with ‘antique furniture’, ‘exotic flowers’, the walls lined with ‘crimson silk damask’, ‘dados’ and ‘green silk velvet.’ Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery*, 3, 10-13.

⁹⁰ Du Maurier’s satirical cartoons offer a key visual record of early examples of ‘Aesthetic Dress.’ The first ‘Aesthetic’ cartoon was published in the magazine in March 1877, and Du Maurier continued to produce illustrations commenting on the icons, tastes, costume, language and behaviour of the ‘Aesthetes’ for the next four years, publishing his final such image on the 21st of May 1881. Du Maurier was also a writer,



Figure 6.19 - Edward Linley Sambourne, Design for an Aesthetic Theatrical Poster, captioned “*Let us live up to it*” and featuring Terry at its centre. Reproduced in *Punch* 7th May 1881, 215. Reproduced from Anne Anderson, “Fearful Consequences . . . of Living up to One’s Teapot’: Men, Women, and ‘Cultchah’ in the English Aesthetic Movement ca. 1870–1900.” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37.1 (2009): 219-54. Print.

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Whether attracting criticism or admiration, the Aesthetic movement was certainly receiving public recognition. Sites such as the Grosvenor Gallery and the New Gallery (which followed in 1888) provided prominent meeting points for those within and on the fringes of the Aestheticism.⁹¹ These were environments in which, as Newall shows,

and, as Chapter 5 discussed, his book *Trilby*, first published in 1894 and adapted for the stage in 1895, was partially inspired by the Aesthetic movement. It includes several references to both Terry and the Lyceum Theatre. George Du Maurier, *Trilby* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 91, 209.

⁹¹The Gallery brought together many of the figures who would go on to play a leading role in productions at the Lyceum Theatre. Significantly for Terry, alongside Sir Coutts Lindesay (1847-1913), the founder members included Joseph Comyns-Carr (1849-1916), husband to Alice Comyns-Carr who, from 1887, would have primary responsibility for designing Terry’s stage costumes. Amongst the first artists to exhibit their work were Burne Jones, James McNeil Whistler (1834-1903), Walter Crane (1845-1915), Albert Moore (1841-1893) and George Frederick Watts. Watts and Whistler were already known to Terry, her children had been brought up with Crane’s picture books as ‘their classic’, and the actress would go on to collaborate with Burne Jones in the Lyceum Company production of *King Arthur* in 1895. Terry, *The Story of my Life*, 80. The New Gallery, which opened in 1888 at 121 Regent Street W., London, was founded by Joseph Comyns-Carr and Charles Edward Hallé. Carr and Hallé had been co-directors of Sir Coutts Lindsay’s Grosvenor Gallery, but resigned from the increasingly troubled gallery in 1887. Alice Comyns-

‘Bohemia and high fashion mingled.’⁹² Comyns-Carr observed that the gallery founders, Sir Coutts and Lady Lindsay, ‘took a certain pride in being the first members of Society to bring the people of their own set into friendly contact with the distinguished folk of art and literature’ and ‘[...]gathered together the *elite* of the great world as well as all the brilliance of a select Bohemia.’⁹³

An icon of Aestheticism

By 1879, Terry’s prominence within the Aesthetic movement provoked Henry James (1843-1916) to declare that ‘Miss Ellen Terry is ‘aesthetic’; not only her garments but her features themselves bear the stamp of the new enthusiasm.’⁹⁴ Similarly Walter Hamilton’s survey of the movement (published in 1882) identified both Terry and Irving as actors whose ‘intensity’ earns them admiration from even ‘the strict Aesthete’, noting also that ‘it is indeed at the Lyceum Theatre that Aestheticism in all its beauty can be seen.’⁹⁵

Terry’s status as an ‘Icon of Aestheticism’ is also manifest in the satirical cartoons which ridiculed followers of the movement. One such image, entitled ‘Let us live Up to It’, created by Linley Sambourne (1844-1910) and published in *Punch* in 1881, features Terry at its centre. [FIGURE 6.19] Produced in the manner of a theatrical poster Terry is shown carrying a ‘blue and white’ teapot on a laurel wreath and is presenting this celebrated

Carr discusses this period in her husband’s career in her *Reminiscences*, 157-166. It was here that John Singer Sargent’s portrait of Terry as Lady Macbeth was first exhibited in 1889 becoming a ‘cause célèbre’ as a result. Loretta Clayton, “Oscar Wilde, Aesthetic Dress and the Modern Woman: Or Why Sargent’s Portrait of Ellen Terry Appeared in *The Woman’s World*” *Wilde Discoveries: Traditions, Histories, Archives*, Ed. Joseph Bristow (Toronto : Published by the University of Toronto Press in association with the UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 2013), 146.

⁹²Christopher Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions: Change and Continuity in the Victorian Art World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3.

⁹³ Comyns-Carr does however add the significant detail that, whilst Lady Lindesay ‘liked knowing artists and musicians and herself dabbled in both these arts[...], we [Comyns-Carr and her husband] of the Bohemian world were never deceived into thinking that she *really* included us in the “inner circle” of her own friends.’ Comyns Carr, *Reminiscences*, 54.

⁹⁴ Henry James, *Nation*, 13th June 1878 (J.H.Richards: New York).

⁹⁵ Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic movement in England* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1882), 31-32.

‘Aesthetic accessory’ to the Polish Actress Helena Modjeska (1840-1909).⁹⁶ Swathed in loosely gathered bands of fabric resembling a ‘classical’ style tunic. Her hair is also confined in a historically appropriate laurel wreath. These garments are clearly referencing the ‘Greek chitons’ frequently recommended as a form of Aesthetic attire and perhaps also Terry’s costumes from her recent performance as Camma in *The Cup* that same year.⁹⁷ Another caricature, by Alfred Bryan and printed in *Moonshine* in circa 1882 leaves no doubt regarding Terry’s enthusiasm for Aestheticism. [FIGURE 6.20] The lily Terry raises to her face, the Japanese fan clasped in her right hand, and ‘blue and white’ vase which surmounts the column on which the actress is leaning, were all typical accessories of the Aesthete [FIGURE 6.21]. Terry’s dress, with its full sleeves and a raised waistline, also typifies the Aesthetic interest in reviving past fashions, (in this instance those of the early nineteenth century). Her connection with the caricature is evident not only from the features, but also in the raised, pleated collar at the neckline, a style Terry favoured and which, as will be discussed, reappears frequently in photographs and sketches of the actress. [FIGURE 6.22] Such caricatures make apparent Terry’s significant role as a figurehead for the movement and present her as a woman, who, like

⁹⁶ This caricature has been discussed by Anne Anderson in her chapter, “Fearful Consequences...of Living up to One’s Teapot’: Men, Women and ‘Cultchah’ in the Aesthetic movement,” *Rethinking the Interior*, Ed. Jason Edwards and Imogen Hart (London: Ashgate, 2010) 112. Helena Modjeska (*Modrzejewska*) dominated Polish Theatre in the late 1860s and early 1870s. After emigrating to America in 1876, she began to make a career on the America stage, making a tour to Europe between 1879 and 1882. Despite her comparatively limited command of English the actress achieved great success and popularity on the European and America stage

⁹⁷ A debate entitled “Letters from Artists on Ladies’ Dress” published in *The Strand Magazine* in 1891, produced the general consensus that ‘classical Greek Dress should be our guide in all costume’ as such garments ‘never contradict nature’s simple lines...[and] by their shape express the figure underneath.’ Madame Starr Canziane. “Letters from Artists on Ladies Dress” *The Strand Magazine*, London, 1891, 172. Godwin also addressed this issue, drawing attention to the practical difficulties of adopting classical dress in a climate so different from the Greek and Roman environment in which it originally flourished. E.W.Godwin, *Dress, and Its Relation to Health and Climate* (London: W. Clowes, 1884) 75.

the teapot she carries in the second image, acts as an icon of Aestheticism and embodies 'the Aesthetic woman.'⁹⁸



Figure 6.20 - Alfred Byran, Line drawn caricature of Terry, 'Moonshines Gallery of Professional Beauty, 7 and 8 (Alternated with Illustrated Natural History),' 1882. Press cutting pasted in the Percy Fitzgerald Album, Vol. 5, 295. Garrick Club London. Personal photograph by the author. 6 August 2013.

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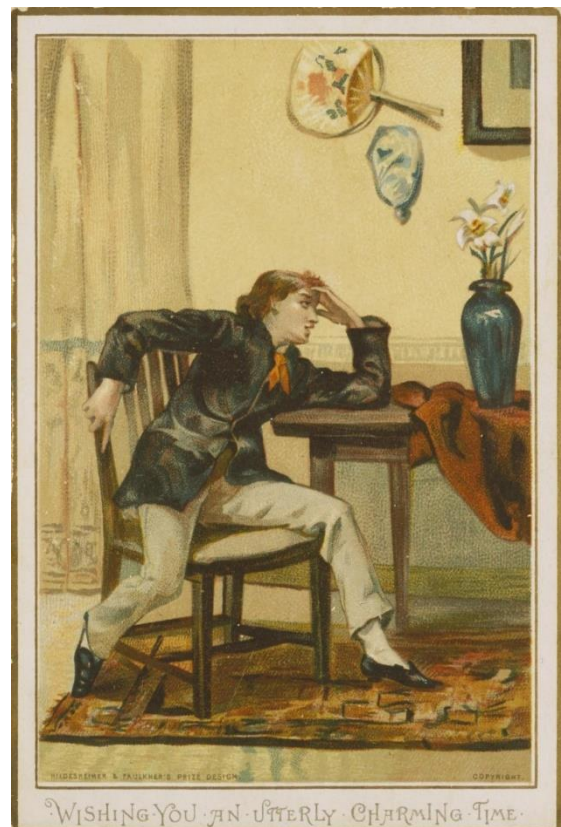


Figure 6.21 - Albert Ludovici, II, One of a series of greetings cards satirising the Aesthetic Movement, 1882. Colour lithograph on card. 12.5 x 8.5 cm. Printed and published by Hildesheimer & Faulkner, London. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.2413-1953.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁹⁸ The longevity of this status can be seen in the fact that Terry was cited by Margaret D. Stetz as an example of the 'Aesthetic' Woman in her chapter, of the same name, published in: Calloway and Orr Ed., *The Cult of Beauty*, 178-183.



Figure 6.22 - Sir Johnstone Forbes Robertson, Ellen Terry, 1876. Oil on canvas 60.8 x 50.6cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG 3789.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

‘Aesthetic’ costumes

The Lyceum production of *The Cup* in 1881, confirmed Terry’s standing within the movement. The elaborate staging and the classically inspired costumes combined to create a production which was hailed as a ‘banquet of sensuous delicacies.’⁹⁹ As Chapter 4 discussed, great care was taken to create the ‘right’ material for the costumes and Godwin, who provided advice for these costumes, also sent Terry’s notes regarding the ‘archaeological’ accuracy of the attitudes she assumed during the performance.¹⁰⁰ Terry, ‘her picturesque figure robed in stuff that seems spun out of the wings of a dragon fly,’

⁹⁹ *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 January, 1881. Press cutting, Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume I: 141-143, Garrick Collection, London.

¹⁰⁰ E. W. Godwin, Susan W. Soros, and Catherine Arbuthnott et al. *E.W. Godwin: Aesthetic movement Architect and Designer*. (New Haven: Yale University Press published for the Bard Graduate Center Studies in the Decorative Arts, New York, 1999) 35.

dominated the performances and the Lyceum Theatre was established as a venue in which ‘Aestheticism in all its beauty [could] be seen.’¹⁰¹ [FIGURE 6.23]

There are also clear visual links between the style of the staging and the costumes and the recreations of the classical world depicted in the work of artists such as Frederick Leighton (1830-1896) and Lawrence Alma Tadema (1836-1912), particularly the paintings they created between circa 1860 and 1885. Indeed, one reviewer actually declared that the production captured ‘[...] the concentrated essence of such a fascinating art as that of Sir Frederick Leighton and Mr. Alma Tadema in a breathing and tangible form [...]’¹⁰²



Figure 6.23 - Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 10.2cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:317-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁰¹ Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic movement in England* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1882) 31-32. See also “The Cup,” *Truth*, Jan 13th 1881, 47. Press Cutting, Percy Fitzgerald Album, Vol IV: 175-6. Garrick Club, London.

¹⁰² “The Cup,” *Daily Mail*, Jan 4th 1881, n.p. Press Cutting, Percy Fitzgerald album, Vol IV: 143. Garrick Club, London.



Figure 6.24 - W & D Downey Photographers, May Fortescue as Lady Ella in *Patience* at the Opera Comique, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 9.3 x 5.7cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.146:48-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Parallels can also be traced between Terry's costumes and the costumes created for a production staged the same year, at the Opera Comique in W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan's satire on the movement, the comic opera *Patience or Bunthorne's Bride*.¹⁰³ The similarities between the theatrical costumes are particularly apparent in the garments worn by May Fortescue (1862-1950) as Lady Ella.¹⁰⁴ [FIGURE 6.24] Again, the connection with Aesthetic paintings is apparent as the sleeves on the costumes worn by both Terry and Fortescue are gathered at the upper arm, in the same way as in garments depicted in

¹⁰³ The programs and publicity connected with *Patience* highlighted its status as "A new Aesthetic Opera." This emphasis on the novelty of the piece did not pass unnoticed among the critics, who were quick to point out that this was not the first dramatic production to take up the new craze for Aestheticism as its subject matter. A production that many reviewers identified as a direct rival to *Patience* was Sir Francis Cowley Burnard's (1836-1917) play *The Colonel*, which had been produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre some two months before *Patience* opened at the Opera Comique on the 24th of April 1881. Whether or not *Patience* is deemed to have followed, or led a trend, the success of the production was such that it transferred to the newly built *Savoy Theatre* in October 1881, and subsequently toured America.

¹⁰⁴ A detailed analysis of the costumes in this production can be found in Veronica Isaac, "Costume," *The Oxford Handbook of Opera* ed. Helen Greenwald (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Tadema's *The Midday Slumbers*, 1881 and Leighton's *Orpheus and Euridyce*, 1864-5.¹⁰⁵

[FIGURE 6.25, 6.26] Furthermore, the bracelets worn by both Terry and Fortescue strongly resemble a serpent style armlet owned by Tadema's second wife, Laura Theresa Alma Tadema (1852-1909) which featured in many of his paintings, including *The Sculpture Gallery*, (first exhibited at the Royal Academy, London in 1875).¹⁰⁶ [FIGURE 6.27, 6.28, 6.29] As this comparison Terry and Fortescue's costumes illustrates, whether satirising Aestheticism (*Patience*), or celebrating the values of the movement (*The Cup*), the garments and accessories worn by both performers closely referenced Aesthetic paintings and functioned as a visual embodiment of the ideals of the movement: their dress became 'art.'



Figure 6.25 - Sir Frederick Leighton, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, 1864-5. Oil on canvas. Measurements not recorded. Leighton House Museum, London. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number LGH224376.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁰⁵ Jane W. Stedman has recorded how Gilbert devised stage pictures in the styles of contemporary Aesthetic painters, including Leighton's *Daphnephoria* (1878), and Burne Jones's *Design from Romance of the Rose* (1881). Jane W. Stedman, *W.S. Gilbert: A Classic Victorian and His Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 183.

¹⁰⁶ This bracelet now in a Private Collection was displayed in the V&A's 'Cult of Beauty' exhibition. Images and further information can be found in the accompanying book. Clare Phillips, "Jewellery", *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic movement, 1860-1900*, Stephen Calloway, Lynn F. Orr, and Esmé Whittaker (London: V&A Publishing, 2011) 208-9. Amongst the paintings in which the armlet features are Tadema's *The Sculpture Gallery*, 1874 (first exhibited in London in 1875). "Lawrence Alma Tadema, *The Sculpture Garden*, 1874." *Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth*. [n.d.] The bracelet also appears in *The Roses of Heliogabalus*, 1888 and *The Fridgadariam*, 1890. For further information about the bracelet see also Jeffrey A Cadby, "Gold Snake Armlet, designed by Lawrence Alma Tadema for his wife Laura," Jeff Cadby's Facets of Knowledge, Wordpress, 28 November 2014.



Figure 6.26 - Lawrence Alma Tadema, *The Midday Slumbers*, 1881. Watercolour on paper. 65 x 25cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number HTL91863.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.27 - Unknown photographer, May Fortescue as Lady Ella in *Patience* at the Opera Comique, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 9.5cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.146:83-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.28- Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 10.2 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:318-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.29 - Maxim Garcha. Colour photograph of a gold snake armlet, set with diamonds, turquoise, rubies and sapphires. The armlet was designed by Lawrence Alma-Tadema for his second wife Laura Theresa Alma Tadema and engraved with her name in Greek script. Tadema commissioned the jewellers and goldsmiths JS & AB Wyon to create the armlet in circa 1870-3. Private Collection of Jeffrey A. Cadby.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

‘Fashioned’ or ‘fashioning’?

Terry was not simply following, or being ‘fashioned’ by the movement however. The 1887 production of *The Amber Heart*, in which Terry, appearing without Irving, played the lead, illustrates how the actress actively exploited and embraced her prominent position within the Aesthetic movement to ‘form [a very specific] self.’¹⁰⁷

Terry’s deliberate identification with Aestheticism is evident in the promotional photographs and, as in the Bryan caricature, she appears alongside a lily, a flower which, like the sunflower, had been adopted as an icon of the Aesthetic movement.¹⁰⁸ [FIGURE 6.30] Securely established within the Lyceum Company, Terry also chose this moment

¹⁰⁷ Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning*, 2-3.

¹⁰⁸ Oscar Wilde was amongst the figures credited with establishing the lily and sunflower as symbols of the movement. Charlotte Gere, and Lesley Hoskins *The House Beautiful: Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Interior* (London: Lund Humphries, 2000) 12,13,26.

to dismiss her previous costume designer, Harris, in order to collaborate with Comyns-Carr, also a supporter of Aestheticism. Comyns-Carr had an innovative approach to design which allowed the pair to create costumes which started, rather than followed, fashions.¹⁰⁹ As the analysis of the costume in Chapter 4 showed, the costume Comyns-Carr created for Terry advertises her preference for Aesthetic Dress. The dress exemplifies the Aesthetic preference for garments which, as will be discussed, defied fashion, and drew inspiration from the past to create styles which celebrated ‘the natural form’ and suited the individual. The wide hanging sleeves reference depictions of medieval dress whilst the loose, flowing swathes of pale fabric echo classical robes, and are softly shaped using pleats and weights, rather than corsetry. The design also allowed Terry the freedom of movement that was considered so important within Aestheticism, and, as Chapter 3 demonstrated, by Terry herself. As Chapter 4 revealed, the success of this costume was such that Comyns-Carr revived the design when creating a dress for Terry’s performance as Fair Rosamund in *Becket* in 1893, six years later. [FIGURE 6.31]

Chapter 5 established that Terry was not the only actress to wear stage costumes influenced by the Aestheticism. Langtry, who first rose to prominence when painted and idolised by leading figures within Aestheticism, began her stage career wearing costumes which deliberately referenced her status within the movement.¹¹⁰ Langtry soon

¹⁰⁹ Comments in Comyns-Carr’s *Reminiscences*, and the surviving costumes, indicate that Patience Harris had a much more conservative and traditional approach to stage costuming. Comyns-Carr was willing to adopt a more unorthodox and experimental approach, and more significantly she was also ‘an archpriestess of the Aesthetic dress movement’ (Cumming, *Macbeth at the Lyceum*, Costume, 12, 1978, 56). Similarly Loretta Clayton, referring to Comyns-Carr’s own remarks on the subject in her *Reminiscences* suggests that Terry’s new costume designer might have provided ‘the real life model for George Du Maurier’s character Mrs. Cimabue Brown.’ Loretta Clayton, ‘Oscar Wilde, Aesthetic Dress and the Modern Woman: Or Why Sargent’s Portrait of Ellen Terry Appeared in *The Woman’s World*.’ 148. Clayton references Comyns-Carr’s *Reminiscences*, 84-5.

¹¹⁰ Langtry discusses her rise to prominence in her autobiography Lillie Langtry, *The Days I Knew*, (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1925), 53-55 and 86-97. Laura Beatty also touches upon Langtry’s connection with Aestheticism in her biography of Langtry, *Lillie Langtry: Manners, Masks and Morals* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1999) 58-65. Citing John Stokes, Michael R. Booth, and Susan Bassnett, *Bernhardt, Terry, Duse: The Actress in Her Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 9, Clayton suggests that ‘Critics have argued that virtually all of the great actresses of the fin de

abandoned ‘classical draperies’ however, in favour of costly couture gowns and established a profitable partnership with the couturiers Charles Frederick Worth (1825-1895) and his son Jean-Philippe (1856-1926).¹¹¹ Terry, in contrast, continued to work with Comyns-Carr, and returned to Aesthetic styles throughout her career.¹¹²

Irving employed leading artists within the Aesthetic movement to design some of his most spectacular productions.¹¹³ Terry was particularly impressed by the costume Alma-Tadema designed for her role as Imogen in the 1896 production of *Cymbeline*, describing it as ‘[...] one of the loveliest dresses that [she] ever wore.’¹¹⁴ [FIGURE 6.32] Terry’s praise for this costume reflects the skill with which Tadema’s design drew upon the myriad of styles associated with Aesthetic Dress to create a costume suited to this specific actress. Whilst carefully referencing the draped and silhouette of classical robes, it has also been adapted to suit Terry’s, by then, fuller figure.¹¹⁵ An examination of the costume,

siècle were related to aestheticism not only because of the company they kept, but also because of the ways they styled themselves. These actresses avoided makeup, or at least claimed such; made progressive choices in costume, including the avoidance of corsets; and led nontraditional private lives.’ Loretta Clayton, ‘Oscar Wilde, Aesthetic Dress and the Modern Woman: Or Why Sargent’s Portrait of Ellen Terry Appeared in *The Woman’s World*.’ 151.

¹¹¹ Laura Beatty has discussed the profitable partnership Langtry established with the couturier Charles Worth, ‘[...] with whom she cleverly negotiated acknowledgement in her programme as part payment’ for her costumes. Laura Beatty, *Lillie Langtry: Manners, Masks and Morals* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1999) 294. Similarly, in her discussion of the ‘House of Worth’ Elizabeth Ann Coleman notes that Langtry ‘Acquired much of both her personal and her professional wardrobe (from at least 1885 on) from Worth.’ and, citing Pierre Sichel, *The Jersey Lily: The Story of the Fabulous Mrs. Langtry*. (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1958) notes that ‘[Langtry] reputedly tried to negotiate her bill promising a North American tour with advertisements in every program’. Elizabeth Ann Coleman, *The Opulent Era: Fashions of Worth, Doucet and Pingat*, (New York: Thames and Hudson and The Brooklyn Museum, 1989) 106. A vibrant pink costume in the Ellen Terry Collection, and reputedly owned by Langtry, also has a label woven with ‘Worth, Paris’ stitched to the dressband in the bodice. See Appendix 1, Lillie Langtry, SMA.COST.190, 1118915.

¹¹² Images of Langtry’s costumes in subsequent productions within the Victoria and Albert Museum document the actress’s transition towards mainstream fashion and couture dress. Notable examples include the series of photographs which painter and photographer Henry Van de Weyde (1838-1924) took of Langtry in 1885 in which Langtry is shown tightly corseted and wearing elaborate evening dress. Similarly images of Langtry from 1899 show her wearing costumes which Jean-Phillipe at the House of Worth created for the production of *The Degenerates* at the Haymarket Theatre.

¹¹³ Amongst these were the 1895 production of *King Arthur*, examined in Chapter 4, for which Burne-Jones designed the set and costumes, and also the 1896 production of *Cymbeline*, designed by Alma-Tadema.

¹¹⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 350.

¹¹⁵ Terry was 49 in the year *Cymbeline* was staged and as Comyns-Carr reveals in her *Reminiscences* there was some debate between Tadema and Terry about how to achieve a costume which would be ‘becoming to her figure.’ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 254.

which survives at Smallhythe, revealed that the long sleeved bodice is shaped with soft pleating and, Terry's waist would have been defined with loosely gathered triangular bands of twill silk (rather than a corset).¹¹⁶ [FIGURE 6.33] The colours have also been chosen with care. All fit within the colour palette of natural, muted, tones favoured within Aestheticism.¹¹⁷ The subtle cream and sea green silk gauze used for the bodice flatter and highlight Terry's face and hands. Conscious of the theatrical space for which the costume was intended however, Tadema selected bolder tones for the skirt of the costume which is constructed from panels of purple, orange, russet and gold twill silk. [FIGURE 6.34] The success of the costume, both as a work of art and a garment tailored to Terry as an individual, is apparent in surviving images of the actress. [FIGURE 6.35]

Although Terry's decision to continue her allegiance to Aestheticism can be partially attributed to the style of production favoured by Irving and the Lyceum, there were also clear personal advantages for the actress. By presenting herself as an icon of a movement which venerated 'art', and 'the artist,' Terry was able to establish herself as an 'artist' rather than simply an 'actress.' As this chapter will show however, this was not simply a marketing ploy and Terry remained deeply committed to Aesthetic design, and to a rejection of the 'fashionable,' within her dress and private houses throughout her life.

¹¹⁶ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Imogen, *Cymbeline*, 1896, SMA.TC.105 [1118830].

¹¹⁷ Rejecting the vivid tones which could be achieved with chemical (aniline) dyes, Aestheticism attached great importance to choosing flattering, natural colours for dress. Numerous articles and handbooks on Aesthetic Dress address this theme. They include Mrs. H.R. Haweis who touches upon this issue in *The Art of Dress* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1879), 98 and devotes an entire chapter of *The Art of Beauty* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878) to 'Colour', 175-204. Louise Higgin also addressed colour in her publication, *Art As Applied to Dress: With Special Reference to Harmonious Colouring* (London: J.S. Virtue, 1885).



Figure 6.30 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:407-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.31 - Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Fair Rosamund in *Becket*, Lyceum Theatre, 1893. Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.4cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:482-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.32 - Photographer unknown. Ellen Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896. Photographic paper on card mount. 30 x 25 cm. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1122467.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.33 - Detail of the bodice which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 6 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.105 [1118830].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.34 - Detail of the skirt which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 6 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.105 [1118830].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.35 - Photographer unknown. Hand tinted photograph of Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, 1896, Lyceum Theatre. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1119387.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

A suitable 'stage set'

Terry's self-fashioning successfully maintained her popularity and, importantly, helped her to negotiate 'traditional ideas of female virtue.'¹¹⁸ Her success in this endeavour stemmed in part from the fact that, as Eltis emphasises, Terry was constantly performing 'as naturally and mutably in private correspondence as on the public stage.'¹¹⁹ Terry's performances were not confined to paper however, and her domestic space also functioned as additional stage set, over which she maintained tight control.

The impact Terry's relationships with Watts and Godwin had upon her taste has already been established. Whilst Watts introduced Terry to the concept of a harmonious domestic environment, it was through Godwin that Terry learnt how to create such spaces for herself. The first home Terry and Godwin shared was the 'The Red House', near Gustard Common, Hertfordshire, but it was the house Godwin designed for the couple in circa 1869, Pigeonwick, at Fallows Green, which had the most significant and lasting impact on Terry's taste.¹²⁰ [FIGURE 6.36]

Though Terry revealed relatively little about this phase in her career, details about the houses the couple shared, and the decorative styles they favoured, can be gleaned from letters sent by Godwin to Terry, which remain in the collection at Smallhythe.¹²¹ Their

¹¹⁸ Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 171.

¹¹⁹ Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 183.

¹²⁰ Many of Godwin's designs for the property survive in the archive of the Royal Institute of British Architects. One such design (dating from circa 1869) includes a profile image of a female figure dressed in pale green. The figure with its blonde hair and draped Aesthetic style gown, with long sleeves and a slight train, is very likely to have been intended as a representation of Terry. RIBA Archive, V&A, Library Reference RIBA12579 PB526/5 (10) (RAN 7/L/5 (10)).

¹²¹ These letters are grouped together with further papers at Smallhythe Place, where they are filed under the reference number SMA/MS/39-50. In 1877, Godwin was also designing a house for the artist J.M. Whistler. His designs for this property, and related drawings, provide a further indication of the style favoured by Godwin and which he and Terry are likely to have adopted within their own home. See for instance Design for House & Studio for J.A.M. Whistler Esq, Chelsea, c.1877-78 (pen & ink on paper), Private Collection and Outline of Interior Decoration, 1881 (ink on tracing paper) 30.5x45.7cm, Private Collection. Both images accessible via Bridgeman Art Library.

contents show that Terry was actively consulted regarding the furnishing of their home. A letter addressed to their daughter Edy, (though clearly intended for Terry to read as it repeatedly refers to ‘Mama’). Godwin explains that he has been ‘obliged to paper over the Second and 3rd floors’ and that the stairs are to be left unpainted ‘if mama don’t mind the look of old stone.’ He apologises that the paper used for the nurseries is cheap and does not have the blue birds Edy wished for, but, suggests that it can be ‘covered with pictures and old fans.’¹²² A second letter, written directly to Terry, explains that he has chosen the ‘Japan paper curtains’ for the drawing room as ‘Mule cloth wouldn’t do.’ He also reassures her, ‘you can make what changes you like’ when the room is free of workmen. Similarly, Godwin has taken responsibility for ensuring the bedroom they share on the second floor is ‘fit for habitation’ and wall papered, (though they will have to make do with shutters and blinds until the curtains are ready), but has left the decoration of the ‘Lady’s Snuggery’ for her to do ‘what [she] likes with.’¹²³

When financial difficulties compelled them to return to London in 1874, the pair rented a house in Taviton Street.¹²⁴ A sense of the aesthetic ‘harmony’ cultivated by Godwin can be gleaned from a description Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson (1853-1937) provides of this house.¹²⁵ Forbes-Robertson (an actor and painter) was a friend and sometime

¹²² This letter is currently in the collection at Smallhythe and not part of the wider correspondence currently held on long term loan at the British Library. The date has been added by Terry in an inscription which also notes that it was presented to her by Edy in 1887.

¹²³ Descriptions within the letter indicate that it was sent in the summer of 1875. This would fit with Terry’s performance pattern during this period. It suggests that the children were living with Terry at this point, with their nanny ‘Boo’ Rumball to take care of them. This letter is currently in the collection at Smallhythe and not part of the wider correspondence currently held on long term loan at the British Library.

¹²⁴ The property on Taviton Street was close to the current location of Kings Cross St Pancras, Euston and Russell Square.

¹²⁵ Godwin also provided several descriptions of this house (where Terry and he lived together from circa 1874-5) in an article he produced for *The Architect* in 1876. As Lionel Lambourne discusses, Godwin’s descriptions reveal that the woodwork below the dado was painted ‘a rather dark toned yellow of which yellow ochre is the base, but combined with white, sprinkled with gamboges, Prussian blue and vermillion.’ On the walls above this level was a frieze ‘painted in a pale grey green (that green sometimes seen at the stem end of a pineapple leaf when the other end has faded’ indeed, as Godwin acknowledged, ‘most of the colours in the room [were] gathered from the pineapple’ E.W. Godwin, ‘My House ‘in’ London’, *The Architect*, 1876. Quoted in Lionel Lambourne. *The Aesthetic Movement*, London: Phaidon.1996, 161.

colleague of Terry and visited this house in 1874. He recalled being shown into a drawing room where the '[...] floor was covered with straw coloured matting' and the white walls, divided by a dado 'of the same material,' were decorated with hangings of 'cretonne, with a fine Japanese pattern in delicate grey-blue.' A dominant feature within this space was the 'full sized cast of the Venus of Milo' and in front of this stood a pedestal and censer 'from which rose, curling round the Venus, ribbons of blue smoke.' Forbes-Robertson also describes Terry's 'floating' entrance into the room, presenting her as a 'vision of loveliness' whose 'blue kimono' and 'wonderful golden hair' was so perfectly suited to the setting that '[...] she seemed to melt into the surroundings and appeared almost intangible.'¹²⁶

Terry's relationships with Watts and Godwin initiated her enduring sense of the importance of adapting her dress to match her setting both on and the stage.¹²⁷ This attitude to dress and décor was also central to the Aesthetic movement. Indeed, in an essay entitled '*The Two D's or; Decoration and Dress*,' a prominent commentator on Aesthetic attire, Mrs Haweis (1848-1898), warned her readers 'not [to] buy dresses which in fashion or colour are unsuitable to your room' or to have 'rooms which disagree with your dress.'¹²⁸

¹²⁶Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, *A Player Under Three Reigns* (London: T.Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1925) 66-67.

¹²⁷ As Auerbach notes, the critic William Archer, remarked upon Terry's ability to 'harmonise' with stage 'pictures' and Chapter 4 demonstrated the importance Terry attached to an awareness of lighting and colour on the stage when designing her costumes. Auerbach, *Ellen Terry, Player in Her Time*, 171.

¹²⁸ Mary Haweis, "The Two D's; or Decoration and Dress", *Temple Bar*, 67, 1883, 124. Mrs Mary Eliza Haweis (1848-1898) was amongst the earliest writers on Aesthetic Dress, publishing her first articles discussing dress and art in *Saint Paul's Magazine* in 1873. The wife of a clergyman, and a dress historian, Haweis' best known publications are *The Art of Beauty* (1878) and *The Art of Dress* (1879). She was also commissioned to write a series of articles on this theme for *The Queen* and other art and fashion journals. Haweis has been discussed in detail by both Stella Mary Newton, *Health, Art and Reason: Dress Reformers of the 19th Century*, (John Murray, 1974), 52-3 and Patricia A. Cunningham, *Reforming women's fashion, 1850-1920: politics, health and art* (Kent State University Press. 2006) 104-121.

Forbes-Robertson's description of Terry conveys the success with which she had adapted her dress and movement to her surroundings. It makes apparent her recognition that, by adopting Aesthetic 'costume,' and ensuring that her houses provided an appropriate backdrop for her garments, she could make a clear, and determined statement of her pioneering role in a movement which, as Haweis would write four years later, celebrated 'Dress as Art' and an 'art form.'¹²⁹

Terry's description of a visit the actress Mrs. Marie Bancroft (1839-1921) paid to this house in Taverton Street in 1875, exposes the contrast between Terry's Aesthetic lifestyle, and the dress and domestic life of her contemporaries. As Terry records, Bancroft 'petite - dressed in black - elegant Parisian black' arrived to find a room 'which had been almost completely stripped of furniture. The floor was covered with Japanese matting, and at one end was a cast of the Venus of Milo, almost the same colossal size as the original.' Appropriately attired to match the Aesthetic environment Terry was wearing a dress

[...] of some deep yellow woollen [sic] material which my little daughter used to call the "frog dress," because it was speckled with brown like a frog's skin. It was cut like a Viollet-le-Duc tabard, and had not a trace of the fashion of the time.¹³⁰

Contemporary descriptions and images indicate that Terry continued to decorate her houses in a manner influenced by Aestheticism, even after the collapse of her relationship with Godwin. Indeed, she retained several items of furniture designed by Godwin

¹²⁹ Mary Haweis, *The Art of Dress* (London: Chatto&Windus, 1879) 10-15, 19 and 32-3.

¹³⁰ Terry, *Story of My Life*, 93. Terry's reference to 'Viollet-le-Duc' relates to the work of Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), which was also discussed in Chapter 4. A French architect and theorist, Le Duc was particularly famous for his 'restorations' of 'medieval' buildings. He also had a significant impact on contemporary knowledge of dress history and fashion through his book *Histoire de l'habitation humaine, depuis les temps préhistoriques jusqu'à nos jours* (1875) (published in English in 1876 as *Habitations of Man in All Ages*). The illustrations which accompanied this history of the domestic architecture provided a source of inspiration for many stage and Aesthetic designers.

throughout her life including a tea table he made for her, which remains amongst the furniture at Smallhythe.¹³¹ [FIGURE 6.37] Evidence of Terry's continuing enthusiasm for Aesthetic Décor, can be found in description of her London residence in Barkston Gardens, Earl's Court in 1892. As the author observes, she has retained the sculpture of the Venus de Milo set back in a recess on 'quaint oaken sideboard' and 'Aesthetic accessories' such as the 'amber silk curtains' in the drawing room, together with dado rails and tiles are visible in various rooms.¹³² The most striking part of the house however is what they term 'The Alcove.' [FIGURE 6.38] They describes this space as 'the most delightful arrangement in miniature rooms conceivable' remarking that,

[...] As a specimen of artistic furnishing [...] this little alcove may be opened out as a perfect model [...] How cosy are the cushions under the canopy of the window-how quaint the oaken table and chairs, which are an exact model of those used by Shakespeare himself.¹³³

This space which is also '[...] in every sense of the word a study' has clearly been designed with care, and communicates key messages to its audience. The dual identity of this area, which is simultaneously artistic and academic, deliberately intertwines Terry's 'public' and 'private' identities. Subtle allusions to Shakespeare within the furniture reference Terry's Aesthetic sensibilities: specifically her ability to draw inspiration from past elegance to create contemporary beauty. The same furnishings also recall Terry's theatrical career, in particular her status as 'Shakespearean actress.' This effect is heightened by the numerous books and pictures also contained within the alcove. These

¹³¹ In addition to this tea table (National Trust Inventory Number 1117440) Terry also retained a sideboard which she used in her London home. A duplicate of this sideboard survives in the V&A, Museum Reference Number CIRC.38:1 to 5-1953.

¹³² How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 490.

¹³³ How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 491.

advertise the intense research which, as Terry's surviving library evidences, informed her professional work.¹³⁴

Wilson suggests that 'For maximum effect upon their urban stage bohemians needed a *mise en scene*, theatrical sets and costumes for the performance of revolt and identity.'¹³⁵

Followers of Aestheticism, Terry included, certainly conform to this characterisation and descriptions and photographs of Terry's houses illustrate her continued adherence to a 'Bohemian' style of décor which '[...] expressed both an avant-garde Aesthetic and individual personality.'¹³⁶



Figure 6.36 - Edward Godwin. Design for Pigeonwick, Fallows Green, Harpenden, ca. 1869. Ink, watercolour and pencil on paper. Measurements not recorded. RIBA Archive, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Reference number RIBA 12579.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹³⁴ How, *Illustrated Interview*. No, XVII, 490. Gail Marshall has discussed Terry's library and begun to explore the significance of the extensive annotations Terry made on her texts. Gail Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 157-160 and Gail Marshall, "Ellen Terry: Shakespearean Actress and Critic," *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 11.3 (2004):355-364.

¹³⁵ Elizabeth Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts* (London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2000) 159.

¹³⁶ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 161.



Figure 6.37 - Mahogany tea table, designed for Terry by Godwin in circa 1870-1875. Museum Record Photograph. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1117440.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.38 - Unknown artist. 'The Alcove.' Line drawn image from an original photograph by Elliot and Fry, featured in Henry How, *Illustrated Interview*, No, XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 1892, 494. Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

6.5 AT THE FOREFRONT OF AESTHETICISM

Dress as 'art'

'Bohemian dress' was also, as Wilson shows, 'fraught with meaning' which 'might be symbolic, might be theatrical, or deeply authentic.'¹³⁷ In Terry's case the 'meaning' of her dress shifted according to the context in which she appeared. Whether on the 'public' or 'private' stage, Terry adapted her dress to suit the 'role' being performed, and to express the 'meaning' appropriate to the setting.

Although Terry wrote about and preserved examples of her theatrical costumes, she made comparatively little effort to document her personal dress. Some references appear in letters, articles and her autobiography, but Terry never discusses her personal dress in the same level of detail as her stage costume, and very limited information survives regarding where she purchased, and who made, her off stage dress.¹³⁸ Thus a far greater reliance must be placed here upon the evidence drawn from contemporary descriptions, photographs, illustrations and paintings. The wealth of information contained within this source material facilitates an exploration of the manner in which Terry's personal style evolved over the course of her life and career and, also, the social, artistic and historic factors, which shaped her taste.

As was the case with Terry's approach to interior décor, there is a noticeable alteration in her dress following her marriage to Watts in 1864, after which her personal dress begins to diverge from the fashionable silhouette. Her move away from fashionable dress towards Aesthetic garments was confirmed during her relationship with Godwin in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Though strongly influenced by the styles and views of

¹³⁷ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 161.

¹³⁸ One key exception is, as Chapter 4 discussed, are surviving letters Terry which sent to her costume maker Nettleship. These reveal that Terry requested her to make personal garments on several occasions.

Aestheticism, Terry also drew inspiration from developments in fashionable dress, and wider movements within art and society. Her personal style also evolved in response to the changing shape of her body and also, towards the end of her life, her declining health.

As the analysis which follows will show, though the garments worn by Terry represent a fusion of diverse styles and influences, it is possible to trace three key phases in the development of her personal style. The first stage coincided with, and arguably resulted from, Terry's close relationship with Godwin and his appreciation for the art of Japan. During this period Terry, then young and slim, was one of the first women in England to adopt garments which reflected both an enthusiasm for Japonisme and the first signs of the development of 'Aesthetic' dress.

By 1880, however, a second stage in Terry's personal style becomes apparent. Established as an independent artist and performer Terry had begun to develop her taste and move beyond from Godwin's initial influence. Terry's dress in the late 1880s and 1890s reflects this self-determination and her kimonos are replaced by floor length dresses, which draw their inspiration from the fashions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The third period in the development of Terry's personal style is characterised by a shift towards tunic style garments and the incorporation of Chinese robes. By 1900 Terry's figure was much fuller and no longer suited the belted kimonos or floor length 'Watteau back' dresses she had previously worn. The 'Chinese' and 'Greek' robes Terry now adopted flattered her altered body shape and, in her final years, proved both comfortable and practical.



Figure 6.39 - Magenta silk dress with bodice, jacket, skirt, peplum and bow, Madame Vignon, Paris, 1869-1870. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.118 to D-1979.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.40 - Green silk dress with matching peplum and belt. Maker unknown, England, ca. 1872. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.101-B.1972.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.41 - Detail of internal boning, in a pale blue figured silk bodice. Liberty & Co. Ltd, London, 1898. Museum of London. Personal photograph by author, 29 October 2010. Museum Number 81.242.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.42 - Detail of internal bustle pad, in jewel green silk velvet plush dress. Hewell [?] and James Ltd., London, ca.1888-9. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by author, 22 February 2011. Museum Number T.407-2001.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.43 - Sir William Blake, *Portrait of Mrs Luke Ionides*, 1882. Oil on canvas. 102.2 x 115.2cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.1062:1, 2-2003.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.44 - William Powell Frith, *Private View at the Royal Academy*, 1881. Oil on canvas. 102 x 193cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Reference CRJ1959.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.45 - Detail from William Powell Frith, *Private View at the Royal Academy*, 1881. Oil on canvas. 102 x 193cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Reference CRJ377198.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Style 1: 'Aesthetic' dress and Japonisme (ca.1869-1880)

The emergence of Aesthetic dress as a distinctive form of attire was evident by the mid-1870s, with a number of books and articles commentating specifically on such garments. As existing research into Aesthetic dress has shown, contemporary publications and illustrations, together with the surviving clothing, reveal the diversity of the styles encompassed within the term 'Aesthetic dress.'¹³⁹ Fashion favoured heavily corseted

¹³⁹ This theme was ably addressed by Stella Mary Newton in the 1970s and few subsequent texts have surpassed the quality of her comprehensive discussion of this theme. More recent publications include, Diana Crane. 'Clothing behaviour as non-verbal resistance: Marginal women and alternative dress in the nineteenth century', *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives* (London: Routledge. 1999) 335-364; Patricia A. Cunningham, *Reforming women's fashion, 1850-1920: politics, health and art* (Kent State University Press. 2006); Edwina Ehrman, 'Frith and Fashion', *William Powell Frith: Painting the Victorian Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006) 111-129; Stella Mary Newton, *Health Art and*

figures and close fitting garments which were supported on bustles, embellished with complex trimmings, and created in the vivid colours made possible by the chemical (aniline) dyes discovered in the 1850s. [FIGURE 6.39 and 6.40] Aestheticism, in contrast, promoted subtle, natural shades, such as ochre and indigo.¹⁴⁰ Surviving examples of Aesthetic dress reveal that whilst many followers of the movement rejected the constricting underwear and garments required to achieve the fashionable silhouette, channels of steel and internal bustles were often used to provide support and structure within Aesthetic clothing.¹⁴¹ [FIGURE 6.41 and 6.42] The exterior of Aesthetic garments would generally be designed to conceal this internal support and, in contrast to the close fit associated with fashionable dress, they conveyed, often artificially, an impression of softness, employing drapery, loose pleats, tucks, and smocking, to shape the garment loosely to the wearer.¹⁴² [FIGURE 6.43]

Reason” Dress Reformers of the 19th century (London: Murray, 1974) and, most recently, Kimberly Wahl, *Dressed As in a Painting: Women and British Aestheticism in an Age of Reform* (Durham New Hampshire: University of New Hampshire Press, 2013).

¹⁴⁰ Texts such as Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) and Lucy Johnston with Marion Kite and Helen Persson, *Nineteenth-century Fashion in Detail* (London: V&A Publishing, 2005) which cover key elements of fashion during this period, are amongst those that have addressed the development of synthetic and aniline dyes. More recently, Charlotte Nicklas has made a notable contribution to specialised research on this subject area in her Doctoral thesis *Splendid hues: colour, dyes, everyday science and women's fashion, 1840-1875*. Doctoral thesis, University of Brighton, 2009 and articles such as Charlotte Nicklas, “Light, colour and language in mid-nineteenth century women’s fashion,” *Surface tensions: surface, finish and the meaning of objects*, Ed. Victoria Kelley and Glenn Adamson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

¹⁴¹ These include a pale blue figured silk bodice made by Liberty & Co. Ltd, London in 1898 in which the internal boning is concealed, and belied, by the gentle pleats used to shape the exterior, Museum of London, 81.242. Similarly, there is an Aesthetic dress held by the V&A, which whilst it has no internal boning and fits relatively loosely to the figure, does have a dress band, and a crescent shaped pad, added at the interior centre back of the bodice, where it joins the skirt, to create a subtle ‘bustle effect’ at this point. Victoria and Albert Museum, Museum Number T.407-2001.

¹⁴² These developments in seasonal fashion have already been widely documented elsewhere and these publications, together with the large number of surviving garments record that the silhouette fashionable in the mid 1870s and early 1880s relied upon a tightly laced corset to achieve a narrow waist and uplifted bust. Key publications include: Nancy Bradfield, *Costume in Detail: Women's Dress, 1730-1930* (Kent: Eric Dobby Publishing Ltd, New ed. 1995); Anne Buck, *Victorian Costume and Accessories* (New York: Costume and Fashion Press, revised edition, 1997); Sarah Levitt, *Fashion in Photographs, 1880-1900* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1991), Sarah Levitt, *Victorian's Unbuttoned: Registered Designs for clothing their wearers and makers, 1839-1900* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986); Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); Clare Rose, *Clothing and Society in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011); Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Norah Waugh, *The Cut of Women's Clothes 1600-1930s* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994).

William Powell Frith's (1819-1909), *A Private View at the Royal Academy* (1881) features an array of Aesthetic garments and illustrates the contrast between Aesthetic and Seasonal fashion. [FIGURE 6.44] The 'Aesthetes' depicted include a woman wearing a vivid salmon pink frock with a box pleated train known as a 'Watteau back', a style then very popular amongst women within the Aesthetic movement, Terry included.¹⁴³ Indeed, Terry is herself featured in the painting. [FIGURE 6.45] She is wearing a small black hat with soft crown and narrow brim, and the pleated sleeve of her dull gold/bronze dress is just visible behind the figure of Oscar Wilde, who dominates the scene.¹⁴⁴

As Ehrman has discussed, a visit to an art gallery, or, as Haweis suggested, 'an old Cathedral still decked by early bas-reliefs,' could provide inspiration for women wishing to dress artistically.¹⁴⁵ 'Old pictures' and books about period costume were regarded as a source of 'attractive sleeve details and decorative combinations of colours and fabrics' and led to a trend within Aestheticism for reviving styles fashionable in 'past ages.'¹⁴⁶ In her examination of the Aesthetic garments worn by the poets Katherine Bradley (1846-1914) and Edith Cooper (1862-1913), Sarah Parker, discovered direct evidence that they

¹⁴³ This double box pleat at the centre back of the dress took its name from the paintings of the artist Jean Antione Watteau (1684-1721) and was developed from the mid the late eighteenth Robe à la Française or 'Sack back' styles in which his female subjects were generally dressed.

¹⁴⁴ As his position suggests, Wilde established himself as a prominent figure with the Aesthetic Movement. Both his clothing (in this instance a salmon pink tie, lily and brown velvet coat with wide lapels, and lily in his buttonhole) and the décor within his house on Tite Street, where he moved in 1884, (designed by Godwin and Whistler) were chosen to express his Aesthetic sensibilities. He was amongst the enthusiasts for Aestheticism satirised in the 1881 Gilbert and Sullivan opera *Patience* and his prominence was such that Richard D'Oyly Carte (1844-1901) (seeking to promote the American tour of *Patience*) agreed to finance Wilde's lecture tour. In return Wilde scheduled his arrival in American cities so that it would with the opening of the opera, acting, as Max Beerbohm suggested, as a "sandwich board for *Patience*." Ian Bradley, *Complete Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 269 and Alison Adburgham, *Liberty's: A biography of a shop* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1975) 30-31.

¹⁴⁵ Edwina Ehrman, 'Women's Dress'. In: *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1869-1900*. London: V&A Publishing, 2011, 207.

¹⁴⁶ Haweis, *Art of Dress*, 76. Not all women were in favour of this tendency to bow to 'the authority of the artist in matters of taste,' which as the author, and commentator Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897) warned, threatened to transform women into 'as series of costumed models for his pictures.' Mrs. Margaret Oliphant, *Dress* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1878) 5.

were drawing their inspiration from ‘the old masters’ viewed in the galleries of Europe.¹⁴⁷ Indeed a sketch of the Madonna by Cooper following a trip to Dresden in 1891 was actually captioned ‘Hints for a dress.’ As Parker showed, the two women ‘viewed their dresses as art-objects: ones that were to be carefully planned, constructed and displayed to the public gaze.’¹⁴⁸



Figure 6.46 - Southwell Brothers. Ellen Terry, circa 1863. Sepia Photograph on paper. 8.8 x 5.8 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:155-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁴⁷The two poets published under the joint name Michael Field and had both a professional and personal partnership.

¹⁴⁸ Parker discovered this evidence in their diaries and correspondence. These included the sketch Parkers discusses, which was accompanied by a description of ‘the pallid hellitrope’ colour of garment with its ‘rim about the neck and sleeves of old gold that harmonises the robe with the severe blue cloak.’ Sarah Parker, ‘Fashioning Michael Field: Michael Field and Late-Victorian Dress Culture,’ *Journal of Victorian Culture* (2013): 1-22 (12-13)



Figure 6.47 - Boned corset of silk trimmed with machine-made lace, worn with cage crinoline. Possibly made in France or Great Britain, 1864. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.169-1961.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.48 - G.F.Watts. *Choosing*. 1864. Oil on strawboard mounted on Gatorfoam. Measurements not recorded. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum number NGP 5048.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.49 - Henry Rigge. Ellen Terry, ca.1865-7. Sepia Photograph on paper. 9 x 5.8 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:153-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.50 - Dress of embroidered cotton muslin. Possibly made in England or France, ca. 1818, Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.79-1972.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.51 - Herbert Watkins. Ellen Terry, ca.1872, Sepia Photograph on paper. 9 x 6 cm.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:188-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

At the forefront of Aestheticism

Though seldom conforming to current trends, Terry's personal style did not completely reject fashionable dress. Photographs taken of her in the early 1860s reveal that as young woman she generally adhered to contemporary fashions. In *[FIGURE 6.46]*, (taken in circa 1863), for instance, Terry's full skirt is clearly supported by a crinoline and the structure of her corset is visible through the close fitting bodice of her dress.¹⁴⁹ As *[FIGURE 6.47]* demonstrates a crinoline or a stiff, padded, petticoat, and a corset were

¹⁴⁹ The photograph is not dated, but a series of photographs of Terry as Desdemona (held within the V&A collections, Museum numbers S.133:170, 172, 176 and 178 -2007) were taken at the Southwell Brother's Studio in Baker Street in 1863 and Terry's hair and features are consistent with this image of Terry in her personal dress, Museum number S.133:155-2007.

required to achieve this silhouette. Terry's marriage to Watts in 1864 however, heralded a shift in her attitude to dress and a visible alteration in her garments.

This change was signalled by the dark brown silk dress in which Terry appeared during the wedding ceremony. Designed by Pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt, Terry wears the same dress in the portrait Watts painted of her the same year. [FIGURE 6.48] Only the bodice of the dress is visible, but the departure from the bright aniline colours fashionable at the time, is apparent in the dark tones of the brown silk ground. Some lighter colours have been introduced at the wide neckline, which is edged with a white frill gathered in loose pleats, and decorated with a pale blue ribbon but their use is restricted to subtle highlights. The fit of the bodice is also much softer than current fashion demanded and the sleeves are set unfashionably lower on the shoulder, allowing Terry to move much more freely.

As photographs from circa 1865 onwards show, Terry sustained this alteration in style after her separation from Watts. The waistline of her dresses was raised to the 'natural' level and the fit of her bodices remained softer than was fashionable. [FIGURE 6.49] reveals that Terry's skirt though fashionably full, falls in gentle folds, rather in than the characteristic bell shape provided by the crinoline. The decoration of her plain garments is focused on the sleeves, which in Figure 49 are gathered in graduated 'puffs' resembling the 'mamaluke' or 'marie' sleeves popular between circa 1810 and 1820 [FIGURE 6.50]. The sleeves in [FIGURE 6.51] are simpler, but still fit much more loosely than was common for the period. Terry is also wearing the simple strands of large beads which became an established part of her pared down approach to dress and accessories.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Such Amber beads became a popular Aesthetic accessory for women by the 1880s and Terry's beads are very similar to those held by Elfrida Ionides (1848-1929), an influential follower of the movement, in a portrait which William Richmond Blake (1842-1921) painted of her in 1882. This painting is now held by the V&A, Museum Reference E.1062:1, 2-2003. A similar necklace is also amongst possessions owned



Figure 6.52 - Unknown photographer, Ellen Terry, ca.1875-1880. Sepia photograph on paper. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:358-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Indian and Chinese shawls

Large shawls which enveloped her shoulders and upper body in their voluminous folds formed part of Terry's wardrobe throughout her life. [FIGURE 6.52] As Michelle Maskiell has observed, the popularity of Kashmir shawls, which peaked in the 1860s, had declined by 1870s.¹⁵¹ Images of Terry however, reveal that she continued to wear unfashionably large shawls throughout her life, and several examples survive within the collection at Smallhythe.¹⁵² Maskiell suggests that 'Asian commodities like Kashmiri shawls became key objects for late-nineteenth century Aesthetic [...] "taste

by Terry within the collection at Smallhythe Place, National Trust Inventory number 1117765. According to the catalogue record these beads were worn almost continuously by Terry until her last illness.

¹⁵¹ Michelle Maskiell, "Consuming Kashmir: Shawls and Empires, 1500-2000," *Journal of World History*, 13.1 (Spring 2002): 35-36, 49, 42.

¹⁵² Refer to Appendix 1, Full catalogue of garments held at Smallhythe, Ellen Terry, Personal Dress and Accessories.

professionals” who sought out ‘hand crafted textiles.’¹⁵³ These costly shawls certainly continued to form part of the ‘antique embroideries’ stocked by Liberty’s of London. Such shawls therefore identified the wearer as a ‘taste professional.’

Significantly however, not all Terry’s shawls conform to this ‘exclusive’ Aesthetic. In an image from the mid to late 1880s, she wears a shawl which is printed with flowers and motifs of European inspiration. [FIGURE 6.53] This fusion of styles and motifs was typical of Terry’s approach to dress.



Figure 6.53 - Window and Grove. Ellen Terry, ca.1880-1890. Sepia photograph on paper.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:421-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Japonisme and Greek dress

¹⁵³ Maskiell, “Consuming Kashmir: Shawls and Empires, 1500-2000,” 42-3. Maskiell draws upon the work that Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) and Paul Greenhalgh, “The History of Craft,” *The Culture of Craft: Status and Future*, ed. Peter Dormer. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997) has carried out relating to this issue.

Terry's relationship with Godwin had a significant influence on the evolution of her personal style. Godwin had strong opinions on dress, and, as Chapters 4 and 5 discussed, designed some of the costumes Terry wore on stage.¹⁵⁴ He also had a noticeable impact on her personal dress and that of their children. It was Godwin who introduced Terry to Japanese art and dress and she shared his admiration for its 'unobtrusive beauty' and 'lightness.'¹⁵⁵ Terry's enthusiasm for classically inspired dress also dates from the time she spent with Godwin, who, though recognising that 'in the climates of transpontine Europe the old classic dress cannot be revived,' often praised the 'beauty of form and cut' associated with 'Greek dress.'¹⁵⁶

Godwin also brought Terry to the notice of the painter of James McNeil Whistler (1834-1903) whose fascination with Japan, which began in the 1860s, is evident in the subjects of paintings.¹⁵⁷ In addition to presenting the pair with 'a blue and white Nankin dinner set' and some 'Venetian glass,' Whistler sent Craig 'a tiny Japanese kimono when Liberty

¹⁵⁴ By the time Godwin began a relationship with Terry he had already established a reputation as both an architect and an informed advocate of Aesthetic Dress. When the department store, Liberty's, opened a 'Costume Department' in 1884, Godwin was appointed as its Head. As Lambourne has discussed, Godwin also designed costumes for a wide variety of theatre productions over the course of his career. Lionel Lambourne, "'Pyrrhic success': E.W. Godwin and the Theatre," *Country Life* (2 October 1986): 1024-5. Godwin's lectures and publications on the theme of dress include E. W. Godwin "A Lecture on Dress", delivered in 1868 and re-published in Radu Stern, *Against Fashion: Clothing As Art, 1850-1930* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2004: 83-93) and E. W. Godwin, *Dress, and Its Relation to Health and Climate* (London: W. Clowes, 1884).

¹⁵⁵ Frances Collard explored Godwin's engagement with Japan in an unpublished presentation entitled "E.W. Godwin and Anglo-Japanese Design." This took place at the Study Day, *Imagining Japan: Anglo-Japanese Influences on 19th Century British Art and Design*, organised by Victoria & Albert Museum on 25 June 2011. As Lionel Lambourne found, Godwin also collected Japanese prints, and these were displayed in both the house he shared with his first wife, Sarah Yonge (who died in 1864), and those he would subsequently live in with Terry. Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement*, (London: Phaidon, 1996) 155-6.

¹⁵⁶ E.W. Godwin, *Dress and its relation to Health*, 77. Lambourne has examined the significance of Godwin's knowledge of classical dress, in particular its impact on the 1881 Lyceum production of *The Cup*. Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement*, 162-3.

¹⁵⁷ Ribeiro's references to Whistler's 'frequent' visits to the house that Terry shared with Godwin and to kimonos sent by the artist to Terry's daughter 'Edy' also illuminate elements of Terry's interaction with members of the Aesthetic Movement. Ribeiro writing in Macdonald, Galassi and Ribeiro. *Whistler, Women and Fashion*, 49-50. *La Princesse du pays de la porcelain*, (1863-5), Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. is an early example of paintings which exemplify Whistler's interest in Japan.

was hardly a name.’¹⁵⁸ Two kimonos, worn by Craig in circa 1874 (then aged about 5 or 6), survive within the collection at Smallhythe.¹⁵⁹ Neither are as lavish as the elaborate and colourful kimonos featured in Whistler’s paintings, and both are comparatively roughly made, bearing a closer resemblance to the wadded sleeping coverlet known as a ‘yogi.’ These were cut in the same shape as a kimono, but tended to be larger and the sleeves were fully sewn to the body.¹⁶⁰ One has been made up in peach silk crepe, stencilled with a design of roses in red and orange using the ‘katagami’ process. It is not lined.¹⁶¹ [FIGURE 6.54] The other has a silk/wool blend ground fabric which has been stencilled with a burnt orange geometric pattern. [FIGURE 6.55] It is interlined with fleece, and lined with pale orange silk. Further padding is present at the hem and at the base of the hanging sleeves. A photograph taken of Craig in circa 1874, shows her wearing this second kimono.¹⁶² [FIGURE 6.56] As this image demonstrates, Terry’s children offered her a further means through which to express her Aesthetic identity. She and Godwin ensured that both children received an ‘Aesthetic education,’ dressing them in Aesthetic garments and decorating their nursery with ‘Japanese prints and fans.’¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Terry, *The Story of my Life*, 124 and Adburgham, “The Early Years,” 27. Anne Anderson has established the significant part which ‘art objects’, such as this china and Godwin’s Japanese fans and prints played in establishing and expressing an Aesthetic identity. Anderson, “Fearful Consequences...of Living up to One’s Teapot’: Men, Women and ‘Cultchah’ in the Aesthetic Movement,” 111-130.

¹⁵⁹ See Appendix 1, Edith Craig, Kimono 1, SMA.COST.97, 1118822 and Kimono 2, SMA.TC.98, 1118823.

¹⁶⁰ Examples of such garments can be found in the V&A, Museum Number FE. 155-1983 and the Metropolitan Museum, New York, Museum Number 1983.566 and 66.239.3.

¹⁶¹ This stencilling technique, in which paper stencils, (many of which are extremely sophisticated and intricate), are used for dyeing textiles is specifically associated with Japan, and Japanese textiles. Such textiles were also highly valued by ‘Western consumers’ of Japanese textiles in the late nineteenth century. Julie Warchol, “Japanese Stencils.” *Smith College Museum of Art, Massachusetts*. 22 January 2013 and “Logical Rain, Rediscovered after 125 years in Dresden: the world’s richest resource of Japanese stencils for dyeing samurai kimonos Proposition II.” *Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden* [n.d.]

¹⁶² In her compilation of Edith Craig memoirs Ann Rachlin suggests this photograph was taken whilst Terry living at 221 Camden Road. Ann Rachlin, *Edy was a Lady*, (Leicester: Matador, 2011) 13.

¹⁶³ Terry describes this upbringing in her autobiography, Terry, *The Story of my life*, 80. When interviewed in 1910, Craig recalled spending much of childhood ‘barefoot’ and in ‘Japanese clothes.’ Craig was quoted in Margaret Kilroy, “Helpers at the Scottish Exhibition,” *Votes for Women*, April 5 1910, 455.



Figure 6.54 - Katagami stencilled silk kimono unlined, worn by Edith Craig (1869-1947), Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 20 July 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.COST.97, [1118822].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.55 - Katagami stencilled silk kimono with fleece interlining, worn by Edith Craig (1869-1947), Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 20 July 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.98, [1118823].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.56 - Herbert Watkins, Edith Craig wearing SMA.TC.98, ca.1874. Sepia photograph on paper. 10.3 x 6.5cm. Ellen Terry Collections, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT1122635.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.57 - Samuel A. Walker, Ellen Terry, ca.1874, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.4cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:418-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

‘Oriental Robes’– a route to ‘artistic and sartorial freedom?’¹⁶⁴

Though no examples of the Japanese kimonos worn by Terry have survived, written and visual records testify to her preference for this form of attire, and her position at the forefront of the introduction of Japonisme into fashion in Britain by the mid-1870s. Christine M.E. Guth has described how the ‘flood of imports from Japan’ in the 1860s generated this vogue for ‘Japonisme’ which, together with a ‘heightened appreciation of materials, techniques, forms and colours,’ endured for the next two decades.¹⁶⁵ In the 1870s, Terry was a pioneer in her adoption of Japanese kimonos which, by the 1880s, were becoming an increasingly popular form of informal attire among followers of Aestheticism.¹⁶⁶ As Anna Marie Kirk suggests, Japanese dress, like classical dress, offered a ‘radical’ contrast to the ‘elaborately constructed garments of mainstream fashion’ as the ‘looser, lower waists, the abandonment of the corset and the larger armholes gave the wearer more physical freedom.’¹⁶⁷ As already discussed, Terry’s dresses were already following these lines in the mid-1860s. Yet, as Kirk also stresses, because a kimono represented the ‘extremes’ of Japanese style, it was not adopted ‘wholeheartedly as an alternative to mainstream dress.’ Instead the kimono was worn only ‘indoors’ and subsequently as a ‘dressing and tea gown,’ from the 1880s up to circa 1914.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Anna Marie Kirk, ‘Japonisme and Femininity: A Study of Japanese Dress in British and French Art and Society, c.1860-c.1899.’ *Costume*, 42, (2008), 111-129. 120.

¹⁶⁵ Christine M.E. Guth in “Japonisme,” *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900* (London: V&A Publishing, 2011) 110-113, 111. James Joseph Tissot (1836-1902) captured this enthusiasm in his two paintings *Young Lady Looking at Japanese Objects* and *Young Women Looking at Japanese Objects*, both painted in 1869, both oil on canvas and in Private Collections.

¹⁶⁶ For further discussion on this topic see Elizabeth Kramer, “‘Not so Japan-Easy’: The British Reception of Japanese Dress in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Textile History*, 44 (1) (May 2013): 3-24 and Anna Marie Kirk, ‘Japonisme and Femininity,’ 111-129.

¹⁶⁷ Kirk, ‘Japonisme and Femininity,’ 111-2, 120.

¹⁶⁸ Kirk, ‘Japonisme and Femininity,’ 111-2.

What distinguished Terry's interaction with these garments, from that of most other women, was the 'public' context within which Terry wore her kimonos. A key instance of this was her decision, in 1875, to wear a kimono when posing for a photograph intended for public circulation and sale. [FIGURE 6.57] Although the mount in which the image was sold was labelled 'Ellen Terry as a Japanese Lady,' in fact it shows Terry wearing her 'personal' clothing, and not a 'theatrical' costume.¹⁶⁹ In portraits of Terry associated with her theatrical roles, her posture and hairstyle, and in some instances, setting, are all chosen to convey the precise role being 'performed.'¹⁷⁰ Terry's relationships with Godwin and Whistler would have familiarised her with the poses and backdrops depicted within Japanese Woodblock prints and yet she has made no attempt to re-create these scenes.¹⁷¹ [FIGURE 6.58] In Figure 6.57, Terry's hair is unfashionably softly, and informally gathered up, her gaze is fixed directly at the viewer and her hands are resting on her hips. In this photograph she is deliberately presenting her 'self' as a wearer of this Japanese garment, not only within the 'domestic', but also the 'public' sphere.

The manner in which Terry is wearing her kimono is also significant. Kirk describes how by the mid nineteenth century the term 'kimono,' meaning in Japanese 'thing worn,' encompassed an ensemble of layers robes and accessories, topped by the *kosode*, an 'unfitted wrap around robe with short sleeves.' This is the 'kimono' that features most

¹⁶⁹ Not all the versions of this photograph of Terry have remained in this mount, but even though the copy of this photograph held within the Guy Little Collection at the V&A has been removed from its mount, pencil annotation on the rear matches the caption of those copies which remain within their original mount.

¹⁷⁰ This aspect of Terry's stage photographs was discussed in relation to images of Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet* (1878) and as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart* (1887). Another very obvious instance are the series of images of Terry as Viola in *Twelfth Night* (1884) in which she appears shipwrecked, gazing out over the shore, S.133:386-2007 and in her male disguise. In both these images both Terry's posture, setting, and expression reflect the narrative of the play, and the character she is portraying.

¹⁷¹ This image of Terry contrasts with a photograph of her daughter, Edith Craig, taken in 1888, which has been constructed to convey Craig's adoption of a Japanese identity. Aged 19, and again wearing a kimono, Craig is shown positioned in front of an elaborate Japanese screen, and with a hairstyle and makeup chosen to suit her Japanese 'costume.' Melville includes this image of Edith Craig in her biography *Ellen and Edy*, but does not include any information about the source of the image or, the circumstances in which it was taken. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 65.

frequently in European and American artworks from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century.¹⁷² [FIGURE 6.59] The *'kosode'* was fastened with a stiffened *obi*, or wide sash. In a very elaborate or formal ensemble a further open kimono, an *Uchikake* might also be worn on top of the *kosode*.¹⁷³ In this photograph of Terry her use of a soft sash to define her waist and 'the possible suggestions of an under-robe at the neck' reference the traditional Japanese style of kimono. Yet the garment has clearly been adapted to suit her preference for loose fitting, unrestrictive garments, especially through Terry's use of a softly folded sash, rather than a stiffened 'obi.'¹⁷⁴ Similarly, this gentle confinement at the waist distinguishes Terry's approach to wearing the kimono from what in the 1880s became the 'ideal Aesthetic/artistic manner of wearing robes.' This was, Kirk suggests, that 'they should flow "open and sprawl back."¹⁷⁵ Therefore Terry's 1875 kimono, whilst clearly influenced by both Japanese traditions, and the Aesthetic enthusiasm for such garments, was pioneering, and did not fully conform to either style. Instead she chose to wear this garment in a manner which both suited, and expressed, her individuality.

Although popular within Aesthetic circles, such unconventional attire, worn without a corset, provoked controversy among the wider public. This was due in part to louche behaviour then often identified with such clothing.¹⁷⁶ As a result, very few women would

¹⁷² Kirk, 'Japonisme and Femininity,' 117.

¹⁷³ Kirk, 'Japonisme and Femininity,' 117.

¹⁷⁴ Kirk does not discuss the photograph in detail but does observe key details such as the *obi* and under robe and notes that 'no *obi-age* (cords which kept the *obi* in place) is worn, and there is no attempt to replicate the hairstyle or make-up of a Japanese Lady.' Kirk, 'Japonisme and Femininity, 111-129. 121.

¹⁷⁵ Kirk reaches this conclusion from her analysis of contemporary paintings and a description of such garments in de Goncourt's novel *Manette Solomon* (originally published in 1867). Kirk, 'Japonisme and Femininity, 111-129. 121.

¹⁷⁶ In the first volume of his series of seven novels *À la recherche du temps perdu*, 'Swann's Way,' Marcel Proust (1871-1922) describes the bedroom of Odette de Crecy, a former courtesan, 'hung with Oriental draperies, strings of Turkish beads, and a huge Japanese lantern suspended by a silken cord [with] enormous palms growing out of pots of Chinese porcelain...[and]...great cushions of Japanese silk'. Odette receives Swann in this intimate chamber attired in 'a pink silk dressing gown, which left her neck and arms bare.' The allure exerted by both these exotic objects and is vividly rendered in these pages, as is the association between the fluid, opulence of the kimonos and robes which Odette's dressing gown closely resembles,

have had sufficient courage in their artistic resolutions to defy convention by being photographed wearing such garments. For this reason, Langtry's decision to be photographed wearing a kimono in 1884 was plausibly a conscious reference her earlier role in the Aesthetic movement. It is equally possible, given her direct gaze and languorous pose, however, that Langtry was deliberately exploiting the garment's less respectable associations, in a manner never evident in Terry's use of the kimono.¹⁷⁷

[FIGURE 6.60]

By the 1880s kimonos were well established as part of informal, Aesthetic dress, and by 1890s were being sold by major London department stores, but this trend was in its infancy in 1875, when Terry was first adopting such garments as part of her personal wardrobe.¹⁷⁸ Though painters such as Claude Monet (1840-1926), Pierre Auguste Renoir (1841-1921), James Joseph Tissot (1836-1902) and, particularly, Whistler, collected kimonos and the 'exotic garments' featured in their paintings during the 1860s-1880s, only Whistler was regularly painting scenes which included kimonos in the late 1860s and early 1870s.¹⁷⁹ Whistler's gift of two small kimonos for their daughter, to Terry and Godwin, as early as 1874 is thus of much historical importance. It was not until 1876 that Monet presented *La Japonaise (Camille Monet in Japanese Dress)* (Figure 6.59), to the public and Renoir's portrait of *Madame Hériot* (1882) was completed six years later.

[FIGURE 6.61] The 1875 photograph of Terry predates these paintings and evokes the

with the loose morals and conduct believed to be adopted by their wearers. Marcel Proust, translated by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, revised by D.J. Enright, *Swann's Way*. London: Vintage Books (2005), 264-265.

¹⁷⁷ Langtry had numerous affairs with prominent public figures and, as Carlson suggests, the sexual scandals of Langtry's private life meant that her previous commercial success in roles such as the 'chaste Rosalind' owed less to the quality of her acting, than to the desire of the audience members to see 'Miss Langtry in tights.' Carlson, Marvin. *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 2003, 86-7.

¹⁷⁸ Elizabeth Kramer, "'Not so Japan-Easy': The British Reception of Japanese Dress in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Textile History*, 44 (1) (May 2013): 3-24. 14.

¹⁷⁹ Akiko Fukai, "Japanism in Fashion," *Kyoto Costume Institute*. [n.d.], 3.

sophisticated restraint associated with earlier works by Whistler, such as *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green - The Balcony*, (ca.1864-1870) and *La Princesse du pays de la porcelain*, (ca. 1863-65). [FIGURE 6.62 and 6.63] Considered within this context, this photograph of Terry represents a significant statement of self-confidence and determination to establish and identity herself as a figure at the forefront of new fashions within the Aesthetic movement.



Figure 6.58 - Eisen Keisai. 'The Koya Tama River', from the series 'Six Famous Rivers with the Name Tama', early 1820s, Japanese Woodblock print. 37.1 x 25.1cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.12980-1886.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.59 - Claude Monet. *La Japonaise* (Camille Monet in Japanese Dress) ca. 1876. Oil on canvas. 231.8 x 142.3cm, Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Museum Number 56.147.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.60 - Jose Maria Mora. *Lillie Langtry wearing a kimono*, 1884. Albumen cabinet card. 16.5 x 10.7cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x197342.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

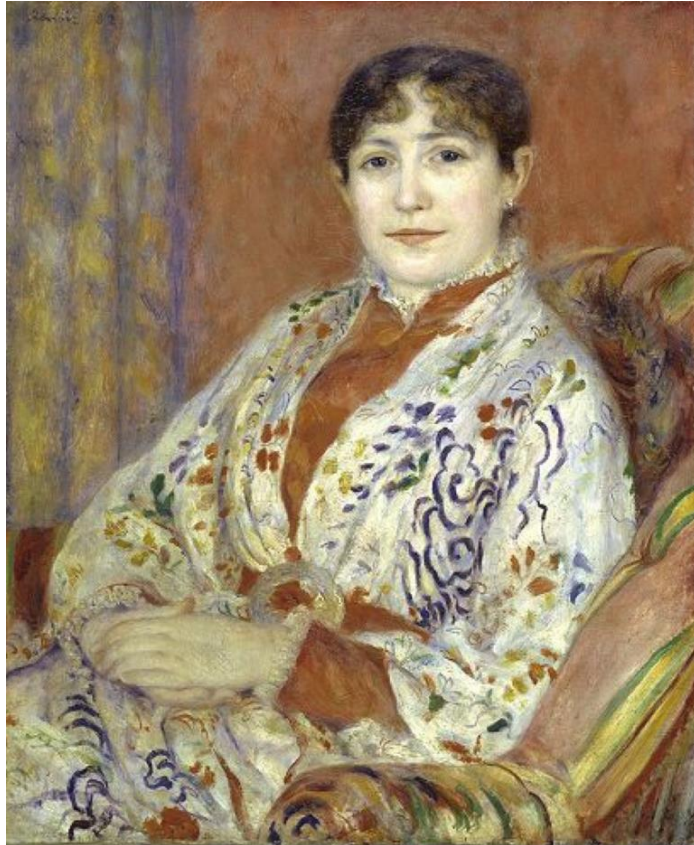


Figure 6.61 - Pierre Auguste Renoir, *Madame Hériot*, 1882, 65x54cms, oil on canvas. Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

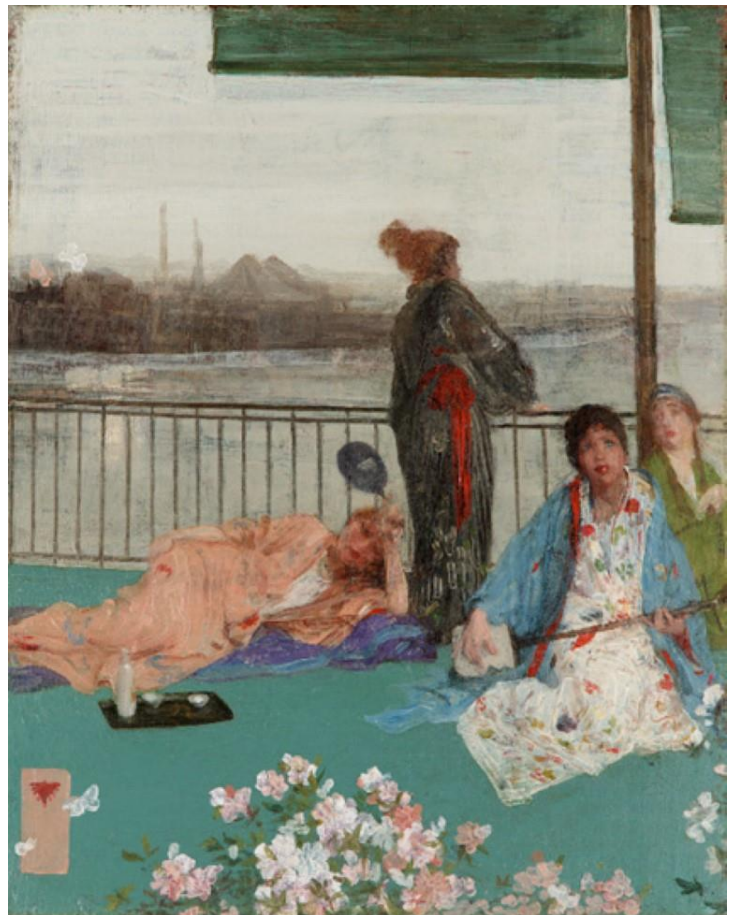


Figure 6.62 - James McNeil Whistler, *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green - The Balcony*, ca.1864-1870. Oil on wood panel, 61.4 x 48.8cm. Courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Museum Number F1892.23a-b.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

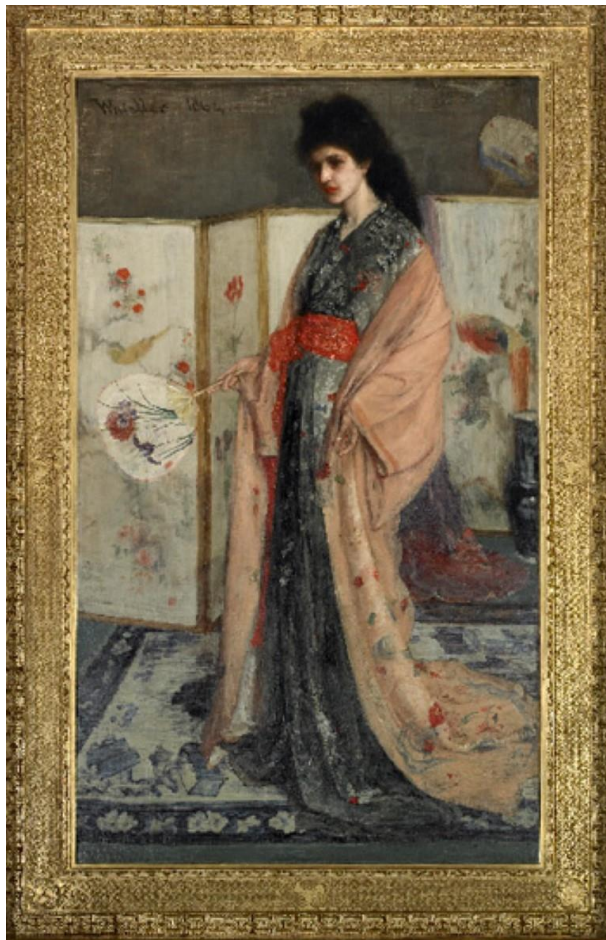


Figure 6.63 - James McNeil Whistler, *La Princesse du pays de la porcelain*, ca. 1863-65. Oil on canvas, 199.9x116.1cm. Courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Museum Number F1903.91a-b.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Style 2: Historicism and Europe

By 1880, Terry's personal clothing exhibits a move away from the influence of Japan, towards garments inspired by a fusion of historic and contemporary European fashions. As Chapter 4 showed, Terry often sought inspiration from historic fashions when creating her stage costumes, and a similar approach can be identified in many of the garments she wore off stage.¹⁸⁰ In the 1880s, for instance, Terry frequently wore floor length dresses which loosely followed the line of the figure, but were only softly gathered at the waist

¹⁸⁰ A case in point being the research Terry carried out when developing her costume for *Macbeth* in 1888 (discussed in Chapter 5), and her earlier reference to the fact that she had studied the work of the Renaissance painter Cesare Vecellio (ca.1530-ca.1601) when offered the part of Portia in 1875. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 93.

(if at all). [FIGURE 6.64] This style references the silhouette of the Robe à la Française or ‘Sack back’ dress fashionable in the early to mid-eighteenth century. [FIGURE 6.65] Several trends within mainstream fashionable dress were inspired by eighteenth century garments, as exemplified in the ‘Dolly Varden’ dresses fashionable in the early 1870s, which revived and adapted the ‘Polonaise’ style gowns of the 1780s. [FIGURE 6.66]. Terry’s personal preference for garments inspired by this period is evident in the number of her dresses (both on and off the stage) which featured a double ‘box pleat,’ or ‘Watteau back,’ at the rear.¹⁸¹ [FIGURE 6.67]



Figure 6.64 - Herbert Rose Barraud. Ellen Terry, late 1880s. Sepia photograph on paper. 13.2 x 9.7 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:488-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁸¹ Two key examples of Terry’s surviving costumes which feature this ‘Watteau back’ are a dress worn by Terry in the title role of Olivia (now in the Museum of London Collections, Museum Reference 51.93) and the dress Terry wore as Nance Oldfield which forms part of the collection at Smallhythe (National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109 a+b).



Figure 6.65 - A woman's green and cream striped silk satin sack back, petticoat and stomacher. English, 1760-1770. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.471 to B-1980.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.66 - Front cover of music sheet for *The Dolly Varden Polka*, as performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, composed by W.C. Levey, late 19th century. Printed ink on paper. 33.6 x24cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.170-2012.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.67 - Unknown photographer. *Terry in dress with Watteau back* ca.1880s. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Image courtesy of Susannah Mayor, 5 May 2016.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The 'Liberty' dress¹⁸²

One of the few surviving examples of Terry's personal dress features this 'Watteau Back.' [FIGURE 6.68] It is a floor length unbleached raw tussore silk dress. Both this fabric, and the beige cotton with which the skirt and bodice are lined, are light in weight and of fine quality. Although there is evidence of machine stitching on the seams, the hem and lining have been finished by hand. There is no inner boning and the trained dress softly follows the line of the body. It fastens down the centre front with one interior row of self-

¹⁸² Though it has not been possible to prove a link between the example of Terry's personal dress preserved at Smallhythe and the department store, the dress has been traditionally known as 'The Liberty Dress.' Although, as previously noted, the Costume Department did not open until 1884, it is possible that the fabric for the dress could have been purchased at Liberty & Co. Unfortunately no records survive at Smallhythe or in the archives of Liberty & Co to confirm or disprove this hypothesis.

covered buttons.¹⁸³ Though no date is recorded for the garment, the dress exhibits a modified version of the late 1870s/early 1880s bustle style silhouette, and probably dates from between 1877 and 1882.¹⁸⁴ [FIGURE 6.69 and 6.70] Areas of wear to the large, practical, front pockets and stretching at fastenings and the centre front do however indicate that Terry wore this dress over a long period of time.

The precise origins of the dress remain unclear, but Prown's three stage analysis of 'Description, Deduction and Speculation' makes it possible to establish certain key characteristics of the dress.¹⁸⁵ The ground fabric of the dress is plain, but a full length embroidered panel has been inserted into the centre front. Both this panel, the cuffs, collar, and upper edge of the pockets (stitched at hip level to the left and right of the skirt of the dress) have been decorated with hand worked tambour stitch embroidery. The patterns formed by this embroidery, though floral in inspiration, are primarily abstract, and are executed in pale tones of pink, brown, blue and cream. [FIGURE 6.71] The motifs contained within this embroidery conform to no specific style or date and do not form a precise repeat. Given the history and origins of tambour work they could be Indian in origin, as could the tussore silk ground fabric. [FIGURE 6.72] There are also elements of the decorative motifs, in particular the abstract coloured lines and loops of tambour work, which resemble patterns within Chinese embroidery. [FIGURE 6.73] An intermingling of styles was typical of Aesthetic dress embroidery however, and from the late eighteenth century such tambour work embroidery was also being carried out in England.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ For a full catalogue record see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Personal Dress, SMA.TC.201, 1118926.

¹⁸⁴ A comparable dress, dating from the early 1880s, and in the same muted tones, survives in the collection at the Gallery of Costume, museum number 1947.4066.

¹⁸⁵ Prown, "Mind in Matter", 7-9.

¹⁸⁶ Catherine A. Leslie *Needlework Through History: An Encyclopedia* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2007) 207.

Whilst this dress alludes to current fashions in its shape, it has been constructed to conform to the personal tastes of one specific wearer. The line of the dress alludes to the ‘bustle’ silhouette fashionable in the late 1870s. This fashion relied on the structural support provided by the pads of hoops of a bustle, the shaping in Terry’s dress however, required no special underpinnings. Instead it was created using the four box pleats at the centre back of the dress bodice, which extend down the rear of the dress to form the ‘Watteau back.’ [FIGURE 6.74] Similarly the unbleached tussore silk fabric, together with the embroidered decoration, depart completely from the colour palette and styles of current fashions. Created in a decade which favoured a tightly corseted hourglass figure, this dress fits very loosely to the figure, and no internal boning whatsoever is present. The small upstanding collar, trimmed with a pale blue ribbed silk frill, like the ‘Watteau back,’ is a feature which characterised Terry’s personal style from the mid-1870s and throughout the 1880s and which were particularly suited to her tall, slender figure.¹⁸⁷ [FIGURE 6.75 and 6.76] Thus, whilst the dress is neither Chinese nor Indian in origin, it reflects the influence not only of these cultures, but also of trends with mainstream fashion and Aesthetic dress, all intermingled to suit and realise, Terry’s own personal style.

¹⁸⁷ Thousands of images of the actress survive from this period, the most notable collections being held by the V&A, Smallhythe Place and the National Portrait Gallery. Terry’s preference for small, upright collars, often trimmed with a ruffle can be seen in images such as Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson’s portrait of the actress from 1876, held in the National Portrait Gallery, Image Reference NPG 3789 and images such as the photograph taken by Samuel Alex Walker, museum number S.133:353-2007 in the V&A Collections which shows the actress in dress where a panel of lace has been added at the neckline and extends into a short, soft collar, defined at the neck with a soft ribbon.



Figure 6.68 - Overview of dress worn by Terry, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 8 August 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.69 - Overview of dress worn by Terry as mounted following conservation treatment to show bustle silhouette, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.70 - Leon Sault. "Young Ladies Journal Monthly Panorama of Fashion," July 1875. Hand coloured fashion plate on paper. Measurements not recorded. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.319-1955.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.71 - Detail of dress worn by Terry, showing unbleached tussore silk ground decorated with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.72 - Detail showing tambour work decoration on man's hunting coat of embroidered satin with silk, India, ca. 1620-1630, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number IS.18-1947.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.73 - Roundel, satin weave silk with silk embroidered design of He Xianggu, one of the Eight Daoist Immortals, China, Qing dynasty, 19th century. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number FE.123C-1983.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.74 - Rear view of dress as mounted following conservation treatment, showing 'Watteau back.' Tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.75 - Detail of collar of dress, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.76 - London Stereoscopic Company. Ellen Terry, ca.1875-1880. Sepia photograph on paper. 9.1 x 5.8 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:220-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Style 3: “Greek dress one moment, Chinese robes the next”

By circa 1900, Terry’s style had altered again. Terry returned to Asia for inspiration and loose fitting, softly draped, ‘Chinese Robes’ became a key garment within her personal wardrobe. Photographs of Terry suggest that she had begun wearing Chinese robes regularly by about 1910, and letters sent by Terry’s housekeeper and nurse Hilda Barnes (fl.1920-1950) to Edith Craig suggest that they remained part of Terry’s wardrobe until her death in 1928.¹⁸⁸ [FIGURE 6.77] Two examples of these ‘Chinese robes’ survive

¹⁸⁸ As these letters reveal, Terry owned several examples of these practical and comfortable garments, and in one Barnes asks Craig to ‘bring the kimono [more likely a Chinese robe] that was left at the flat & you said was being cleaned – this one being so dirty.’ Letter from Hilda Barnes to Edith Craig. Ellen Terry Collection (125/1) Z3.057 (a), British Library, London.

within the collection at Smallhythe. Neither match extant images showing her wearing similar robes but this indicates that she owned and wore a range of these garments.

These ‘exotic’ Chinese garments were not unfamiliar to late nineteenth British society and were becoming available to purchase in ‘The West.’¹⁸⁹ In 1891, the portrait painter G. A. Storey (1834-1909) had declared that a ‘Chinese or a Japanese loose gown’ was a mode of ‘Artistic dress’ which would make even ‘rotund’ women look ‘presentable.’¹⁹⁰ By 1900, as Verity Wilson notes, Chinese Robes were no longer rare commodities and were indeed regarded as a ‘[...] very common place [...] manifestation of ‘the exotic’ by middle and upper-class women.’¹⁹¹

What distinguishes Terry’s engagement with these garments however, is the fact that they represented part of her daily personal ‘dress’ rather than a form of ‘dressing up.’ The two surviving examples of Terry’s robes indicate that she made limited alterations to these garments when wearing them.¹⁹² Both are made from plain silk satin with stylised motifs of flowers, birds and insects embroidered on the exterior in satin stitch using floss silks.¹⁹³ They have an asymmetrical fastening at the right shoulder with vents set into the side seams, and are lined throughout with damask silk. One robe, SMA.TC.86, [FIGURE 6.78] has long, flaring, sleeves which could be worn turned back at the cuff to reveal the contrasting yellow lining. The other, SMA.TC.85, [FIGURE 6.79] has square sleeves which finish at the elbow. Both robes have additional detailing in the form of bands of

¹⁸⁹ Verity Wilson, “Studio and Soiree, Chinese Textiles in Europe and America 1850 to the Present,” *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, ed. Ruth B. Philips and Christopher B. Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press) 232-3.

¹⁹⁰ Mr. G. A. Storey, ‘Letters from Artists on Ladies Dress’ *The Strand Magazine*, 1891, 167.

¹⁹¹ Verity Wilson, “Western Modes and Asian Clothes: Reflections on Borrowing Other People’s Dress,” *Costume*, 36, (2002): 139-156 (147).

¹⁹² Catalogue records for comparable garments held by the V&A suggest that these may actually be ‘jackets’ designed to be worn with skirts, rather than robes. See the catalogue description for and image of FE.399-2007, ca.1850-1911, and T.53-1970, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. It is possible that Terry added a lining to both the jackets, but no significant alterations have been made to their structure.

¹⁹³ For full catalogue records see Appendix 1, Chinese Robes SMA.TC.85 and SMA.TC.86.

decorative braids and fabric at the cuffs, centre front opening and hem. [FIGURE 6.80 and 6.81] Whilst this detailing could have been added specifically for Terry, decorative sleevebands were commonly added to jackets during the Qing dynasty, so they may be original to the garments.¹⁹⁴ Even the collars, which, as stitch marks on SMA.TC.85 indicate, were ‘added’ to the jacket after construction, resemble collars present on surviving examples of ‘Chinese’ garments from this period.¹⁹⁵ Similarly, Figure 77 showing Terry in circa 1910 dressed in a comparable jacket, depicts her wearing the garment as it was traditionally worn, having made no modification to the fit or construction.¹⁹⁶

Photographs of Terry’s personal dress, between circa 1905 and 1928, reveal that Terry not only wore Chinese robes, but also incorporated features from these garments within her personal dress during this period. This becomes particularly evident in the design of Terry’s sleeves from circa 1910, which become wide at the cuff. The relaxed cut and fit of her garments, whilst in line with the less fitted silhouette introduced by the 1920s, also references the distinctive ‘T-shape’ of her Chinese robes. [FIGURE 6.82 and 6.83]

¹⁹⁴ Numerous examples of these sleevebands survive in the V&A collections, see for instance T.137&A-1948, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

¹⁹⁵ See, for instance, T.201-1934, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

¹⁹⁶ One Chinese robe within the collection at Smallhythe offers an exception to this pattern however, as it shows clear evidence of re-fashioning and modification. Further research is required to establish the precise provenance of this robe however as a direct connection between it and Terry has not been fully substantiated. Susannah Mayor, House Steward at Smallhythe ‘found the robe some years ago in the Barn Theatre’ and suggested ‘that it should be looked after.’ Susannah Mayor, Personal communication with the author. 4 May 2016. Email. As Wilson has noted it was not unusual practice to alter Chinese robes during this period and this re-styling could include alteration to ‘something more useful.’ Wilson includes a number of examples of the ways in which such garments might be ‘appropriated and altered’ in her exploration “Western Modes and Asian Clothes: Reflections on Borrowing Other People’s Dress,” *Costume*, 36, (2002): 139-156 (143-5). She also discusses this further in Verity Wilson, “Studio and Soiree, Chinese Textiles in Europe and America 1850 to the Present,” *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, ed. Ruth B. Philips and Christopher B. Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press) 237, 239. For further images and the full catalogue record relating to this modified robe see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Chinese Robes.



Figure 6.77 - Photographer unknown. Ellen Terry wearing a Chinese Robe, *The Sketch*, ca. 1905-1915. Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.78 - Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.86.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.79 - Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.85.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.80 - Detail from Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.86.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.81 - Detail from Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.85.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.82 - Photographer unknown. Press cutting showing Ellen Terry ca.1905-1915. Personal Photograph by the author 4 February 2013. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.83 - Silk summer dress. Maker Unknown, England, 1920-1925. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.19-1960.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.84 - floral motifs. Maker Unknown, ca.1915-1925. Personal photograph by the author 14 April 2016. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.1415-1984.

[ORIGINAL IN
COLOUR]

Continuing to experiment

Of the few other extant examples of Terry's personal dress, one item stands out. Dating from circa 1910 to 1920 this is a full length silk dress with a pale pink/red ground which has been roughly batiked with a repeat pattern of pale yellow floral motifs with deep blue/black leaves. [FIGURE 6.84] The dress is formed from a long 'T' shaped piece of fine silk fabric, with sleeves which are wide at the top but narrow to fit the line of the arm at and the cuff. It is unlined, the only details are narrow bands of gold metallic braid at the cuffs and 'V' shaped neckline.¹⁹⁷

The style reflects Terry's willingness to embrace innovative modes of construction and design, in this instance, hand-worked Batik.¹⁹⁸ As with the Chinese robes also worn by Terry at this time, this dress fits loosely to the body, a cut suited to her tall, but thickening, figure and desire for graceful, free, movement. The colour palette though departing from the pastel tones fashionable during this period remains confined within the subtle, earthy tones which characterised Terry's dress during the 1870s and 1880s.¹⁹⁹

An 'individual' approach

The immense range of photographs, sketches and paintings of Terry make apparent the eclecticism which characterised her personal dress for much of her life. As Terry remarked in 1911:

¹⁹⁷ The dress was donated to the British Theatre Museum Association (whose collections were subsequently acquired by the V&A in 1974) by a friend and biographer of Terry, Marguerite Steen (1894-1975) in October 1973. See Appendix 3, Victoria and Albert Museum, Ellen Terry, Personal Dress, Museum Number S.1415-1984 for full catalogue record and further images.

¹⁹⁸ Rosemary Crill (Senior Curator, Asian Department, V&A) has confirmed that it is likely to have been produced in Europe rather than Asia, but research into its origins continues. Rosemary Crill, Personal communication with the author. 9 May 2014. Email.

¹⁹⁹ These tones are captured in a portrait of Terry by Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, from 1876, now in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery, Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, *Ellen Terry*, 1876, oil on canvas, 60.8cms x 50.6cms, Museum Reference NPG 3789.

After trying garments of every size and shape in private life, I have ended by adopting the Japanese style one day and the Greek the next. A cupboard full of unworn corsets bears witness to the number of presentations and representations I have received (and disregarded) from staymakers and stay recommenders, begging me to improve my figure.²⁰⁰

Terry was thus not wedded to a single aesthetic and consciously drew upon a wide variety of sources to create garments which reflected her ‘individuality.’ Aestheticism allowed, and actively encouraged its followers to adopt varied styles which were as diverse as history and art would allow. Their principal aim was to promote alternative garments which were not bound by the dictates of continental couture designers. Stressing the importance of simplicity and grace, Oliphant argued that, ‘Art’ should seek to awaken ‘some spirit of individualism and of personal interest’ in the design of clothing.²⁰¹ Haweis attached equal importance to individuality and freedom:

Until individual opinion is admitted to be free, we can have no true or original art in England, in dress, nor anything: for the secret of all true art is freedom, to *think for ourselves*, and to *do as we like*.²⁰²

She set out three key design principles which would elevate clothing ‘into a fine art,’ namely:

1. That it shall not contradict the natural lines of the body.
2. That the proportions of the dress shall obey the proportions of the body

²⁰⁰ Ellen Terry, “Stage Decoration,” 88.

²⁰¹ Oliphant, *Dress*, 80.

²⁰² Haweis, *Art of Dress*, 22.

3. That the dress shall reasonably express the character of the wearer



Figure 6.85 - Elliot and Fry. Ellen Terry, ca.1880-1885. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:449-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.86 - Elliot and Fry. Ellen Terry. 1884. Chlorobromide print on cream card mount. 27.8 x 21.1 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum. Museum Number NPG x127489.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

All of these ideas had been adopted by Terry before they were published by Haweis in 1878 and the actress' personal style evolved over the course of her career, adapting to shifts in fashion, art, and her own physique. Throughout her adult life the neckline, sleeves, and skirts of her garments were particularly distinctive. During the 1870s and 1880s she favoured small, upright collars, often trimmed with narrow frills and many of her garments feature a soft bow, or comparable details at the neckline. [FIGURE 6.85] Further evidence of Terry's individualisation of contemporary styles can be found in a photograph from 1884. [FIGURE 6.86] It shows Terry wearing a dress cut in the Princess line silhouette, a style popular in the early 1880s, and which had been recommended as a flattering form of Aesthetic attire, but which was no longer fashionable by this date.²⁰³ Again Terry was continuing to wear a style which, though no longer fashionable, suited her tall, slim, figure. By adding an open gown over this Princess line dress Terry also individualised her interpretation of the style. Her elbow length sleeves with their lace cuffs recall the ornate fashions of the mid to late eighteenth century, and the loose cut of the gown adds softness to the comparatively close fitting dress beneath.

The sleeves of Terry's garments generally followed the line of the arm, finishing at the elbow in a turned back cuff, or if full length, fitted relatively closely at the wrist, ending with a cuff which might be plain, or decorative. By the 1890s, however, the fullness occasionally present in the upper section of the sleeves within Terry's earlier garments is exaggerated, reflecting the fashion for 'gigot' sleeves of circa 1894 and 1897. [FIGURE 6.87 and 6.88] Terry, who continued to wear very full sleeves after their popularity

²⁰³ Both Ada Ballin and Mrs Haweis recommend this form of attire. For Ballin the appeal of the garment lies in the fact that 'the weight...is equally distributed, as, being cut all in one, the weight of the skirt depends entirely from the bodice.' Haweis, perhaps as concerned with beauty, as utility, remarks upon the manner in which these close-fitting dresses, define 'the beautiful lines of the hips and falling in slightly at the knees, are strictly in accordance with the natural lines of the body.' Ada Ballin, *Science of Dress in Theory and Practice*, London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington. 1885. Chapter XI, 'A New System of Dress for Women', p. x and Mrs. H.R. Haweis. *Art of Dress*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1879). 66-7.

waned, arguably adopted this style because it suited her more mature figure, the wider shoulder line creating the impression of slimness at the waist. She also adapted ‘gigot’ sleeves, incorporating elements of the ‘puff’ sleeves fashionable during the first decades of the nineteenth century, to create a flattering fusion of the two styles.²⁰⁴ This fusion is exemplified in a photograph of Terry from circa 1900, in which the stiff full upper sleeves form part of a short sleeved, open fronted tunic, which she wears over a long sleeved gown which is loosely shaped to her figure.²⁰⁵ [FIGURE 6.89] As these images confirm, Terry’s continually adopted moderated and personalised versions of contemporary trends within her personal dress.



Figure 6.87 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry, ca. mid 1894-7. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:513-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.88 - Dress consisting of a bodice and skirt of embroidered silk velvet. Possibly made in Paris, retailed by Stern Brothers, New York, 1894. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.272&A-1972.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²⁰⁴ This ‘puffed’ style can be seen in fashion plates from circa 1810 to 1820 and is realised in extant garments, such as MT.2024 and MT.2029, in the collection of Chertsey Museum.

²⁰⁵ Susan North and Avril Hart provide a detailed and illustrated analysis of the wide variety of sleeves and cuffs fashionable during the mid to late eighteenth century in Avril Hart and Susan North, *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Fashion in Detail* (London: V&A Publishing, 2009) 86-94.

The consistent features of Terry's personal dress were therefore: the soft, and often extremely loose, fit of her garments; the incorporation of features drawn from past and contemporary fashions; and, generally, a small upright collar, or some detail, perhaps in the form of a soft bow, at the neck. There were garments and accessories which departed completely from this European dominated aesthetic, and reflect the influence of Japan and India. In her later years Terry returned to Asia for inspiration and loose fitting, garments, often based upon, or actually, Chinese robes, were established as a staple part of her wardrobe.



Figure 6.89 - Walker & Boutall, after Sir Emery Walker. Ellen Terry, early 1900s. Photogravure. 13.9 x 10.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x19637.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Asserting ‘individuality’ and ‘fashioning’ an identity

By 1888 Terry’s personal style was sufficiently recognisable for a feature in the journal *Woman’s World*, entitled ‘Shopping in London’ to include a drawing of the type of woman to found shopping in Liberty’s which, Newton suggests, was ‘based on the young Ellen Terry.’²⁰⁶ [FIGURE 6.90] Kimberley Wahl found similar evidence of Terry’s importance, noting how, in an 1880 edition of the *Queen*, a visual image of a ‘cream-coloured’ Aesthetic bridal gown, ‘bordered with plaitings and lace,’ the full skirt ‘caught up on one side’ is explained as being ‘like the dress worn by Ellen Terry [in the role of] Portia.’²⁰⁷ [FIGURE 6.91]

Although strongly committed to her personal style, Terry also remained conscious of the importance of adapting her dress to suit her surroundings, and audience. As surviving images and Terry’s few extant garments indicate, much of the clothing she wore within a domestic setting was relatively plain in design and subdued in colour. When living in Kent in the early 1900s, for instance, Terry adopted full ‘smocks’, previously practical wear for rural men, for her own dress.²⁰⁸ For Terry her smocks provided comfortable, informal dress, and were worn with ‘a blouse and skirt and flat sandals’ and she had them made locally, in ‘a variety of vivid colours’ and sent to her, at Smallhythe.²⁰⁹ [FIGURE 6.92]

²⁰⁶ Newton, *Health, Art and Reason*. 120.

²⁰⁷ Although published in 1880 and therefore after the Lyceum Company revived *The Merchant of Venice* in 1879, this description recalls Terry’s costumes from the earlier, 1875 production of the play, at the Prince of Wales Theatre. Wahl, *Dressed as in a Painting*, 110-1.

²⁰⁸ Smocks were falling out of use among Sussex and Kent agricultural labourers and shepherds by the 1870s but were still made and worn at this time. A range of research has been published on the history and decline of ‘The Smock’. See, for instance, Nicholas Thornton, “Enigmatic Variations: The Features of British Smocks,” *Textile History*, 28.2 (1997):176-184.

²⁰⁹ Terry’s daughter was more daring, establishing her smocks as part of her ‘everyday’ attire, and matching them with ‘baggy trousers’. As Jane Ashelford discovered the outfits of both Terry and her daughter, had a notable impression on their American friend Claire Avery, then working as an artist for Vogue. On her return to America Avery’s sketch of a group of three elegant gardeners in smocks featured in the 1914

This approach to dress provided an immediate contrast to the carefully designed costumes associated with her professional identity, and also implied that within this domestic space, it was her surroundings, rather than herself, which she presented foremost to her audience. When appearing in public however, Terry recognised the importance of performing for her audience. For instance, in 1883, when arriving in New York on the first ever Lyceum Company tour of North America, Terry wore a vivid red sash and ‘flame coloured scarf,’ accessories which both attracted attention, and signalled her prominent status within the company. As *The Tribune* reported,

[...] she showed herself possessed of a marked individuality. Her dress consisted of a dark greenish brown cloth wrap, lined inside with a peculiar shade of red; the inner dress, girt at the waist with a red, loosely folded sash, seemed a reminiscence of some eighteenth century portrait, while the delicate complexion caught a rosy reflection from the loose flamed coloured scarf tied in a bow at the neck [...].²¹⁰

Terry did not always perform the role of ‘leading lady.’ She was often required to appear as merely one actress amongst a group of distinguished performers and would adapt her dress accordingly. On one such occasion, a charity appearance at Grosvenor House, London, in 1889, Terry acknowledged her altered status by adopting a restrained and ‘[...] extremely elegant robe [...] of a soft, white clinging material, [worn] with a wrapper of pale grey caught up on one shoulder with a silver clasp.’²¹¹ The tones of this pale robe

edition of the magazine, accompanying an article ‘confirming the smock as an enduring fashion garment.’ Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress* (London: National Trust, 1996) 303.

²¹⁰ [One of a series of articles describing Terry’s arrival in America] published in *The Tribune*, October 1883. Press Cutting, Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883* Garrick Club, London.

²¹¹ Terry was one of a number of actresses who had gathered to raise funds for ‘The Lost and Starving Dogs.’ Mrs. Bancroft, the ‘only lady in a bonnet’, and dressed in ‘plain black silk’ with which ‘she wisely wore a somewhat formidable white wrap’ was also amongst those present. “Entertainment at Grosvenor

harmonised with the garments of her fellow performers (Miss Miller also wore white and Mrs. Bancroft carried a wrap in the same colour) but the silhouette and addition of the silver clasp allowed Terry to retain and subtly assert her individuality.²¹²

Wahl has argued that ‘Aesthetic dressing was a highly symbolic form of representation [...] with the potential to signify a range of cultural values, from the expression of individual identity to larger shifts in social ideology in relation to the body and clothing.’²¹³ Terry’s professional career had heightened her awareness of the power of dress to communicate character and ‘fashion’ an identity.²¹⁴ In her memoirs, Duff Gordon, recalled her disappointment that ‘[...] I could never persuade [Terry] to let me make her a dress,’ yet, as she acknowledged, ‘[...] although I used to drape pieces of material on her. It would have been impossible to picture [Terry] in fashionable clothes, they would not have suited her personality.’²¹⁵ Duff Gordon’s remarks confirm the degree to which Terry’s dress became a public extension of her personality. They also resonate with Wilson’s suggestions that ‘[...] bohemians by “making a statement” with their style of dress’ were able to ‘announce’ an ‘inner individual truth.’²¹⁶ As Cockin suggests, Terry was both creating and endowed with ‘proliferating provisional selves.’²¹⁷ This examination of Terry’s personal style has demonstrated that dress provided Terry with an

House,” dated by hand, June 1889. Press Cutting, Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883*, Garrick Club, London.

²¹² “Entertainment at Grosvenor House,” dated by hand, June 1889. Press Cutting, Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883*, Garrick Club, London.

²¹³ Wahl, *Dressed as in a Painting*, xi. Writing on the same theme Wilson suggests that for Lady Ottoline Morrel (1873-1938) ‘[...] dress was an essential component in the creation of an original identity. Her clothes were truly theatrical, sometimes copies from her own sketches, sometimes from paintings, sometimes from actual theatre costumes, unlined and tacked together by her seamstress, Miss Brenton.’ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 171.

²¹⁴ McKenna, for instance, applauded Terry’s firm belief that ‘The character should find expression in the costumes’ and noted how often Terry introduced ‘apparent trifles’ which were ‘in harmony with the individuality of the woman she portray[ed].’ McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” 459.

²¹⁵ Duff Gordon, *Discretions and Indiscretions*, 33-4.

²¹⁶ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 161.

²¹⁷ Katharine Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,” *Ellen Terry Spheres of Influence*, ed. Katharine Cockin (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), 133.

additional and important, means through which to express and ‘costume’ her multiple ‘identities,’ and therefore played a crucial part in Terry’s self-fashioning.²¹⁸



Figure 6.90 - Unknown artist. Line drawing illustration accompanying an article in *Woman's World*, Vol.2, 1888. Personal photograph by the author 14 October 2015. National Art Library, Special Collections, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.91 - Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:226-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²¹⁸ Cockin, ‘Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,’ 133.



Figure 6.92 - Photographer unknown. Photograph showing Terry and another woman (Kitty[?]) both wearing smocks. ca. 1905-1915. Personal Photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

6.6 FASHIONING A LEGACY

‘Great actress’

In addition to ‘fashioning herself’, Terry was also conscious of the importance of ‘fashioning’ her ‘legacy.’²¹⁹ The celebrations staged to mark her fifty year stage jubilee in 1906, with crowds queuing for tickets from midnight, illustrate the extent of her popular appeal at this stage in her life.²²⁰ The event was a public testament to Terry’s

²¹⁹ Chapter 2 discussed the manner in which actresses’ manipulated and presented their public image has been examined by Christopher Breward in *Fashioning London*, 88-91. As Edith Craig and Christopher St John declare in the notes they have added to Chapter V of their edition of Terry’s autobiography, ‘[...] it came naturally to Ellen Terry to dramatise herself. So there are hundreds of Ellen Terries, all genuine in their way, for these was in this extraordinary rich and varied nature an abundance of material for their creation.’ Terry, Craig, and St. John, *Ellen Terry’s Memoirs*, 74.

²²⁰ Audience members queued overnight to obtain tickets for the celebrations and leading figures from across the arts participated in the celebratory performances staged at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. “Ellen Terry’s Jubilee, Fifty Years Ago Today she first acted,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, Apr 28, 1906 and “Ellen Terry Jubilee, Scenes at ‘Old Drury’, A 29 Hour Vigil,” *Unidentified periodical*, 1906. Press Cutting, pasted in Ruth Canton Album, *Henry Irving*, Garrick Club, London.

celebrity and leading figures from the theatrical profession, gathered to celebrate her career. Twenty-two members of Terry's family joined together to stage Act 1 of *Much Ado About Nothing*. In a re-enactment 'ghosted' by her celebrated Lyceum performances, Terry appeared as Beatrice for the final time. The performance fulfilled a dual function: reminding audiences of Terry's 'theatrical achievements,' and reaffirming the acting dynasty established by her family.²²¹ [FIGURE 6.93]

Although the matinee was organised by an all-male committee, Terry exerted a strong influence over the arrangements made for the production, both publically and in private. The press reported her successful plea that a number of seats in the pit and gallery should be reserved for the public.²²² Notes to the 1931 edition of Terry's autobiography also reveal that when presented with 'an actressless programme in honour of an actress!' Terry refused to appear, until 'women of talent' were invited to join the celebrations.²²³

Despite the splendour and success of her Jubilee celebrations however, it was not until 1925 that Terry received official royal recognition of her status within the 'theatrical aristocracy.' Three decades passed between Terry's receipt of this honour and the earlier award of Irving's knighthood. This, together with the fact that she was the second rather than the first actress to be made a Dame of the British Empire, shows that although in 1906 Terry's public were willing to celebrate her theatrical achievements, further efforts were required to earn royal approval.²²⁴ As she recognised, there were several means

²²¹ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 58, 92.

²²² "Ellen Terry Jubilee: Scenes at 'Old Drury', A 29 Hour Vigil", 1906.

²²³ Nina Auerbach remarks upon this confrontation in *Ellen Terry, A Player in Her Time*, 9. She quotes from Christopher St. John's additional biographical notes to Terry, Craig and St John, *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, 281.

²²⁴ The American born actress Geneviève Ward (1837-1922) who, in 1921, became the first actress to become a Dame. In contrast to Terry, Ward maintained a reputation for observing 'strict standards of propriety' throughout her career. T.C. Davis, *Actresses as working women*, 5.

through which to achieve the royal recognition required to cement her status within her profession, and establish a legacy which would endure beyond her death.



Figure 6.93 - Photographer unknown. "A Cast of Terry's at Ellen Terry's Benefit," *The Sketch*, 1906. Press cutting showing Ellen Terry's 1906 Jubilee. Personal Photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Re-fashioning the narrative

Terry's efforts at re-fashioning the narrative of her career pre-date her 1906 Jubilee and can be traced to her decision, in 1902, to leave the Lyceum Company. Chapter 3 discussed how, by the late 1890s, Terry was conscious that Irving needed a leading lady who could provide the 'youthful' Shakespearean heroines the public associated with the 'Ellen

Terry' of 1870s and 1880s. As she recognised, even the 'illusion of youth,' and the flattering gloom of gaslight, could not conceal the fact that she was 'no longer young.'²²⁵ Terry therefore '[...] set about inventing a new beauty to take the place of the old beauty of her youth.'²²⁶ Rejecting her characterisation as a 'Victorian actress [...] belonging to the "old school,' in 1903 she marked her first and last venture into theatre management by staging a controversial play by Henrik Ibsen.²²⁷ She appointed her son as director and employed her daughter to create the costumes. [FIGURE 6.94] The production proved a critical and financial failure and Terry's extreme disappointment with her performance is revealed in a collection of loose pages from her diary for the period. This includes her declaration on Saturday 18th April 1903 that, 'I can not play it – 'for nuts' – think it is because I don't understand her – Can't look the part even – all the work, trouble, exp. [expense], in vain, I feel shame.'²²⁸ Though dissatisfied with her own performance, Terry remained defiant in her belief that the production '[...] anticipated the scenic ideas of the future by a century, of which at any rate the orthodox theatre managers of the present age would not have dreamed.'²²⁹

Despite the commercial failure of *The Vikings*, Terry (now 56) continued her attempts to resist the eternally 'youthful' and 'charming' identity imposed upon her. The tour which followed her 1903 season at the Imperial helped Terry to recoup some of the money she had lost. It also provided an opportunity to perform *The Good Hope*. This play, by the

²²⁵ As Chapter 3 discussed Gail Marshall has examined this aspect of Terry's later career in detail. Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 155-7. As Chapter 3 discussed, both Terry's correspondence, and her writing reveals a growing consciousness of the consequences of aging. Terry, *The Story of my Life*, 313.

²²⁶ Craig and St John, *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, 285.

²²⁷ Several of Terry's female contemporaries also took on the management of theatres for a time, but many, such as Marie Bancroft and Maud Tree, did so in partnership with their husbands whilst Langtry's three year lease of the Imperial Theatre (between 1900 and 1903) was achieved through significant financial support from Edgar Cohen. Ernest Dudley, *The Gilded lily; the life and loves of the fabulous Lillie Langtry* (London: Oldhams Press, 1958), 175-8.

²²⁸ Loose pages from Terry's Diary, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Reference 125/31/3, Z2.170/1, British Library, London.

²²⁹ Terry, *Story of My Life*, 312.

Dutch dramatist, Herman Heijermans (1864-1924) and translated into English by St John, was ‘[...] essentially modern in construction and development’ and without any ‘star’ parts. For Terry, content to relinquish her position as leading lady, it offered the opportunity to appear in the small, but important role of ‘a very homely old peasant woman.’ Terry’s efforts to escape her established ‘feminine identity’ extended to ‘stumbl[ing] about ‘heavily in large sabots.’ These efforts met with resistance from critics however, who declared that she ‘[...] walked like a fairy and was far too graceful for a Dutch fisherwoman!’ [FIGURE 6.95] Terry reveals the frustration she felt in her autobiography, in which she described the situation as ‘[...] a case of “Give a dog a bad name and hang him”—the bad name in my case being “a womanly woman”!’²³⁰

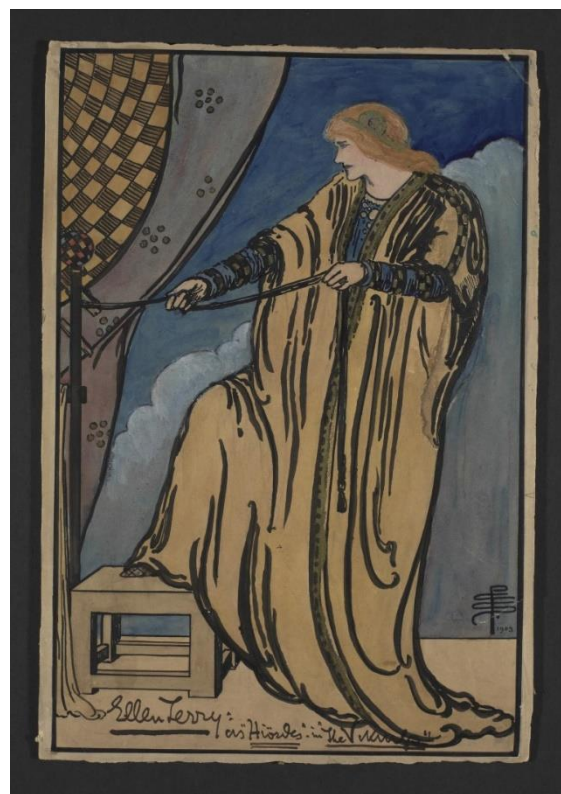


Figure 6.94 - Pamela Coleman Smith. Ellen Terry (1847-1928) as Hiördis in *The Vikings*, Imperial Theatre, 1903. Watercolour on paper. 28 x 19.3 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.913-2012.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²³⁰ Terry, *Story of My Life*, 328-329.

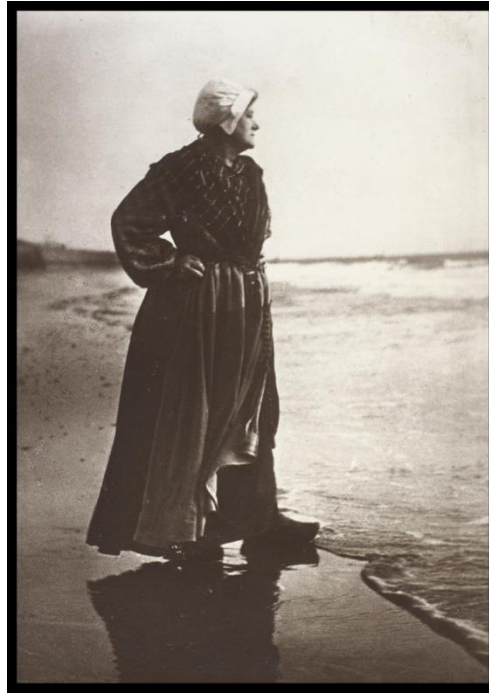


Figure 6.95 - Unknown photographer. Ellen Terry as Kniertje in *The Good Hope*, 1904. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:528-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Writer

The financial problems Terry faced following the failure of *The Vikings*, were heightened by the decline in the value of her investments. Cockin, who argues that ‘Terry’s career was significantly affected by the way in which she managed her finances,’ suggests that these financial pressures may have been a factor in Terry’s decision to publish her autobiography in 1908.²³¹ This publication provided Terry with an important source of income, and it also gave her a chance to reflect upon and re-present, key moments in her career.

²³¹ Cockin, ‘Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand’, 144. Cockin cited both the publication of the autobiography and, in 1913, the publication of Terry’s book on the Russian Ballet (almost entirely written by Christopher St John and Pamela Coleman Smith) as evidence of the financial motivations behind Terry’s self-promotion. Cockin explored this theme further in a Paper she presented at the conference *The Actress as Author: Nell Gwynn to Ellen Terry* on 10 July, 2015. ‘“Our Lady of the Lyceum” Performs “Ellen Terry”: Letters, Stories and Plots.’ (Hampshire: Chawton House Library, 2015).

Within the text Terry engages directly with her ‘audience,’ opening her account by begging them to excuse her lack of ‘skill in writing.’ The intimacy of the narrative she offers is heightened by presenting her autobiography not as ‘[...] human document for the benefit of future psychologists and historians’ but as a story she is sharing with ‘[...] the good, living public which has been considerate and faithful to me for so many years.’²³² Though this introduction seems to deny the long term purpose and historical significance of this account, Terry reveals her awareness of its potential future value when, later in the text, she reflects upon her lost diaries, noting that such ‘useful’ and ‘dull’ documents can become ‘[...] invaluable to the student, centuries afterwards.’²³³

Postlewait declared that by the late eighteenth century ‘the popular “memoir” (either an autobiography or a biography) had become, ‘a necessary adjunct to the role of theatre in society’ and Terry’s autobiography was certainly only one example of many theatrical memoirs published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.²³⁴ As Gale’s work on autobiographies has demonstrated, however, these accounts play a crucial part in the diverse ‘autobiographical strategies’ through which performers ‘constructed’ their identities and fashioned an enduring legacy.²³⁵

²³² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, ix-xi.

²³³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 366. In her personal copy of this autobiography, which survives at Smallhythe, Terry has underlined this passage.

²³⁴ Postlewait, “Autobiography and Theatre History,” 249. Autobiographies published by Terry’s contemporaries include Sarah Bernhardt, *My Double Life*, (London: W. Hernemann, 1907); Madge Kendal, *Dame Madge Kendal, by herself*, (London: John Murray, 1933); Marie and Squire Bancroft (who published a joint autobiography), *Recollections of sixty years* (London: John Murray, 1909) and Lillie Langtry *The Days I Knew* (London: Hutchinson, 1925).

²³⁵ Using the actress and manager Lena Ashwell (1872-1957) as a case study, Gale examines what she terms ‘Auto/biographical negotiations of the professional self.’ As Gale discovered, Ashwell can be seen to have ‘consciously created an archive of her work, providing biographical material which could easily be placed beside and interrelated with her later autobiographical writings by the theatre historian.’ Gale, “Lena Ashwell and Auto/Biographical Negotiations of the Professional self,” 99, 115, 121. Gale addressed this theme further in the Keynote Paper she presented at the conference *The Actress as Author: Nell Gwynn to Ellen Terry* on 10 July, 2015. Maggie B. Gale, “‘Believe me or not’:* female performer and autobiographical histories of professional practice” (Hampshire: Chawton House Library, 2015).

Another significant aspect of the autobiography and one which was not openly revealed was the fact that it was written in partnership with St John.²³⁶ As Cockin's examination of Terry's letters revealed '[...] while Terry was an uninhibited correspondent, she engaged a ghost-writer for published autobiographical writings and public lectures.'²³⁷ Rather than disempowering Terry or devaluing the account however, Cockin suggests this information offers a '[...] new perspective on Terry as performer, author and employer,' who '[...] projected herself, via Edith Craig, and Christopher St John, in particular calculated ways.'²³⁸ Commenting on the collaboration, St John presents her position as that of Terry's 'literary henchman' and an 'apprentice' to a 'master craftsman,' declaring that Terry was an active participant in the writing process for whom St John's 'services' were a 'convenience' rather than a 'necessity.'²³⁹ [FIGURE 6.96] The success of their business partnership can be seen in its longevity, as it endured beyond the creation of the autobiography to include the publication of a series of articles on Stage Design and Decoration (1910); a book on the *Russian Ballet* (1913) and, the creation, and posthumous publication, of Terry's *Four Lectures on Shakespeare* (1932).²⁴⁰ As this evidence and the quality and quantity of Terry's letters indicate, Terry's '[...] employment of a ghost-writer' need not 'necessarily be interpreted as a lack of confidence or a sign of her failure

²³⁶ As the Introduction explained, Christopher St John, (né Christabel Marshall) lived with Terry's daughter from about 1899, and worked closely with Terry on much of her published writing. As Cockin notes, there are three editions of Terry's biography. The first published in 1908, the other two published posthumously. The second, with extensive additional notes by her daughter Edith Craig, and Christopher St John, was published in 1933 and the last published in 1948 by Christopher St John, after the death of Craig. Katharine Cockin, "Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue: the Victorian actress, letters and life-writing," *Journal of European Studies*, xxxii (2002), 157.

²³⁷ Cockin, "Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue," 152.

²³⁸ Cockin, "Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue," 152, 158.

²³⁹ Ellen Terry, Christopher St. John, and William Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare* (London: Hopkinson, 1932), 8-9. Early drafts of the manuscript for the autobiography were retained by Terry and remain in the collection at Smallhythe. These are covered with Terry's notes and suggested amendments. Uncatalogued Papers, Documents connected with Christopher St. John and Terry's autobiography. Smallhythe Place, Kent.

²⁴⁰ Cockin emphasises the professional nature of the partnership as recorded in the formal terms set out and agreed to in the letters exchanged by Terry and St John. Cockin, "Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue," 158-9.

to write independently.’ On the contrary, as Cockin suggests ‘[...] the act of writing – even engaging another woman to write for her – appears to have been a means of self-performance for Terry.’²⁴¹

Another instance of Terry’s literary ‘performances’ lies preserved within the library at Smallhythe. The books within this collection are filled with Terry’s annotations which, as Marshall demonstrates, offer a ‘private’ testament to her critical ability and ‘[...] show an actress ever engaged in the process of interpretation, retrieval, intervention and disputation.’²⁴² Whether or not they were intended for public scrutiny, Cockin argues that these ‘[...] annotated working copies of plays testify to [Terry’s] scholarship as well as to her frustrated creativity.’²⁴³ The notes Terry makes on her play texts present Terry as an active, independent, figure, with the confidence to become ‘[...] actor as well as actress, manager/director, and a critic of both theatrical and literary material.’²⁴⁴

Much of the annotation on the texts takes the form of conversational remarks addressed to an unspecified audience, sometimes, as in the case of her autobiography, with Terry’s past self. This allows Terry to correct errors in biographical accounts, record past successes and failures and, in some instances, to recall and mourn past friends and colleagues.²⁴⁵ Through this marginalia, as Marshall reveals, Terry enters into ‘discursive

²⁴¹ As discussed in Chapter 1, Cockin’s arguments are founded upon her editorship of Terry’s ‘Collected Letters’ and she notes Terry’s ‘refusal to delegate authorial control of her letters’ even when in ill health. Cockin, “Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue,” 161.

²⁴² Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 160.

²⁴³ Cockin, “Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue,” 154.

²⁴⁴ Marshall, “Ellen Terry: Shakespearean Actress and Critic,” 361. As discussed Terry’s library includes working texts for many of her key productions, many annotated with stage directions and observations, some, as is the case with Terry’s copy of *Macbeth*, with photographs and mementos added to create a record of the production itself. J.Comyns-Carr, *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: An Essay*. (London: Bickers & Son, Leicester Square, 1889.) Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place, Reference E.V.2.18.

²⁴⁵ Terry corrects numerous errors in T. Edgar Pemberton’s 1902 biography and challenges his interpretation of her performances on several occasions. T. Edgar Pemberton, *Ellen Terry and Her Sisters* (London: C.Arthur Pearson, Limited, 1902), Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Reference E.V.4.9. She has also annotated Charles Hiatt, *Ellen Terry and her Impersonations* (George Bell and Sons, 1898), in the same manner. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place, Reference E.V.4.10. Similarly, Terry has filled her autobiography and playtexts with observations on her performances. Within the same texts she has also added notes about some of the figures she worked with. In the case of Irving she has actually inserted a

relationships with playwrights, critics, her partner Henry Irving, and her younger selves.’²⁴⁶ In this manner Terry ‘fashioned’ a new identity as a ‘writer or annotator’ which enabled her to escape the constraints imposed on her when ‘performing’ her role as ‘an actress.’ In this new guise, Marshall proposes, Terry ‘[...] might legitimately hope to influence more effectively and strategically how these plays might be read, and her own role might be understood [...] Terry could instead begin to be at least partially, imaginatively, self-determining.’²⁴⁷

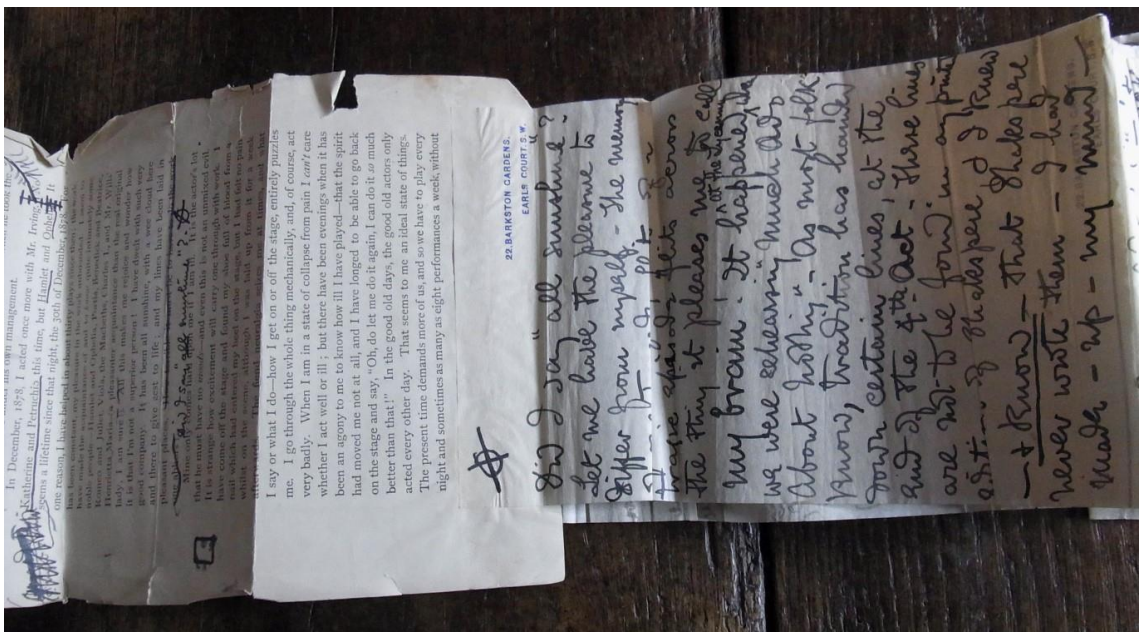


Figure 6.96 - Terry’s annotations on the draft of her autobiography. Personal photograph by the author 4 April 2016. Christopher St John, material relating to publications written for and about Ellen Terry. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

lock of his hair into her copy of *Macbeth* and in the passages of her autobiography which describes his death, Terry has underlined several phrases in pencil and added the phrase ‘My Dear-Dear=’ in pencil at the right hand margin.

²⁴⁶ Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 160 and Marshall, “Ellen Terry: Shakespearean Actress and Critic,” 357.

²⁴⁷ Marshall. *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 161.

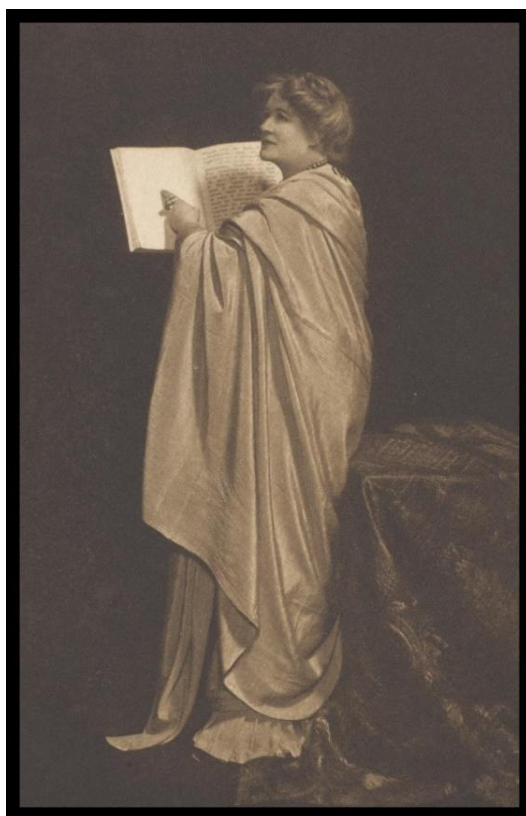


Figure 6.97 - Photographer Unknown. Terry in the robes created for her *Lectures on Shakespeare*, circa 1910. Print on paper. 12.3 x 8cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:533-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Lecturer

As has been demonstrated, there were limitations on the views and personas Terry was deemed able to express when performing her celebrity identity ‘as an actress.’ In 1910 however, Terry had another opportunity to refashion the public perception of her understanding of drama, design and performance: this time in the ‘role of lecturer.’²⁴⁸ Between 1910 and 1915 she delivered lectures across England, America and in Australia.²⁴⁹ Uniting critical commentary with ‘performance’ gave her the confidence she

²⁴⁸ The idea for the lecture tour came from the literary agents Curtis Brown who approached Terry with the idea of an American Tour. This tour lasted from November 1910 to spring of 1911. The tour continued in autumn of 1911 in England, but re-titled ‘A Shakespearean Discourse with Illustrative Acting’ as ‘lectures’ thought too intimidating for an English Audience. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 217

²⁴⁹ Christopher St John suggests that ‘The idea of her lecturing originated as far back as the year 1903 when she was touring the provinces with her own company in a repertory of plays. She consented during her visit to Glasgow, to give a talk on Shakespeare in aid of the funds of the local branch of The Ladies Theatrical

lacked in print, and Katherine E. Kelly argues that the lectures also allowed Terry ‘the freedom to speak on behalf of a modern womanhood she could not, in her Lyceum roles, perform, nor in her life fully inhabit.’²⁵⁰ Drawing on her past theatrical experience Terry worked with her daughter to create a suitable scene and costume. Her co-author St John records how Terry appeared alongside a lectern (previously a desk used by Irving) wearing ‘flowing robes of crimson, or white or grey,’ the colour chosen to suit the mood of her discourse.²⁵¹ [FIGURE 6.97]

This international lecture series gave Terry a crucial opportunity to revise and relive her interpretation of famous roles, to perform parts denied to her during her professional career and to raise much needed income.²⁵² Though written in partnership with St John, the surviving lecture texts reveal that their content was continuously evolving and that the typed text is covered with Terry’s revisions, additions and stage directions.²⁵³ [FIGURE 6.98] As St John’s introduction to the published edition of the lectures acknowledges,

[...] Not only did she [Terry] make several different versions for different types of audiences; she gave each particular audience

Guild [and] [...] eventually choose the Letters in Shakespeare’s plays [...] She included it in her repertory when she went to the United States in 1910 to give a series of lectures [but] [...] the lectures on Shakespeare Heroines were the most popular. They gave Ellen Terry better opportunities for exercising her own art and in time became an epitome of her Shakespearean impersonations.’ Terry, St. John, and Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, 12.

²⁵⁰ Katherine E.Kelly, “The After Voice of Ellen Terry,” *Ellen Terry Spheres of Influence*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), 65.

²⁵¹ Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 217 and Terry, Craig and St John, *Ellen Terry’s Memoirs*, 287.

²⁵² Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 154-160.

²⁵³ Several bound versions of Terry’s lectures survive and these are listed in F.T. Bowyer, *Catalogue of the Working Library of Ellen Terry at Smallhythe Place, Tenterden, Kent*, (n.p.: National Trust, 1977), 53-54. As St John recalled ‘When she first delivered the lecture, several copies of which she had printed in a type large and bold enough for her to read it without spectacles, she adhered more of less faithfully to the original version. By 1915 she had transformed it with cuts, transpositions, and the incorporation of many of her platform improvisations.’ Terry, St. John, and Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, 11.

improvisations inspired by its response. The text printed here is a blend of the four texts she used most frequently during her tours.²⁵⁴

The intelligent and educated criticism Terry was able to express both through these lectures, in related articles, provided her with another crucial tool through which to edit the narrative of her professional life and to cement her leading position within the theatrical aristocracy.²⁵⁵

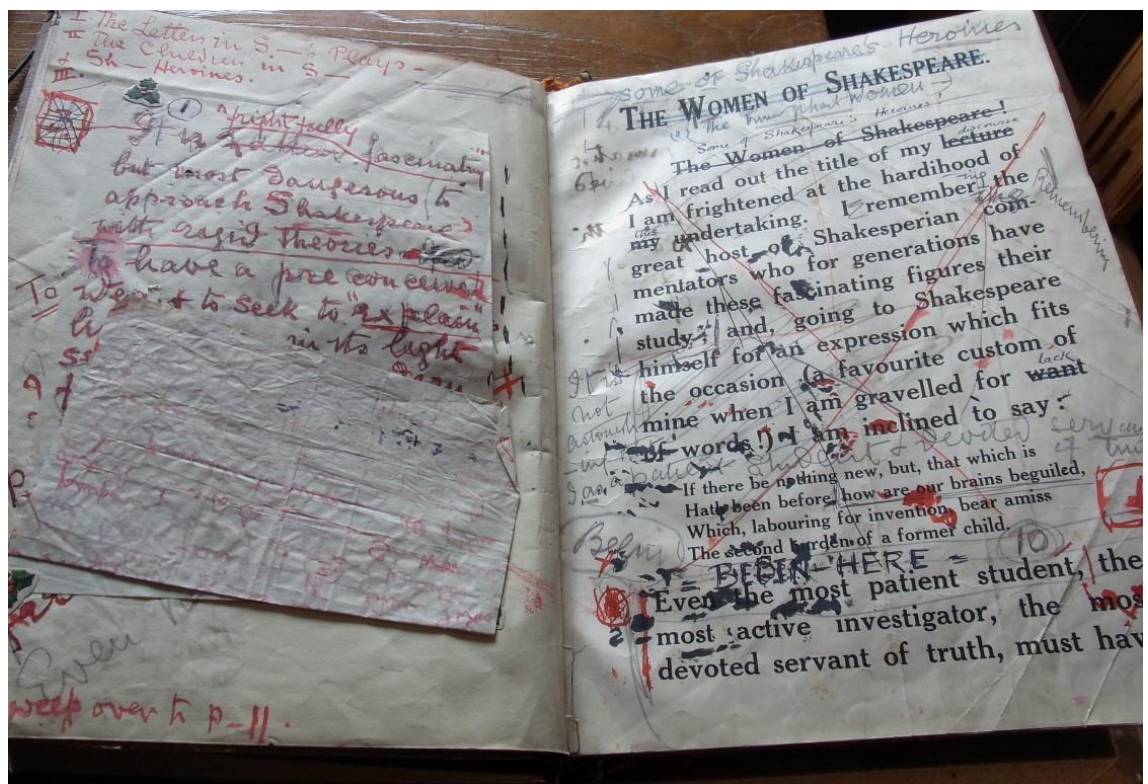


Figure 6.98 - Detail from the transcript of Terry's lecture *The Triumphant Women*. Ellen Terry Collection, Library, Smallhythe Place. Personal Photograph by the author. 23 March 2015. National Trust Inventory Number NT 3118744.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²⁵⁴ Terry, St. John, and Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, 11.

²⁵⁵ These included a series of three articles for McClures magazine published in 1910, but like her autobiography, written in partnership with Christopher St John. Cockin, "Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue," 158.

Collector

Terry's published and private writing demonstrate that the actress was not only conscious of her 'theatrical afterlife' but also eager to take control of, and to preserve, this legacy.²⁵⁶

Although many of the items which now form part of the collection at Smallhythe were acquired and brought together by Craig after her mother's death, Terry herself assiduously and energetically assembled a range of objects documenting not only her own career, but also ephemera and objects connected with her 'theatrical ancestors' and 'theatrical contemporaries' during her lifetime.²⁵⁷ [FIGURE 6.99]

A profile of Terry, published in 1897 observed that 'Her London home in South Kensington is a veritable museum of beautiful and interesting things, her collection of stage relics and mementos and photographs is quite unrivalled.'²⁵⁸ Similarly, How, in his description of Terry's Earl's Court home in 1892 noted her 'case of curios,' which amongst other things contained

Mrs. Siddon's Bible, with a letter in her own handwriting; [...] and surely the daintiest and tiniest thing of lace handkerchief's-Sarah Bernhardt's.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ Terry's autobiography and her lecture series played a key part in this. Kelly, "The After Voice of Ellen Terry," 69.

²⁵⁷ Terry's collection is described as 'forming the nucleus' of the proposed memorial to the actress. *'Ellen Terry Memorial' – Smallhythe Place, Tenterden, Kent, The Home of Ellen Terry 1902-1928*, Unpublished Leaflet (ca.1928, not paginated). Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 57, SC3-C4, British Library, London. Terry's original collection was remarked upon by Alice Comyns-Carr in her *Reminiscences* (London: Hutchinson & Co, Ltd. 1926) 312. It is also described in interviews of Terry, such as How, Miss Ellen Terry, 490-1; Mc Kenna, "Ellen Terry", 458 and *The Sphere*, April 28 1906, Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 57, SC9-G22, British Library, London.

²⁵⁸ *St Pauls*, January 9 1897, Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 62, SC9-G12, British Library, London.

²⁵⁹ How, Miss Ellen Terry, 492-3.

In addition to documenting Terry’s own career, the collection assembled at Smallhythe also includes mementos which the actress collected from her contemporaries. Amongst them is a cloth inscribed with a message and signed by Bernhardt after Terry once loaned the actress her dressing room.²⁶⁰ Terry’s costume collection also contains several items worn by other performers, including the suit worn by her brother, Fred Terry (1863-1933) as *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and several costumes worn by Irving.²⁶¹



Figure 6.99 - Photograph showing a detail from a display case in Terry’s former home, Smallhythe Place. The items on display were collected by Terry and her daughter, Edith Craig. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal Photograph by the author. 4 April 2016.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²⁶⁰ Interviewing Terry in 1894 Mc Kenna described ‘The drawing room, an apartment with severely striped walls and handsome freize, is full of curios as well as flowers, interesting mementos of celebrities past and present. A striking portrait of Mr. Irving, the work of Bastien Lepage, hangs opposite to Miss Terry’s own particular seat, Countless as the trifles of interest, among them a Bible that belonged to Mrs. Siddons; a letter in the handwriting of that great actress [...] properties used by many a famous actor, and a cup that belonged to Sir Walter Scott. Another treasure valued by Miss Terry is a toilet cover whereon is inscribed in “grease paint” a pretty little message of affectionate thanks from Sarah Bernhardt [...]’ McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” 458.

²⁶¹ Terry actually commissioned Nettleship to transform remnants of the fabric used to Irving’s crimson ribbed silk robes for Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII* into a cushion declaring her willingness to ‘face the wrath of Mr. Irving.’ Letter from Terry to Nettleship, 1892, Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/TERRY.

‘An auction of memories’²⁶²

Correspondence from Terry’s solicitors and bank reveal that, despite income earned through lecture tours and publications, in the final years of her life Terry faced serious financial problems. These placed her homes and private collection under threat.²⁶³ Regardless of her dwindling income, Terry strove to maintain her generous payments to family members, and by 1921, her financial position was so precarious that she was compelled to sell her flat on the Kings Road, Chelsea and purchase a smaller flat in Burleigh Mansions, St Martin's Lane.

A public auction was held to sell items from her Chelsea home and newspaper reports of the sale provide an emotive account of the ‘heartless’ and ‘barbaric’ process through which ‘the exquisite china and other mementos of a great artist [were] whisked off by sharp bidders for ridiculously small sums.’²⁶⁴ As the press cuttings record however, representatives from Terry’s friends and family not only attended these sales but also purchased key items. Indeed, in her copy of the auction catalogue (which she retained) Craig painstakingly recorded the items purchased by each person and the amount they paid.²⁶⁵ Craig’s efforts to document the fate of Terry’s property, together with the fact that so many items were sold to figures who knew Terry personally, suggests that these

²⁶² Undated and unidentified Press Cutting entitled ‘Auction of Memories’, Ellen Terry Collection, 125/56/5, SC22-G2, British Library, London.

²⁶³ Katherine Cockin raised this issue in “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,” 139 and in the Introduction to Cockin, *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry*, xi-xviii. It is also clear from many of the letters sent to Terry warning her of her diminishing income and in 1923, the letter sent to Hilda Barnes notifying Terry of her imminent bankruptcy. See, for instance, Typed letter from A.C. Peach London, 7th Feb 1917, Letter, Ellen Terry Collection, (125) 125/56/2, SC22-B160 and Typed letter from Gilbert, Samuel & Co, 10th July 1928, Ellen Terry Collection, (125) 125/56/3, SC22-B193, British Library, London.

²⁶⁴ “The Ghosts of Ellen Terry,” *Unidentified periodical*, ca. 1921. Ellen Terry Collection, 125/56/5, SC22-G1, British Library, London.

²⁶⁵ These press cuttings also survive as part of the collection originally assembled at Smallhythe and, as with the auction catalogue, were therefore deliberately retained either by Terry, or her daughter. See Contents of the Residence of ET at King’s Road Chelsea in 31st May 1921 (Published by Messrs. John Barker & Co. Ltd, 1921). Ellen Terry Collection, 125/56/5, SC22-G3, British Library, London.

purchases were pre-meditated, and made with a view to the future recovery, and reunion of Terry's scattered possessions.

Although Terry began 're-fashioning' her 'identity' during her lifetime, she was conscious that a custodian would be required to safeguard her legacy. Both Sophie Duncan and Melville have highlighted the important role her appointed successor, Craig, played in preserving and fashioning Terry's legacy. Significantly, as Melville suggests that in addition to preserving Smallhythe, Craig '[...] was also anxious to dispel the impression of Ellen that often came through articles about her, that she was a charming scatterbrain.'²⁶⁶

This was not to prove an easy task for Craig who, having been left relatively little money to sustain the house, made a public appeal for funds.²⁶⁷ Craig's financial difficulties were heightened by the stock market crash of 1929 which stopped the flow of donations that had followed Terry's death.²⁶⁸ Desperate to save Terry's legacy, not only for theatrical history, but also 'for Ellen Terry's sake,' Craig sought the support of National Trust and on her death the property and the collection were formally transferred to the charity.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 250.

²⁶⁷ Craig adopted a number of schemes through which to raise additional funds, including, in 1931, the publication of Terry's letters to Shaw. This project, though initially sanctioned by her brother, was soon publicly condemned by Gordon Craig, who responded by publishing his own account of Terry's life *Ellen Terry and her Secret Self [with an Annex "a Plea for G. B. S".]* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1931). As Chapter 2 discussed, this battle for Terry's legacy caused a bitter rift between the siblings, and led Edith Craig to respond by publishing a revised edition of Terry's memoirs, with additional notes and chapters in 1933.

²⁶⁸ Clare Atwood, Handwritten notes for a speech made when transferring Smallhythe Place to the ownership of the National Trust in 1949, Ellen Terry Collection (125) 125/39/2, SC4-E1, British Library, London.

²⁶⁹ Atwood, Notes for a speech in 1949, Ellen Terry Collection (125) 125/39/2, SC4-E1, British Library, London.

CONCLUSION

As this chapter has shown, Terry's eventual success, and long term legacy, owe much to the manner in which both her life and legacy were consciously, and carefully, managed. It has demonstrated that from circa 1874 to 1920, Terry was actively engaged in a deliberate process of 'self-fashioning' through which she was able to win, and sustain, public affection and respect. It has acknowledged that certain roles and qualities were imposed upon Terry, in particular her reputation for 'charm' and 'femininity,' which threatened to restrict her professional opportunities. Yet, it has also made apparent Terry's ability to resist and re-fashion these 'identities.'

This chapter has illustrated that Terry's self-fashioning was an integrated process in which all the elements of her 'public' and 'private' identities were carefully managed. Aware of the key part that written and visual records played in both expressing and preserving her various 'identities' she embraced both in her efforts to challenge her previous characterisation as a 'womanly woman,' whose success was due to 'charm' rather than just talent or hard work.

An important element of Terry's 'self-fashioning' was her determination to establish her status as a figure at the forefront of Aesthetic movement. As this chapter has made evident, whilst Terry owed her introduction to the movement to Watts and Godwin, she successfully maintained and strengthened her position as an icon of Aestheticism in her own right. The analysis of her houses and personal dress has revealed the extent to which she employed both mediums to advertise her commitment to the values promoted by the movement. Indeed, Terry's houses, be they 'country cottages' or city flats, provided important 'stage sets,' which enabled her to adopt both the 'feminine' and 'domestic'

roles traditionally associated with such environments, and also served as a testament to her Aesthetic sensibilities, and her commitment its values.

Most significantly, this chapter has provided the first full analysis of the crucial role which dress played Terry's 'self-fashioning' and has shown that Terry adapted her 'costumes' to suit the contexts within which she was 'performing' and her 'identity' was enacted. The analysis of Terry's personal dress has facilitated the identification of three clear stages in the development of her personal style. A style which, as has been illustrated, responded to and was influenced by movements within art and fashion, but was not bound by those dictates. Terry developed a personal style which evolved to suit her changing body, and asserted her individuality. Through this she was able to employ dress, both on and off the stage, to assert her status as a leading figure within the Aesthetic movement and an individual who understood the 'art' of dress.

When returning to the stage in 1874, Terry, as a self-supporting single mother recognised the need to conform to the identities suited to the tastes of the society in which she sought fame. By 1903 however, having achieved professional and financial success, she was eager, and at last able, to preserve a legacy which would endure beyond, and not confine her within, the Victorian Era.

She therefore sought to challenge and 'public' and 'private' identities within which she had been confined during her role as the leading lady of the Lyceum. Not all her efforts met with success, and many were actively resisted, but Terry remained firm in her determination to demonstrate that 'there [was] something more in [her] acting than *charm*.'²⁷⁰ Her 1908 autobiography therefore not only provided her with a vital income, but also offered her an opportunity to re-fashion the narrative of her life. Similarly,

²⁷⁰ Ellen Terry quoted in Terry, St. John, and Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, 13.

Terry's lecture series though initially undertaken for financial reasons, gave her the chance to perform roles never permitted to her at the Lyceum, and to finally take on the role of Director, as opposed to that of obedient cast member.²⁷¹ Through this more confrontational approach to 'self-fashioning' Terry was able to build upon her pre-existing status as a woman, and actress, who appreciated the 'art' of dress and costume, to establish a position as respected artist who understood the 'art' of theatre, and Shakespeare in particular. As her health failed, she took steps to appoint a reliable custodian to preserve this new 'identity,' and the memorial Craig established at Smallhythe, provided an enduring record of the importance and impact of Terry's life and career.

This chapter has established the vital contribution Terry's active 'self-fashioning' made to her social and professional success. As demonstrated, dress played a crucial part in communicating the 'public' and 'private' 'identities' Terry adopted to achieve win public affection. Her visual image was also important, as was her 'written self.' Terry's ability to overcome the social stigma attached to her private life and professional career, the position she gained as one of the leading actresses of her generation, and, above all, her 'legacy' as a significant and intelligent 'Artist,' and potent figure within theatre history, stand as a testament to her ability as a 'performer', both on, and off, the stage.

²⁷¹ As has been discussed the annotation with which Terry covered her Lyceum scripts, together with the manuscripts for, and final text of, her *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, reveal that whilst she respected Irving and their partnership, she did not always fully agree with his interpretation of certain productions. See, for instance, Terry, St. John, and Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, 88, 96.

CONCLUSION

It is no use putting the right dress on the wrong actor or actress. The physical appearance of the person who is going to wear the dress must be borne in mind; so must the dramatic situation in which it is to be worn. Besides realising the character of the period to which they belong, the dresses must be appropriate to the emotions of the play, and must have a beauty relative *to each other* as well as an individual excellence.¹

Ellen Terry, (1911)

Introduction

Ellen Terry's experience and understanding of the practical and artistic factors which shape the design and creation of theatrical costumes, is evident in the above observations. Her remarks also draw attention to the integral position costumes occupy within the multitude of dramatic effects, props, scenery, lighting, and 'bodies,' which are brought together to create a theatrical production.

It was an encounter with the actress's surviving costumes which drew my attention to their rich potential as source material for dress and theatre historians and first inspired the research on which the thesis is founded. The close interrogation of Terry's theatre costumes, alongside the rich body of supporting material preserved within the collection at Smallhythe Place, prompted a reconsideration of the 'afterlives' of theatrical costumes, and brought to light their significant role as carriers of 'meaning' and 'identity.'

As Chapter 2 made apparent, an additional stimulus for the research came from the limited attention paid to surviving theatre costumes within the small, albeit growing, body of existing literature on this theme within both dress and theatre history. Further motivation was provided by the fact that much of this research, whilst highlighting the significant

¹ Terry, "Stage Decoration," 87.

and enduring link between ‘costume’ and ‘fashionable dress,’ has failed to appreciate the potential these garments possess to illuminate wider themes.

The thesis therefore set out to encourage the expansion of existing debates relating to historic theatre costume, and to facilitate this through the establishment of a specific methodology for the analysis of theatre costume, founded upon the detailed analysis of surviving garments. It pursued this aim by adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to research, which united methodological and theoretical approaches from the disciplines of dress history, theatre history and material culture. The close analysis of the personal and theatrical wardrobe of nineteenth century actress, Ellen Terry, provided a case study through which to address the challenges, and explore the scope, of this new methodology. The detailed examination of Terry’s life and dress also shed fresh light on her life and career: offering an insight into the significance of her status as a financially independent woman and the strategies she employed to overcome a potentially scandalous off-stage life, to establish a position as a respected and popular actress who understood the ‘art’ of dress, both on and off the stage.

This conclusion will reflect upon the principal findings of this research. It will assess the success of the methodology created and adopted, and highlight the important contributions the thesis has made to new knowledge. It will clarify and refine the methodology proposed, reaffirming the important contribution that close assessment of surviving garments can make to the quality and success of such research, and demonstrating its potential to facilitate further investigations connected with historic theatre costume within the fields of both dress and theatre history.

Discovering which questions to ask

The research for the thesis commenced with two primary aims in mind. The first: to demonstrate the potential that historic theatre costume offered as an area for academic research, and establish a valid methodology for such investigations. The second: to show

that through a close analysis of Terry's personal and theatrical dress it was possible to re-evaluate existing narratives of the actress's life and career, challenging previous presentations of Terry as a submissive figure, content to sacrifice and curtail her own ambitions to facilitate the career of her on stage partner, Henry Irving.

The research questions asked when analysing Terry's surviving theatre costumes reflected these dual aims. The focus was upon both the information these garments provided regarding characteristics which distinguish costumes from off stage dress and, also, the insights they offered into the life of their original wearer. In the absence of a pre-existing methodology for the analysis and investigation of historic theatre costume it was necessary to commence by establishing a systematic strategy for documentation and analysis. The methodology adopted was strongly influenced by a personal background in object based research, but evolved primarily in response to the questions provoked by close engagement with the garments themselves.

Interrogating surviving garments

Access to a wide body of garments associated with a single individual, offered scope for a level of comparative analysis which is rarely possible when working with historic dress, particularly theatre costume. To take full advantage of this potential it was necessary to adopt a consistent approach when examining the source material. Charts were therefore developed which focussed on recording the aspects of each surviving garment (for both theatre costumes and personal dress) required for comparative analysis. They were also created with the desire to produce the first detailed catalogue of the collection at Smallhythe Place (together with lists of garments and costumes associated with Terry in other museum collections) in mind (See Appendix 1, 2 and 3). For this reason the fields recorded: The relevant museum 'Reference Number' (with any past reference numbers also noted); a 'General Description'; 'Key Measurements', and also 'Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment', (where known). An additional column was also

included to record any 'Additional Relevant Information' which did not fall within these fields. Employing these charts ensured that, where possible, the same data was gathered from each costume. As Chapter 4 showed, recording measurements from the garments associated with Terry provided a means to chart the changing figure of the actress. Read alongside supporting visual and written evidence, these measurements also facilitated reasoned judgements regarding the likelihood that costumes with no, or questionable, provenance had been worn by, or made for, the actress. Recording condition (areas of damage or wear) and also any evidence of past conservation treatment, was found to be particularly important for theatre costume. Chapter 5 touched upon the insights that areas of wear and damage can provide into the movement patterns and gestures of their original wearers. As the thesis also discussed, evidence of use can also document key stages in the complex 'biographies' of theatre costume and may assist in efforts to establish whether a costume dates from the original staging of a production, or is a later remake. These damaged areas are often masked by conservation treatment however, as they require the greatest support when prepared for display. It therefore proved essential to note where repairs had been made, and to consider whether these appeared to be contemporary with the garment, or the result of later intervention.

Establishing this systematic process of documentation provided a foundation from which to consider the importance of these garments within Terry's wardrobe: in particular the part they played in a wider process of 'self-fashioning.' The information uncovered also opened up unanticipated discussions relating to the status and significance of theatre costumes as objects both during, and after, their role as practical stage garments. Of specific interest to the thesis, were the discoveries regarding the complex biographies accumulated by many historic costumes, and their ability to function as carriers of 'identity' and 'meaning.'

Unanticipated questions

The research commenced from the standpoint that an understanding of the social, historic and artistic context within which Terry was operating, and the influence this may have had upon her clothing strategies, was integral to the analysis of her garments. Many of the wider debates addressed within the thesis were unforeseen however, and were prompted by the questions posed by the costumes and their wearer(s).

Carriers of ‘Identity’ and ‘Meaning’

Most theatre costumes are passed from one production, or wearer, to another, acquiring an altered appearance, a new meaning and a different owner and accruing, as they do so, their own complex ‘identities’ or, to use Kopytoff’s terminology, ‘biographies.’² Close analysis of specific costumes from within Terry’s wardrobe revealed the degree to which the different ‘contexts’ within which a costume is used and displayed, continues to shape the ‘meanings’ ascribed to such garments throughout their lifecycle: particularly if they are used by a new performer, or in a different performance. The importance of documenting the different ‘contexts’ within which a costume has been used, and allowing for the degree to which the ‘meaning’ of these garments can alter when ‘translated’ to a new ‘context,’ therefore became apparent.³

The biography of the wearer(s) was found to play an equally important role in shaping the ‘meaning’ ascribed to surviving costumes. Indeed, whilst for many examples of historic ‘fashionable dress’ the identity of the original wearer remains unknown, for historic theatre costume it is often the connection with a famous performer(s) which has secured their preservation.⁴ Consequently it became evident that any analysis of a historic

² Kopytoff, “The cultural biography of things,” 67.

³ The important role context plays in shaping meaning was explored by Stallybrass and Jones in *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 177-183.

⁴ Whilst many factors shape the acquisition policies adopted by institutions who collect theatre costume, including quality of design and the significance of the maker, the identity of the wearer remains a crucial and dominant factor in determining their long-term survival. For a more detailed discussion of the considerations which determine the preservation or otherwise of historic theatre costume see Veronica

theatre costume must consider the associations which develop between such garments and their wearer(s), and the degree to which such garments become imbued with the identity of the performer(s) who has worn them.

Chapters 4 and 5 explored the significance of this perceived ‘connection’ between the costume and its wearer(s) in greater detail. Focussing on the history of specific costumes revealed that such garments are often seen to be channelling their past wearer(s), participating in what Hodgdon, drawing upon Roach’s work on the same theme, described as ‘[...] a form of surrogation.’⁵ Considering the extant costume as a ‘surrogate’ for the absent body offered a framework through which to understand and analyse the emotional potency of ‘resurrected’ theatre costumes: specifically the manner in which such garments, whether used in performance or mounted for display, can take on the role of an ‘effigy,’ perpetuating ‘memory’ of the lost production, and literally, ‘re-membering,’ the absent performer.⁶

The complex histories of the garments under investigation required an approach to analysis which would facilitate a full exploration and recognition of the ‘meanings’ and ‘identities’ they carried. Pearce’s exploration of the ‘chains of meanings’ that can be present simultaneously within a single object, provided a route through which to address the fact that many theatre costumes come to embody a series of individuals or productions, rather than a single performer.⁷ At the same time, by drawing upon Kopytoff’s work on ‘object biographies,’ it proved possible to fashion a biographical model of analysis that clarified the distinctions between the ‘typical’ lifecycle of these garments, and the ‘actual’ lifecycle of the costumes selected for preservation. The status

Isaac, *From Ellen Terry’s ‘Beetlewing Dress’ to David Tennant’s Leather Trousers: An Investigation of the Preservation and Presentation of Theatrical Costume in British Theatres and Museums* (University of Southampton, Unpublished MA Dissertation, 2008).

⁵ Hodgdon, “Shopping in the Archives,” 159-161. She draws upon Roach’s discussion of ‘effigies’ and ‘surrogation’ in *Cities of the Dead* (1996).

⁶ Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36.

⁷ Susan Pearce, “Objects as meaning; or narrating the past,” *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994).

of historic theatre costumes as carriers of ‘memory’ and ‘identity,’ with the ability to conjure up the ‘ghosts,’ not only of an interlinked cycle of performances, but also of specific performers also needed to be recognised. It was found that uniting the approaches advocated by Kopytoff and Pearce, with the work Hodgdon, Roach and Carlson had carried out on ‘surrogation’ and ‘ghosting,’ provided the theoretical terminology required to develop a nuanced approach to analysis. The success of this methodological approach was demonstrated in Chapter 5, in which it was applied directly to Terry’s surviving garments.

The next section of the conclusion provides the opportunity to demonstrate the wider applicability of this methodology, and to reaffirm the factors which must be considered when analysing a historic theatre costume. It will present a biographical mode of analysis which enables researchers to explore the shifting and layered ‘meanings’ ascribed to historic theatre costumes, and to address the significance of their role as carriers of ‘identity.’

Fashioning a Methodology for Analysis: A Suggested ‘Toolkit’

A ‘recontextualisation from surviving remains’⁸

Any researcher contemplating the analysis of a theatrical costume, be it historic or contemporary, will first need to establish the range and amount of evidence available. There are some instances in which the origins or the original form of a garment can never be discovered and, as is the case with research in any field, the viability of the proposed investigation will need to be assessed at the outset.

In most instances, however, even when the available evidence seems limited, there are routes through which it may be possible to discover more. For example, where no

⁸ Hodgdon, “Shopping in the Archives,” 138-9. See also Barbara Hodgdon. ‘Photography, Theatre, Mnemonics; or, Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Still’. *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History*. Ed. William B. Worthen and Peter Holland. (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

provenance can be discovered relating to an extant costume, or when no visual or written description of a costume has survived, alternative routes can be pursued. If starting from an extant costume for which no provenance survives, for example, an insight into its original date and purpose could be gained by seeking out examples or images of comparable garments. Similarly, as Chapter 6 demonstrated, the absence of surviving costumes relating to a specific performer does not have to prove a barrier to analysis. A hypothesis regarding their likely appearance could, for instance, be established by identifying patterns and preferences regarding colours, silhouettes, levels of embellishment and closeness of fit, from surviving descriptions and images of costumes worn both by the performer themselves, and by their contemporaries.

Whatever the focus of the investigation (be it a specific performer, production, or costume type) it should embrace the full range of surviving source material, including extant garments (where these exist). A realistic and thorough approach is vital as, in many instances, success will require an approach which draws together strands from a myriad of sources to reconstruct the most complete history possible for the original costume.

Making full use of extant garments

Whilst, as Chapter 1 discussed, a wide body of existing research within dress history draws upon evidence gathered from extant garments, it is recognised that not all researchers investigating historic theatre costume will be familiar with the use of garments as source material. Furthermore, the comparative analysis of a wide body of historic theatre costumes carried out for the thesis, highlighted the importance of adopting a systematic approach to examination and documentation when drawing evidence from these items.

The methodological approach outlined below is founded upon the steps taken when gathering evidence for this research. It is offered as a starting point for future research,

and created with scope for adaptation to suit the questions being asked of the source material, and the level of information known about the original wearer(s), in mind.

In all instances, regardless of the original purpose or wearer(s) of the costume under investigation, documenting the following information was found to be vital to the process of comparative analysis:

1) Evidence of Alterations/Adaptations: As Chapters 4 and 5 discussed, it is essential that researchers remain conscious that the ‘typical biography’ for a theatre costume includes re-use by the same, or multiple, wearers. It is therefore advised that researchers begin their examination of surviving garments by looking for, and documenting, any evidence of adaptation. The most common and easy to identify adjustments are hems which have been lengthened or shortened, and waist and side seams which have been let out or taken in.

The factors motivating any changes identified should also be fully explored. Evidence that seams have been let out might indicate the presence of a ‘new’ body, but equally it could simply reflect the altering physique of the original wearer. The letting down, or taking up, of hems provides more reliable evidence that a taller or smaller performer has used the costume, but supporting evidence should still be obtained where possible (if only to establish that this change was not carried out for adaptation to an alternative role and production.)

Even where modifications are not immediately apparent within the garment, it is important to be aware that evidence of additional ‘bodies’ may emerge through examination of supporting literature or images. Such was the case with Terry’s costume for Lady Macbeth (1888), where evidence obtained from photographs and written records, rather than the surviving garment, revealed that both the actress Sybil Thorndike, and Terry’s niece, Olive Chaplin, had also worn the costume.

2) Measurements: Measurements offer a vital tool for researchers seeking to rediscover the body which once inhabited the garments. If traces of multiple wearers are identified in a costume then these measurements can still provide useful data, but will need to be treated with an appropriate level of circumspection. Regardless of whether the garment has been adapted or remains in its original form, it is important that measurements are consistent and are taken from the same areas of the garment and in the same units.

Measurements taken from the waist of Terry's garments proved particularly useful for this research as they facilitated discussions of Terry's changing figure during her career. Similarly, measurements from shoulder blade to waist can provide an insight into height, and width across the chest (both front and rear) offers a sense of their build. The distance from waist to front or rear hem is a less reliable guide to height unless the point at which the garment touched the floor can be established. (A raised hem, or trained skirt, threatens to distort, rather than illuminate, the image of the body which originally inhabited the garment.)

3) Materials and Construction: Whilst it is not always possible to make exact identifications of the fabrics used in the construction of a garment it is worth considering the significance of these materials, if only in relation to colour, finish, or pliability.

Discussions in Chapter 4 explored the extent to which the materials used for theatre costumes reflect the artistic context for which they are created, with the dual impact of lighting and distance shaping decisions regarding colours, fabrics and embellishment. Close examination of the materials, fastenings and decorative effects employed for a costume can provide meaningful insights into its role on the stage. Simple fastenings might signal a quick change was required, whilst large metal hooks at the rear or front shoulder-line might suggest the presence of a cloak, or similar garment, previously secured at this point. As importantly, areas formed from fabrics which are noticeably

plainer than those used for the main body of the garment often indicate that these sections of the costume were not visible to the audience, masked by outer garments, or properties. It is standard theatrical practice to re-use costumes, and their component parts. Separate parts such as cloaks, or accessories are therefore frequently transferred to other performers and productions, and parts of the costume, perhaps sleeves or skirt panels, may have been detached and re-used to form new garments. Such information is particularly important to document as in many instances only part of a costume may have survived. Indeed, a researcher must bear in mind the possibility that parts of a surviving ensemble may themselves have been recycled from a previous costume. Consequently, as is the case when documenting a piece of historic dress, it is essential that all the parts of costume (where identifiable) are documented and analysed, both as a complete ensemble, and as separate components.

4) Weight: Whilst it is often impossible to measure the precise weight of a costume, handling it can give researchers a sense of how heavy or light the garment would have been and, through this, an insight into its impact on the wearer's movement on stage. Such information is particularly relevant when working with dance costumes as it can help to determine the nature of the role (walking, or dynamic) for which a costume was originally intended. In Terry's case, the weight of surviving garments illuminated many of her own observations regarding the degree to which specific costumes facilitated or impeded her movements on the stage.

Attention should also be paid to areas of the garment where weight has intentionally been added (perhaps to influence the fall of a hem, or sleeve cuff). This information is especially significant if weight has been added in an area where it would not normally be present, or desirable. Metal weights were incorporated into many of the sleeves and hems of Terry's garments, ensuring that long trains flowed smoothly behind the body and that long, hanging sleeves draped gracefully on the ground. A weight added to the centre front

of the bodice of her Lady Macbeth costume offered an important insight into the flexibility of the knitted silk jersey structure used for this section: indicating the need for additional weight to help to control the hang of the bodice and to shape it closely to her torso.

5) Fit: The manner in which costumes are tailored to fit or re-shape the body beneath them can also reveal the impact they might have had upon movement and silhouette. A close-fitting bodice, stiffened with channels of ‘boning’ will, for example, compel the wearer to maintain an upright, straight backed posture, even when seated, and tight and stiff trousers will place similar limitations on movement.

Costumes can also be employed to deliberately distort the body of the wearer. This was the case with Irving’s costume for *Richard III* in 1877, which altered the actor’s shoulder line by incorporating a silken hump at one shoulder, and modified his gait by raising the heel of one of his shoes.⁹

6) Damage and Wear: Taking due account of the fact that, as Chapter 4 discussed, some costumes may have been subject to deliberate ‘distressing’ for theatrical effect, researchers should also pay attention to areas of damage and wear, particularly if this has occurred in unanticipated places. Whilst perspiration damage under the arms, and tears and hems and fastens are typical features of historic dress (whether used on or off the stage), wear in other unexpected areas can provide a significant insight into the movement patterns and gestures of the original wearer. Extensive wear at knees or elbows might, for instance, indicate that the wearer spent much of their time kneeling, or leaning forward, and the presence of extensive tears, rather than general wear and staining, would suggest that their movements were particularly violent or intense.

It is important that such analysis makes allowance for the durability of fabric used and, where possible, draws upon supporting information from contemporary written

⁹ This costume is held within the V&A Collections, Museum Reference S.2754:1 to 7-2010.

descriptions. Appropriately employed however, it has the potential to reveal patterns of movement and action which, as Chapter 2 and 5 discussed, cannot be captured in static photographs.

7) **Supporting Material:** As the thesis has stressed, surviving garments, where they exist, can provide crucial evidence for research into historic theatre costume. Wherever possible however, the physical evidence revealed through a close examination of a surviving costume must be combined with information drawn from related primary source material, be it visual material, written commentary or comparable extant garments. Only then, as Chapter 2 emphasised, does it become possible to reanimate what Monks termed, the ‘incomplete body.’¹⁰ The steps which follow therefore represent the factors which must be considered by anyone undertaking investigations into historic theatre costume, whether or not their source material includes extant garments.

The role of ‘context’ in shaping ‘meaning

The historical, social and artistic context within which a costume is originally created and used has a significant impact on its design and public reception. Researchers therefore need to fully explore the context within which a costume was created. This should address, but is not limited to, a consideration of the following issues:

- 1) The preconceptions and traditions surrounding the production for which the garment was created. For instance, the title character of *Hamlet* traditionally wears black, therefore any departure from this colour palette is particularly significant.
- 2) The impact of contemporary attitudes to costume design, and views upon the importance attached to ‘historical authenticity’, have shifted significantly over

¹⁰ Monks, *The Actor in Costume*, 140.

time, and remain continually in flux. During the time that Terry's costumes were created there was a movement towards what was perceived as 'historical authenticity' but, as Chapter 4 discussed, in the early to mid-eighteenth century limited importance was attached to this quality. Perceptions of what constitutes 'authentic' historical dress also vary, and range from referencing a silhouette, to making efforts to replicate the original construction techniques (as was the case for the 'Original Practice Productions' staged at The Globe Theatre, London, between 1997 and 2012).

- 3) The close links which exist between dress on and off the stage (as exemplified within the thesis) mean that it is necessary to establish a clear sense of fashions within dress, both at the date of first creation, and, where possible, at any subsequent point in a costume's history at which significant modifications were made to the structure or design. This allows the researcher to consider the extent to which the design deviates from, or reflects, contemporary trends, and to explore the factors motivating this approach.
- 4) The potential impact that the political or economic situation can have on design should also be considered. Chapter 4 touched upon the impact that a shortage of materials or funds (as was the case during and immediately after the Second World War), may have upon the design choices available to makers and wearers. Investigations also need to take into account the possibility that a production might have used costume to reference figures or political movements within society which, though familiar to audiences of the time, do not immediately resonate with subsequent viewers.
- 5) An understanding of the social context, specifically attitudes towards performers and preconceptions surrounding their role in society, should also shape any analysis. As Chapter 3 made apparent, Terry's approach to dress, both on and off

the stage, was often influenced by the historic preoccupation with the ‘body of the actress’ and, in consequence, the important role that costume and gesture played in communicating and establishing respectability.¹¹

- 6) The artistic context within which garments are created and worn can also have a significant impact on their public reception. For Terry, whose success coincided with the rising influence and importance of the Aesthetic movement, the artistic context within which she was operating had an identifiable impact on her approach to design. Indeed, her status as an ‘Icon of Aestheticism’ contributed to her initial success, and her garments, both on and off the stage, were frequently employed to express her allegiance to the artistic values of the movement.

Character: Wearer vs. Role

It is important not to overlook the practical and narrative function of costume as a signifier of character. Yet, as discussions in Chapter 4 and 5 highlighted, this ‘function’ works in harmony with, and has the potential to be overshadowed by, the ‘character’ of the performer: not only during the original production, but also throughout the ‘afterlife’ of the costume. Where possible, researchers must therefore allow space within their analysis to discover the following information: the role for which a costume was originally created; whether the costume was created for a leading or supporting role; the identity of the original wearer; the level of their celebrity, and the extent to which their fame was founded upon a specific ‘public identity.’ With these facts established, they will then be able to consider the extent to which the ‘public identity’ of the wearer has informed the design of a costume: either through a desire to support, or resist this ‘character.’

¹¹ As Chapter 2 and 3 acknowledge, this concern regarding ‘the body of the actress’ extends beyond the parameters of the nineteenth century. It is an issue which has been explored further by Eltis in “Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress” (2007), Bush-Bailey in *Treading the Bawds* (2006) and Engel in “The Muff Affair” (2009) and *Fashioning Celebrity: Eighteenth-century British Actresses and Strategies for Image Making* (2011), amongst many others.

Invisible Hands: Designer, Maker, Wearer

One of the principal challenges faced in any investigation of a historic theatre costume, is discovering which figures had primary influence over its design and making. Dialogues between designers, makers, wearers, and, indeed, directors (or their historical equivalents), are rarely documented, with the result that the careers and lives of costume makers represent a notable absence from existing research within theatre history.

The level of information surrounding the creation of Terry's costumes facilitated a discussion of the degree of control she was able to exercise over their design and creation. Few performers, either then, or today, exercise such a high level of agency over their theatre costumes. Even so, efforts can still be made to seek out evidence which might illuminate the process through which costumes were created and the extent to which performers influenced their design.

As was the case for this research, key moments in the making or design of a costume may be referred to in letters or autobiographical accounts, but these seldom provide a complete picture of all the steps and individuals involved in the creation of a single costume. All research into this aspect of a costume's history must therefore be undertaken in the knowledge that this is a collaborative process, in which numerous figures may have contributed to the creation of the final garment. They must also be mindful of the extent to which approaches to design and creation will vary according to the scale of the production and the established practice of a specific company or theatre.

Researchers seeking to establish who had primary control over the creation of a specific garment will need to proceed with caution, and their success will depend, to no small degree, on the level of surviving evidence available.

Authenticity

As Chapter 4 discussed, and Terry's costumes reveal, the costumes which survive in museum collections are not always those created for the 'original' run of a production,

even if they are exact replicas of the ‘original’ garments. They may also have been worn by several different performers in various productions. The existence of multiple versions of ‘a costume’ raises important questions regarding the perceived ‘authenticity’ of surviving garments. To respond to such questions, researchers will need to establish exactly what ‘authenticity’ signifies in relation to their personal investigations. The definition employed for this research, and which holds true for the wider study of historic stage costume, was taken from Vannini and Williams’ work (2009). In a definition which is particularly relevant to the shifting identities and value attached to historic theatre costume, they describe ‘authenticity’ as a malleable concept, rather than a ‘static characteristic’ which, as they note, will be continually re-shaped by the ‘[...] set of qualities that people in a particular time and place have come to agree represent an ideal or exemplar.’¹² Whilst researchers do not have to begin their work from the same standpoint, their investigations will need to engage with the complex histories of garments, for which modification, repair, re-use and replacement, are inherent stages in their traditional biography. Only through recognising and documenting these stages can they begin to fully address the issue of ‘authenticity’ and to assess the ‘historical significance’ of garments which, whilst known to have been used by performers for a specific role, may not have been worn in their ‘original’ performance of the part.

A Biographical Approach to Analysis

The physical and symbolic connections that costumes develop with their wearer(s), together with the fact that the ‘typical’ lifecycle of these garments often includes not only damage, repair and alteration, but potentially ‘translation’ to different performers and productions, has significant implications for researchers seeking to interpret historic theatre costume. The thesis has made apparent the capacity of theatre costumes to

¹² Phillip Vannini and J P. Williams, *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society* (Farnham: Ashgate Pub, 2009), 3, 12.

accumulate multiple and complex ‘identities,’ and a layered, rather than single, history. The criteria upon which their ‘authenticity’ and ‘historical significance’ is assessed, must therefore extend beyond conclusive evidence of their use in the ‘original’ production, to address the multiple narratives present within historic stage costume. The thesis has demonstrated that a biographical approach to analysis, founded upon Kopytoff’s concept of ‘object biographies,’ enables researchers to pinpoint the key stages in the evolving biography of a stage costume.

Researchers are first encouraged to establish the ‘typical biography’ for costumes in the period on which their investigation is focussing. The ‘typical biography’ outlined below offers a framework for developing such a biography, and breaks down an intentionally simplified outline of a costume’s ‘life cycle’ into Kopytoff’s model of ‘recognised “ages” or periods.’ This model has been adapted from the six stage model presented in Chapter 5, which represented the typical life cycle of a theatrical costume during the peak of Terry’s career. The addition of a further ‘life cycle period’ takes into account the new possibility that, as this chapter noted, the costume might be transferred to a ‘Hire Wardrobe’ (as is standard practice within many contemporary companies working with theatre costume). Allowing for this additional stage in their life cycle, the ‘typical biography’ of a theatre costume would encompass the following seven ‘periods’:

‘Typical Biography’ of a stage costume:

Period 1: ‘Design and creation’

Period 2: First Performance

Period 3: Return to Wardrobe

Period 4: ‘Repair’ or ‘Adaptation’ for the same, or a new, wearer (repair and adaptation might also occur during the run of the original production)

Period 5: Second Performance (in the same, or an alternative production)

Period 6: Transfer to 'Hire Wardrobe'

Period 7: 'Disposal' through sale, gift or destruction

Whilst the life cycle model created for a 'typical biography' offers a useful starting point for research, the varied histories of Terry's surviving garments show that costumes have the potential to accumulate much more complex biographies. Researchers are therefore advised to adapt this 'Typical Biography' to create an 'Actual Biography' for the garment(s) under investigation: paying particular attention to when, how, and why, its biography departs from the expected life cycle of theatre costumes during the period in which it was created.

'Identity' and 'Meaning'

Adopting a biographical approach to analysis will enable researchers to document and examine the multi-layered history of a costume. Attention must also be paid also to evolutions in the 'meaning' and 'identities' carried by the garment at different stages during this lifecycle, which are directly shaped by both the individuals who wear them, and the 'contexts' within they are used. For this reason, it is essential that investigations fully explore the 'contexts' (historical, physical and cultural) within which a theatre costume has been used. The same importance should be attached to discovering the past wearer(s) of the costume. Only then is it possible to record the multiple 'meanings' and 'identities' that can be simultaneously present within a single costume and, through this, to gain a full understanding of the impact these associations have upon the 'historical' and 'emotional' significance' attached to such garments. Pearce's theories surrounding 'chains of meaning' within which material culture objects become enmeshed, offers a strong foundation for such discussions. Uniting Pearce's theories with Hodgdon and

Roach's work surrounding 'surrogation,' provides a theoretical framework through which researchers can begin to address and articulate a costume's ability to function as a 'surrogate' not only for the body of the absent performer, but also the lost production.¹³

Scope for Further Research

This was a subject area which demanded an interdisciplinary approach to research. The resulting thesis has therefore been deliberately positioned on the borders of dress history and theatre history: two fields within which the value of material culture evidence is already firmly established. The aim was to encourage cross-fertilisations between the two disciplines and to highlight the important contribution the study of historic theatre costume can make to both fields. The methodology presented has therefore been created to offer both dress and theatre historians a route through which to unpick the information preserved within the fibres of these significant garments.

Expanding the Parameters of the Research

This investigation of Terry's stage costume has also made apparent the range of themes which historic theatre costume has the potential to illuminate, not simply in relation to Terry herself, but also within investigations of further time periods, individuals, theatre companies, and other types of performance. Indeed, the applicability of this methodology extends far beyond the parameters of this investigation, and the thesis has already indicated some fruitful areas for further development of the research. The methodology could, for instance, be employed to consider other types of theatrical performance beyond the scope of this study, in particular venues such as the Gaiety Theatre, within which specific conventions governed costume design and performance. Chapter 3, for instance, touched upon the stylised costumes associated with the Gaiety, particularly principal boy roles, which encased and shaped the wearer's torso in bodices which reflected the

¹³ Barbieri, "Performativity and the historical body," 297 and Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36.

fashionable silhouette, but deliberately exposed their legs, and important discussions remain to be had regarding the factors which motivated and sustained such conventions. Indeed, this is an area which would reward far more extensive research, and which offers a further perspective from which to re-examine the connections between theatrical costume and fashionable dress.

Another route through which to expand the discussions initiated by the thesis would be to examine the role of Terry's theatre costume and personal dress in her self-fashioning in relation to that of her contemporaries. Other actresses known for their interest in dress, such as Sarah Bernhardt, Eleanora Duse and Lillie Langtry, could provide particularly interesting points of comparison and extant theatre costumes connected with all three performers survive in museum collections within Europe.¹⁴ These surviving costumes offer an interesting starting point from which to commence an exploration of the connections and contrasts between the garments worn by these performers. This would, in turn, provide an opportunity to assess the differing impact that the historic, artistic and social context within which these actresses were operating had upon their dress. Interesting debates could also be raised by analysing and comparing the 'clothing strategies' these performers employed to establish, or resist their 'public' and 'private' identities.¹⁵

Similarly, the extent of Terry's success and celebrity in America, merits investigation into the manner in which her costumes were received by an American audience and was a research area beyond the scope of the thesis. Collections of material held by institutions

¹⁴ The costume collection at Smallhythe includes at least one costume associated with Lillie Langtry, and another reputedly worn by Sarah Bernhardt. See Appendix 1, Catalogue of the costume collection at Smallhythe Place: Lillie Langtry, *Role and Production Unknown*, SMA.COST.190, 1118915, and Sarah Bernhardt, *Lady Macbeth, Macbeth*, SMA.TC.11, 1118849. Similarly, the large collection of Duse's clothing and related archive material now held at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice, offers an extremely fruitful foundation for a comparable investigation into Duse's relationship with dress on, and off, the stage.

¹⁵ This is the term employed by Strasdin in "Fashioning Alexandra: A Royal Approach to Style 1863-1910) 181.

such as the New York Public Library, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas and the Folger Shakespeare Library, offer a profitable routes through which to extend research and have the capacity to reveal key information about Terry's status and reception beyond the United Kingdom. Extending the analysis of Terry's costume to encompass her performances in America could provide important insights into adaptations the actress made to the 'identities' and 'costumes' she adopted within this new context and society.

The viability of the methodology presented is not confined to the analysis of costumes created within the nineteenth century. Indeed it was intentionally created with scope for application to earlier and later time periods in mind. Any such investigations would need to allow for the alterations which have occurred in the practice of costume design and making over time, particularly if seeking to establish the degree of influence an individual performer had over their stage garments. Even so, there is strong potential for the expansion of the existing discussions to encompass performers, productions and costume types, from a much broader time period.

Kinesthetic Imagination

The thesis became increasingly concerned not only concerned with theatre costumes, but also with the bodies which once inhabited them. As it has shown, both historic theatre costumes, and the performers who wear them, have the capacity to carry both personal and public memories acting as, what Roach termed, 'an eccentric but meticulous curator of cultural memory [and] a medium for speaking with the dead.'¹⁶

Extant costumes therefore have a crucial part to play in rediscovering the pace and physicality of past performances and performers. The ability of costumes to activate what Roach termed the 'kinesthetic imagination,' offers a fruitful area for further research,

¹⁶ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 80.

particularly in relation to dance costume where, in the absence of choreographic notation, the evidence of movement preserved in extant costumes provides ‘a way of thinking about movements-at once remembered and reinvented-the otherwise unthinkable.’¹⁷ A case in point is a tutu designed by Oliver Messel and worn by Margot Fonteyn (1919-1991) in a touring production of *The Sleeping Princess*. Dating from circa 1960 the tutu was used in a scene in which Fonteyn danced the ‘Rose Adagio.’ It exhibits specific evidence of wear at the waist, the point at which Fonteyn’s partner’s hands were repeatedly placed to support her body during the lifts and balances which form part of extremely challenging routine.¹⁸

Costumes and ‘Ghosting’

Another function of stage costume brought to light through discussions within the thesis was the role(s) that stage costumes can play in what Carlson termed ‘ghosting.’¹⁹ The thesis has considered the ability of historic theatre costumes to function as ‘surrogates’ for absent performers. This analysis has opened up the possibility for investigations into the manner in which performers might self-consciously reference their own past roles by re-creating, or alluding to, previous costumes. By establishing the role of costumes as ‘carriers of identity’ and ‘memory’ the thesis has also provided a means through which to engage with, and explore, important debates regarding actors who deliberately wear costumes that reference a previous performance, or a specific aspect of their celebrity. An action which exploits the fact that, for their audiences, this new incarnation will be ‘ghosted’ by the positive memories associated with their past success.²⁰ In the case of Terry’s own wardrobe, for instance, marked similarities were identified between the costume she wore as Ellaine in *The Amber Heart* (1887) and the dress designed for her

¹⁷ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 16-17.

¹⁸ See Museum Number S.301-2001, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

¹⁹ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 2-3. See also Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 93.

²⁰ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 2, 58-9.

appearance as Rosamund six years later, in the 1893 production of *Becket*. The first production marked a highpoint in Terry's career and the moment at which she began working with her personal costume designer. Reviving this costume for the later production therefore enabled Terry to recapture, and revive, memories of this past success, within both her own mind, and that of her audience. The fact that her surviving correspondence and writing reveals that, by the 1890s, Terry was losing confidence in her ability to sustain the illusion of 'eternal youth' which her position as the leading lady of the Lyceum Theatre increasingly demanded, underscores the significance of the decision to revive the 'ghosts' of earlier performances at this particular moment.

As this example indicates, further investigations into these issues have the potential to reveal important details about the part stage costume plays in the transmission of theatrical traditions, and its role in the 'ghosting' of performances, not only by past productions, but also, past performers.²¹

Conclusion: Contribution to Knowledge

The thesis is the first text to propose a thorough and specific methodology for the analysis of historic theatre costume. It has established that any such research must take into account the context in which a costume has been created, used, and preserved. It has also revealed the extent to which these garments become imbued with identities of their original wearer(s) and the implications this has for the 'meanings' which can be ascribed to them.

The research has produced the first detailed catalogue of Terry's dress on and off the stage (See Appendix 1, 2 and 3). Through this detailed investigation of the personal and

²¹ Simon Sladen has begun to explore the costume traditions associated with Pantomime, specifically the strong similarities identifiable between the costumes created for pantomime dames. His initial research has revealed evidence that costumes associated with particularly successful dames have been consciously referenced, or even, in certain instances, deliberately retained and worn again, by later performers. See Simon Sladen, "From Mother Goose to Master: Training Networks and Knowledge Transfer in Contemporary British Pantomime" *IFTR Conference 2014*, 28 July – 1 August. Warwick: University of Warwick. Conference Paper.

theatrical dress of this actress, it has demonstrated the value of extant garments as material culture, and also that scope exists for investigation of historic theatre costume, even when garments do not survive. It is recognised that Terry was an exceptional figure, with a rare degree of interest and engagement in the design and creation of her dress, both on and off the stage. Nevertheless, by focusing specifically on Terry's costume and dress the thesis has offered a fresh perspective on her career and status within the 'theatrical aristocracy' of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.²²

This is the first research to fully explore this significant element of Terry's self-fashioning and, in so doing, has provided a fresh perspective on her biography. It has demonstrated that Terry was an individual who recognised the power of self-fashioning, and whose professional career had made her acutely conscious of the important part that 'performance' both on, and off, the stage, played in this process. The thesis has established the extent to which Terry took active control over her personal and professional identity not only during her lifetime, but also when fashioning her legacy. Through this, it has offered a new understanding of Terry, enhancing existing research into her personal and theatrical dress, and demonstrating the significant role these garments played in her self-fashioning. Specifically, it has revealed the degree to which Terry's stage costumes expressed and reinforced her 'public' identity, in particular her prominent status within the Aesthetic movement. As the research has shown, it was Terry's understanding of the 'art' of dress which enabled her to appreciate and exploit the power of dress to communicate her different 'identities,' and which has made her such an interesting and valuable case study for the thesis.

Significantly, the thesis has drawn upon and refined established methodologies from a range of interconnected fields, to present and demonstrate an effective methodology for

²² Gardner, "The Three Nobodies," 33.

the analysis of theatre costume. Uniting the work of researchers from within dress history, theatre history, and material culture, it has explored the theoretical language and models through which it becomes possible to articulate and analyse the multiple ‘meanings’ that can be carried by a single costume. The thesis illustrates the importance of acknowledging the complex and layered nature of the biography of these garments. It has demonstrated that a biographical approach offers a viable model for the analysis of historic stage costume, enabling researchers to document and analyse the identities accumulated by these garments, and has also identified theoretical models through which to articulate and examine the shifting function of costumes and the implications of their role as ‘carriers of identity.’ Through the examination of extant costumes associated with a specific performer, it has opened up the existing debate relating to stage costumes, highlighting their status as objects worthy of examination and study in their own right.

In so doing, the thesis has accomplished its primary aim and established a methodology for the analysis of historic theatre costume. It has illustrated the important contribution that the evidence obtained from extant costume can make to the disciplines of dress and theatre history and has addressed the challenges and debates raised in the course of such investigations. Most importantly, by creating a methodology which demonstrates the value and potential for object based material culture research into historic theatre costume, the thesis has established a valid and strong platform for further research, and made apparent the wide scope which exists for such investigations.

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This list provides an outline of key elements of the source material within museum and archive collections referred to in the course of the thesis.

Full catalogue records and details of the material examined from archival and museum collections which relates directly to Ellen Terry is provided the Appendices.

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

1949.M.36.11 - Silk brocade bodice and skirt made by Sarah Fullerton, circa 1893

1988.M55.1906 – Fine linen dress made by May Morris of her goddaughter, circa 1906

2003.0458 – ‘Owl Hanging’, embroidered design on linen, circa 1905-1908

1938.M.268 – Hanging/Prayer Mat, May Morris, late nineteenth century.

British Library

Archives of Ellen Terry and Edith Craig Loan MS 125 (On long term loan to the library from Smallhythe Place, National Trust).

The archive comprises:

Edith Craig Papers: Loan MS 125/1-20 and 80-82

Ellen Terry Papers: Loan MS 125/21-75 and 84

Polling Collection: Loan MS 125/76-77

Powell Collection: Loan MS 125/78-79

Material awaiting conservation: Loan MS 125/83

Fashion Museum, Bath

BATHC.I.09.438 – Silk bodice and skirt, decorated with a pattern of flowers and leaves, maker unknown, circa 1905.

BATMC.I.09.454 – Pinafore style dress decorated with a pattern of oranges and leaves, worn over cream muslin blouse embroidered with matching patterns, circa 1906-1910.

BATMC.2000.319 – Hand sewn cream muslin jacket with embroidered decoration. Worn by Ottoline Morrell circa late 19th / early 20th century.

BATMC.2000.317/8 – Cream muslin jacket and skirt both parts printed with geometric stripes and patterns. . Worn by Ottoline Morrell circa late 19th / early 20th century.

BATMC.I.09.471 – Floor length tabard style gown with long train at rear in shot lilac/green silk, circa 1910-1915.

BATMC.2011.3 – Cream striped silk empire line dress, with moss green puff sleeves. Originally worn by Lady Ida Darwin (1854-1946), maker Liberty & Co, circa 1890-1899.

Gallery of Costume, Platt Hall, Manchester

1947.4107 – Long unfitted tunic worn with separate flounced skirt, made from white muslin printed with small design of bull rushes, circa 1875-1880.

1947.4128 – Ensemble of sleeveless tunic, waist-length bodice and separate skirt, made from cream silk woven with small geometric motif, circa 1879-1880. Worn by Louisa Starr (1845-1909).

1947.4173 – Deep green wool dress with trained skirt, decorated with hand embroidery, circa 1878-1883.

1947.4175 – Fine cream wool dress, with draped bodice and skirt central bow and sleeves with turned back cuffs, circa late nineteenth century.

MC/CAG/1955.28 – Salmon pink crepe tea gown with full upper sleeves and panels of green cotton velvet, circa 1890s.

1947.4222 – Dark green wool dress with smocking at bodice and on sleeves, sash at waist, circa 1890-1900.

1947.4169 – Fine cream wool dress with printed decoration, skirt gathered into imitation bustle at rear, circa 1880s.

1947.4195 – Blue/Green crepe wool dress, with full puffed upper sleeves small upright collar. Decorated and shaped with smocking, circa 1893-98.

1947.4066 – Floor length pale gold fine cotton dress, elbow length sleeves and soft round collar. Pleated panel at centre front and decorated with embroidery.

1964.229 – Deep blue silk velvet gown, soft round neckline, narrow belt at waist and elbow length sleeves, made by Liberty & Co circa 1900-1905.

1957.426 – Pale pink silk crepe dress with square neckline and elbow length sleeves. Both dress and matching bag decorated with smocking, circa late 19th or early 20th century.

1947.4261 – Pale pink silk sleeveless dress with crossover empire line bodice and white silk chiffon sleeves. Decorated with beading. No maker's label, but possible link to Liberty & Co 'Hera' style dress, circa 1905-9.

1987.4 – Gold brown crepe and figured silk teagown, low wide round neckline, long wide sleeves and trained skirt. Made by Liberty & Co, circa 1906-1908.

1952.233 – Cream silk teagown with long loose sleeves and rectangular yoke. Both dress and sash are decorated with pale blue/green embroidery.

Garrick Collection, London

The Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Vols. 1-22 (assembled by the painter and sculptor, Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald (1834-1925) these contain a wide range of reviews and articles relating primarily to Irving, but also documenting the career of Terry and of the Lyceum Company between circa 1878-1905.) The pages are numbered and some, though not all, of the press cuttings and images they contain have been dated by hand.

The Ruth Canton Albums, 4 leather bound albums in total covering the years 1879-1892, comprising:

Album 1, Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre (1879-83)

Album 2, Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre (1884-92) Vol.1

Album 3, Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre (1884-92) Vol.2

Album 4, Henry Irving Album

The majority of the clippings mounted in these albums have been dated, though the name of the periodical is seldom recorded. The pages are numbered and the material appears to have been organised both chronologically and thematically. The albums were assembled

by an artist, Susan Ruth Canton (1849-1932) and contain press cuttings and articles relating to Lyceum Productions together with many of Canton's own painted illustrations of productions she had seen.

The Garrick Collection also holds an annotated copy of Hamlet with accompanying watercolour sketches of stage sets, which was previously owned by Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905) and annotated texts of the plays *The Amber Heart* and *Olivia* previously owned by Terry.

Leeds Discovery Museum

LEEDM.E.2002.0011.0003 – Theatre costume consisting of a pale gold brocaded silk dress with silk chiffon sleeves. Provenance on museum record suggests that it was 'originally designed for Ellen Terry' but was actually worn by the actress K.L.Langstaffe (fl.1898) when playing Desdemona in 1898 at the Grand Theatre in Leeds. No evidence could be found to substantiate this connection.

Playbill, 1881, Lyceum Company tour to the City at this time (LEEDM.E.2010.0509.0039).

Museum of London

34.159 – Green silk velvet and silk satin teagown with integral bustle, circa 1892.

49.3/2 – Evening dress of green short silk decorated with floral embroidery and with hanging bag attached, worn by Miss Estella Canziani, circa 1910.

54.101/1 a&b – Grey silk dress decorated with Brussels lace, small shells and Italian buttons from the Abruzzi. Made for Louisa Starr (1845-1909), circa 1900.

58.6/5 and 6 – Pinafore dress made of wool and matching cap, handwoven in Ethel Mairet's workshop and worn by Estella Canziani, circa 1916.

64.92.1 – Coffee brown silk velvet dress with elbow length sleeves and matching belt. Gift of Estella Canziani, circa 1907-1908.

81.242/7 – Pale blue and silver figured silk bodice, with square neckline, made by Liberty & Co, circa 1898.

84.64/2 – Lilac shot silk dress and matching jacket made from fabric handwoven by Charlotte Brown (Kensington) and made by Madame Forma. Worn by Edith Dawson, circa 1910-1914.

2009.3 – One piece cream silk wedding dress with long sleeves, made and worn by a dressmaker working Shoreditch for her wedding in December 1909.

Also a range of garments from the collection connected with Ellen Terry, as recorded in Appendix 2 and 3.

National Portrait Gallery

Sitter Boxes for Terry

Registered Packets relating to portraits of Terry in the NPG collection, as follows:

NPG 46/23/28 - RP 2273: Relating to Replica of John Singer Sargeant's painting of Terry

NPG 46/23/29 - RP 2274: Relating to Watt's - 'Choosing.'

NPG 46/32/32 - RP 3132: Relating to W.G. Robertson's painting of Terry.

NPG 46/37/42 - RP 3662: Relating to Cyril Robert's painting of Terry.

NPG 46/38/20 - RP 3789: Relating to John Forbes Robertson's painting of Terry.

NPG 46/51/35 - RP 5048: Relating to Watt's - 'Choosing.'

NPG 46/66/51 - RP 6567-6568: Relating to James Ferrier Pryde's image of Terry as Nance Oldfield.

The digital copies of photographs, sketches and paintings of Terry which form part of the collection were also examined and accessed through the gallery's online catalogue.

Russell Coates Collection

A range of prints, paintings, caricatures, press cuttings and decorative objects relating to Terry which form part of this large collection were examined in the course of the research.

These included:

BORGM.00966 - Oil portrait painting showing Ellen Terry by Edward Matthew Hale entitled "Ellen Terry - A Sketch at Halliford 1881."

MORGM.01329 - An oil painting on canvas entitled 'Ellen Terry, Study for her Jubilee Picture' by William Ewart Lockhart, dated 1887. This work is a study for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee picture and shows a head and shoulders profile portrait of the sitter.

BORGM: 2009.24 - A large decorative plate showing an underglaze colour head and shoulders portrait of the actress Ellen Terry entitled 'Iolanthe' by Ellen Graham Stow, 1880. There is a faded paper label attached to the reverse of the plate for 'Howell and James' Art-Pottery Exhibition 1881'.

RC1149 - An ebony casket inlaid with ivory panels and engraved with classical subjects. This casket was used by Ellen Terry in her performance as Portia in 'The Merchant of Venice', 11.1879.

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The collection of costume dress and accessories also held at the property and examined in the thesis is detailed in Appendix 1

Furniture, Fashion and Textiles Department, Victoria and Albert Museum

T.171-1973 –Dress of cream silk, designed by Sir Harno Thorneycroft and made up and worn by his wife using silk purchased at Liberty & Co, circa 1881.

T.56-1976 – Dress of silk velvet and embroidered silk damask, retailed by Liberty & Co., London, circa 1894.

T.31-1987 – Two piece ‘Reform Dress’ made from dark brown silk and wool and consisting of a pinafore overdress and sleeved bodice, maker unknown, circa 1893.

CIRC.638&A-1964- Dress of Liberty crêpe and tabard of embroidered velvet in cottons, designed by Forma for Liberty & Co. Ltd., London, circa 1905.

T.32-1987 - Evening cloak in figured silk damask, probably designed by Liberty & Co, circa 1890.

T.36-2007 - Full length evening or opera coat of bronze-coloured silk, with 'rainbow' patterned silk lining, and hand embroidery at neckline and sleeves, circa early 20th century.

T.80-1963 - Cloak made from Liberty's green and beige figured silk, English, 1890s.

T.89-1976 - Evening dress made of velvet and satin, probably made by Liberty & Co, circa 1900.

T.148-1967 - Silk damask tea-gown trimmed with lace, designed by Callot Soeurs, Paris, circa 1905.

T.407-2001 - Jewel green silk velvet dress lined with striped cream cotton, with pleated/gathered full length panels of olive green silk at centre front and woven ribbon at waist. Shaped to fit figure but no boning. Integral bustle, circa 1888.

T.737-1972 - Gown of block printed silk velvet, designed by Babani, Paris, worn by the actress Eleanora Duse (1858-1924), circa 1913.

Department of Theatre and Performance, Victoria and Albert Museum

Autographed Letters Series, THM/14, Terry

Biographical Boxes, Ellen Terry 117 and 118

Production Files, Covent Garden, 1823

Production Files, Lyceum Theatre, 1878-1902

Photograph Files, Terry (Personal Images and in role)

The Ellen Terry Collection, THM/384 (A full catalogue for this archive is available online through Archives Hub)

Watts of Westminster (Company Archive)

Through the assistance of the then Project Archivist Uthra Rajgopal I was granted rare and privileged access to papers within the Watts of Westminster Company Archive. Many documents from the archive were destroyed as the result of bomb damage in the Second World War. I was, however, able to examine the Account Books (covering the years between 1879-1882) and the Stockroom Book (from 1878).

Newspapers

The majority of the newspaper articles referred to in the thesis take the form of press cuttings in archival collections connected with Terry. In such cases the origin of the press cutting has been indicated. Specific articles and reviews from sources outside these archival collections which have been cited in the thesis they are detailed below.

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ABSTRACT

The material culture of historic theatre costume offers a vital resource for the fields of dress and theatre history that has yet to be fully recognised. This thesis unites approaches from both disciplines to create a specific methodology for the study of theatre costume founded upon the examination and assessment of such garments. It argues that theatre costume represents a separate and specific category of clothing and theatrical ephemera.

Celebrated actress Ellen Terry (1847-1928), an individual highly attuned to the significance of dress as an expression of identity, is used as a case study to demonstrate the validity of this new methodology. Adopting an object-based and material culture approach, the thesis engages with the visual and physical evidence about performance and design that can be gathered from Terry's extant theatre costumes. It also highlights crucial information about Terry's dress and its public reception gleaned from additional sources such as photographs; paintings; letters; reviews, and within Terry's papers and books. This thesis represents the first full investigation of Terry's personal and theatrical wardrobe, and is the first study to carry out a close analysis of the actress's surviving garments.

This analysis establishes the factors fundamental to the interpretation and study of theatre costume: the significance of social, artistic and historic context; parallels and contrasts between on and off-stage dress; the collaborative process of design and making; the function of costume as both performance object, and expression of 'identity'; the issue of multiple and complex 'biographies'; and the crucial evidence offered from material culture sources, most importantly, surviving costumes.

Chapter 1 outlines existing methodologies and the cross disciplinary nature of the thesis; Chapter 2 reviews existing literature and proposes a new methodology; 3 provides the context for Terry's professional career; 4 develops the methodology and analyses extant garments. 5 and 6 relate the methodology to ideas of self-fashioning and biography.

The thesis establishes Terry as an exceptional figure in British theatre and society who took an active role in fashioning her public and private image, both during her life, and after her death. The analysis of Terry's wardrobe confirms the status of theatre costumes as unique garments, which represent a key source for design, dress and theatre historians. This detailed case study demonstrates that the methodology presented can be employed in the study of other figures, theatres and periods, and opens up a new and productive direction for future research.

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Skirt of the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Guinevere in *King Arthur*, Lyceum Theatre, 1895. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.118 [1118843].

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Detail of collar on the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Guinevere in *King Arthur*, Lyceum Theatre, 1895. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.118 [1118843].

4.67

Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.1 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:427-2007.

4.68

Exterior of bodice, part of the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Image taken during conservation treatment at Zenzie Tinker Ltd, Brighton. Personal photograph by the author. 14 July 2010. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

4.69

Interior of bodice, part of the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Image taken during conservation treatment at Zenzie Tinker Ltd, Brighton. Personal photograph by the author. 14 July 2010. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

4.70

Overview of the costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888 as now mounted at Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 15 March 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

4.71

Detail of the crochet structure of the skirt showing the beetlewing cases and strands of metal thread which form part of the structure. Part of the costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Image taken during conservation treatment at Zenzie Tinker Ltd, Brighton. Personal photograph by the author. 14 July 2010. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

4.72

Museum Record Photograph. Crimson silk velvet cloak part of a costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Ellen

Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114b [1118839.2].

4.73

Pale gold cloak part of a costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Personal photograph by the author. 16 April 2013. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.115b.

4.74

Dress, part of a costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.115a.

4.75

Museum Record Photograph. Part of a costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.2723:1-2010.

4.76

Annotation in Terry's personal copy of James Robinson Planché's *History of British Costume* (1847 edition). National Trust, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author, 23 March 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [3052813].

4.77

Engraving of a brass of Clothilde, Queen of the Franks, in the Notre Dame Cathedral (attributed to the architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc), inserted into the back pages of one of Terry's personal copies of the script for *Macbeth*. Personal photograph by the author, 23 March 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [3119105].

4.78

John Singer Sargent, *Portrait of Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 221 x 114.3cms. Tate Britain, London. Museum Number N02053.

4.79

John Jellicoe and Herbert Railton 'Scenes from "*Macbeth*" at the Lyceum Theatre, No.3 – Act 1, Scene 5.' Line drawing, 1888. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. Lyceum Theatre, Production box, *Macbeth*, 1888.

4.80

John Singer Sargent, *Replica of a preparatory sketch for Portrait of Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth*, ca. 1906. Oil on canvas. 86.3 x 72.5cms. National Portrait Gallery Collection, London. Museum Number NPG 2273.

4.81

Detail of maker's label in the cloak worn by Ellen Terry as Cordelia in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Personal photograph by the author. 16 August 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.104 [1118829].

4.82

Detail of maker's label in the costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Personal Photograph by the author 14 April 2016. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.2740:1 to 5-2010.

4.83

Cloak worn by Ellen Terry as Cordelia in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Personal photograph by the author. 16 August 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.104 [1118829].

4.84

Bernard Partridge. Ellen Terry as Cordelia and Henry Irving as King Lear in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Print on paper. 24.4 x 32.2cms. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.160-2010.

4.85

Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Cordelia in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax131317.

4.86

Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.9 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax131327.

4.87

Cap worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal photograph by the author. 3 June 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.233 [1118958].

4.88

Tunic, part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal photograph by the author. 26 July 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.113a [1118838.1].

4.89

Underdress, part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal

photograph by the author. 26 July 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.113b [1118838.2].

4.90

Costume worn by Ellen Terry as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906. Personal photograph by the author. 5 March 2013. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.156 [1118881].

4.91

Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.1 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:514-2007.

5.1

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup*, Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.2 x 10.3cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:320-2007.

5.2

Henry Frederick Van Der Wedye. Mary Anderson as Panthenia in *Ingomar*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1883, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 9.6 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.140:33-2007.

5.3

W&D Downey. Lillie Langtry as Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Imperial Theatre, 1886, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.3 x 10cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.143:309-2007.

5.4

Henry Frederick Van Der Wedye. Mary Anderson as Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.9 x 10.3cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.140:130-2007.

5.5

Photographer Unknown. Ellen Kean (née Tree) as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, Princess Theatre, ca. 1856, Sepia photograph on paper. 18.8 x 12.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.139:47-2007.

5.6

Lena Connell, photograph of Terry as appeared in the role of Nance Oldfield in *A Pageant of Great Women*, 1910. Published in Cicely M. Hamilton, *A Pageant of Great Women* (London: The Suffrage Shop, 1910), 31.

5.7

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.4 cm. Guy Little Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:474-2007.

5.8

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax131315.

5.9

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax160593.

5.10

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Albumen Cabinet Card. 14.5 x 10.5 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax16978.

5.11

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. Guy Little Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:472-2007.

5.12

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.1 cm. Guy Little Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:473-2007.

5.13

Window & Grove. Edward Gordon Craig as Alexander Oldworthy and Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:550-2007.

5.14

Window & Grove. Edward Gordon Craig as Alexander Oldworthy and Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Photographic paper on card mount. Measurements not recorded. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [1122390].

5.15

Outer gown which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection,

Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109a [1118834.1].

5.16

Pamela Coleman Smith. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1900, Hand tinted print on paper. 31.3 x 26 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.908-2012.

5.17

Inner dress which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109b [1118834.2].

5.18

Detail of the inner dress which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109b [1118834.2].

5.19

James Ferrier Pyrde. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891. Oil and varnish on card. 56 x 35.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG 6568.

5.20

Costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1891. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2011. Museum Number 47.11.

5.21

Detail of costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1891. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2011. Museum Number 47.11.

5.22

Photographer Unknown, Ellen Terry with her granddaughter Nellie, 1919. Terry is wearing the costume she wore as Nance Oldfield, possibly in the *Pageant of Great Women* in 1909. Photographic postcard. Measurements not recorded. National Trust, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number, NT 1120250.

5.23

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:230-2007.

5.24

Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879. Albumen Cabinet Card. 14.1 x 10.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x16988.

5.25

Museum Record Photograph. Detail of the darned repairs visible on the cuff of a robe worn by Irving as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1879, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2796:1-8-2010.

5.26

Costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

5.27

Detail of the costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

5.28

Cap, part of the costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

5.29

G.W.Baldry, *Ellen Terry as Portia*, ca.1883. Garrick Club London. Image Courtesy of The Garrick Club, London.

5.30

John Everett Millias, *Portia*, ca.1885-6, Oil on canvas. 125.1 x 83.8 cm. MET Museum, New York. Accession Number 06.1328.

5.31

Clare Atwood. *Vita Sackville-West as Portia*, ca.1910. Oil on canvas. 34.1 x 24.1 cm National Trust, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [1118225].

5.32

Sketch of Terry as she appeared as the 'Shakespeare Ball in aid of the Actor's Benevolent Fund', 13th May 1905, unidentified publication. Personal photograph by the author, 14 April 2016. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Ellen Terry Collection, Press cuttings of Ellen Terry relating to her role in *The Merchant of Venice*, THM/384/32/17.

5.33

H.M.Brook 'Sketches of the Shakespeare Ball in aid of the Actor's Benevolent Fund', 13th May 1905. Pen and ink drawing on paper. 34.2 x 44.5 cm. Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection. Digital Image File Name 37555.

5.34

Zenzie Tinker. Image of the first of two surviving bodices associated with the 'Beetlewing Dress.' On this bodice the silk at the hem matches that present in the remainder of the costume. Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

5.35

Zenzie Tinker. Second of the two surviving bodices associated with the 'Beetlewing Dress.' On this bodice remains of the originally attached crochet skirt are visible at the hips. Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

5.36

Zenzie Tinker. A detail of the bodice (National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114a [1118839.1]), as mounted, and without the separate sleeves, Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

5.37

An image of the British Theatrical Loan Exhibition, Dudley House, Park Lane, 1933. This image appears to have been a cutting clipped from a newspaper and has been pasted into the exhibition catalogue. Personal photograph by the author. 3 November 2014. National Trust, Smallhythe Place. This exhibition catalogue is part of the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

5.38

Detail of the 1933 exhibition showing Edith Craig adjusting the dress worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, (National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.170). The dress is displayed with an apron not used during the original production, or retained within the collection. The image features in the exhibition catalogue. Personal photograph by the author. 3 November 2014. This exhibition catalogue is part of the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

5.39

Detail of the Beetlewing as displayed in the 'Costume Room' before it was re-designed in 2011. Personal Photograph by the author, 17 September 2008.

5.40

A page from the first of two scrapbooks created by Edith Craig between 1929 and 1947. This page features photographs and a flyer associated with a Jumble Sale to raise funds for the Ellen Terry Memorial in August 1931. Personal photograph by the author. 4 April 2016. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

5.41

A detail of the photograph of Olive Chaplin (née Terry) wearing the Beetlewing Dress at a Jumble Sale to raise funds for the Ellen Terry Memorial in August 1931. Photograph mounted in first of two scrapbooks created by Edith Craig between 1929 and 1947. Personal photograph by the author. 4 April 2016. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

6.1

Window & Grove, Edward Gordon Craig as Joey, the gardening boy, in *Eugene Aram* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.6cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:548-2007.

6.2

Frederick Hollyer, Ellen Terry with her children Edith Ailsa Craig and Edward Gordon Craig, Platinum Print from *Portraits of Many Persons of Note*, (Volume 3) 1886. 15.4 x 10.3cm. Museum Number 7862.1938.

6.3

Frederick Hollyer, Ellen Terry with her children Edith Ailsa Craig and Edward Gordon Craig, Platinum Print from *Portraits of Many Persons of Note*, (Volume 3) 1886. 15.4 x 10.3cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number 7865.1938.

6.4

Photographer Unknown, Ellen Terry and Edith Craig on the Lyceum Company tour to America, 1895-6, Sepia photograph on paper. 13.7 x 9.6 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:511-2007.

6.5

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Catherine Duval and Edward Gordon Craig Arthur de St Valery in *The Dead Heart* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1889, Sepia photograph on paper. 8.6 x 5.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:397-2007.

6.6

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry, ca. 1890s. Matte hand coloured bromide postcard print. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x 160594.

6.7

Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:218-2007.

6.8

Artist unknown. Advertisement for Hindes (Patent) “Ellen Terry” Hair pins. Published in *The Illustrated London News*, 23 May 1885. Engraving on paper. Record photograph courtesy of Uthra Rajgopal. 5 February 2012.

6.9

Detail of the rear of a photograph of the Aubrey Arms, Uxbridge. A cottage rented by Terry in ca.1889. Personal photograph by the author, 1 September 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/250.

6.10

Detail of the rear of a photograph of the Red House, Gustard Common. A house Terry shared with Godwin in 1869. Personal photograph by the author, 1 September 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/264.

6.11

Contact sheet photograph inserted in Terry’s copy of J.Comyns-Carr, *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: An Essay* London: Bickers & Son, Leicester Square, 1889.) Personal photograph by the author, 13 April 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number E.V.2.18.

6.12

Detail from a contact sheet of photographs by Window and Grove documenting Terry’s appearance as Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Personal photograph by the author, 4 December 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/2001.

6.13

Composite sheet of images showing Terry as she appeared as Mamillius in *The Winters Tale* (1856), Hermione in *The Winters Tale* (1906) and Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* (1879). Personal photograph by the author, 4 December 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/2003.

6.14

Unknown artist. ‘The Hammocks Under the Apple Tree.’ Line drawn image from an original photograph by Elliot and Fry, featured in Henry How, *Illustrated Interview*, No, XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 1892, 492.

Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.15

Photographer unknown, Tower Cottage, Winchelsea, Photographic postcard. (Publisher unknown, early twentieth century). Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box, THM 117-118. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.16

Photographer unknown, Smallhythe Place, Photographic postcard. (Everett and Ashdown publishers, early twentieth century). Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box, THM 117-118. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.17

Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:218-2007.

6.18

Thomas Matthews Rooke, *The Studio, Little Holland House*, London, 1904. Watercolour on paper, Measurements not recorded. Watts Gallery, Surrey. Copyright © Trustees of Watts Gallery, Surrey. Source Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number TWG114700.

6.19

Edward Linley Sambourne, Design for an Aesthetic Theatrical Poster, captioned "*Let us live up to it*" and featuring Terry at its centre. Reproduced in *Punch* 7th May 1881, 215. Reproduced from Anne Anderson. "'Fearful Consequences . . . of Living up to One's Teapot': Men, Women, and 'Cultchah' in the English Aesthetic Movement ca. 1870–1900." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37.1 (2009): 219-54. Print.

6.20

Alfred Byran, Line drawn caricature of Terry, 'Moonshines Gallery of Professional Beauty, 7 and 8 (Alternated with Illustrated Natural History),' 1882. Press cutting pasted in the Percy Fitzgerald Album, Vol. 5, 295. Garrick Club London. Personal photograph by the author. 6 August 2013.

6.21

Albert Ludovici, II, One of a series of greetings cards satirising the Aesthetic Movement, 1882. Colour lithograph on card. 12.5 x 8.5 cm. Printed and published by Hildesheimer & Faulkner, London. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.2413-1953.

6.22

Sir Johnstone Forbes Robertson, Ellen Terry, 1876. Oil on canvas 60.8 x 50.6cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG 3789.

6.23

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 10.2cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:317-2007.

6.24

W & D Downey Photographers, May Fortescue as Lady Ella in *Patience* at the Opera Comique, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 9.3 x 5.7cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.146:48-2007.

6.25

Sir Frederick Leighton, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, 1864-5. Oil on canvas. Measurements not recorded. Leighton House Museum, London. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number LGH224376.

6.26

Lawrence Alma Tadema, *The Midday Slumbers*, 1881. Watercolour on paper. 65 x 25cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number HTL91863.

6.27

Unknown photographer, May Fortescue as Lady Ella in *Patience* at the Opera Comique, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 9.5cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.146:83-2007.

6.28

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 10.2 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:318-2007.

6.29

Maxim Garcha. Colour photograph of a gold snake armlet, set with diamonds, turquoise, rubies and sapphires. The armlet was designed by Lawrence Alma-Tadema for his second wife Laura Theresa Alma Tadema and engraved with her name in Greek script. Tadema commissioned the jewellers and goldsmiths JS & AB Wyon to create the armlet in circa 1870-3. Private Collection of Jeffrey A. Cadby.

6.30

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887. Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:407-2007.

6.31

Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Fair Rosamund in *Becket*, Lyceum Theatre, 1893. Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.4cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:482-2007.

6.32

Photographer unknown. Ellen Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896. Photographic paper on card mount. 30 x 25 cm. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1122467.

6.33

Detail of the bodice which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 6 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.105 [1118830].

6.34

Detail of the skirt which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 6 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.105 [1118830].

6.35

Photographer unknown. Hand tinted photograph of Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, 1896, Lyceum Theatre. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1119387.

6.36

Edward Godwin. Design for Pigeonwick, Fallows Green, Harpenden, ca. 1869. Ink, watercolour and pencil on paper. Measurements not recorded. RIBA Archive, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Reference number RIBA 12579.

6.37

Mahogany tea table, designed for Terry by Godwin in circa 1870-1875. Museum Record Photograph. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1117440.

6.38

Unknown artist. 'The Alcove.' Line drawn image from an original photograph by Elliot and Fry, featured in Henry How, *Illustrated Interview*, No, XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 1892, 494. Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.39

Magenta silk dress with bodice, jacket, skirt, peplum and bow, Madame Vignon, Paris, 1869-1870. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.118 to D-1979.

6.40

Green silk dress with matching peplum and belt. Maker unknown, England, ca. 1872. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.101-B.1972.

6.41

Detail of internal boning, in a pale blue figured silk bodice. Liberty & Co. Ltd, London, 1898. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by author, 29 October 2010. Museum Number 81.242.

6.42

Detail of internal bustle pad, in jewel green silk velvet plush dress. Hewell [?] and James Ltd., London, ca.1888-9. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by author, 22 February 2011. Museum Number T.407-2001.

6.43

Sir William Blake, *Portrait of Mrs Luke Ionides*, 1882. Oil on canvas. 102.2 x 115.2cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.1062:1, 2-2003.

6.44

William Powell Frith, *Private View at the Royal Academy*, 1881. Oil on canvas. 102 x 193cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Reference CRJ1959.

6.45

Detail from William Powell Frith, *Private View at the Royal Academy*, 1881. Oil on canvas. 102 x 193cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Reference CRJ377198.

6.46

Southwell Brothers. Ellen Terry, circa 1863. Sepia Photograph on paper. 8.8 x 5.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:155-2007.

6.47

Boned corset of silk trimmed with machine-made lace, worn with cage crinoline. Possibly made in France or Great Britain, 1864. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.169-1961.

6.48

G.F.Watts. *Choosing*. 1864. Oil on strawboard mounted on Gatorfoam. Measurements not recorded. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum number NGP 5048.

6.49

Henry Rigge. Ellen Terry, ca.1865-7. Sepia Photograph on paper. 9 x 5.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:153-2007.

6.50

Dress of embroidered cotton muslin. Possibly made in England or France, ca. 1818, Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.79-1972.

6.51

Herbert Watkins. Ellen Terry, ca.1872, Sepia Photograph on paper. 9 x 6 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:188-2007.

6.52

Unknown photographer, Ellen Terry, ca.1875-1880. Sepia photograph on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:358-2007

6.53

Window and Grove. Ellen Terry, ca.1880-1890. Sepia photograph on paper. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:421-2007.

6.54

Katagami stencilled silk kimono unlined, worn by Edith Craig (1869-1947), Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 20 July 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.COST.97, [1118822].

6.55

Katagami stencilled silk kimono with fleece interlining, worn by Edith Craig (1869-1947), Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 20 July 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.98, [1118823].

6.56

Herbert Watkins, Edith Craig wearing SMA.TC.98, ca.1874. Sepia photograph on paper. 10.3 x 6.5cm. Ellen Terry Collections, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT1122635.

6.57

Samuel A. Walker, Ellen Terry, ca.1874, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.4cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:418-2007.

6.58

Eisen Keisai. *'The Koya Tama River', from the series 'Six Famous Rivers with the Name Tama'*, early 1820s, Japanese Woodblock print. 37.1 x 25.1cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.12980-1886.

6.59

Claude Monet. *La Japonaise* (Camille Monet in Japanese Dress) ca. 1876. Oil on canvas. 231.8 x 142.3cm, Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Museum Number 56.147.

6.60

Jose Maria Mora. *Lillie Langtry wearing a kimono*, 1884. Albumen cabinet card. 16.5 x 10.7cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x197342.

6.61

Pierre Auguste Renoir, *Madame Hériot*, 1882, 65x54cms, oil on canvas. Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

6.62

James McNeil Whistler, *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green - The Balcony*, ca.1864-1870. Oil on wood panel, 61.4 x 48.8cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Museum Number F1892.23a-b.

6.63

James McNeil Whistler, *La Princesse du pays de la porcelain*, ca. 1863-65. Oil on canvas, 199.9x116.1cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. Museum Number F1903.91a-b.

6.64

Herbert Rose Barraud. Ellen Terry, late 1880s. Sepia photograph on paper. 13.2 x 9.7 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:488-2007.

6.65

A woman's green and cream striped silk satin sack back, petticoat and stomacher. English, 1760-1770. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.471 to B-1980.

6.66

Front cover of music sheet for *The Dolly Varden Polka*, as performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, composed by W.C. Levey, late 19th century. Printed ink on paper. 33.6 x24cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.170-2012.

6.67

Unknown photographer. *Terry in dress with Watteau back* ca.1880s. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Image courtesy of Susannah Mayor, 5 May 2016.

6.68

Overview of dress worn by Terry, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 8 August 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

6.69

Overview of dress worn by Terry as mounted following conservation treatment to show bustle silhouette, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014.

6.70

Leon Sault. "Young Ladies Journal Monthly Panorama of Fashion," July 1875. Hand coloured fashion plate on paper. Measurements not recorded. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.319-1955.

6.71

Detail of dress worn by Terry, showing unbleached tussore silk ground decorated with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

6.72

Detail showing tambour work decoration on man's hunting coat of embroidered satin with silk, India, ca. 1620-1630, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number IS.18-1947.

6.73

Roundel, satin weave silk with silk embroidered design of He Xiangu, one of the Eight Daoist Immortals, China, Qing dynasty, 19th century. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number FE.123C-1983.

6.74

Rear view of dress as mounted following conservation treatment, showing 'Watteau back.' Tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

6.75

Detail of collar of dress, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

6.76

London Stereoscopic Company. Ellen Terry, ca.1875-1880. Sepia photograph on paper. 9.1 x 5.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:220-2007.

6.77

Photographer unknown. Ellen Terry wearing a Chinese Robe, *The Sketch*, ca. 1905-1915. Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.78

Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.86.

6.79

Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.85.

6.80

Detail from Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.86.

6.81

Detail from Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.85.

6.82

Photographer unknown. Press cutting showing Ellen Terry ca.1905-1915. Personal Photograph by the author 4 February 2013. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.83

Silk summer dress. Maker Unknown, England, 1920-1925. Museum Record Photograph. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.19-1960.

6.84

An example of Terry's personal dress. Batik silk dress printed with a repeat pattern of floral motifs. Maker Unknown, ca.1915-1925. Personal photograph by the author 14 April 2016. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.1415-1984.

6.85

Elliot and Fry. Ellen Terry, ca.1880-1885. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:449-2007.

6.86

Elliot and Fry. Ellen Terry. 1884. Chlorobromide print on cream card mount. 27.8 x 21.1 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum. Museum Number NPG x127489.

6.87

Window and Grove, Ellen Terry, ca. mid 1894-7. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.5 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:513-2007.

6.88

Dress consisting of a bodice and skirt of embroidered silk velvet. Possibly made in Paris, retailed by Stern Brothers, New York, 1894. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.272&A-1972.

6.89

Walker & Boutall, after Sir Emery Walker. Ellen Terry, early 1900s. Photogravure. 13.9 x 10.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x19637.

6.90

Unknown artist. Line drawing illustration accompanying an article in *Woman's World*, Vol.2, 1888. Personal photograph by the author 14 October 2015. National Art Library, Special Collections, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.91

Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:226-2007.

6.92

Photographer unknown. Photograph showing Terry and another woman (Kitty[?]) both wearing smocks. ca. 1905-1915. Personal Photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.93

Photographer unknown. "A Cast of Terry's at Ellen Terry's Benefit," *The Sketch*, 1906. Press cutting showing Ellen Terry's 1906 Jubilee. Personal Photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

6.94

Pamela Coleman Smith. Ellen Terry (1847-1928) as Hiördis in *The Vikings*, Imperial Theatre, 1903. Watercolour on paper. 28 x 19.3 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.913-2012.

6.95

Unknown photographer. Ellen Terry as Kniertje in *The Good Hope*, 1904. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.3cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:528-2007.

6.96

Terry's annotations on the draft of her autobiography. Personal photograph by the author 4 April 2016. Christopher St John, material relating to publications written for and about Ellen Terry. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

6.97

Photographer Unknown. Terry in the robes created for her *Lectures on Shakespeare*, circa 1910. Print on paper. 12.3 x 8cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:533-2007.

6.98

Detail from the transcript of Terry's lecture *The Triumphant Women*. Ellen Terry Collection, Library, Smallhythe Place. Personal Photograph by the author. 23 March 2015. National Trust Inventory Number NT 3118744.

6.99

Photograph showing a detail from a display case in Terry's former home, Smallhythe Place. The items on display were collected by Terry and her daughter, Edith Craig. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal Photograph by the author. 4 April 2016.

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Declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed:

Dated:

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INTRODUCTION

Ellen's stage clothes became such a part of her that some magic seemed to belong to them. I know her daughter Edith Craig never liked them being cleaned, she said it spoilt them and the magic went out of them.¹

Sybil Thorndike (1960)

Carriers of Meaning, Memory and Identity

Theatre costumes are ephemeral, they are created to be re-used, re-cycled or discarded and certainly not with preservation in mind. When garments do survive, they represent a departure from the typical life cycle, or 'biography' of a stage costume. Yet, as opening quotes suggests, and this thesis will demonstrate, surviving theatre costumes are significant garments, which have the potential to reveal crucial information about the bodies that once inhabited them, the productions in which they were used and the culture and society within which they were originally designed, made worn and seen.

The contribution that an investigation into the material culture of historic theatre costume can make to the field of dress and theatre history has yet to be fully recognised, researched, and theorised. So far, only a limited range of research has been published relating to the development of theatrical costume, and these publications rarely make more than a cursory reference to extant garments. This thesis addresses those gaps within both dress and theatre history and unites approaches from both disciplines, along with others, to create a specific methodology for the study of theatre costume which is founded upon the examination and assessment of such garments.

¹ Sybil Thorndike, Transcript of Audio Recording, Smallhythe Place, 1960.

The celebrated actress Dame Ellen Terry (1847-1928), an individual highly attuned to the significance of dress as an expression of identity, is used as a case study to demonstrate the validity of this new methodology. The costumes preserved at Terry's home, Smallhythe Place, represent one of the largest and most significant collections of historical theatrical costumes within the United Kingdom and yet have never been fully catalogued or examined before. This thesis presents the first full investigation of Terry's personal and theatrical wardrobe and will reveal the historical and cultural importance of these garments.²

Adopting an object-based material culture approach, this thesis engages with the visual and physical evidence about performance and design that can be gathered from extant theatrical costumes. It also highlights crucial information about Terry's dress and its public reception gleaned from a wide range of primary sources including photographs; paintings; letters; reviews, and Terry's personal papers and books.

This thesis will establish the context crucial not only to developing an understanding of Terry, her clothes and her professional and private identity, but also factors which are fundamental to the wider interpretation and study of historical theatrical costume. These factors include: the significance of social, artistic and historic context; parallels and contrasts between on and off-stage dress; the collaborative process of design and making; the function of costume as both performance object and expression of 'identity'; the issue of multiple and complex 'biographies' and the crucial evidence offered from material culture sources, most importantly, surviving costumes (where they exist).

Igor Kopytoff's concept of 'biographies' and Susan Pearce's exploration of 'the chains of meaning' accumulated by objects, offer a route through which to analyse and articulate

² The research acknowledges and builds upon, Valerie Cumming's initial research into this topic as published in: Ellen Terry: An aesthetic actress and her clothing" *Costume* 21 (1987): 67-74; "Macbeth at the Lyceum" *Costume* 12 (1978): 53-63 and "First Knight: Henry Irving, 1838-1905" *Costume* 40: 67-71.

the complex 'biographies' accumulated by historic theatre costume. Drawing upon the work of Joseph Roach, Barbara Hodgdon and Marvin Carlson this thesis also examines the ability these garments have to carry the 'memories,' or 'ghosts,' of their previous wearer(s), acting as 'surrogates' for the bodies which once inhabited them.

Chapter 1 outlines the existing methodologies within dress history, theatre history and material culture which the thesis draws upon and stresses the cross disciplinary nature of the research. Chapter 2 reviews existing literature and proposes a new methodology specifically tailored to the analysis of historic theatre costume. Chapter 3 provides the wider context for Terry's professional career, whilst Chapter 4 introduces the methodology and analyses extant garments. This methodology is developed further in Chapter 5, which examines the complex 'biographies' accumulated by historic theatre costumes and the important part that context plays in shaping the 'meaning' and 'memories' that they carry. Chapter 6 builds on the debates raised in the preceding chapters, and extends the methodology presented into ideas of self-fashioning and biography. It pays particular attention to the part that Terry's dress played in establishing her identity and legacy as a celebrated actress and respected 'artist' on and off the stage.

Ellen Terry (1847-1928)

Ellen Terry offers rich potential as a case study through which to demonstrate the new methodology this thesis proposes for the interpretation and analysis of historic theatre costume. Of most significance amongst the wide range of material culture objects and archives relating to Terry which survive in museum collections, is the large collection of historic theatre costumes preserved in her former home, Smallhythe Place. The close examination of this material culture evidence, in particular Terry's surviving theatre costumes, will provide a clear and convincing example of how the new methodology

proposed within this thesis can be applied to a specific individual. This will illustrate the important contribution extant theatre costumes can make to such investigations.

The significance of Terry's 'public' and 'private' identities, and her suitability as a case study stems in part from her complex biography and the specific social milieu in which she moved. Terry's lifestyle, both on and off the stage, directly challenged conventional Victorian morality and social codes. Despite this, she succeeded in becoming one of the leading actresses of the era, achieved international success and was made a Dame in 1925. The thesis will argue that Terry's success was due in part to her careful self-fashioning, both during her lifetime and after her death.

The daughter of two 'strolling players,' both Terry and her elder sister Kate (1844-1924), together with their younger siblings, were rigorously trained for the stage from an early age.³ Terry made her stage debut in 1856 and continued acting until her first marriage, aged 16, to the painter George Frederick Watts (1817-1904) in 1864.⁴ Although she separated from Watts in late 1865, the marriage provided her with an important introduction to 'another world, a world full of pictures and music and gentle, artistic people.'⁵

As this thesis will show, the time she spent with Watts had an identifiable influence on Terry's taste in décor and dress. It was her relationship with the architect and designer Edward William Godwin (1833-1886) however, which had the most significant and enduring impact on her approach to dress and design, both on and off the stage. Indeed,

³ Terry's parents had eleven children, nine of whom survived to adulthood. Of these nine, only two, the eldest, Ben (b.1839), and second youngest, Tom, did not pursue a career on the stage. As Chapter 2 will discuss, Terry's life has been well documented in biographies. See in particular, Joy Melville, *Ellen and Edy, a biography of Ellen Terry and her daughter Edith Craig 1847-1947* (London: Pandora, 1987) 48, 146 and Nina Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time* (London, Dent and Sons, 1987) 30-36.

⁴ Terry had been introduced to Watts by her friend, the dramatist, Tom Taylor (1817-1880) and it was whilst Watts was painting a portrait of Terry and her sister Kate that the relationship between Terry and Watts developed.

⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 48.

Terry credited Godwin with initiating her ‘[...] interest in colour, texture, effects of light on colour, the meaning of dress, and a certain taste for beauty which [she] never lost.’⁶ These elements of Terry’s approach to dress are central to the analysis of her stage costume in Chapter 5, and underpin the exploration of the role dress played in her self-fashioning undertaken in Chapter 6.

It was through Godwin that Terry was introduced to the artistic principles and leading advocates of Aestheticism, just as the movement was gaining hold in Britain. Although their relationship had ended by 1876, Terry maintained her allegiance to Aestheticism, and soon established her independent status as a leading figure within the burgeoning Aesthetic movement. Though, as Chapter 2 will acknowledge, Terry’s connections with Aestheticism have been explored within the existing literature, this thesis represents the first research to fully assess the significance of Terry’s status as an icon of Aestheticism and the impact that the movement had upon her theatrical costumes.

Terry first met Godwin in 1863 and the pair became reacquainted during her brief, and unhappy, return to the stage in late 1865. In 1866, Terry abandoned family, friends, and her professional career, to spend six years living with Godwin in rural Surrey. In 1874, escalating debts compelled Terry, once again, to return to London and life as an actress. Now the mother of two illegitimate children, Edith Craig (1869-1947) and Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966), she had to overcome not only the gossip surrounding the failure of her marriage to Watts, but also the scandal and disgrace of her subsequent relationship with Godwin (whom she never married).

⁶ Ellen Terry, “Stage Decoration”, *The Windsor Magazine* (Copyright by S.S.McClure Company in the United State of America, 1911) 74.

In spite of the scandal surrounding her off-stage life, Terry soon secured both the forgiveness, and affection, of the public.⁷ She never attempted to conceal the existence of her children, and as Chapter 6 will discuss, they played an important part in establishing her identity as a caring mother, whose return to the stage was an unavoidable sacrifice made through necessity, rather than any personal ambition.

The reputation for ‘charm’ and ‘womanliness’ upon which the public’s affection for Terry was founded, though beneficial for her professional career, threatened to impose limitations on the theatrical and personal ‘roles’ she was permitted to perform. The implications of such restrictions will be explored in Chapter 3, which will also examine the occasions upon which Terry sought to resist and challenge these limitations. As Chapter 5 and 6 will show, dress played an important part in expressing and reinforcing these acts of rebellion.

By 1878, Terry’s popularity had brought her to the notice of Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905). Newly established as the manager of the Lyceum Theatre, Irving offered her a position as the leading lady of the Lyceum Company. The power balance of their professional partnership, which was sustained for twenty-two years, and the precise nature of the couple’s off stage relationship, has been contested in past biographies of Terry.⁸ Of primary importance for the thesis however, is the evidence Chapter 3 will present to demonstrate that it was a partnership founded upon mutual respect. Irving’s appreciation for Terry’s knowledge of ‘art and archaeology in dress,’ together with the

⁷ As Katharine Cockin notes, ‘At a time when illegitimacy meant exile from respectability, [Terry] managed, extraordinarily, to raise both of her children relatively unscathed.’ Katharine Cockin, *Edith Craig (1869-1947): Dramatic Lives* (London: Cassell, 1998) 15. As Chapter 6 will discuss, Terry’s second marriage to the actor Charles Wardell (who acted under the stage name, Kelly), though short lived, did provide both Terry and her children, with an important, if temporary, return to ‘respectability.’ For further discussion of this relationship see Auerbach, *Ellen Terry*, 184-5 and Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 78-9.

⁸ See for instance, Marguerite Steen, *A Pride of Terrys: Family Saga* (London: Longmans, 1962) 183-6; Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 9-11; Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 90-107 and Katharine Cockin, “Ellen Terry and Henry Irving: A Working Partnership”, *Henry Irving: a re-evaluation of the pre-eminent Victorian actor-manager*, ed. Richard Foulkes (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008) 37-48.

actress' own increasing financial independence, enabled her to gain a significant, and unusual, degree of control over the design and making up of her costumes.⁹

Terry's status within the Lyceum Company established her as a celebrated figure within Britain and America.¹⁰ This growing 'celebrity' obliged her to maintain close and careful control of her 'public' and 'private' identity and the measures she employed to fashion her identity, both on and off the stage will be addressed in Chapters 3 and 6.¹¹ As Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will demonstrate, dress played a crucial part in this process of self-fashioning, communicating and establishing the 'identities' and 'roles' Terry performed for the public.

By 1902 Terry had achieved a position as a financially independent and successful performer.¹² Increasingly disillusioned by the constraints which her partnership with Irving imposed upon her theatrical career however, she chose to leave the Lyceum Company. In 1903 she leased the Imperial Theatre, commencing her first, and only, venture into theatre management.¹³ Working with her daughter (a respected costumier) and son (a progressive and experimental designer and director), Terry chose to stage a controversial production of *The Vikings* by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906).¹⁴ Although the

⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 157.

¹⁰ Whilst part of the Lyceum Company Terry was involved in six extremely profitable tours to America, the first in 1883, the last in 1899.

¹¹ Sos Eltis is amongst those who have discussed this aspect of Terry's life and career. See for instance, Sos Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*. Ed. Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 179 and *Acts of Desire: Women and Sex on Stage, 1800-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 94, 154, 156.

¹² At the peak of her career Terry's salary was up to '£200 a week' in comparison to the £25 to £40 which was the average weekly income of a leading lady at this time. Kerry Powell. *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 7.

¹³ This aspect of Terry's career will be explored in Chapter 3. It has also been addressed by Gail Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 157 and Jenny Bloodworth 'The Burden of Eternal Youth: Ellen Terry and *The Mistress of the Robes*', *Ellen Terry: Spheres of Influence*, ed. Katharine Cockin (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011) 49-64.

¹⁴ Both Terry's children had, like their mother, been trained for a career on the stage, and had acted alongside Terry in Lyceum Productions. Terry's daughter went on to establish a career not only as a costumier, but also a director and her life has been discussed more fully by Katharine Cockin and Joy Melville. Cockin, *Edith Craig (1869-1947): Dramatic Lives* (1998) and Melville, *Ellen and Edy* (1987). The career of Terry's son has been widely documented and Gordon Craig established a long-standing

experimental production proved a commercial and financial disaster, Terry regarded it as an important signal of her intent to challenge her characterisation as ‘a Victorian actress.’¹⁵

As Chapter 6 will make apparent, Terry’s venture into theatre management was part of a wider process of self-fashioning through which she sought to establish a new, progressive, identity.¹⁶ The lecture tours she undertook between 1910 and 1915 and her published writings, particularly her autobiography (published in 1908), also provided an important means through which to edit the narrative of her professional life and to cement her status as an actress who understood the ‘art’ of theatre.¹⁷

Terry continued to act on stage, and in some early films, until ill health, and increasingly poor eye sight, led to her enforced retirement. The extent of the public affection she inspired was evident in the scale of the celebrations that marked her fifty year stage jubilee in 1906. It was not until 1925, however, that her status within the theatrical profession received official recognition and she was finally made a Dame.¹⁸ This honour reaffirmed

reputation as a pioneering designer and director and published an influential range of theoretical work outlining his views on theatre and the role of the ‘director.’ Publications offering further information about Gordon Craig’s career and views include Edward Gordon Craig, *A Living Theatre: the Gordon Craig School, the Arena Goldoni, the Mask: Setting Forth the Aims and Objects of the Movement and Showing by Many Illustrations the City of Florence [and] the Arena* (Florence: School for the Art of the Theatre, 1913) and Irene Eynat-Confino, *Beyond the Mask: Gordon Craig, Movement and the Actor* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987).

¹⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 312.

¹⁶ Katharine Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand’ *Ellen Terry Spheres of Influence*, Ed. Katharine Cockin (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), 144. As Chapter 6 will discuss, Terry staged a successful lecture tour across Britain, America and Australia. She also participated in several productions staged to promote the women’s suffrage movement and, between 1911 and 1920, acted as the Honorary President of *The Pioneer Players*. Terry’s daughter played a key role in running this theatrical society, which was established to produce ‘plays dealing with all kinds of movements of interest at the moment,’ including women’s suffrage, feminism and socialism. Katharine Cockin has published widely on the work of this society, see, for instance, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage: The Pioneer Players 1911-1925* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000) and ‘Edith Craig and the Pioneer Players in a “Khaki-clad and Khaki-minded World”: London’s International Art Theatre,’ *British Theatre and the Great War 1914-1919: New Perspectives*. Ed. A. Maunder (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015) 121-139.

¹⁷ These included a series of three articles for McClures magazine published in 1910, but like her autobiography, written in partnership with Christopher St John. Katharine Cockin, “Ellen Terry, The Ghost Writer and the Laughing Statue: The Victorian Actress, Letters and Life-writing.” *Journal of European Studies*, xxxii (2003): 151-63, 158.

¹⁸ This royal recognition of Terry’s celebrated status came thirty years after the knighthood awarded to Terry’s on stage partner, Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905) and made Terry the second actress to achieve this

Terry's position as a respected figure and leading actress and when she died in 1928 the King and Queen were amongst the 'thousands' who mourned her passing.¹⁹

Terry had also remained conscious of the need to secure and control her legacy not only during her lifetime, but also after her death. Chapter 6 will explore the role Edith Craig played as custodian of her mother's legacy, transforming the actress' home, Smallhythe Place, into a lasting memorial of Terry's life and career. It is here that the vast majority of Terry's costumes are preserved, and these garments, together with the collection of photographs, books, letters and theatrical ephemera she assembled during her lifetime (and which were added to by Craig after Terry's death), play a fundamental part in this thesis.

As the thesis will demonstrate, Terry was a significant figure in British theatre and society who took an active role in fashioning her public and private image, both during her life, and after her death. It is the degree to which she employed dress as a tool for self-fashioning both on and off stage which makes her such a valuable vehicle through which to address the key critical debates relating to the study of historical theatrical costume. The analysis of Terry's wardrobe will confirm the status of theatrical costumes as unique garments, which represent a significant and underused source for both dress and theatre historians. This in depth analysis of a single figure, makes possible a compelling demonstration of the validity of the new methodology this thesis presents for the analysis

honour. The American born actress Geneviève Ward (1837-1922), had been the first actress to become a Dame Grand Cross of the British Empire in 1921. Ward had maintained a reputation for observing 'strict standards of propriety' throughout her career. This lifestyle presented an undeniable contrast to Terry, whose private life encompassed two illegitimate children, three marriages, (the last of which was in 1907, to a man some thirty years her junior), divorce, and rumours of numerous affairs (including a relationship with Irving). Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women* (London: Routledge, 1991) 5.

¹⁹ "Royal tributes to Ellen Terry, Mourned by thousands who knew her, A simple funeral, Actors Church as a likely resting place." Press Cutting, *Sunday Times*, July 22 1928. Ellen Terry Collection, Box 57 SC2-G27, British Library, London. An enduring public memorial to Terry was created the following year, when a silver casket containing her ashes was installed in St Paul's Church, London. The casket was made and designed by architect and craftsman John Paul Cooper (1869-1933). Cooper was an important member of the Arts and Crafts movement who specialised in metalwork and jewellery and he was a friend of Terry's son, Gordon Craig. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 248.

of historic theatre costume, together with its potential for use in the study of other figures, theatres, and time periods.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this thesis is to establish a new methodology, founded upon material culture approaches, for the analysis of historic theatre costume. Terry's complex theatrical and private biography, together with the interrelationships between Terry's 'public' and 'private' identities, offer a rich and significant case study through which to establish and demonstrate this methodology for the research into, and analysis of, historic theatre costume.

Through close analysis of Terry's personal and theatrical dress this research will also contribute new knowledge to her existing biography, demonstrating Terry's status as a figure at the forefront of the Aesthetic movement, and a woman who understood, and employed, the 'art' of self-fashioning.

The methodology and source material upon which the thesis is founded will be introduced in Chapter 1. Chapter 1 and 2 will establish the current state of research into theatre costume within dress and theatre history. Together, they lay the foundations for a thesis that will demonstrate the vital contribution theatre costumes can make to our understanding of dress and theatre history, and presents a new, and specific, methodology for the analysis of these unique garments, which establishes their significant role as carriers of meaning, memory and identity.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH SOURCES AND METHODOLOGIES

1.1 Introduction

This interdisciplinary thesis unites critical approaches from theatre and dress history to devise a methodology for the analysis of historic theatre costume. This will be proposed through a close analysis of the dress worn by the actress Ellen Terry both on and off the stage, highlighting the part these garments played in her ‘self-fashioning’ and demonstrating her significance within late nineteenth century society and today.

This chapter provides an overview of the three fields which have shaped the methodology presented in this study: material culture, theatre history, and dress history. Acknowledging the distinctions between these disciplines, it will also highlight links between them. An interdisciplinary approach to research has been embraced by both dress and theatre historians. Similarly, researchers from both disciplines draw upon material culture sources and approaches, and recognise the need to situate their analysis of surviving material within its original historic and social context. Yet, there are also important differences between these two areas of historical research. Not least that, whilst dress historians focus on ‘clothing’ as a very specific aspect of human experience and identity, theatre historians are generally concerned with all the elements, clothing included, which are brought together to create a theatrical performance.

An object based, material culture approach to research plays an integral role in this thesis. This chapter will therefore begin with an outline of the source material upon which the research is founded. The next section will introduce the approaches within Material Culture which have influenced dress and theatre historians, and which have shaped the methodology presented in this thesis. Having established this foundation the chapter will then engage more directly with current debates and methodology within theatre history

and dress history. It will examine sources and methodology specific to each field before exploring methodologies which can be profitably employed within both disciplines.

The chapter will emphasise the potential for development within both fields and illustrate the detailed, contextualised, level of analysis which can be achieved through uniting approaches from dress and theatre history. The final section will focus specifically on theatre costumes: objects which, in their dual position as theatrical ephemera and extant historic garments, have the potential to be of equal interest to both dress and theatre historians. It will demonstrate the value of this source material for researchers within both fields, and introduce a new methodology tailored to the analysis of this specific category of 'dress.'

1.2 Principal Sources for Study

This research is founded upon the assessment and interpretation of a collection of some thirty five complete theatrical costumes (and associated accessories) worn by Ellen Terry between circa 1878 and 1925. This collection is held by the National Trust at Smallhythe Place (hereafter Smallhythe) in Kent and has never been formally catalogued nor fully discussed. As one of the most extensive collections of theatrical dress from this era, with a direct connection to one of the leading actresses of the late nineteenth century, it is of particular historical significance.

For the purposes of this research an extensive examination was made of the collection. The constituent parts and, where relevant, related accessories, for each costume were examined, photographed, and documented, and the results are presented in the appendix of the thesis.¹ Related items within the collection at Smallhythe, in particular the photographs, literature, properties, and ephemera collected by Terry, were also

¹ See Appendix 1, Catalogue of the costume collection at Smallhythe Place.

investigated. As these additional objects were already in the process of being documented by the National Trust, only the costumes were catalogued in detail.

Whilst Smallhythe holds the largest collection of Terry's costumes, and three of the five surviving examples of her personal dress with reliable provenance, investigations were also made relating to garments connected with Terry held by other institutions in the United Kingdom and these will be discussed later in this chapter.²

Smallhythe Place

During her lifetime Terry amassed a collection, now at Smallhythe, which comprises in excess of one hundred separate garments and accessories, amongst them costumes from twenty-two of the productions in which Terry appeared whilst working at The Lyceum Theatre. The collection also includes examples of personal dress, costumes worn by Terry's contemporaries, and a wide selection of theatrical ephemera connected with Terry and other celebrated performers.

Following Terry's death in 1928 the collection passed into the care of her daughter, Edith Craig (1869-1947). Craig re-organised, and added to, the collection, creating a display in Terry's house Smallhythe Place in Kent to commemorate her mother's career.

Smallhythe and the two neighbouring properties had been purchased by Terry in 1899. They remained in her daughter's possession until 1938 when, having repeatedly failed to raise the funds required to support the long term transformation of the house into a memorial museum, Craig entered into discussions with the National Trust. By 1939 an

² The two other items are a silk tunic dress held by the Victoria & Albert Museum (S.1415-1984) and a cotton jacket held by the Museum of London (64.154). Full details of these items are provided in Appendix 3.

agreement had been reached between the two parties and on Craig's death in 1947 Smallhythe was left to the charity's custodianship.

Although a selection of Terry's most famous costumes has been displayed at Smallhythe since the 1930s the full costume collection at Smallhythe, which is stored in an external converted artist's studio at the property, remains virtually unexplored by researchers. In addition to the costume collection, Smallhythe also holds a wealth of supporting material through which it is possible to gather further information about Terry's life and career, and, significantly, her personal and theatrical dress. This includes Terry's working library and over three thousand contemporary photographs.

The motivations behind the creation of Terry's theatrical collection will be explored in Chapter 6. The material within this collection, in particular the garments, will be drawn upon throughout the thesis, but will play a particularly crucial role in the discussion of Terry's theatrical costumes in Chapter 4 and 5, and of her personal dress in Chapter 6.

Department of Theatre and Performance, the Victoria & Albert Museum

The material held by the Department of Theatre and Performance, Victoria & Albert Museum (hereafter V&A) is as extensive and diverse as that within the collection at Smallhythe. The one noticeable absence however, are any complete costumes that can be reliably established as having been worn by Terry.³

Of most interest within the collection are two recent acquisitions which, like the costumes at Smallhythe, are yet to be fully explored by researchers. These comprise, a collection

³ The V&A do hold a cream silk dress, Museum Number: S.9-1976, which was reputedly worn by Terry as Juliet. However, as Chapter 4 will discuss, this garment departs markedly from the design and silhouette of the costumes worn by Terry in this role, which she played only once at the Lyceum in 1882.

of costumes worn by Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905), and a substantial archive of letters and papers connected with Terry's professional career and private life.⁴

As Chapter 5 will show, examining the costumes worn by Irving alongside those worn by Terry offers a unique opportunity to compare and contrast the style favoured by the two performers during their twenty-four year stage partnership. Uniting the costumes of the two performers also makes it possible to gain a clearer sense of the overall aesthetic of specific productions and the extent to which Terry's costumes echoed, or diverged from, those of her fellow performers.

The collection of letters and papers were previously in private ownership and as such have not yet been fully studied, even by Katharine Cockin, who has published eight volumes containing all the correspondence previously known to have been associated with Terry.⁵ Of particular significance to this study is the fact that the collection contains previously unknown letters between Terry and her costume maker Mrs. Ada Nettleship (1856-1932) and private correspondence (previously thought to have been destroyed) which confirms longstanding rumours about Terry's close personal relationship with Irving.⁶

As indicated, these discrete collections are only part of the vast range of material held by the V&A amongst which are: programmes and newspaper reviews; cartes des visites; photographs; autographed letters; designs, and further archives connected with the

⁴ The collection associated with Sir Henry Irving includes over 60 items of costume, most complete ensembles. It was previously on long term loan to the Museum of London from the Royal Shakespeare Company Collections. The Ellen Terry Archive (THM/384), was previously held by a descendent of Terry until its purchase by the V&A in 2010. A full listing of this archive can be accessed online via Archives Hub. "The Ellen Terry Collection," *Archives Hub* [n.d.]

⁵ The eight volumes which comprise Professor Katharine Cockin's *Collected Letters of Ellen Terry* are being published on an annual basis by Pickering & Chatto, the first was published in 2010, the eighth volume is scheduled for publication in 2017.

⁶ These letters, sent from Irving to Terry, reveal the intimacy of their off-stage relationship (particularly during the 1880s and 1890s). Annotation in Terry's handwriting on the letters indicates that they were carefully retained, and record specific dates on which she re-read them. The letters are catalogued under the reference THM/384/6.

Lyceum Theatre, and the designers and performers employed at the theatre whilst Terry was its leading lady. The V&A therefore provides a resource which complements, and expands upon, the material held at Smallhythe.

Related Collections – Dress and Costume

Whilst Smallhythe and the V&A hold the greatest range of items relating to Terry, there are a number of other collections within the United Kingdom which hold relevant material. The Museum of London holds five costumes (and related accessories) worn by Terry, and at least one example of her personal dress.⁷ At least three of the five costumes are alternative ‘versions’ of costumes in the collection at Smallhythe. As Chapter 4 and 5 will discuss, such duplication exposes a specific challenge faced in the analysis of theatrical costume: namely determining the ‘original’, or ‘primary’, costume, for a theatrical role. Aesthetic garments and accessories from the Museum of London; Fashion and Textiles Department, Victoria & Albert Museum, Platt Hall, Manchester, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and the Fashion Museum, Bath, have also provided key evidence and comparative pieces for the discussion of Terry’s engagement with Aesthetic dress in Chapter 6.

Related Collections – Theatrical Material

A number of collections which hold material relating to Terry’s theatrical career were also consulted. Chief amongst these was the Garrick Club Library which holds a significant collection of theatrical ephemera, including paintings, engravings, playbills, printed texts, documents and discrete collections. Of particular significance for this study were the three scrapbooks documenting Lyceum productions put together by the artist

⁷ See Appendix 2 for full details of these garments. As Sarah Demb, Museum Archivist & Records Manager at the Museum of London was able to confirm, the acquisition records for these costumes indicate that they were donated by a number of different individuals, but many of them had a personal connection with Terry or her daughter Edith Craig. Sarah Demb, Personal communication with the author. 16 May 2014.

Susan Ruth Canton (1849-1932) and the twenty-two volumes relating to Lyceum productions, which comprise the Percy Fitzgerald collection. The latter was assembled by the painter and sculptor, Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald (1834-1925) for his personal reference and, like Canton's scrapbooks, provided a range of valuable material.

The National Portrait Gallery, London and The Russell Coates Collection, Bournemouth, provided key sources of images of Terry. The latter also holds a number of press clippings and sketches of the actress, whilst the range of images of Terry within the National Portrait Gallery collections is comparable in quantity and breadth to that in the V&A and Smallhythe. A comparison of these images made it possible to trace patterns in style and fit of garments adopted by Terry both on and off the stage, and also the artists and photographers that she favoured.

Aestheticism and Aesthetic Dress

As Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil declare,

[...] to know if a woman is participating in fashion at a particular moment
[...] requires enormous contextual information before one can even begin
to speculate as to motives, strategies and identities, let alone assessing a
relationship to place, occupation, cosmopolitanism or provincialism.⁸

Terry's rise to fame coincided with the peak of Aestheticism, and, as Chapter 6 will show, she became established as a figurehead for the movement. Chapter 2 will engage more fully with the existing literature on this theme. Of particular relevance to the methodology employed in the thesis however, is the existing work with surviving examples of Aesthetic dress.

⁸ Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeill, *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2010) 8.

Comparatively few examples of Terry's personal dress survive and the analysis of her garments therefore depends primarily upon a close reading of photographs and contemporary descriptions of Terry. Further details were also gathered from contemporary images and literature relating to Aesthetic dress.⁹ To mitigate for the absence of surviving dress, the garments worn by Terry were examined alongside Aesthetic dress and contrasting examples of fashionable dress from a period of circa 1870 to 1920 within the collections of the Museum of London; the Fashion Museum, Bath; The Gallery of Costume, Platt Hall, Manchester; the Fashion and Textile Collection, Victoria & Albert Museum, London and from Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and Petersfield Museum. The evidence regarding construction, colour and design, gained from close analysis of these garments provides essential supplementary information through which to contextualise and analyse Terry's personal dress.

Terry dressed both herself, and her houses in Aesthetic style. This thesis will therefore draw upon evidence from period photographs of the actress's houses, together with interviews, and surviving pieces of furniture owned by the actress within the V&A and at Smallhythe, to explore the manner in which Terry fashioned the 'private' space of her home. The primary focus of the analysis will be upon the extent to which the décor Terry selected for her houses functioned as a backdrop for the garments which she adopted within this environment.

1.3 Relevant methodological approaches within material culture

This thesis examines the design, raw materials, making, and lifecycle of Terry's surviving theatre and personal wardrobe. It is founded upon an object focused, material culture

⁹ Contemporary handbooks offering guidance on Aesthetic Dress included, but were not limited to, the work of Mrs. H.R. Haweis in particular *The Art of Dress* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1879); J.A. Gotch, *Art in Costume* (London: K. Paul, Trench & Co, 1882) and Lucy Crane, *Art and the Formation of Taste* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1882).

approach set in an interdisciplinary context, which assesses the value and significance of ‘things.’ The wide range of source material and scope of critical themes with which this study will engage demands this interdisciplinary approach to research. The next section will outline the manner in which this analysis draws upon specific methodological approaches, and how they will be used to interpret the extant garments which are fundamental to this study.

‘The Significance of Things’

Leora Auslander explained that ‘In its broadest sense, material culture embraces the class of all human-made objects.’¹⁰ She specifically defines her understanding of material culture as goods which are ‘felt and touched,’ ‘whose design involves aesthetic consideration’; ‘are not simply functional,’ and which are recognised as ‘modes of communication or memory cues, or expressions of the psyche, or extensions of the body, as well as sites of aesthetic investment.’¹¹ The relationship individuals form with material objects and ‘all that they express through their creation and use’ is, as Auslander argues, often ‘not reducible to words.’¹² It is precisely for this reason that the theoretical and methodological approaches encompassed within the broad field of material culture provides such a crucial framework for this thesis. Theory and methodology drawn from this discipline offers the means through which to articulate, the otherwise inexpressible, and indefinable, symbolic significance of objects.¹³

¹⁰ Leora Auslander, “Beyond Words,” *The American Historical Review*, Volume 110, Number 4, (2005) 1015.

¹¹ Auslander “Beyond words’ 1016.

¹² Auslander “Beyond words’ 1017.

¹³ This ‘symbolic importance’ has been explored by writers such as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in “Why We Need Things” *History from Things, Essays on Material Culture*, ed. Steven Lubar and David Kingery (London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993) 20-29. See also texts such as Daniel Miller, *The Comfort of Things* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008) and Judy Attfield, *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg, 2000).

As Judy Attfield has demonstrated, material culture also offers a route through which to examine and articulate the key role that ‘things’ play in the expression and construction of ‘group and individual identity.’¹⁴ As Auslander notes

in twentieth century Europe, the style of a person’s clothing or home inevitably and inexorably located that person in society; the objects did not reflect as much as *create* social personal (as well, some would argue, as the self itself)¹⁵

Taking Attfield and Auslander as a starting point, this thesis will consider what ‘the material culture’ of Terry’s life reveals about her efforts to construct a specific identity within late nineteenth century society, and also, importantly, to fashion a legacy which would endure after her death.

‘Description, Deduction and Speculation’

Direct engagement with ‘things’ (where possible) was at the heart of the methodological approach Jules David Prown proposed in his ‘Introduction to Material Culture,’ in 1982. As Prown demonstrates, it is the information gathered through this close analysis of artefacts which ‘[...] makes visible the otherwise invisible.’¹⁶ The tri-partite approach to analysis proposed by Prown, divided into ‘Description, Deduction and Speculation’, is now securely established within material culture in general, and dress history, in particular. This cumulative process of analysis, is founded upon not only a close examinations of the object, but also a consideration of the ‘sensory’, ‘intellectual’ and ‘emotional’ ‘relationship between the object and the perceiver.’ It therefore offers a clearly defined route through which to document and interpret ‘the information encoded

¹⁴ Judy Attfield, *Wild Things: The Material Culture of Everyday Life*, (Oxford: Berg, 2000) 14-15.

¹⁵ Auslander, *Beyond Words*, 1018.

¹⁶ Jules David Prown, “Mind in Matter: An introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, 17.1 (Spring, 1982): 1-19, 5.

in objects.’¹⁷ One aspect of material culture objects which Prown does not consider, but is of central importance to this research, is the process of designing and making. Nevertheless Prown’s approach to analysis offers inspiration for the methodology proposed in this thesis, which will demonstrate that it is only through examining a theatre costume at first hand, feeling the weight, examining the construction and documenting the evidence and consequences of repeated use, that a researcher can gain a full sense of, ‘[...] what it would be like to use or interact with the object.’¹⁸

A ‘slow approach to seeing’

In *The Dress Detective* (2015) Alexandra Kim and Ingrid Mida, acknowledging their debt to Prown, proposed an updated, comparable, three part approach to analysis, specifically tailored to the object based study of dress. Their methodology centres upon: Observation (capturing the information from the object); Reflection (considering embodied experience and contextual material), and Interpretation (linking the observations and reflections to theory).¹⁹ They stress that ‘Dress artefacts are unique’ and demand a ‘practice based framework’ which ‘articulates the steps necessary to read and reflect systematically’ on the evidence contained within these objects.²⁰ The methodology presented by Kim and Mida refines terminology employed by Prown, and is founded upon their own experience working with historic dress and textiles. The ability to look closely and slowly at a ‘dress artefact’ plays a fundamental part in Kim and Mida’s methodology. This ‘slow approach to seeing’ is, as they stress, vital if the ‘dress detective’ is to discover, and articulate ‘the biography of the object.’²¹ They emphasise the rewards of ‘patient observation,’ and a systematic approach to documentation and analysis through case studies which illustrate

¹⁷ Prown, “Mind in Matter”, 7-9.

¹⁸ Prown, “Mind in Matter”, 7.

¹⁹ Alexandra Kim and Ingrid Mida, *The Dress Detective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 28-31.

²⁰ Kim and Mida, *The Dress Detective*, 22.

²¹ Kim and Mida, *The Dress Detective*, 13, 33.

and respond to the challenges of specific garments and textiles. These case studies are supported by clear and comprehensive checklists devised to guide the reader through each of the three steps required to read and interpret a dress artefact.²²

The breadth of the themes and garments addressed within the book does restrict Kim and Mida's ability to contextualise their analysis of specific garments through comparison with similar items, or to engage fully with the critical debates raised during the 'Interpretation' of their case studies. Even so, this publication marks a crucial step in the evolution of dress history as a discipline, and clearly articulates a methodology specifically created for the analysis of extant garments. It therefore offers a valuable framework on which to build a methodology through which to analyse and articulate the 'narrative embedded' within theatre costumes.²³

1.4 Relevant methodological approaches within dress history

In their introduction to *Dress History Now: New Directions in Theory and Practice* (2015), Charlotte Nicklas and Annabella Pollen explain that dress history is founded upon not only a fusion of disciplines, but also of methodological approaches.²⁴ This thesis exemplifies the benefits of this interdisciplinary approach to research and analysis. It will build upon current methodological approaches within dress history, theatre history and material culture to establish 'costume' as distinct and clearly defined category within dress history and introduce a new methodology for the analysis of these unique garments.

²² Kim and Mida, *The Dress Detective*, 216-221.

²³ Kim and Mida, *The Dress Detective*, 27.

²⁴ Charlotte Nicklas, and Annabella Pollen. *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) 2-4.

Dress within material culture

In 1998 Aileen Ribeiro argued that extant dress whilst clarifying the ‘cut and construction of garments’, and functioning as an established part of the wider body of source material required for her ‘art historical’ approach to dress history, ‘can present only a fragmented picture.’²⁵ Ribeiro, whilst confident in the centrality of ‘artistic sources for dress history,’ assigned a marginal, supportive role, to extant dress.²⁶ Her views highlight the fact that, as Lou Taylor noted in 2002, object based research centres ‘on [the] examination of minute detail, channelled through a series of patiently acquired skills and interpretative methods’ which are often ‘underrated or perhaps misunderstood.’²⁷

As Chapter 2 will discuss however, there has been a shift in attitudes over recent decades and research within material culture has begun to recognise the contribution both extant garments and surviving textiles can contribute to an awareness that, as Daniel Miller argued in 2010, ‘Clothing is not Superficial.’²⁸ In 1998 Valerie Steele was already promoting this approach to research, declaring that ‘of all the methodologies used to study fashion objects, one of the most valuable is the interpretation of objects.’²⁹ Steele’s analytical approach draws on Prown’s three stage approach to object analysis and also upon the work of E. McClung Fleming.³⁰ As Steele explains, Fleming, like Prown, stressed the importance of obtaining ‘supplementary information from other sources, external to the artefact,’ but proposed an alternative final stage he called ‘cultural

²⁵ Aileen Ribeiro, “Re-Fashioning Art: some visual approaches to the study of the history of dress,” *Fashion Theory*, Volume 2, Issue 4, (1998), 316-7 and 323.

²⁶ Aileen Ribeiro, “Re-Fashioning Art: some visual approaches to the study of the history of dress,” 320.

²⁷ Lou Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 3.

²⁸ Daniel Miller, “Why Clothing is not Superficial”, *Stuff* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 12-41.

²⁹ Steele’s role as the chief curator of The Museum at the *Fashion Institute of Technology* has enabled her to carry out object based research which demonstrates the ‘unique insights into the historic and aesthetic development of fashion’ which can result. Valerie Steele, “A Museum of Fashion is More Than a Clothes-Bag,” *Fashion Theory*, 2:4 (1998): 327-336, 327.

³⁰ Steele, “A Museum of Fashion is More Than a Clothes-Bag”, 329. Steele draws in particular upon Prown’s “Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method” (1982). She also draws specifically from E. McClung Fleming, “Artifact Study: A Proposed Model,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, 9 (1974) 153-173.

analysis,' which examines 'the relationship of the artefact to its culture.'³¹ Steele's synthesis of these two approaches facilitates 'the sharp focus on the materiality of surviving items of dress,' in particular the 'nuanced cultural importance embedded in supposedly trivial details' advocated by Taylor, and which are essential to a complete, and successful, use of extant garments in historical research.³²

Miller has also made a significant contribution to recent work in this field. Miller's early work was shaped by a semiotic approach which viewed 'Clothing as a kind of pseudo-language that could tell us about who we are.'³³ Miller's investigations relating to specific cultures and their dress has had a significant impact on his methodology. It has led him to argue that within certain cultures garments were employed in the creation of something which was not simply 'fashion' but a 'style' which reflects 'the individual construction of an aesthetic based not just on what you wear, but how you wear it.'³⁴ Miller's observation is particularly relevant to the analysis of Aesthetic dress, which was not characterised by a single, unified 'fashion' but rather a fusion of styles which celebrated the individual.³⁵

Miller's collaboration with Suzanne Küchler, *Clothing as Material Culture* (2005), reaffirmed the importance of dress within the study of material culture.³⁶ For Küchler and Miller 'the sensual and the aesthetic – what cloth feels and looks like – is the source of

³¹ Steele, "A Museum of Fashion is More Than a Clothes-Bag", 331.

³² One of Steele's key texts on this theme is her 1999 *The Corset: A Cultural History*. Yale University Press, for which Steele compared what she termed 'dozens and dozens of corsets in a variety of collection'. Steele, "A Museum of Fashion is More Than a Clothes-Bag", 332.

³³ Miller, "Why Clothing is not Superficial", 12.

³⁴ Miller, "Why Clothing is not Superficial", 15.

³⁵ As Chapter 6 will discuss, Mrs. H.R. Haweis (a leading commentator on Aesthetic dress) attached great importance to suiting the colour and cut of clothes to the individual, rather than following the dictates of fashion. Mrs. H.R. Haweis, *The Art of Dress* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1879) 32.

³⁶ Suzanne Küchler and Daniel Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture* (London: Berg, 2005). Both Küchler and Miller drew on their past work in bringing together this edited collection. Of particular relevance are Suzanne Küchler's joint publication with Graeme Were, and Glenn Jowitt. *Pacific Pattern*. (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005) and Miller's joint authored, Miller, Daniel, and Sophie Woodward. *Blue Jeans: The Art of the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

its capacity to objectify myth, cosmology and also morality, power and values.’ On this basis they argue that ‘the dissection of clothing into pattern, fibre, fabric, form and production is not opposed to, but part of, its consideration as an aspect of human and cosmological engagement.’³⁷

Importantly, their book rejected ‘the dualism between society and materiality.’ Citing Webb Keane’s warning that regarding clothes merely as ‘signs or representations of social relations’ risks overshadowing their significance as material objects, Miller challenges this ‘artificial separation.’³⁸ As Miller comments, ‘we are prepared now to see clothes themselves as having agency as part of what constitutes and forms lives, cosmologies, reasons, causes and effects.’³⁹ This thesis examines clothing from this dual perspective, considering the materiality of the clothing alongside, and in relation to, the manner in which the finished garments projected the wearer’s social and professional status and reflected Terry’s views on art and dress.

Personal and Public Memories

As Miller acknowledges, his methodological approach has evolved over time and has led him the belief that, ‘A study of clothing should not be *cold*, it has to invoke the tactile, the emotional, intimate world of feelings.’⁴⁰ The collaborative investigation which Amy de la Haye, Lou Taylor and Eleanor Thompson carried out into a collection of clothing connected with the Messel family, exemplifies the practical implications of Miller’s observations.⁴¹ As de la Haye, Taylor and Thompson explain, ‘Whilst other types of

³⁷ Kuchler and Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture*, 1.

³⁸ Webb Kean, “Signs are Not the Garb of Meaning: On the Social Analysis of Material Things” *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) 182-205. Cited in Kuchler and Miller. *Clothing as Material Culture*, 2. Miller develops this theme further in pages 5-7 of the same text.

³⁹ Kuchler and Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture*, 2.

⁴⁰ Miller, “Why Clothing is not Superficial”, 41.

⁴¹ The clothing within the Messel collection was donated to Brighton Museum and Art Gallery and played a fundamental role in the museum’s exhibition, and accompanying publication, *Family of Fashion: The Messels: Six Generations of Dress* (2005). For full details see Amy de la Haye, Lou Taylor and Eleanor

objects are usually collected for their perceived monetary, as well as aesthetic, values, clothes are kept and treasured for their symbolic qualities and for the personal memories they hold.’⁴² Through a close examination of the garments, alongside an archive of letters, household bills, photographs and purchasing records, the authors were able to narrate ‘the history, style and aspirations of this family.’⁴³ The emotive resonance of the collection is clear, and through their ‘close focus on the design, making, consumption and survival of these precious garments’ the authors sought to ‘touch on the respect and love each generation of this family had, and has, for the one before.’⁴⁴ Terry’s collection provides an equally compelling route into her biography. Chapter 5 will explore the ‘symbolic qualities’ with which Terry’s costumes have become endowed in further detail. It will pay particular attention to the manner in which, as Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones have discussed, historic theatrical costumes, often retained because of an association with a famous performer, act as ‘carriers of [their] identity.’⁴⁵

1.5 Relevant methodological approaches within theatre history

For Theatre Historians the primary challenge is, as Christopher Balme observes, the fact that they are constantly seeking to recover a performance, which is ‘irretrievably lost the moment it has finished.’⁴⁶ Some material traces of the original performance do outlive the production. As with dress history, it is through ‘the material culture’ of the theatre

Thompson, *A Family of Fashion, The Messels: Six Generations of Dress* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2005).

⁴² de la Haye, Taylor and Thompson, *A Family of Fashion*, 13-14. John Styles explored the ability of clothing and textiles, to represent ‘threads of feeling.’ As Styles showed the tokens left by parents (often in the form of a scrap of textile) enabled mother’s to create a lasting connection with the children they left in the care of the Foundling Hospital. John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) and *Threads of Feeling: The London Foundling Hospital’s Textile Tokens, 1740-1770* (London: Foundling Museum, 2010).

⁴³ de la Haye, Taylor and Thompson, *A Family of Fashion*, 8.

⁴⁴ de la Haye, Taylor and Thompson, *A Family of Fashion*, 158.

⁴⁵ Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 177.

⁴⁶ Christopher B Balme, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 100-101.

that researchers are able to recover traces of the lost performance or performers. Surviving playbills were, for instance, fundamental to Jacky Bratton's *New Readings in Theatre History* (2003).⁴⁷ Archival evidence such as account books, newspaper reports and documentation regarding sanitation made possible Tracy C. Davis's comprehensive overview of the material, and specifically, economic, conditions of producing and consuming theatre between 1800 and 1914, in *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (2000).⁴⁸ Similarly, Shearer West in *The Image of the Actor: Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble* (1991), explored the evidence that can be gained from the large range of theatrical portraits produced by painters and engravers in the eighteenth century.⁴⁹ For theatre historians such as Barbara Hodgdon, Vivien Gardner and Gail Marshall, photographic portraits of both actors and sets have provided another route through which to recover and remember 'the absent, irrecoverable performance (and performer) through a (literally) material trace.'⁵⁰

Ephemeral and Intangible

In *Research Methods in Theatre & Performance* (2011) Jim Davis outlines the current state, and continuing challenges, of theatrical and performance histories which are often 'concerned with the ephemeral and the intangible.'⁵¹ Davis foregrounds the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to theatre history and historiography, in which research

⁴⁷ Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴⁸ Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Hereafter Tracy C. Davis will be referred to using the abbreviation T.C. Davis.

⁴⁹ Shearer West, *The Image of the Actor: Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble* (London: Pinter, 1991).

⁵⁰ Barbara Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives: Material Mnemonics." *Remembering Shakespeare, Memory, Performance*, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 135-168, 136. See also Vivien Gardner "Gertie Millar and the "Rules for Actresses and Vicar's Wives", *The Celebrated actors as Cultural Icon* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), 96-112 and Gail Marshall in "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress and her international audiences." *Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, ed. Maggie B. Gale and John Stokes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 52-73.

⁵¹ Jim Davis et al., "Research Theatre History and Historiography," *Research Methods in Theatre & Performance*, ed. Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011) 88-109, 97.

must ‘embrace oral testimony and embodied history as well as the material object and the written text.’⁵² Davis explores the specific challenge faced by Kate Normington when seeking to recover the history of a production where textual evidence was lacking, and the practice based endeavour of Gilli Bush-Bailey and Jacky Bratton to ‘revive’ the plays of Jane Scott (from circa 1809-1818). Through this discussion Davis demonstrates the importance of uniting the archive of what Diana Taylor called ‘supposedly enduring materials (i.e., texts, documents, buildings, bones)’ and the ‘ephemeral *repertoire* of embodied practice/knowledge (i.e. spoken language, dance, sports, ritual).’⁵³ In their pursuit of ‘the embodied history of the performer’ both Normington and Bush-Bailey and Bratton draw upon the work of Susan Foster and Joseph Roach. In *Choreographing History* (1995) Foster introduced the notion of ‘bodily writing’ produced when bodies touch buildings, clothing or objects and thus creating ‘a series of “material remains” through which a historian can reconstruct the bodies of the past.’⁵⁴ Engaging with Foster’s work, Roach explored ‘the transmission (and transformation) of memory through movement’ preserved in what he termed the ‘kinaesthetic imagination.’⁵⁵ The relationship between memory and performance will be expanded upon later in this chapter. Specifically addressing the ‘kinetic’ nature of performance, this thesis will propose the addition of theatrical costume to the Taylor’s original list of ‘enduring’ sources. Building upon Foster’s concept of ‘bodily writing’ and Roach’s work on the ‘kinaesthetic imagination’ Chapter 5 will demonstrate that such garments can actually bridge the gap between ‘enduring’ and ‘ephemeral’ materials, preserving traces of the ephemeral elements of performance, in particular movement, in material form.

⁵² Davis et al. “Research Theatre History and Historiography,” 97.

⁵³ Diana Taylor’s 2003 publication *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* is cited by Davis in “Research Theatre History and Historiography”, 93.

⁵⁴ Davis et al., “Research Theatre History and Historiography”, 94.

⁵⁵ Bush Bailey and Bratton draw upon Roach’s *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (1996), Davis et al., “Research Theatre History and Historiography,” 94.

Material Objects

Maggie B. Gale and Ann Featherstone note that in recent years ‘the archive has become a vital cultural tool as a means of accessing versions of the past.’⁵⁶ Gale and Featherstone identified theatre/performance collections as a specific category within archives as a whole, set apart from collections of primarily text-based archive by the diversity of their collections which ‘invariably contain a multiplicity of document forms, including visual and oral materials.’⁵⁷ They, like Davis, suggest that an ‘interpretative strategy,’ which often draws on approaches from other disciplines, is required to make full and effective use of their contents.⁵⁸

Gale and Featherstone’s writing also touches upon the emotive ‘connection’ that a historian can experience when handling artefacts such as letters or costumes with a clear trace of their original creator or wearer.⁵⁹ Addressing the role of ‘digitisation’ within preservation, Gale and Featherstone accept that high quality images facilitate wider access and offer the ability to enlarge and print off details of objects. As they show however, the absence of ‘sensations’ such as touch and smell from this examination, means that researchers are unable to appreciate tangible qualities such as the ‘throwaway quality’ inherent in the thinness of a nineteenth century playbill or the vivid colours of an advertisement.⁶⁰ Chapter 4 and 5 will demonstrate the importance of this direct ‘connection’ with costumes, where condition allows. As they will illustrate, it is only through a close examination of a costume’s texture and weight, its construction, and areas

⁵⁶ Maggie B. Gale and Ann Featherstone, “The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research,” *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*, ed. Baz Kershaw and Helen Nicholson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011 [Reprinted 2012]), 17-40, 17.

⁵⁷ Gale and Featherstone, “The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research,” 20.

⁵⁸ Gale and Featherstone, “The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research,” 20.

⁵⁹ Gale and Featherstone, “The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research,” 32.

⁶⁰ Gale and Featherstone, “The Imperative of the Archive: Creative Archive Research”, 32. They also refer specifically to the waistcoats once worn by the male impersonator and actress Vesta Tilley (1864-1952) which are now in the collections of Worcestershire County Museum. For further details see “The Vesta Tilley Collection”, *Worcestershire County Council* [n.d.]

of damage or wear (rarely evident in a digitised image), that it becomes possible to re-create the physical form, taste, and movement patterns, of the actors who once wore them.⁶¹

A 'postdisciplinary' approach?

Bratton and Roach are also amongst those who advocate an 'expansive interdisciplinary' or, what Roach terms, a 'postdisciplinary' approach, to theatre history.⁶² The success of such an approach is demonstrated by *Theatre/Archaeology* (2001) in which Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks proposed a unification of 'Theatre' and 'Archaeology' founded upon the 'convergence' between, and 'transferable concepts' within, the two disciplines.⁶³ Amongst these parallels they single out 'narrative' as 'a feature of the cultural work that is both archaeology and performance,' demonstrating how 'narratives of performances may intersect with the narrative of personal identity.' In an approach which chimes with Marvin Carlson's work on 'ghosting,' they explain that audiences experience performances in '[...] a state of preparedness which derives from past experiences and the way in which they have chosen to order them and accord them significance.'⁶⁴ As a consequence, they argue, it is '[...] not only impossible for the same performance to take place twice, it is also impossible for the audience to experience the same performance twice.'⁶⁵ One method through which they suggest it becomes possible to 'remember' lost performances, is through 'performance-about-performance.' Such 'second-order performances' are not, they suggest, constrained within a specific form, and could be

⁶¹ As Chapter 4 will discuss, the position of wear and tears to the fabric of costumes such as a pair of silk dupion breeches worn by the actor David Tennant (b.1971) as Touchstone in 1996 (now in the *Royal Shakespeare Company Collections*), can provide important evidence about the actor's movement patterns on the stage.

⁶² Jacky Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xi.

⁶³ Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 2001), 1.

⁶⁴ Pearson and Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology*, 64; Their work recalls Marvin Carlson's, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machines* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

⁶⁵ Pearson and Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology*, 64.

presented as a ‘re-enactment, revival, lecture, demonstration, audio-visual presentation [or] story-telling.’⁶⁶ Chapter 5 will demonstrate, that this concept of ‘second-order performance’ can also be employed to analyse the role which historic theatre costumes play in ‘remembering’ not only lost productions, but also lost performers.

1.6 Interpreting dress and theatre history through paintings and sketches

Paintings

Paintings of Terry represent a key source for the examination of her dress both in role, and off the stage. Central to the analysis of Terry’s dress in the early years of her career are the portraits and sketches made of the actress by her first husband George Frederick Watts (1817-1904). These include his portrait of Terry in her wedding dress, ‘Choosing’ (1864), now held by National Portrait Gallery, and the informal sketches Watts made of Terry, some of which are also held by the National Portrait Gallery, whilst others form part of the collection at the Watts Gallery.⁶⁷ The National Portrait Gallery hold a number of paintings showing Terry as she appeared ‘off stage.’ These include a head and shoulders portrait of Terry, painted by John Forbes Robertson (1853-1937) in 1876, and additional portraits by Walford Graham Robertson (1866-1948) (hereafter W.G. Robertson) and Cyril Robertson (1871-1949) depicting Terry later in her life.

Of the portraits showing Terry in role, John Singer Sargent’s (1856-1925) portrait of Terry as Lady Macbeth is particularly significant, and, as Chapter 5 will discuss, has played a key role in securing the lasting fame of costume Terry wore in this role. First painted and exhibited in 1889, the original portrait is held by Tate Britain. Two related sketches also exist, one a preparatory drawing presented to Terry by Sargent, is held at

⁶⁶ Pearson and Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology*, 65.

⁶⁷ A full list of the portraits and photographs of Terry has been compiled by the National Portrait Gallery, London, and can be found here online. See Elizabeth Heather, “Ellen Terry,” *Later Victorian Portraits Catalogue*, National Portrait Gallery, London. [n.d.]

Smallhythe, the second, created for a theatre programme used in Terry's 1906 Stage Jubilee celebrations, is held by the National Portrait Gallery. Three other portraits connected to the costume Terry wore as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* are also of particular relevance to themes explored in Chapter 5. Two of these three portraits do not actually feature Terry, but do include her costume. Terry is the model for the first portrait, painted in 1883 by G.W. Baldry (fl.1878-ca.1925) and now part of the Garrick Club Collections. The second, painted by Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896) in 1886, and now held by the *Metropolitan Museum of Art*, features a sitter who resembles, but is not, Terry. She is wearing the robes which form part of Terry's costume (loaned to Millais by Terry), but not the cap.⁶⁸ Terry's costume also features in another portrait from the 1930s. Painted by Clare Atwood (1866-1962) the model in this instance is Vita Sackville West (1892-1962), who wore Terry's costume during a Shakespeare Masque at Knole, Sussex, on the 3rd of July 1910.

These formal portraits of Terry will be examined in conjunction with the sketches created for souvenir programmes, commercial sale, and those which featured in contemporary periodicals. Amongst such sketches are a series of images Bernard Partridge drew of both Terry and Irving in role, many examples of which survive in the collections of both the V&A and the National Portrait Gallery. As with all the source material under discussion, these images will be examined in conjunction with surviving garments, photographs and written descriptions (where they exist).

⁶⁸ Lucy Oakley quotes from letters between Millais and Terry arranging this loan in her discussion of this history of the history of this painting. Lucy Oakley, "The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 16, (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1982) 181-194, 183-4.

Critical approaches to interpreting dress in paintings

The use of paintings in the analysis of dress and fashion is long established, and recent texts, such as that published to accompany the touring exhibition *Impressionism, Fashion and Modernity* (2012), demonstrate the central role such source material plays within dress history as a discipline: particularly with regard to the relationship between ‘art’ and ‘dress’ in the late nineteenth century.⁶⁹ In relation to this thesis, the most significant element of the exhibition and book, was the fact that efforts had been made to unite extant dress with the surviving paintings. This signalled a major step forward in both museum curatorial practice and within the collaboration between the disciplines of art and dress history.

A related development within art history research, are publications which examine the creators of such portraits and their relationship with fashion. An example, which is particularly relevant to this study is *Whistler, Women & Fashion* (2003), which explores the artist’s connections with the Aesthetic Movement alongside his ‘involvement in dress design.’⁷⁰ Ribeiro’s contributions to the volume include a chapter which addresses Whistler’s relationship with ‘Fashion.’ Ribeiro argues that ‘Art and Fashion were inextricably linked as cultures of consumption during Whistler’s working life. A period when the art world in London (and the social and professional status of artist themselves) expanded hugely.’⁷¹ This statement identifies a significant shift in the status of the artist, which is of specific significance to the analysis of Terry’s social circle and self-

⁶⁹ The exhibition opened at the Musée D’Orsay in October 2012 and toured to both the Metropolitan Museum in, New York and the Art Institute of Chicago. The text published to accompany the exhibition by Gloria L Groom took its title from the exhibition, *Impressionism, Fashion, & Modernity* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2012). Groom’s was not the only text to address this theme, as can be seen from publications such as Debra N. Mancoff’s *Fashion in Impressionist Paris* (London: Merrell Pub, 2012), published in the same year.

⁷⁰ Margaret F. MacDonald, Susan G. Galassi, and Aileen Ribeiro. *Whistler, Women & Fashion* (New York: Frick Collection, 2003), vii.

⁷¹ Macdonald, Galassi and Ribeiro, *Whistler, Women and Fashion*, 19.

presentation carried out in Chapters 6. Whilst Ribeiro's chapter provides key contextual information for this thesis and makes effective use of visual sources, close analysis of extant garments is noticeably absent from her discussion.⁷² This thesis will demonstrate the significant contribution uniting visual and written evidence with extant garments can make to the understanding of both dress and theatre costume.

In *The Art of Dress* (1995) Ribeiro remarks upon a portrait's ability to represent a 'fusion of character, likeness and costume.' At the same time she warns that, 'A portrait is not merely a mechanical image, it is a likeness of the sitter and his or her character seen through the temperament of the artist, whose views reflect the opinions of contemporary critics writing about art and dress.'⁷³ Both observations are relevant to the analysis of images which depict Terry, an individual whose celebrity was founded upon her ability to perform a 'role.' This is a challenge repeatedly faced by theatre historians such as Laura Engel who, as Chapter 2 will discuss, draws upon portraits of famous performers to explore key debates surrounding the position of the actress as a 'celebrity' and a 'woman' within eighteenth century society.⁷⁴

The National Portrait Gallery's 2011 exhibition *The First Actresses: Nell Gwyn to Sarah Siddons*, made a significant contribution to this discussion. In her introduction to the accompanying book, Gill Perry argues that '[...] visual and written portraits helped shaped the identity of [their] women protagonists as "goddesses," tragic and comic heroines, models of feminine virtue, objects of erotic fantasy, shrewd self-publicists and

⁷² Ribeiro refers specifically to the 'aesthetic dress of white linen that has a Watteau back and panels of tambour work floral embroidered in blue and pink' in the collection at Smallhythe. She also suggests that this might be the gown that Terry was wearing when described in *The Brooklyn Times* (1884) as appearing in 'an artistic gown, with a Wateau [sic] plait.' As Chapter 6 will show however, Terry owned a range of dresses which featured a 'Watteau back' and the dress in the collection at Smallhythe departs significantly from Ribeiro's description. Ribeiro, *Whistler, Women and Fashion*, 49-50.

⁷³ Aileen Ribeiro, *The Art of Dress* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1995) 236, 14.

⁷⁴ Laura Engel, "The Muff Affair: Fashioning Celebrity in the Portraits of Late-eighteenth century British Actresses," *Fashion Theory*, 13.3 (2009): 279-298, and *Fashioning Celebrity: Eighteenth-century British Actresses and Strategies for Image Making* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011).

even agents of transgression.’⁷⁵ Portraits of women, and actresses in particular, could therefore ‘both enhance or betray the identities enacted on stage or narrated through biography.’⁷⁶ As Perry shows, an analysis of any portrait must take into account the fact these are objects which, tell us ‘not just about the subject, her ambitions and how she wished to be seen (if the work was commissioned by the actress), but [also] about the historical conventions of portrait painting, the artist’s tastes, fashion, gender, social status and so on.’ Theatrical portraits present additional challenges for the researcher, as rather than offering a direct ‘likeness’ of the sitter they ‘may depict the actress in role, or [be] replete with references to role-playing.’⁷⁷ In *Spectacular Flirtations: Viewing the Actress in British Art and Theatre, 1768-1820*, Perry carries the implications of ‘role-playing’ further. Looking specifically at the ‘theatrical portrait in role’ she argues that such portraits offer ‘a representation of a staged or pseudo event’ and, moreover, one that has been ‘translated through the conventions and aesthetic preferences of the artist.’ They therefore form part of a process, which Perry calls, ‘double mediation’ in which the artist’s ‘painted reconstruction’ is substituted ‘for the masquerade on stage.’ Theatrical portraits in role would therefore seem to be ‘twice removed from the supposedly “real” person.’⁷⁸ Yet, as Perry notes, ‘[...] many of these portraits fostered or encouraged a sense of identification and engagement in the viewer’ and their success was founded upon their ability to ‘reveal a recognisable individual.’⁷⁹ Theatrical portraits are therefore enmeshed within ambiguities, and those which show a performer in role often generate

⁷⁵ Gill Perry, Joseph R. Roach, and Shearer West, *The First Actresses: Nell Gwyn to Sarah Siddons* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011) 13.

⁷⁶ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 13-16.

⁷⁷ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 27.

⁷⁸ As Perry explains she employs the term ‘double mediation’ to ‘[...] represent the complex networks, relations and processes that link the artist’s work of theatrical performance to historical situations, cultures, genders and sexualities.’ Gill Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations: Viewing the Actress in British Art and Theatre, 1768-1820* (London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2007) 20-1.

⁷⁹ Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations: Viewing the Actress in British Art and Theatre, 1768-1820*, 20-1.

further conflation between the ‘personal, painted and public (theatrical) identities’ of their subjects.⁸⁰

In his analysis of portraiture in both painted, and photographic form, Richard Brilliant also remarks upon the frequency of confusions which arise from the ‘ambiguity of impersonation,’ and the ‘conflation’ of ‘various identities in the public mind’ which result. Focusing on twentieth century film stars, Brilliant suggests that this confusion is generated by the fact that these figures maintain ‘a flexible relationship between familiarity and distance, between their image and illusion, between their “natural selves” and their film roles.’⁸¹ As Chapter 3 and 6 will show, the same holds true for theatre actors in the late nineteenth century.

Brilliant also examines the role of ‘the artist’ in self-fashioning. He quotes Herman Rosenberg’s description of portraiture as a ‘consensual ritual encounter which is both trusting and wary’ and in which ‘the subject submits to the interpretation of the artist, hoping to retain some control over what that interpretation might be.’ He adds his own observation that ‘[...] the artist’s collusive involvement may, or may not, correspond to the subject’s own representation of self, even at the time of portrayal.’⁸² Brilliant stresses that the ‘[...] rhetorical character of self-fashioning and its deference to the expectations of others’ is such that ‘[...] putting people in the “rightful” place within a social context always requires a high degree of cooperation and collusion among the participants in a social encounter.’⁸³ These remarks highlight the crucial role that the ‘collusion’ of the viewer/audience plays in the process of self-fashioning, in which success depends upon their willingness to accept and sustain the identity being projected.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 27-8 and Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations*, 15.

⁸¹ Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: Reaktion Book, 1991), 89-90, 104.

⁸² Herman Rosenberg quoted in Brilliant, Richard, *Portraiture*, 90.

⁸³ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 89.

⁸⁴ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 90.

Building upon the insights offered by Perry and Brilliant, Chapter 6 will consider the impact that this ‘confusion’ between an actress’ ‘costumed performances’ and her “‘real’ person,’ had upon the viewer’s engagement with, and interpretation of, their portraits.⁸⁵ It will also examine the extent to which Terry embraced, and, or, resisted, the perceived parallels between her ‘public’ and ‘private’ identity in her visual and written biographies.⁸⁶

Caricatures and Sketches

Periodicals and caricatures from the period offer an additional perspective on the specific style of aesthetic clothing favoured by Terry and also the public response to her attire. Publications such as *Punch* and *The Illustrated London News* offer a particularly fruitful source for such research. Leonée Ormond has argued that many people learnt about Aestheticism from social cartoons in such periodicals.⁸⁷ Ribeiro has also noted the value of such source material, arguing that cartoonists, like artists ‘provide invaluable testimony to the culture, the manners, the *vision* of the times. *What* they depict and *why* is of crucial importance to anyone seriously interested in the study of dress.’⁸⁸

Both Ormond and Ribeiro are conscious however that the value of such resources depends on a nuanced reading which takes in account the degree of exaggeration indulged in by both authors and artists for dramatic effect. Taylor presents a methodological approach for those decoding ‘the cultural messages passed down to us in individual cartoons’ in *The Study of Dress History* (2004). The five-fold approach advocated by Taylor assesses not only the images themselves, but also the personal and political interests of their

⁸⁵ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 27-8.

⁸⁶ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 24.

⁸⁷ Leonée Ormond, “Punch and Satire,” *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1890*, Ed. Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle-Orr (London: V&A Publishing, 2011) 212.

⁸⁸ Aileen Ribeiro, “Re-Fashioning Art: some visual approaches to the study of the history of dress,” *Fashion Theory*, Volume 2, Issue 4, (1998), 323.

creators, their publishers, and their readership. This thesis also recognises the importance, as Taylor stresses, of appreciating the ‘exact period context of the specific cartoon at the moment of publication’ before placing any images within their ‘proper dress historical context.’⁸⁹

Davis notes that historians within any discipline are required to confront, ‘The referential dilemma’ which is presented by ‘the gap between the actuality of events in the past and how they have been represented.’ Without vital contextual information such visual sources, whether they take the form of paintings, photographs or caricatures, are, Davis argues, ‘limited in their scopes for revealing exact details of past theatrical performance.’⁹⁰ To interpret and employ such material effectively it is therefore essential to be conscious of their limitations, in particular contemporary ‘aesthetic rules and conventions,’ and the extent to which they may present an ‘idealised rather than “authentic rendering” of an event.’⁹¹

The importance of Davis’ observation is borne out by the ‘intriguing gaps, even ruptures’ which Kimberley Wahl identified between ‘the visual representation and literary framing of “artistic” dress,’ and ‘how these forms of clothing were actually acquired, adapted and worn on the body.’⁹² As Wahl observes, the ‘presence of Aesthetic dress in the print culture of the nineteenth century is rich, varied and ubiquitous.’⁹³ When examining extant Aesthetic garments, however, Wahl discovered that many were actually ‘stylistic hybrids’ which conformed to ‘the predominant stylistic features of mainstream fashionable dress’ rather than ‘the radical examples of alternative dress as called for in the art and reform

⁸⁹ Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, 145.

⁹⁰ Davis et al. “Research Theatre History and Historiography,” 95.

⁹¹ Jim Davis et al. “Research Theatre History and Historiography,” 95.

⁹² Kimberly Wahl, “Picturing the material/manifesting the visual: Aesthetic Dress in late nineteenth-century British culture,” *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, ed. Charlotte Nicklas, and Anabella Pollen (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) 97-112, 97.

⁹³ Wahl, “Picturing the material/manifesting the visual: Aesthetic Dress in late nineteenth-century British culture,” 100.

literature of the day.’⁹⁴ As Wahl states, it was this work with surviving garments which drew her attention to ‘the chasm which exists between the material culture evidence of artistic or alternative forms of dress and the representation of Aesthetic dress as an ideal form or as a visual expression of cultural critique.’⁹⁵ Wahl’s experience highlights the ‘complex relationship between material forms of clothing and visual/literary representations of “fashion”’ and, by extension, theatrical costume.⁹⁶ Her research demonstrates the importance of examining visual/literary representations of historic theatrical costume alongside comparable garments, where possible. Only through considering the physicality of garments can the researcher appreciate how dress is actually constructed and worn on the body, and, through this, its impact on movement, and the manner in which it can distort, or support the form beneath. Such considerations will be central to the discussion of both Terry’s personal and theatrical costume carried out in Chapter 5 and 6.

1.7 Interpreting dress and theatre history through photographs

Hundreds of photographs showing Terry in both her stage costume, and in off stage dress survive, making it possible to chart developments in her personal and private dress from her first performance in 1856, through to her death in 1928. The majority of these images depict Terry in a professional setting and are held in the collections of the National Portrait Gallery and V&A. One of the most important collections of photographs of Terry survives at Smallhythe however, as it is here that the largest proportion of informal, ‘private’ images of Terry have been assembled.

⁹⁴ Wahl, “Picturing the material/manifesting the visual: Aesthetic Dress in late nineteenth-century British culture,” 106.

⁹⁵ Kimberly Wahl, *Dressed as in a Painting: Women and British Aestheticism in an Age of Reform* (Durham: University of Hampshire Press, 2013), xix.

⁹⁶ Wahl, “Picturing the material/manifesting the visual: Aesthetic Dress in late nineteenth-century British culture,” 99.

The surviving photographs of Terry provide a visual narrative of the actress's life. The formal studio images offer an illustration of her professional self, as presented to the public, and the large proportion of images depicting the actress in Aesthetic dress testify to her commitment to the movement. The fact that photographs showing Terry in the 1850s and 1860s (prior to her marriage to Watts and relationship with Edward William Godwin (1833-1886)) have survived, make it possible to analyse her evolving style and to evaluate the impact that Terry's partnerships with leading artists, and members of the Aesthetic movement, had upon her sartorial development. As few examples of Terry's personal dress survive, these photographs play a crucial part in the analysis of her off stage garments carried out in Chapter 6.

As is often the case, far fewer images showing Terry in 'private' life survive, but those that do will be analysed in relation to the more formal images, facilitating a comparison of the parallels and contrasts between Terry's 'public' and 'private' dress. Both these informal and professional photographs also document Terry's domestic surroundings. Chapter 6 will draw upon evidence from these images to examine the manner in which Terry constructed a 'stage-set' within her domestic space, which allowed her to sustain specific 'public' and 'private' identities.

'Reading' Photographs

The history and interpretation of photography has been thoroughly covered elsewhere. Its significance in relation to this study lies in the fact that the commencement of Terry's stage career (in the mid-1850s) coincided with key developments in photographic technology.⁹⁷ This included the ability to produce multiple copies of the same image, and

⁹⁷Key texts include: R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (London: Fontana, 1984); Maria Morris Hambourg, et al., *The Waking Dream: Photography's First Century*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993; L. Heron and V. Williams, *Illuminations* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1996); André Jammes and Eugenia Parry Janis *The Art of French Calotype*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Elizabeth Anne McCauley, *Industrial Madness: Commercial Photography in Paris, 1848–1871* (New

significant improvements in the quality of the images that could be produced. Balme has drawn attention to the potential value of these photographs for theatre historians.⁹⁸ Gardner, Catherine Hindson, David Mayer and Marshall are amongst those who have explored the significant part that the 2 ¼ by 3 ½ inches cartes des visite prints (produced from 1854), and the larger cabinet cards (6 ½ by 4 ½ inches) which replaced them in circa 1866, played in the promotion of both productions and performers.⁹⁹

It was not only celebrities whose images were recorded in photographers' studios however, and, recognising the demand for 'private' photography, George Eastman (1854-1932) introduced the first film based 'Kodak' camera in 1888. These cameras offered the first opportunity for private individuals to create their own photographs outside the photographer's studio.¹⁰⁰ Photographs taken with these non-professional cameras provide another perspective on Terry's 'private' self, as will be demonstrated in Chapters 6.

There are however limitations to this source material, not least the fact that many photographs of Terry have been taken in a studio setting. As Chapter 5 will show, whilst efforts were made to replicate elements of the theatre set in the studio and to recreate, or at least evoke, scenes from a production, photographs showing Terry in role cannot be relied upon as a true record of how the costume would have appeared on the stage. A

Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); B. Newhall, *The History of Photography* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1982); S. Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin Books, 1978), J. Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, (London: Macmillan London, 1992).

⁹⁸ Christopher Balme discusses the potential of such sources for theatre historians in Balme, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies*, 105-6.

⁹⁹ The use of photographs, in particular the picture postcard (created in the late 1890s), to promote theatrical productions and performers has been discussed by Gardner in "Gertie Millar and the "Rules for Actresses and Vicar's Wives," *The Celebrated actors as Cultural Icon* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004); Catherine Hindson in *Female Performance Practice on the Fin-de-Siècle popular stages of London and Paris: Experiment and Advertisement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), David Mayer in "The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film," *Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, ed. Maggie B. Gale and John Stokes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 74-94 and Gail Marshall in "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress and her international audiences," *Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, ed. Maggie B. Gale, John Stokes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁰ Graham Clarke, *The Photograph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 18.

further significant limitation lies in the fact that despite the fact that colour photography was first invented in the mid nineteenth century, it was not until the 1950s that colour photographs became widely available. As a result, although some images of Terry have been hand tinted or coloured, most of them are black and white or sepia, and therefore reveal little or no information about the original colours of the garment they depict.

As Graham Clarke suggests in his introduction to *The Photograph*, 1997, ‘any photograph, by implication, involves a set of questions and ambiguities endemic to its nature as an act of representation.’¹⁰¹ Clarke’s primary interest lies in the cultural and social meanings of the photograph. He has also presented a specific methodology for ‘How to Read A Photograph.’¹⁰² This takes into account both the pre-conceptions inherent in any analysis, and also the ‘levels of meaning’ present in any photographic image. As Clarke observes,

Whenever we look at a photographic image we engage in a series of complex readings which relate as much to the expectations and assumptions that we bring to the image as to the photographic subject itself. Indeed, rather than the notion of looking, which suggests a passive act of recognition, we need to insist that we *read* a photograph, not as an image but as a *text*.¹⁰³

Clarke’s approach has therefore been employed here to construct a framework for an informed analysis of surviving photographs, which takes into account, not only the artistic and cultural conventions shaping the creation and reception of photographic portraits, but also the impact that technological innovations had on the medium.

¹⁰¹ Clarke, *The Photograph*, 7.

¹⁰² Clarke, *The Portrait in Photography* (London: Reaktion Books, 1992) and *The Photograph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁰³ Clarke, *The Photograph*, 27.

Clarke is also amongst those who have explored the relationship between the photographer and the sitter within the studio and seeks to restore an awareness of the photographer to the analytical process.¹⁰⁴ The controlling role of the photographer is also an important consideration for David Mayer, who has explored the stylistic conventions present in theatrical photographs from the late nineteenth century. Mayer claims that whilst

Gradually, the actress, her entire physical self visible, begins to emote, [...] her emoting is aestheticized and controlled by the photographer and is unlikely to have been as overtly theatrical as it would have been on a stage before an audience.¹⁰⁵

As Helen Walter notes, before the 1890s photographs of performers were not taken in the theatre, but were, in effect, as posed studio portraits.¹⁰⁶ She therefore argues that photographs of actors in role should be regarded as ‘a moment of performance’ which provide ‘[...] only one opportunity for the exposition of character’ they represent, ‘[...] a distillation of the traits which the actor and photographer considered most important.’¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, ‘[...] with the opportunity for expression through movement and vocalization removed, the pose and costume were of paramount importance in realizing characterisation.’¹⁰⁸ The observations of both Mayer and Walter recall Roland Barthes’

¹⁰⁴ Clarke, *The Photograph*, 7-9, 29. Richard Brilliant (referred to previously) has examined the nature and significance of the interactions between the subject, artist and viewer. See: Brilliant, *Portraiture* (London: Reaktion Books, 1991).

¹⁰⁵ David Mayer, “The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film,” *Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, ed. Maggie B. Gale and John Stokes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 74-94, 81.

¹⁰⁶ Helen Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage”, *Costume*, 47.2, (2013): 161-179, 167, 170. As Walter notes the history and production of theatrical photography has been explored in further detail by Michael R. Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Barbara McCandless, ‘The Portrait Studio and the Celebrity,’ *Photography in Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Martha A. Sandweiss (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1991) and by Michele Majer in ‘Staging Fashion, 1880-1920,’ *Staging Fashion 1880-1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, Billie Burke*, ed. Michele Majer (London: Yale University Press, 2012).

¹⁰⁷ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage”, 167, 170.

¹⁰⁸ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage”, 161-179, 167, 171.

description of photography as a ‘kind of primitive theatre.’ All three highlight the complications present in any ‘reading’ of a photograph, exposing the ‘theatrical nature’ of a process repeatedly employing stage sets, established poses and re-touching.¹⁰⁹ Engaging with these concerns Chapter 6 will address the fact that, as an actress, Terry is an unusual sitter, conscious that her photographic portraits were produced for a public, rather than for a domestic, audience. It will also consider the level of control Terry might have exerted over her photographed self and examine how these images functioned as an extension of Terry’s on stage performance and within the actress’s efforts to ‘fashion’ her ‘public’ and ‘private’ identity.

Photographs as ‘objects’

The thesis will also consider the photograph’s role as a physical object, which as Elizabeth Edwards asserts is, ‘central to its function as a socially salient object’ and plays an integral part in ‘the construction of meaning.’¹¹⁰ Whilst acknowledging the importance of Bourdieu’s writing on the ‘social uses of photography’ Edwards has highlighted the absence of a true consideration of the ‘materiality’ of these images.¹¹¹ Her own analysis establishes the important part physical engagement plays in the creation and consumption of photographs.¹¹² Situating photographs within the wider realm of ‘performative material culture’ Edwards encourages a consideration of the role photographs play in the way ‘in which people construct themselves and are constructed by others through the cultural forms of their consumption.’¹¹³ This construction of self through the creation, and

¹⁰⁹ R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (London: Fontana, 1984), 31-2.

¹¹⁰ Elizabeth Edwards, “Photographs as Objects of Memory,” *Material Memories: Design and Evocation*, ed. M.Kwint, C.Breward, J.Aynsley (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 221-222.

¹¹¹ Edwards cites Bourdieu’s, *Photography: A Middle Brow Art*, trans. S. Whiteside (Cambridge, 1990) and *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1986 [1979]). Edwards, “Photographs as Objects of Memory,” 224-5.

¹¹² Edwards, “Photographs as Objects of Memory,” 227-8.

¹¹³ Edwards, “Photographs as Objects of Memory”, 225. Susan Stewart has also published important work on this theme. See, for instance, Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

dissemination of photographs will be a central concern within Chapter 6. This chapter will respond to Mayer's characterisation of the photograph as a 'connection' between the actress and their consumer or 'audience' as it considers the part photographs of Terry played in the 'public consumption' of the actress's image.¹¹⁴

Analysis of Dress through Photographs

As this thesis will show, photographs also have the potential to provide an important insight into the clothing habits of their subjects. The work carried out by Avril Lansdell for her two books *Wedding Fashions 1860-1980* (1983) and *Fashion a la Carte, 1860-1900* (1985), for instance, demonstrated the information that cabinet cards and cartes des visite photographs can provide about nineteenth century fashion. Lansdell's work was founded upon a methodology which used dated and named photographs wherever possible. This information is not always recorded for the photographs of Terry, but cross referencing undated photographs with performance schedules, images within the press and related periodicals, and details of photographic studios records on the rear of some prints, offer a means through which to make informed deductions regarding dates.

Clare Rose's close analysis of 1,800 documented photographs of young children placed in the care of Dr. Barnardo's Homes from 1875-1900 demonstrated that these images can also shed light on the dress of those outside the exclusive section of society which featured in the *Fashion in Photographs* series.¹¹⁵ Rose's methodology, which united close reading of photographs with information drawn from periodicals, registered designs, surviving garments, related images and approaches from within social history, lays the foundation for the interdisciplinary, and detailed analysis of photographs and images of Terry

¹¹⁴ Mayer, "The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film," 83-5.

¹¹⁵ The results of this research, which was at the foundation of her doctoral research, were published in Clare Rose, *Making, Selling and Wearing Boys' Clothes in Late-Victorian England* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2010). See in particular 40-54.

undertaken throughout this thesis. Surviving photographs of Terry will be examined in relation to her contemporaries both on, and off the stage. Recurring features within garments and their 'fit' will be used to identify and document the actress's 'personal style.' The motivations behind these sartorial choices will be explored within Chapter 6 which will consider why, and how, Terry's personal aesthetic was influenced by, and deviated from, the conventional fashions of the late nineteenth century.

1.8 Interpreting dress and theatre history through letters

As Terry records in her autobiography both her diaries and many of her letters were subject to selective destruction by both Terry herself and her descendants.¹¹⁶ The thousands which survive, dating from the mid-1860s and continuing into the days leading up to Terry's death in 1928, are therefore testament to the important role this form of communication played in her personal and professional life. The largest collection of surviving correspondence was originally part of the collection at Smallhythe and remains the property of the National Trust. For practical reasons of access and conservation however these letters are now housed in the British Library. Many caches also remain in museums not only across Britain, but also America, where Terry travelled on lengthy tours during the later decades of her career.¹¹⁷

As the letters reveal Terry's correspondents were numerous and extremely varied. Of most interest to this thesis are the surviving letters between Terry and figures connected with her theatrical career. These include letters Terry sent to her costumier, Mrs. Ada

¹¹⁶ Ellen Terry, *The Story of My Life* (London: Hutchinson, 1908), Introduction.

¹¹⁷ Terry embarked on her first tour to America with the Lyceum company in 1883, Terry's seventh, and final tour to America with the company took place in 1903. Terry returned to North America again on her own lecture tour in 1910-11. Katharine Cockin who has carried out extensive research into Terry's surviving correspondence has discovered letters in numerous archives within America. These include, but are not limited to: the Fales and Berol Collection, New York University; the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC; Houghton Library, Harvard University, Massachusetts; The New York Public Library; The New York Players' Club and the University of California, Los Angeles.

Nettleship (1856-1932), love letters from her on-stage partner, Henry Irving and personal correspondence exchanged with her daughter, Edith Craig (who also made costumes for the actress and worked as a costumier and director in her own right). Unfortunately no letters have yet been traced between Terry and her costume designer, Alice Comyns-Carr (1850-1927), though Comyns-Carr's *Reminiscences* and Terry's auto-biography offer an alternative insight into their relationship.¹¹⁸ Also of note are the sketches Terry often drew in her own letters. The correspondence between Terry and her costumier, Nettleship, frequently includes drawings, or scraps of material which indicate the trimming or silhouette required and demonstrate beyond question that Terry provided firm guidance about the materials, and colours required for, not only her own costumes, but also those of other female members of the cast.¹¹⁹

Terry's letters as a source for dress history

The value of letters as a historical source has long been recognised within the field of dress history, not least because of the breadth of time periods and themes which letters can help to illuminate.¹²⁰ For Miles Lambert, when contextualised with evidence gathered from a wider body of evidence gained through court trials, pledge books and trade directories, letters offered a 'glimpse' into 'The consumption and distribution of second-

¹¹⁸ It is possible that some letters may be discovered through Katharine Cockin's continuing research into Terry's correspondence but as yet no letters exchanged between Alice Comyns-Carr and Terry have been discovered in the collections at Smallhythe, the V&A, or in the Garrick Collection. Similarly, no references could be found through searches using the online database of UK based archives, Archives Hub, "Archives Hub, at the centre of great research," *Archives Hub*. [n.d.].

¹¹⁹ One such letter, sent from Terry to Nettleship and dated 'One o'clock in the morning', includes a sketch and detailed instructions from the actress, relating to a dress required for the next day. Victoria and Albert Museum, Autographed Letters Series, (hereafter ALS), THM/14/20/TERRY/5, Letter from Terry to Nettleship, July 1895.

¹²⁰ Such texts include Clare Browne, "Mary Delany's embroidered court dress," *Mrs. Delany and her circle*, ed. M. Laird and A. Weisberg-Roberts (New Haven and London: Yale Center for British Art, 2009); Maria Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2009); Elizabeth Kramer, "Not so Japan-easy: The British Reception of Japanese Dress in the late nineteenth century," *Textile History*, 44.1 (2013): 3-24 and Clare Rose, "Evaluating the Manufacturing and Retailing Practices of H. J. & D. Nicoll through a c. 1860 Boy's Suit," *Textile History*, 45.1 (2014): 99-118.

hand clothing in northern England during the long eighteenth century.’¹²¹ Beverley Lemire’s research has demonstrated that even a single letter has the potential to contain crucial evidence regarding an individual’s relationship with their clothing, revealing personal details which are rarely recorded in more formal documents such as account books or probate inventories.¹²² For Edward Maeder the letters of costume designer Renie Conley formed part of a range of ephemera through which he was able to investigate her connection with a specific ‘fashion phenomenon’ and to illustrate (in some instances literally) the ‘excitement and fear’ Conley’s scandalous creations were provoking.¹²³ Similarly, by contextualising accounts of John Chute in letters with surviving paintings, textiles and decorative furnishings at The Vyne (a country house in Hampshire, England) Daniel Claro was able to present a revised, and very different, portrait of his subject. Letters written by, and about, John Chute, provided a means through which to assess ‘the divergence’ between historian’s accounts and primary sources’ revealing that whilst ‘historians writing since the 1940s described him [Chute] as affected, foppish, and flamboyant, Chute’s letters portray quite a different gentleman.’¹²⁴

Terry’s letters represent a crucial source of information for the thesis. Their primary, and most obvious value lies in the details they contain relating to Terry’s personal and professional life. They will also be examined with regard to the evidence this correspondence reveals about Terry’s involvement in the design and creation of the costumes worn by both herself and other members of the Lyceum and company.

¹²¹ Miles Lambert, “The consumption and distribution of second-hand clothing in northern England during the long eighteenth century” *Textile History*, 35.1 (2004):1-26.

¹²² Beverley Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade Before the Factory, 1660-1800* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 149.

¹²³ Edward F. Maeder, “Research Note: Sources for a Forgotten Episode in The History of Post-war Fashion”, *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 1.2, (1997): 215-229.

¹²⁴ Daniel Claro. “Historicizing Masculine Appearance: John Chute and the Suits at The Vyne, 1740–76,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, 9.2, (2005): 147-174, 148.

Cockin has argued that

Within the field of auto/biography the letter itself becomes a resonant text, the location of words on the page a matter for interpretation and the process of dating and situating it in the broader historical landscape is one which [...] naturally opens up a discussion of historicism and cultural materialism.¹²⁵

Recognising the strength of Cockin's argument this thesis will demonstrate that the value of such source material extends beyond its written content. The analysis of Terry's correspondence will not only consider the language employed by Terry, but also the role Terry's writing played in her self-fashioning. Nina Auerbach's 1987 biography of Terry offers a starting point for this analysis. Auerbach focussed her analysis on the different names, both nicknames, variations on Terry's own name, and the names of her most famous parts, with which the actress signs off her letters. She argues that Terry's letters show her adapting her written self to the individual with whom she is corresponding, suggesting, significantly, that the names Terry adopts 'designate her [Terry's] own mercurially shifting incarnations.'¹²⁶

For Jennifer Adams an analysis of letters must also consider their status as physical objects in which the message contained 'may be enhanced, illustrated, or even obscured by the writer's choice of paper, writing instrument, or even handwriting style.'¹²⁷ Whilst this thesis cannot encompass a full examination of the mediums encompassed within Terry's surviving correspondence, it will analyse these letters as a form of material

¹²⁵ Katharine Cockin, "Dame Ellen Terry and Edith Craig: suitable subjects or teaching" *The Higher Education Academy, English Subject Centre*, Higher Education Academy [2 October 2009].

¹²⁶ Nina Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time* (London: Dent & Sons, 1987) 209.

¹²⁷ Jennifer Adams, "Recovering a Trashed Communication Genre: Letters as Memory, Art, and Collectible" / *Residual Media*. Charles R. Acland (Ed) (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007): 185-199, 188.

culture.¹²⁸ Specific attention will be paid to the evidence which Terry's annotations offers, that particular letters were re-read and highly valued.¹²⁹

Cockin has led research into Terry's correspondence and has drawn attention to the role writing played in Terry's career.¹³⁰ Her most significant contribution to researchers studying the private correspondence of Ellen Terry are her *Collected Letters of Ellen Terry*, which brings together letters distributed across fifteen collections throughout Europe and America for the first time.¹³¹

There have been previous efforts to publish Terry's correspondence, most significant amongst them *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence* (1931). Shaw and Terry began exchanging letters in 1892, and against the wishes of some of Terry's family, a collection of these letters, edited by Christopher St John, was published after Terry's death. As Cockin notes however, St John's editorial style extended beyond the excusable standardisation of spelling and correction of punctuation and grammar, to include the removal of specific names, and the omission of some letters altogether.¹³² Cockin's volumes are not bound by same the need St John felt to omit or conceal revelatory opinions of Terry's colleagues (then still living) and can therefore restore Terry's original text and also attempt to capture her distinctive epistolary style. Galen Goodwin

¹²⁸ The forms taken by the surviving letters include photographic and plain postcards; small scraps of paper; sheets of letter paper headed with the actress's address or with those of the theatres, and also encompasses envelopes covered with stamps which indicate where and when the actress was on tour. In some instances additional items enclosed by, or sent to, Terry also survive.

¹²⁹ Love letters sent to Terry by Irving (and previously thought to have been destroyed) include dated annotation by the actress indicating when the letters may have been revisited. These letters are part of a wider archive collection in the V&A. They form part of the Ellen Terry Collection, and are catalogued under the archive reference THM/384/6. "The Ellen Terry Collection." *Archives Hub*. [n.d.].

¹³⁰ Some of the key writing Cockin has published on the correspondence can be found in Katharine Cockin, "Ellen Terry, The Ghost Writer and the Laughing Statue: The Victorian Actress, Letters and Life-writing," *Journal of European Studies*, xxxii (2003):151-63 and Katharine Cockin, "Ellen Terry and Women's Suffrage Agitation," *Gender and Politics in the Age of Letter-writing 1750-2000*, Ed. Caroline Bland and Marie Cross (London: Ashgate, 2004).

¹³¹ Cockin has brought together these letters in an eight volume series which organises the correspondence chronologically. As noted earlier, this eight volumes series entitled *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry* is being published on an annual basis by Pickering and Chatto.

¹³² Katharine Cockin, eds. *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry, Volume 3: 1894-1898* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), Introduction, xi.

Langstreth (2001) and Sally Peters (1992) have also examined the correspondence between Shaw and Terry and used these letters to re-evaluate their relationship, and, in Langstreth's case, to explore the extent to which Terry continued to 'perform' in her letters.¹³³

Cockin's edited volumes of Terry's correspondence were put together before the recent emergence of a further archive of letters which are now part of the collections of the V&A. This thesis builds upon the significant and crucial work Cockin has carried out in relation to Terry's correspondence and will also draw attention to aspects of the correspondence which are yet to be considered. An emphasis will be placed upon the information this surviving correspondence can reveal about Terry's personal and theatrical dress, as will be demonstrated in Chapters 4 and 5.

Of particular interest for this thesis is Cockin's research into Terry's correspondence with her friend and ghost-writer, Christopher St John, born Christabel Marshall (1871-1960). Cockin draws upon evidence within letters between the two women to argue that '...the act of writing-even of engaging another woman to write for her – appears to have been a means of self-performance for Terry.'¹³⁴ Terry personal and professional relationship with Marshall, in particular her decision to employ Marshall, a professional woman, as a ghost-writer, will be addressed in Chapters 6.

Ann Hardie is one of the few researchers who have considered what the surviving letters reveal about Terry's theatrical costume. Her research was inspired by a letter sent by Terry to her costume maker, Mrs. Ada Nettleship (1856-1932), in 1895. As Hardie states,

¹³³ A significant body of research has been published relating to this correspondence. This includes Galen Goodwin Langstreth, 'Epistolary Follies: Identity, Conversation and Performance in the Correspondence of Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw', *Shaw: The Annual of Bernard Shaw Studies*, 21 (2001): 27-40 and Sally Peters, 'A Paper Courtship: Bernard Shaw and Ellen Terry', *Annals of Scholarship*, 9, 3, (1992): 327-40.

¹³⁴ Christopher St. John, born Christabel Marshall (1871-1960) became a long term companion of Terry's daughter, and was also a respected playwright and author. Cockin, "Ellen Terry, The Ghost Writer and the Laughing Statue: The Victorian Actress, Letters and Life-writing", 161.

her own past career as a theatrical costumier meant that she empathised with the letter's recipient, recognising that 'Just for a minute the anonymity which shrouds the members of [her] profession opened a crack.'¹³⁵ Hardie remarks upon the extent to which costume makers and designers remain absent from theatre history and presents her own explanations for this absence.¹³⁶ Whilst a full exploration of the history and importance of theatrical costumiers lies beyond the scope of this thesis it will demonstrate the potential for further research in this area. Chapter 5 will, for instance, draw upon this correspondence between Terry and Nettleship to explore the latter's significant role in the creation of Terry's theatrical, and personal dress.

1.9 Interpreting dress and theatre history through memoirs

A further source which will be central to this thesis is Terry's autobiography, *The Story of My Life*. Published in 1908 Terry's text offers a unique and personal record of the actress's dress.¹³⁷ As with any autobiographical text, particularly one intended for publication, the scope for exaggeration, deliberate editing and invention cannot be discounted, nor should the extent of St. John's involvement in the editing and creation of the text be overlooked. Fortunately statements within the text can be substantiated or re-evaluated in the light of evidence gathered from the myriad of complementary source material, including typed and manuscript texts relating to previous attempts made by the actress to capture her 'Stray Memories.'¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Ann Hardie, "A Letter from Ellen Terry," *Costume* 33 (1999): 110-115, 110.

¹³⁶ Hardie notes that despite Nettleship's position as a highly successful costumier and dressmaker little has yet been written about this either her personal life or her professional career. She cites Michael Holroyd's biography of Nettleship's son-in-law *Augustus John: The New Biography* (London: Vintage, 1997) as the primary source of any current information about the costumier and dressmaker. See Hardie, "A Letter from Ellen Terry", 113-4.

¹³⁷ Ellen Terry, *The Story of My Life* (London: Hutchinson, 1908).

¹³⁸ This material formed part of the archive recently donated to the V&A and catalogued under the archive reference THM/384/38. It includes notes assembled under the heading 'Stray Memories' which date from the late 1890s (prior to the publication of Terry's autobiography in 1908). "The Ellen Terry Collection." *Archives Hub*. [n.d.].

By the mid to late nineteenth century it had become common practice for performers to publish their memoirs or an autobiography.¹³⁹ A wealth of biographies and autobiographies published by and about Terry and her contemporaries therefore survive.¹⁴⁰ These texts offer a particularly valuable resource for this thesis and will be examined alongside Terry's autobiography to gather further evidence about the life, and public perception of the actress. They also provide a key point of comparison for the analysis of the role autobiographical writing played Terry's construction of a theatrical legacy which cemented her status as a celebrated figure and artist.

Perry argues that as accounts which offered an insight into the "real" identities of performers, 'biographies had the potential to 'demolish as well as enhance reputations.'¹⁴¹ She suggests that many actresses were compelled to adopt 'autobiographical strategies' to take control of, and shape 'a public identity that was vulnerable to misrepresentation.' As she also notes, whether approved or condemned by their subject biographies offer a selective interpretation of a life, 'rather than holding up a mirror to [their] subject.'¹⁴² As Taylor has argued however, the careful 'editing' which is an inherent quality of autobiographical accounts can 'reflect personal flaws, vanities and anxieties.'¹⁴³ The value of Terry's autobiography is enhanced by the survival of draft manuscripts for the text. These drafts, together with letters documenting the editorial process, makes it possible to substantiate, and document decisions made when 'fashioning' this narrative of Terry's life, which could only be surmised from the final printed text.

¹³⁹ As Perry notes in *The First Actress*, the practice of publishing biographies, memoirs, diaries and other 'tales' of performers can be traced back to, and beyond, the late eighteenth century. Perry, *The First Actress*, 27-31.

¹⁴⁰ Key examples include Sarah Bernhardt, *My Double Life. Memoirs of Sarah Bernhardt. With many portraits and illustrations* (London, William Heinemann, 1907); Alice Comyns Carr, *Mrs. J. Comyns Carr's Reminiscences* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1926); Dame Madge Kendal, *Dame Madge Kendal by Herself* (London: John Murray, 1933) and Lillie Langtry, *The Days I Knew* (London: Hutchinson, 1925).

¹⁴¹ Perry, *The First Actresses*, 27, 28.

¹⁴² Perry, *The First Actresses*, 28, 31.

¹⁴³ Lou Taylor, *Establishing Dress History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) 99.

Autobiographical writing also has the potential to illuminate wider themes, as can be seen in Morag Martin's use of the memoirs of Giacomo Casanova de Seingalt (1725–1798) and Mlle. Clairon (1723– 1803), an actress at the Comédie Française, as a vehicle through which to explore the impact of the move towards neo-classical simplicity in late eighteenth century France.¹⁴⁴ For Julia Emberley, autobiographies were part of a wider body of texts by female writers through which she explored 'the complexities of fashion and its various meanings in everyday life'. These texts provided Emberley with a way of 'reading objects in everyday life in order to negotiate their meanings and values for subjective and aesthetic experience'.¹⁴⁵ This element of Terry's autobiography will be fundamental to the discussion of Terry's relationship with her dress in Chapters 5 and 6.

The value of auto/biography in '*Interpreting the Theatrical Past*' was highlighted by Thomas Postlewait (1989).¹⁴⁶ His contribution to a volume of essays exploring 'The Historiography of Performance' identifies specific challenges encountered in drawing evidence from publications where

not only can no separation be established between face and mask, presence and absence, private and public personality, life and art, but also that these dualisms are too neat because they split identity, documents, and historical conditions in ways that are reductive¹⁴⁷

Such dualisms are inescapable in any effort to trace the 'private self' of a performer. Terry's autobiography must be therefore approached as a carefully edited narrative of the

¹⁴⁴ Morag Martin, Casanova and Mlle Clairon: Painting the Face in a World of Natural Fashion. *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, Volume 7, Number 1 (2003): 57-77.

¹⁴⁵ Julia Emberley, "Material Fictions of Desire," *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture*, Volume 11, Number 4 (2007): 463-481.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Postlewait, "Autobiography and Theatre History," *Interpreting the Theatrical Past: Essays in the Historiography of Performance*, ed. Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1989) 248-272.

¹⁴⁷ Postlewait, "Autobiography and Theatre History", 250.

actress's life, rather than a true, complete, or reliable, account. The fact however, that it is possible to re-evaluate the 'self' Terry's presents to her readers in the light of evidence gathered from the actress's private correspondence and information from related sources about the 'true' nature of her off-stage life, makes a significant difference to the manner in which this text can be read and used. As Chapter 6 will show therefore, Terry's autobiography provides an important insight into the 'private self' she sought to construct for her audience.

1.10 Interpreting dress and theatre history through extant garments

As Chapter 2 will discuss, the status of extant garments as an important source for research is now firmly established within dress history. What has yet to be fully appreciated however, is the contribution that extant theatre costumes can make to our understanding of the history of theatre and to the individual self-fashioning of performers. This thesis builds upon existing work with extant garments to present a new methodology specifically tailored to the examination and analysis of theatre costumes. The section which follows will outline the methodological approaches upon which this new methodology will be founded. It will also introduce some of the theoretical approaches which are drawn upon to address the specific challenges presented by this unique category of garments.

'The clothes themselves'

Kate Strasdin's recent research into Alexandra, Princess of Wales (1844-1925) has demonstrated the contribution an examination of extant garments can make to the understanding of an individual's approach to dress. Strasdin was able to gather information about the psychological factors which impacted on Alexandra's approach to dress through private journals, memoirs, letters and a rich range of images. It was her

close analysis of surviving garments however, which revealed key details about the physicality of the Princess. Most importantly that garments worn by Alexandra after suffering from rheumatic fever in 1867 were deliberately designed to ‘normalise’ the Princess’s silhouette and conceal the curvature of her spine which had resulted from her illness. The evidence obtained from ‘the clothes themselves’ offered Strasdin an entirely new insight into the physiological factors which influenced the design and structure of Alexandra’s garments. On the basis of this information Strasdin was able to reveal, and understand, a ‘clothing strategy which went beyond the dictates of fashion alone.’¹⁴⁸

The importance of ‘context’

Terry’s physicality was one of many factors which influenced the ‘clothing strategy’ she adopted both on and off the stage. Miller has highlighted the importance of the relationship between ‘clothing’ and ‘the body.’¹⁴⁹ His observation is particularly relevant to the analysis of extant theatre costumes, which must allow for the degree to which these garments are shaped by the physicality of both their original wearer(s) and the performance in which they were used. As this thesis will show however, this is only one of several factors which need to be considered when examining garments created for, and used in, stage performance.

The research Walter carried out into the relationship between actor-managers and dress, establishes important elements of the specific approaches required for analysis of theatrical costumes. Her close examination of the costumes Henry Irving wore as Charles I in 1873, exposed the distinction between the contemporary perception of his costumes

¹⁴⁸ Kate Strasdin, “Fashioning Alexandra: A Royal Approach to Style 1863-1910),” *Costume* 47.2 (2013):180-197, 181.

¹⁴⁹ As Miller notes Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: fashion, dress, and modern social theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000) and Leigh Summer, *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset* (Oxford: Berg, 2001) have also begun to explore this theme. Küchler and Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture*, 4.

as an exact ‘reproduction of Van Dyck’s portraits of Charles I’, and the true nature of garments created to convey ‘[...]an overall impression of Van Dyck in Action.’¹⁵⁰ Walter’s research demonstrates the importance of recognising the ‘context specificity of theatre costume.’¹⁵¹ As she notes, and as Chapter 4 will discuss, these are garments which are designed to be ‘read’ from a distance, under stage lighting.¹⁵² The ‘context’ is not limited to the specific physical space for which theatrical costumes are created however, but extends to encompass the factors which shape their public reception. Drawing upon the earlier work of Bert O. States and Martin Meisel, Walter suggests that the theatrical production should be viewed as ‘[...] a transaction of a collaboration between actors and audience’ in which, as Meisel argued, the success of the production, and its costumes, depends upon the ability to ‘negotiate an audience’s expectations.’¹⁵³ She uses her analysis of Irving’s costumes to demonstrate that when working with historic theatrical costumes researchers must consider ‘[...] not only the setting of the play itself but the experiences and cultural contexts which framed the expectations of its particular audience [...]’¹⁵⁴ The significance of the artistic and social context within which Terry and her costumes operated will be addressed in Chapter 3 and 6 of this thesis, and will be made apparent in the close analysis of Terry’s costumes undertaken in Chapters 4 and 5.

The Missing ‘Costumes’

Barbara Hodgdon is one of the few theatre historians whose work does offer a crucial illustration of the significance and ‘emotional resonance’ of surviving costumes as

¹⁵⁰ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage,” 167, 174.

¹⁵¹ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage,” 163.

¹⁵² Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage,” 173.

¹⁵³ Walter draws specifically on Martin Meisel, “The Role of the Audience,” *How Plays Work: Reading and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 96-128 and Bert O States, “The Actor’s Presence: Three Phenomenal Modes,” *Acting (Re) Considered*, ed. Phillip B. Zarrilli, (London: Routledge, 2002), 23-39. See Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action,” 163.

¹⁵⁴ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage,” 163.

physical objects.¹⁵⁵ Hodgdon's material culture approach to analysis conveys not only 'the thrill' 'of touching a costume's fabric' but also the importance of 'feeling its weight and drape in one's hand [...]'¹⁵⁶

She positions costumes as part of a research process she describes as a 'recontextualisation from surviving remains,' which draws together individual 'fragments' to "'push" the aura of theater [sic] into re-being, into consciousness.'¹⁵⁷ Her research demonstrates the importance of uniting a range of source material when seeking to 'reconstruct' a performance. As she shows, surviving theatre costumes can reveal details not apparent in black and white images, the colours of these garments 'tinting, toning and reanimating the photograph[s].'¹⁵⁸

Building upon Hodgdon's work, Chapter 5 will draw upon examples of extant costumes worn by Terry, contextualised with images and written sources to address, in depth, the absence of theatrical costume from both dress and theatre history.

1.11 'Fashioning' a Methodology

Multiple Identities

Researchers seeking to 'interpret' theatrical costumes must also contend with the number of 'associations' and 'identities' a costume accumulates during a life cycle that often includes not only damage, repair and alteration, but potentially the transfer to different performers and productions over time. A recognised framework has yet to be proffered for documenting and analysing the complex life history of theatrical costumes.

¹⁵⁵ Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives," 135-168.

¹⁵⁶ Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives," 140.

¹⁵⁷ Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives," 138-9. See also Barbara Hodgdon. 'Photography, Theatre, Mnemonics; or, Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Still'. *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History*. Ed. William B. Worthen and Peter Holland. (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

¹⁵⁸ Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives," 140.

This thesis draws upon theoretical approaches outlined by Igor Kopytoff, in particular his concept of ‘object biographies’ to examine and delineate these ‘multiple identities.’¹⁵⁹ Dinah Eastop is amongst those who have demonstrated the manner in which Kopytoff’s theories have been successfully employed within material culture to analyse an ‘object’s significance.’¹⁶⁰ Eastop notes that it is possible to construct two types of ‘object biography’. The first, ‘a biography constructed for a specific object’, the second, ‘a biography constructed for a type of object.’¹⁶¹ Eastop demonstrates the implications of Kopytoff’s methodology for conservators and curators determining appropriate treatments for objects which exhibit evidence of several stages in their ‘life.’ Her analysis exposes the degree to which ‘Consideration of the garment’s technological and cultural biography allows the different values attributed to these ‘life stages’ to be brought into sharper focus.’¹⁶² Within her article, Eastop references the work of Verity Wilson, who, as she notes, employed Kopytoff to examine the ‘life histories’ of a specific type of textile. For Wilson, Kopytoff offered a model through which to examine the shifting ‘identities’ of Chinese Dragon Robes transferred from their traditional Chinese context, to North American and European museums.¹⁶³

Inspired by Eastop and Wilson’s use of ‘Kopytoff’s idea of object biographies’ as a tool for ‘recording and preserving objects in museum collections’ this investigation will apply Kopytoff’s biographical mode of analysis to theatrical costume.¹⁶⁴ The case studies

¹⁵⁹ Igor Kopytoff, “The cultural biography of things: commoditization as a process.” *The Social Life of Things Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. A. Appadurai. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1986] 2006) 64-91.

¹⁶⁰ See Dinah Eastop, “The biography of objects: a tool for analysing an object’s significance,” *International workshop on flexible materials in Asian collections: Exchange of approaches to conservation, presentation and use* (Kuala Lumpur: Department of Museums and Antiquities, 2003): 100-113 and Dinah Eastop “Conservation as Material Culture,” *Handbook of Material Culture*, ed. Christopher Tilley et al (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2006): 516-533.

¹⁶¹ Eastop, “The biography of objects: a tool for analysing an object’s significance,” 102.

¹⁶² Eastop, “The biography of objects: a tool for analysing an object’s significance,” 107.

¹⁶³ Verity Wilson, “Studio and Soiree: Chinese Textiles in Europe and America, 1850 and Present,” in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, ed. Ruth Phillips and Christopher Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999): 229-242.

¹⁶⁴ Eastop, “The biography of objects: a tool for analysing an object’s significance,” 100.

discussed in Chapter 5 will demonstrate that Kopytoff's biographical approach to analysis can be employed to document both the 'typical biography' and the 'actual' biography of surviving costumes.¹⁶⁵ These case studies will also illustrate the degree to which several layers of history can be simultaneously present within one object, and explore the means through which it might be possible to communicate this complex story within a single, coherent, narrative.

Chains of meanings

The semiotic approach to analysis used by Susan Pearce to explore the 'chain of meanings' that individual objects accumulate over time will be used in conjunction with, and offers a potential alternative to, Kopytoff's concept of 'object biographies.'¹⁶⁶ Pearce demonstrated this approach through an infantry soldier's red jacket, worn at the battle of Waterloo, and now at the *National Army Museum* in Belgium. She explores the layers of both symbolic and historical meaning which this jacket has accumulated over time. As a result, Pearce argues, the jacket has become a 'message-bearing entity, acting in relationship to Waterloo as both an intrinsic sign and as a metaphorical symbol, which is capable of a very large range of interpretations.'¹⁶⁷ As Pearce demonstrates, 'the dynamic process of interpretation and reinterpretation... extends far beyond the mere perception of what the object is.' It is therefore a 'creative' and 'active' process in which, whilst the object has a fixed form, its interpretation and reinterpretation is almost limitless.¹⁶⁸ She argues that, in the analysis of any object, it is essential to remain conscious of the range of 'meanings' that this the object has already accumulated; has the potential to

¹⁶⁵ Igor Kopytoff, "The cultural biography of things," 67-9.

¹⁶⁶ Pearce adopts a technical mode of analysis (which draws upon the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, Roland Barthes and J.W. Leach) to delineate the objective system of signs and signifiers within which the jacket operates. Susan Pearce, "Objects as meaning; or narrating the past," *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994) 19-29, 21-23, 28.

¹⁶⁷ Pearce, "Objects as meaning; or narrating the past," 21.

¹⁶⁸ Pearce, "Objects as meaning; or narrating the past," 26-27.

accumulate; and to which you, as 'interpreter', will construct in the process of interpretation. Pearce's 'chains of meanings' offer a model which Chapter 5 will employ to address and articulate the changing status and 'meaning' of Terry's theatrical costumes as they moved from their initial status as working garments, to their current status as items of 'historical significance.'

1.12 - Conclusion

This chapter has begun to explore the challenges inherent in the analysis of historic theatre costume and has demonstrated the range of source material available for this research. Although both theatre and dress historians have begun to engage with theatre costume as a source for research, with the exception of Hodgdon and Walter, few researchers have considered the kind of evidence that can be amassed through physical engagement with surviving costumes. The object based approach to research which is fundamental to this thesis will demonstrate the importance and value of undertaking a close reading of such garments.

As this thesis will show, Terry offers an ideal case study through which to illustrate significant themes which historic dress and extant theatrical costume can illuminate. Having made apparent the wide range of material culture that survives in relation to Terry and her career, the next chapter will introduce the themes which this material culture will be employed to illuminate. It will also indicate how the thesis will engage with, and build upon, existing literature relating to: the actress; Aestheticism; self-fashioning and theatre costumes.

By uniting existing critical theory and established methodology within dress, material culture, and theatre history, this thesis will create a new methodology for the analysis of theatrical costume.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the critical debates which will be at the core of the thesis and illustrates how the analysis of primary material, in particular evidence relating to Terry's dress, will be situated within existing theoretical approaches.

Whilst the career and life of Ellen Terry are by no means absent from theatrical record, the significant role that dress played in Terry's self-fashioning, has been largely overlooked within recent scholarship. Valerie Cumming is one of the only figures to have published work which specifically addresses the costumes worn by Terry and considers the significance of 'Costume' within the Lyceum productions. She also remains one of the few researchers to have explored the evidence Terry's personal dress and theatrical costumes can provide regarding her connection with the Aesthetic movement.¹ Cumming's initial research must therefore be credited with laying the foundation for the detailed examination of Terry's dress and costumes undertaken in this thesis.²

Whilst this chapter draws upon this, and other existing research into Terry, it also sets out further interdisciplinary methodologies which will be employed in a re-evaluation of Terry's historical and contemporary significance both as a woman, and as a performer in her own right. It will focus on illuminating overlooked discussions about Terry's career, in particular her position as an icon of the Aesthetic movement and the significant role dress played in establishing her professional and public identity. This is the first study to undertake a detailed and complete analysis of the actress's personal and theatrical dress and to unite material across existing collections to achieve this.

¹ Valerie Cumming, "Ellen Terry: An aesthetic actress and her clothing" *Costume* 21 (1987): 67-74

² Valerie Cumming, "Macbeth at the Lyceum" *Costume* 12 (1978): 53-63 and "First Knight: Henry Irving, 1838-1905" *Costume* 40 (2006): 67-71.

This chapter will demonstrate that Terry was undeniably an exceptional figure in British theatre and society who offers an ideal vehicle through which to advance our understanding of the history of the actress and the development of theatrical costume. As this chapter explains, Terry will be employed as a case study through which to develop critical approaches to the following issues: the relationship between dress and theatre costume during this period; self-fashioning through dress; celebrity and the construction of 'public' and 'private' selves in relation to the nineteenth century actress and, crucially, establishing a methodology for the study of theatrical costume.

Throughout the thesis the garments worn by the actress, in particular Terry's theatre costumes, will provide both the starting point, and the evidence through which, to address these critical debates. This thesis argues that theatre costume represents a separate and specific category of clothing and theatrical ephemera. The distinctive characteristics and significance of theatre costumes, both as garments and source material, will be introduced in the conclusion of the chapter. This initial discussion will lay the foundations for Chapters 4 and 5, in which close analysis of Terry's theatre costumes will demonstrate the practical and theoretical applications of the methodology this thesis presents for the study of theatrical costume.

2.2 Key Context

Biographies of Terry

This thesis will re-examine Terry's life and career from a self-consciously twenty-first century, revisionist perspective. It will demonstrate the agency Terry showed in fashioning her personal and professional identity, both during her lifetime, and after her death. A starting point for this is an assessment of the biographies written about the actress from 1902 onwards. The first such biography was published by T. Edgar Pemberton in

1902, and offered a romanticised version of Terry's life entitled *Ellen Terry and Her Sisters*.³ Pemberton adopts an elegiac tone and anecdotal approach throughout the book and, despite drawing information from both Terry's own brief account of her early life, published under the title *Stray Memories* in *The New Review* in 1891, and corresponding with the actress during the drafting of his text, his narrative contains several factual errors.⁴

Six years after Pemberton's biography was published, Terry produced her own account of her life and career in her autobiography, *The Story of My Life* (1908) which will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6. It was the publication of a collection of the letters exchanged between the actress and the playwright George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) in 1930 however, to which Terry's son, Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966) attributed his reluctant decision to offer his own account of her life. Craig's biography of Terry, entitled *Ellen Terry and her secret self* (1931) deliberately set out to produce a counter narrative to that offered in the edited letters and to reveal 'that little Nelly who was my mother-her secret self-[...] a very small person, not a famous person-the little mother – who fought quietly and magnificently for fifty years [...]'⁵ At the commencement of his text Gordon Craig confidently declared that the 'Nelly' he describes was 'someone unknown to all but her father and mother, sisters and brothers, my father and myself.'⁶ It was perhaps his additional observation that, 'My sister never knew her' and 'preferred to cling to the more

³ An amateur actor, and playwright Pemberton had many connections within theatrical circles and this was not Pemberton's only biography of a theatrical performer. Pemberton's subjects also included the comic actor Edward Askew Sothem (1826-1881); a joint biography of William Kendal (1843-1917) and his wife Madge Kendal (1848-1935); the dramatist Thomas William Robertson (1829-1871); the actor/manager John Hare (1844-1921) and the actor/manager Sir Charles Wyndham (1837-1919). These texts were published in 1889, 1891, 1892, 1895 and 1905, respectively. See also T. Edgar Pemberton, *Ellen Terry and Her Sisters* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1902).

⁴ A letter, sent from Terry to Pemberton in July 1901 survives in the collection of Terry's letters now held in the British Library. Pemberton himself also refers to Terry's account of her early life, '*Stray Memories*,' in the introduction to his own biography of the actress. Pemberton, *Ellen Terry and Her Sisters*, 24. Pemberton also describes his own memories of seeing Terry play the Duke of York aged about 6, however this is a story Terry denied in her own autobiography in 1908. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 6.

⁵ Edward Gordon Craig, 'Foreword,' *Ellen Terry and her secret self* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co, 1931), n.p.

⁶ Gordon Craig, *Ellen Terry and her secret self*, n.p.

solid fabric, the famous Ellen Terry,' together with the combative stance of the text, which provoked the actress's daughter, Edith Craig (1869-1947) to produce a revised version of the Terry's own autobiography. Jointly edited with her partner, Christopher St. John, and including substantial notes and commentary from them both, their account, *Ellen Terry's Memoirs* was published in 1932.⁷ They emphasised the fact that 'very few alterations had been made in the original text' and that the 'amplified' and 'complete' narrative presented was founded upon evidence gathered from Terry's letters, diaries and notebooks.⁸ Their stated aim was to provide an 'accurate record of the last years and death of Ellen Terry' which corrected the 'inaccuracies' of Gordon Craig's account and present[ed] 'Ellen Terry [as] the best authority on Ellen Terry.'⁹

This sibling contest over the true narrative of Terry's life was complicated further by the publication of *A Pride of Terrys* by Marguerite Steen (1962). Steen was a close friend of the actress, and she offered what Nina Auerbach, in her 1987 biography of Terry, described as 'shrewd, if gossipy and partisan' account of the life of both Terry and her siblings.¹⁰ Many of the anecdotes Steen related are open to question but her biography did not, as its author freely confessed, aspire to perfection. Instead it offered 'the picture of a great theatrical family, the royalty of the English theatre' in a text informed by a personal relationship with the Terry, her family and the theatre.¹¹

⁷ Dame Ellen Terry, Edith Craig and Christopher St. John, eds., *Ellen Terry's Memoirs: With a Preface, Notes and Additional Biographical Chapters by Edith Craig & Christopher St. John* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1933).

⁸ Terry, Craig and St. John, eds., *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, v.

⁹ Terry, Craig and St. John, eds., *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, xi.

¹⁰ Marguerite Steen, *A Pride of Terrys: Family Sag*. (London: Longmans, 1962). In her prefatory note, for instance, Steen notes that Terry's autobiography was 'ghosted' by Christopher St. John, a fact not widely publicised or openly admitted upon its publication. Nina Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time* (London: Dent & Sons, 1987) 28.

¹¹ Joy Melville, in her biography of Terry notes that Steen's version of the circumstances which surrounded Terry's romance and elopement with Edward William Godwin (1833-1886), differs from that offered by Terry's friend, the couturier Lucile, Lady Duff Gordon (1863-1935). Joy Melville, *Ellen and Edy: A Biography of Ellen Terry and Her Daughter, Edith Craig, 1847-1947* (London: Pandora, 1987), 95. See also Steen, *A Pride of Terrys: Family Saga*, xi. See Steen, *A Pride of Terrys: Family Saga*, xi-xii.

Roger Manvell's *Ellen Terry: A Biography* (1968) claimed to be the 'first-full scale biography' of Terry.¹² This text certainly offers the most reliable account of the actress's career since Terry's own biography in 1908, drawing upon previous biographies, personal conversations with Terry's descendants and some archival material for its narrative.¹³ Yet Manvell also returns repeatedly to his exploration of Terry's 'own essential nature,' her feminine qualities, in particular, her capacity for, and susceptibility to, love, and the degree to which her career was shaped by the great men she encountered.¹⁴ As a result, in Manvell's account, Terry's private self remains obscured by the pre-existing figure of a beautiful, if flawed, actress who, largely through her partnership with Henry Irving, became a magnificent object of public adoration.¹⁵

Three further biographies of Terry were published in the mid to late 1980s, and writers such as Nina Auerbach, strove to highlight and raise awareness of a woman whose potential and ambition was restrained by her position as 'Irving's obedient subordinate.'¹⁶ In Auerbach's view Terry's willingness to submit to 'Irving's reign', 'both obstructed and inspired a woman-centered theatre.' She does however acknowledge moments of 'whispered challenge' on the part of the actress, and draws attention to the manner in which Terry was able to exploit the 'love' she inspired in both friends and the public to manipulate those around her.¹⁷ The crucial point at which Auerbach's account of Terry's life expands beyond previous biographies, is in its investigation of the 'mobile and opaque

¹² Roger Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography* (Heinemann: London, 1968), flyleaf, n.p.

¹³ Significantly Manvell's research uncovered the first proof, in the Register of births for the district of St Johns and St Michaels Coventry, that Terry was born, not in 1848 as was previously believed, but in 1847. Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography*, notes, n.p., vi.

¹⁴ Manvell touches upon Terry's 'nature' repeatedly in his text. Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography*, 79, 91, 136-7. Two of the ten chapters, named after men with whom Terry was connected, and are entitled 'Godwin' and 'Shaw.' Similarly, two more of the remaining eight chapters, centre upon her father, Benjamin Terry (1818-1896), and her on stage partner, Henry Irving.

¹⁵ Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography*, flyleaf (n.p.), 288, 328-329.

¹⁶ Nina Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time* (London: Dent & Sons, 1987), 11. Auerbach has also published subsequent work on the actress, including Nina Auerbach, 'Perturbed Spirits: Victorian Actors and Immortality', *Victorian Shakespeare: Vol. 1, Theatre, Drama, Performance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

¹⁷ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 9-11.

self beneath [Terry's] roles' and the steps Auerbach takes to recover these 'suppressed identities.'¹⁸ Auerbach presents Terry as a woman eternally performing as she 'tried to become what others imagined.' The 'many parts' which Terry adopted during her lifetime were all, Auerbach suggests, 'performances of womanliness' which do not transcend, or threaten, the values of her age but instead 'make her its true abstract and brief chronicle.'¹⁹ Chapter 6 of this thesis will engage directly with Auerbach's characterisation of Terry as a woman adopting multiple roles to conciliate a society subject to 'unnerving tension between incarnate power and "incarnate womanhood" and which by definition renounced power and ego.'²⁰ Chapter 6 will also reassess Auerbach's positioning of Terry as, forever 'shackled' to a composite identity as 'Henry Irving's stage wife, and Ophelia to his celebrated Hamlet.'²¹

Joy Melville's joint biography of Terry and her daughter, *Ellen and Edy: A Biography of Ellen Terry and Her Daughter, Edith Craig, 1847-1947*, published the same year as Auerbach's account, offers a further perspective on Terry. For Melville, Terry was an 'enigma', an actress with two sides, one 'the talented professional', the other 'frivolous', 'unpunctual' and frequently 'collapsing with laughter on stage.' A further complication, as Melville relates, was that 'the actress in [Terry] warred with the woman,' and her desire for domesticity - playing 'a dutiful Victorian wife,' was overcome by the need for money, and her inherent 'unconventionality' which 'kept bursting through.'²²

As importantly, Melville's text also signalled an increased interest in Terry's daughter, Edith Craig. The contribution to theatre history made by Craig, a costumier and director in her own right, has long been overshadowed by that of her brother, Edward Gordon

¹⁸ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 14-5.

¹⁹ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 16-7.

²⁰ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 23.

²¹ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 175.

²² Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, xiii-xiv.

Craig.²³ Melville has ‘deliberately given Edy’s brother [...] a lesser place in this book,’ focussing her attention on the interdependence between the mother and daughter. Melville’s biography of Terry is the first to fully acknowledge the significance of Craig, not only her leading role in Terry’s life, but as a figure worthy of biography in her own right.²⁴

Both Melville and Auerbach’s interest in retelling Terry’s history are in line with a contemporary shift towards recovering ‘Women’s History’ across a wide range of disciplines. Though written two years after Melville and Auerbach published their revised accounts of Terry’s life, David Cheshire’s *Portrait of Ellen Terry*, (1989) returns to the established narrative and presentation of the actress as ‘an attractive but erratic charmer.’²⁵ As with Manvell’s biography, the chapters are shaped around the male figures with whom Terry was associated, with five of the eight chapters focusing on her interaction with these men.²⁶ Frustratingly, Cheshire offers no formal references for the information presented in his text.²⁷ The primary value of this biography therefore lies not in the text, but in the images which it contains. As Cheshire records in his ‘Acknowledgements,’ many of these were obtained through Edward Craig (Terry’s grandson) and were therefore not included in previously published sources. Of particular

²³ The controversial and ground breaking experimentation with light and set design initiated by Terry’s son has established the reputation of Gordon Craig. Gordon Craig remains a revered figure within both theatre history and contemporary theatre design. A case in point is the annual Gordon Craig lecture at Central School of Speech and Drama, together with the 2010 exhibition ‘Space and Light’ at the Victoria & Albert Museum which focused specifically on the designer and director.

²⁴ This challenge has been taken up by Katharine Cockin who, as discussed in Chapter 1, continues to publish research focussing specifically on Craig, her career, and her contribution to the movement for Women’s Suffrage. See, for instance, Katharine Cockin, *Edith Craig (1869-1947): Dramatic Lives* (London: Cassell, 1998) and *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage: The Pioneer Players 1911-25* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001). Another figure who has made a notable contribution to the existing research on Edith Craig is Roberta Gandolfi. A case in point being her biography of Craig, *La Prima Regista: Edith Craig, Fra Rivoluzione Della Scena E Cultura Delle Donne* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2003).

²⁵ David Cheshire, *Portrait of Ellen Terry* (Oxford: Amber lane Press, 1989), 7.

²⁶ See ‘Contents’ list, in which the chapter titles include: ‘G.F.Watts’; ‘E.W.Godwin’; ‘Irving and the Lyceum’; ‘Ellen and Henry and ‘Craig’, Shaw and a Jubilee’. Cheshire, *Portrait of Ellen Terry*, 5.

²⁷ Cheshire confidently records Terry’s height as ‘about 5ft 6ins’ and suggests that her ‘long dresses were used to accentuate her height’ but includes no reference to the source of this information. Cheshire, *Portrait of Ellen Terry*, 12.

value for this thesis are the images which show moments early in Terry's career, and the private sketches made of Terry by her associates.²⁸

Michael Holroyd's 2010 publication *A Strange Eventful History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving and their Remarkable Families*, which presented a joint biography of Terry, Irving, and the children of both performers, signalled a similar return to traditional portrayals of Terry. It presented her as a woman 'who loved people being in love with her,' who had 'little interest in theatre administration' and was therefore inclined to 'give way' to Irving.²⁹ Similarly whilst Holroyd acknowledges the importance of Terry's 'aesthetic sense,' he also observes that 'Sometimes her inappropriate sweetness, her sheer playfulness, suggested she was more concerned with her dresses than with Shakespeare's lines.'³⁰ The disregard for the significant role that costume played in Lyceum productions, demonstrated in Holroyd's words, is something that this thesis will address directly.

A Victorian Actress?

By the time of her death in 1928, Terry was recognised as 'the most popular and universally revered English actress of her time,' her contribution to the arts having received official recognition three years earlier, when, in 1925, she became only the second actress to be made a Dame of the British Empire.³¹

Terry was, as T.C. Davis has noted, exceptional and at the peak of her career at the Lyceum theatre, she earned substantially more than her contemporaries. The 'financial independence- combined with their sexual freedom' of these star actresses was Mary

²⁸ These include a photograph from 1859 which shows Terry with the cropped hair and 'peg-trousers' adopted for her role as Hector in *Home for the Holidays* and informal sketches of the actress by E.W. Godwin. Cheshire, *Portrait of Ellen Terry*, 19.

²⁹ Michael Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving and their Remarkable Families* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2010) 86 and 121.

³⁰ Holroyd, *Strange Eventful History*, 122, 186.

³¹ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as working women*, 5.

Luckhurst and Jane Moody argue, ‘unprecedented.’³² As Chapter 3 will show however, Terry, though distinguished by her success and prominence within society, was still subject to the same social and cultural pressures as her male and female contemporaries. As such Terry’s life and career offer a route through which to explore the developments in the acting profession and artistic world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and their impact within society as a whole.

As Terry herself anticipated, her legacy has suffered from her characterisation as a ‘Victorian Actress of the old school.’³³ This stems in part from her long association with the elaborate and somewhat conservative productions presented at the Lyceum. This perceived conservatism is often contrasted with the independent and progressive careers of Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) and Elenora Duse (1858-1924), as was the case in John Stokes, Michael Booth, and Susan Bassnett’s joint authored publication, *Bernhardt, Terry, Duse: The Actress in Her Time* (1988).³⁴ Marshall has attributed Terry’s loss of status in comparison to actresses such as Duse and Bernhardt, to the demise of ‘traditional’ drama upon the advent of the plays of Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) and the ‘New Woman’ they portrayed. She suggests that

In this duel between these two actresses, Ellen Terry was displaced as the leading female performer in London [...] Terry [was] immersed in an aesthetic which was coming to seem outdated [...] the final Victorian practitioner of a national

³² As Luckhurst and Moody note, actresses such as Terry also ‘made considerably more money than successful women novelists.’ Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody, eds., “Introduction: The Singularity of Theatrical Celebrity,” *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 8.

³³ In her autobiography Terry anticipates and seeks to counter this characterisation. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 312.

³⁴ John Stokes, Michael Booth and Susan Bennett, *Bernhardt, Terry, Duse: The Actress in her time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

tradition which Bernhardt and Duse had sidestepped, bringing their own repertoire to the English stage [...] ³⁵

Significantly however, Marshall uses this a starting point from which to challenge Terry's previous confinement within the nineteenth century. Her examination of the 'ways in which Terry negotiated the end-of-the-century conditions affecting Shakespearean productions' offers a crucial starting point for the reappraisal which will take place within this thesis. For Marshall, and for Chapter 6, Terry's writings on Shakespeare, are central to an examination of the actress's efforts to fashion a new role for herself 'beyond the confines of the spectacular Lyceum stage' and in the later years of her life. ³⁶

Another figure whose research considers Terry as an autonomous woman, and has begun to explore the actress' legacy beyond the Lyceum Theatre, is Katharine Cockin.³⁷ Cockin's focus on the later years of Terry's career is prompted in part by her interest in recovering of the history of Terry's daughter, and the theatrical organisation Craig managed, 'The Pioneer Players.' Her research sheds light on Terry's connection with the Suffrage Movement, an important aspect of her life which has received little attention to date and will be touched upon in Chapter 6.³⁸

Drawing upon the narratives of Terry's life already presented in these biographies, this thesis will seek to offer a new biography of the actress. The focus in this instance will be upon exposing previously under-explored elements of Terry's success and significance, in particular her role as a leading figure within the Aesthetic movement. Emphasis will

³⁵ Marshall, "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress," 69.

³⁶ Marshall, "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress," 154.

³⁷ Katharine Cockin. "Ellen Terry and Henry Irving: A Working Partnership", *Henry Irving: a re-evaluation of the pre-eminent Victorian actor-manager*, ed. Richard Foulkes (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008) 37-48.

³⁸ Cockin explores Terry's connection with the Suffrage Movement and also her characterisation as a 'Freewoman' by the journal of the same name in 1911. See: Katharine Cockin, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage: The Pioneer Players 1911-25* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 7-9. Joy Melville, also refers to Terry's self-designation as a 'suffragette.' Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 222

be placed on the key part that the garments worn by the actress, both on and off the stage, played in cementing her position within the Aesthetic movement and in fashioning her identity as a celebrated actress who understood the ‘art of theatre.’

2.3 An Icon of Aestheticism

As this thesis will show Ellen Terry’s public and private personas were founded upon her adoption of Aesthetic dress and her prominent position within the Aesthetic movement. As the first investigation to fully explore this aspect of Terry’s professional and personal life, it is essential that Terry’s dress is explored within the wider context of the Aesthetic movement.

‘The Cult of Beauty’

The history and the impact of the Aesthetic movement is not a new topic for historical enquiry. An early writer on the theme was William Gaunt in *The Aesthetic Adventure* (1945). Gaunt’s text offered useful contextual information regarding the movement and a detailed account of the development and trajectory of its aims and exponents over the course of the 1870s, 1880s and 1890s.³⁹ Amongst the most notable recent contributions to the field is the book created to accompany the 2011 exhibition at the *Victoria & Albert Museum, The Cult of Beauty* curated by Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle Orr. The comprehensive collection of essays brought together in Calloway and Orr’s edited collection *The Cult of Beauty* (2011) makes apparent the impact of the Aesthetic movement on art, architecture and interior design between circa 1870 and 1900. They also draw attention to the range of material evidence which survives in paintings, period

³⁹ William Gaunt, *The Aesthetic Adventure* (London: Sphere Books Ltd, 1945 [Cardinal Edition, 1975]). The arrest and trial of Wilde in 1895 is widely recognised as the point at which the decline of the movement becomes inevitable. This is a view put forward by Lionel Lambourne in *The Aesthetic movement*, who suggests this decline was cemented by the early death in 1898 of Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898), an artist lauded by Aesthetes throughout the 1890s. Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic movement*, (London: Phaidon, 1996), 226.

publications and caricatures, together with furniture, wallpaper, metalwork, ceramics, jewellery and textiles.⁴⁰

In *Art for Art's Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (2007) Elizabeth Prettejohn traces the origins of the actual term, 'Aestheticism' and the idea of a coherent movement of this kind to circa 1868, when the phrase 'Art for Art's sake' (translated from Gautier's '*L'Art por L'Art*'), first began to be applied to artists and their work.⁴¹ This date is of particular significance to this thesis as it confirms that Terry was living and working with one of the leading exponents of both Aestheticism and Aesthetic dress, Edward William Godwin (1833-1886), throughout the early phases of the Aesthetic movement (between 1868 and 1875).

Whilst Prettejohn's research focuses on the place of 'Art' within Aestheticism, she notes that the movement encompassed the full range of visual arts and that its influence was felt in dress and interior décor, as well as on the subject matter and approach to painting adopted by its followers.⁴² As Lionel Lambourne comments in *The Aesthetic Movement* (1996) this quest for a balance between decoration and attire resulted in a movement 'deeply concerned with the visual arts, valuing the frame as much as the picture, placing much emphasis on listing the individual components which make an attractive room setting – a "Home Beautiful."⁴³

⁴⁰ Stephen Calloway, Lynn Federle-Orr, and Esmé Whittaker. *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement, 1860-1900* (London: V & A Publishing, 2011).

⁴¹ Prettejohn cites Sidney Colvin's article "English Painters and Painting" published in *The Fortnightly Review* in 1867, in support of her claim that it is possible to identify of a moment when a group of artists within England, though not formally working together or indeed 'declaring allegiance to the motto "art for art's sake"' began to be in close social contact, with the result that 'their work demonstrates a complex pattern of correspondences and inter-relationships [...].' Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Art for Art's Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 5.

⁴² Prettejohn, *Art for Art's Sake*, 7. The artists listed by Colvin were Frederick Leighton, Albert Moore, James McNeil Whistler, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Edward Burne-Jones, Simeon Solomon, G.F. Watts, Arthur Hughes and George Heming Mason. Prettejohn addresses explored similar themes in her 1999 publication *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

⁴³ Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic movement* (London: Phaidon, 1996) 6.

Calloway's examination of 'Artists, Collectors and their houses' in *The Cult of Beauty* (2011), establishes the ideals and inspiration which generated the devotion to art manifested in this desire for 'The House Beautiful.'⁴⁴ As Calloway explains

[...] the emerging Aesthetic movement [...] sought to redefine the artist primarily as a super-sensitive seeker after ideal beauty. Artists engaged in the creation of this new kind of exquisite art had a need, it was held, to look constantly upon beauty, to surround themselves only with exquisite things [...]⁴⁵

The resultant search for beauty was explored by Charlotte Gere in her 2010 publication, *Artistic Circles: Design and Decoration in the Aesthetic movement*, in which Gere investigates 'the influence of artists' houses and households on eclecticism in house decoration.'⁴⁶ Gere's detailed analysis of the photographs, paintings, documentary evidence and surviving examples of the studios and homes created these by artists leads her to expand upon previously established, and narrower concepts of Aestheticism, 'with its focus on chinamania and the rediscovered art of Japan' and to establish the panoply of historic styles and cultural influences embraced by the movement.⁴⁷ Chapter 6 will reveal the impact that this interest in a wide range of historic periods, cultural influences and decorative styles and effects had upon Terry's approach to dress and design both on the stage and within her home.

Aesthetic Dress

⁴⁴ Stephen Calloway, 'The Palace of Art: Artists Collections and their houses', *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic movement 1860-1900*, Ed. Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle Orr (London: V&A Publishing, 2011) 90-109.

⁴⁵ Calloway, 'The Palace of Art,' 90.

⁴⁶ Charlotte Gere, *Artistic Circles: Design and Decoration in the Aesthetic movement* (London: V&A Publishing, 2010) 9.

⁴⁷ Gere, *Artistic Circles*, 9.

Chapter 6 of this study will focus specifically on Terry's engagement with Aesthetic dress. There has been a growing interest in the study of Aesthetic dress within dress history since Stella Mary Newton published, *Health, Art & Reason* in 1974.⁴⁸ Newton's publication is still the most comprehensive and thorough guide to dress reform during the late nineteenth century. This is one of the few texts which examines the interrelationships and shared stylistic traits which existed between Aesthetic dress and the other dress reform movements established in the decades between 1850 and 1910. Newton's text also makes apparent the importance role that political, social and artistic motives played in shaping taste during this period.

Other notable contributions have been made to the literature published on the theme of Aesthetic dress by researchers such as Edwina Ehrman, Diana Crane and Patricia Cunningham.⁴⁹ Diane Crane (1999) and Patricia Cunningham (2006) have focussed primarily upon literary sources in their discussion of Aesthetic Garments. Ehrman has also drawn extensively upon literature from the period to explore debates regarding women's dress, in particular the relationship between dress and art. Significantly, she supports and contextualises this discussion with images and surviving examples of both Aesthetic and fashionable dress.⁵⁰

Though Annette Carruthers and Mary Greensted's *Simplicity or Splendour: Arts and Crafts Living: Objects from the Cheltenham Collections* (1999) focused on the Arts and Crafts movement, it also provides a concise overview of trends within Aesthetic dress

⁴⁸ Stella Mary Newton, *Health Art and Reason: Dress Reformers of the 19th century* (London: Murray, 1974).

⁴⁹ Edwina Ehrman, "Frith and Fashion" *William Powell Frith: Painting the Victorian Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006); Edwina Ehrman, "Women's Dress," *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic movement 1860-1900*, Stephen Calloway and Lynn Federle Orr, Ed. (London: V&A Publishing, 2011); Diana Crane, "Clothing behaviour as non-verbal resistance: Marginal women and alternative dress in the nineteenth century" *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1999) 335-364; Patricia A. Cunningham, *Reforming women's fashion, 1850-1920: politics, health and art* (Kent State University Press, 2006).

⁵⁰ Ehrman, "Frith and Fashion," 111-129.

and jewellery, which establishes the key characteristics of Aesthetic dress, whilst illustrating the diverse range of styles encompassed within the movement.⁵¹ Like Ehrman, Carruthers and Greensted employ a rich variety of material culture to support their discussion, with paintings, photographs and surviving garments illustrating the range of approaches to ‘Aesthetic’ dress.⁵² Carruthers and Greensted’s work also exposes the fact that, in many instances, there remains only a loose definition of what distinguished Aesthetic dress from concurrent movements advocating what Taylor has termed ‘counter-cultural’ dress.⁵³ Taylor (2005) is one of the few researchers to have addressed the cross fertilisation which occurred between the movements for dress reform during this period and, crucially, attempted to distinguish between them. Taylor’s work offers an initial consideration, rather than a full dissection, of the differences between movements. It focuses upon identifying the characteristics which distinguished what she termed Arts and Crafts based ‘Simple Life Dress’ from Aesthetic dress (which she describes as ‘fine-art related dress’), and uses existing garments to illustrate the subtle stylistic differences between the two categories of dress.⁵⁴

A significant recent publication is Kimberley Wahl’s *Dressed as in a Painting* (2013).⁵⁵ Whilst previous research has investigated the interrelationships between fashion and art, Wahl is amongst the first scholars to focus specifically on the role of dress within the Aesthetic movement. Wahl’s analysis encompasses the full range of visual culture connected with the movement. She employs this material, alongside text drawn from

⁵¹ Annette Carruthers and Mary Greensted, *Simplicity or Splendour: Arts and Crafts Living: Objects from the Cheltenham Collections* (London: Lund Humphries, 1999).

⁵² Carruthers and Greensted, *Simplicity or Splendour*, 35-47.

⁵³ Taylor employs this term to refer to clothing which departs from, or directly challenges, mainstream fashion in Lou Taylor, *Establishing Dress History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) 123.

⁵⁴ These garments included an ornate silk velvet coat, hand embroidered with sprays of flowers from circa 1895-1900 (V&A Collections, Museum Number T.49-1962) and a dress by Thérèse Lessore of embroidered linen from 1905 (Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, Museum Number T.10086.1). Lou Taylor, “Arts and Crafts Dress,” *International Arts and Crafts*, Ed. Livingstone & Parry (London, V&A Publications, 2005), 224-227.

⁵⁵ Kimberly Wahl, *Dressed as in a Painting: Women and British Aestheticism in an Age of Reform* (Durham, New Hampshire: University of Hampshire Press, 2013).

period periodicals and publications, to argue that ‘Aesthetic dressing was a highly symbolic form of representation in the nineteenth century, with the potential to signify a range of cultural values, from the expression of individual identity to larger shifts in social ideology in relation to the body and clothing.’⁵⁶ The manner in which, as Wahl’s comments suggest, Aesthetic dress could be used to express individual identity, is fundamental to the analysis of the attraction such garments evidently held for Terry, and the role they played in Terry’s ‘fashioning’ of her social and artistic persona.

2.4 ‘Dressing the Part’

This thesis considers how dress can be employed to express and ‘fashion’ an identity within art and society. It highlights the part dress played in Terry’s self-fashioning and its key role in communicating the ‘identities’ she adopted both on and off the stage.

Fred Davis has explored the purposes fashion serves in ‘social differentiation and social integration,’ arguing that cultural scientists have yet to give full consideration to the ‘meaning’ of fashion.⁵⁷ He contends that ‘clothing styles and the fashions that influence them over time constitute something approximating a code.’⁵⁸ This ‘clothing-fashion code’ is, he suggests, ‘highly context dependent,’ and this ‘context’ can be defined as the ‘identity of the wearer, the occasion, the place, the company, and even something as vague and transient as the wearer’s and viewer’s moods.’⁵⁹ F. Davis’ observations have important implications for the analysis of both off-stage garments and theatre costume as both categories of ‘dress’ are shaped by, and subject to, the influence of social, historic and artistic ‘context.’

⁵⁶ Wahl, *Dressed as in a Painting*, Introduction, xi.

⁵⁷ Fred Davies, *Fashion, Culture and Identity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1992) 4. Hereafter, referred to as F. Davis.

⁵⁸ F. Davies, *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, 5.

⁵⁹ F. Davies, *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, 8.

As F. Davis' arguments highlight, an awareness of the specific social and cultural 'context' within which Terry operated is essential to the analysis of her life, dress and career. Terry would have been conscious that all her garments (whether worn on or off the stage) were potentially subject to public scrutiny and widespread comment in the illustrated press. Her theatre costumes in particular, were created specifically for a 'public context' within which both Terry and her clothing would be displayed before an audience. Evidence gathered from Terry's surviving costumes and examples of her personal dress will demonstrate that Terry was highly attuned both to the 'clothing-fashion codes' which operated within late nineteenth century and to the manner in which her clothing could be skilfully employed to challenge, or conform to the ideology underpinning these 'codes.'

The 'social dimension of clothing'

Leonore Davidoff's exploration of the shifting 'social spheres' operating within Victorian Society, *The Best Circles* (1973) was a landmark publication, being amongst the first texts to make full use of primary sources and to demonstrate a clear understanding of the cultural significance of clothing within a social context. Whilst her research did not extend to an examination of surviving clothing, Davidoff's recognition of the 'codes' expressed within Victorian middle class female dress, is evident in her observation that 'Every cap, every bow, streamer, ruffle, fringe, bustle, glove and other elaboration symbolised some status category for the female wearer.'⁶⁰ Nearly ten years later, in *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie* (1981), Philippe Perrot, used a multidisciplinary approach to carry out a detailed study of the clothing worn by the 'Parisian bourgeoisie' in the mid nineteenth century. Perrot looked at the 'social dimension of clothing' and investigated 'the behaviours it implied' and the 'upheavals it provoked.'⁶¹ His work offers valuable

⁶⁰ Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles* (Suffolk: The Cresset Library, [1973] 1986), 93.

⁶¹ Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994 edition)

context for the analysis of Terry's clothing, confirming the role clothing played in establishing and communicating social position and, by extension, the important part dress could perform in 'fashioning' identity.

The adoption of what F. Davis refers to as 'Anti-Fashion' has become a topic of ever increasing interest within dress history over the past two decades.⁶² Elizabeth Wilson has identified similar evidence of groups within society adopting dress as an expression of a specific social, political or artistic identity.⁶³ In *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts* (2000) she explored the social and economic circumstances which favoured the emergence of 'the bohemian.' She focussed particularly on the role art, and 'the arts' as a whole, played in the development of different notions of 'bohemia' and 'bohemians' concluding that

The figure of the bohemian acts out the way in which the artist was caught up in the uncertainties modernity produced. By living, dressing and behaving not only differently from the surrounding social culture, but in a manner calculated to shock and outrage his or her audience, the bohemian dramatized his/her love-hate relationship with the society that had given birth to him/her.⁶⁴

As Wilson explains, both the social groups in which bohemians moved and the urban context within which such communities developed, 'played an important role in Bohemia.'⁶⁵ She highlights the performative elements of the 'bohemian lifestyle,' describing this urban context as 'The Bohemian Stage.' Wilson also suggests that, as bohemians 'brought into play all those aspects of daily life that were *not* central to the production of works of art,' in particular 'dress, surrounding and relationships,' they

⁶² F. Davies, *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, 159-188.

⁶³ Elizabeth Wilson. 'Utopian Dress and Dress Reform', *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., Ltd., 2007) 208-227.

⁶⁴ Elizabeth Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts* (London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2000) 8-9.

⁶⁵ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 25.

‘challenged the bourgeois insistence that art was a realm apart.’⁶⁶ Chapter 6 will consider how Wilson’s analysis of ‘the bohemian identity’ relates to Aestheticism, in particular the importance Aesthetes attached to the cultivation of beauty in all aspects of life. It will also address the performative element of Bohemia and consider how Terry’s domestic space functioned as a stage set for her ‘private’ identity.

Within theatre history, Bratton has also considered the theatrical elements of ‘Bohemia’ and discovered clear ‘links between Bohemia and the development of the theatrical West End.’ Bratton’s exploration of Bohemia in London was primarily founded on literary sources, which led her to suggest that “‘Bohemia” was more of a notion than a new reality, a way of presenting themselves that was created by the writers for the newly powerful periodical press and the stage.’⁶⁷ Whilst acknowledging that many writers emphasise the male role and masculine identity formation within their depictions of Bohemian life, Bratton also identified scope for female empowerment within Bohemia society. This is one of the few areas, Bratton suggested, in which women appear to be recognised ‘as a presence’ and she argues that ‘the theatrical/Bohemian public sphere differed [...] from the closed all-male world of bourgeois business, precisely in its responsiveness to female importance – even where that response is to seek to appropriate or deny the power to which it is reacting.’⁶⁸ Bratton developed her analysis of Bohemia and its interrelationship with the mid Victorian theatre using a process she termed ‘conceptual mapping.’ This focus on the mental conception of physical spaces allows her to examine how ‘ideas’ about places functioned alongside, and shaped, their ‘material’ presence. From this foundation Bratton was able to explore how ‘the creators of Victorian theatre perceived their own world; how they conceived of their work and the social identity it gave them.’⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 24.

⁶⁷ Jacky Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage: Marriage, Management and the Mapping of Gender in London, 1830-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 94.

⁶⁸ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 107, 104-5.

⁶⁹ Bratton, *The Making of the West End*, 6-7.

Bratton's work, together with that of Davidoff and Wilson, offers important insights into the specific theatrical and artistic context within which Terry was operating and the social identities available to Terry as a nineteenth century actress.

The 'Public' Spheres

As a woman whose celebrity and professional career required her to abandon the security of the 'domestic sphere' and live almost entirely within in the 'public sphere,' Terry occupied an unusual position within Victorian society. Davidoff and Catherine Hall offered a helpful discussion of the implications and origins of this concept 'separate spheres' in *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (1987).⁷⁰ They trace the origins of this ideology to the late eighteenth century and explain that its foundations lay in the belief that 'men and women occupied separate spheres by nature as well as custom and propriety.' As a consequence men were perceived to be naturally formed for 'the more public exhibitions on the great theatre of human life.' Women, by contrast, were best suited to the smaller scale of the domestic, seeing the world 'from a little elevation from [their] own garden' where they had 'an exact survey of home scenes.'⁷¹ The continuing influence of this ideology within late nineteenth century Britain is apparent within contemporary writing on the subject of women's 'nature' and 'function', including: etiquette manuals; magazines; novels, and polemical essays such as John Ruskin's *Of Queen's Gardens* (1865).⁷² Women working in the theatre therefore represented a direct challenge to the established context and behaviour for conventional middle and upper class women within Victorian Society.

⁷⁰ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

⁷¹ Davidoff and Hall cite and quote from the influential writings published by Hannah More (1745-1833), which articulated her views on these 'spheres.' Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 169.

⁷² Ruskin's work is widely credited with articulating the ideal of Victorian Womanhood, and was published in as part of a collection of three essays entitled *Sesames and Lilies* (London: Smith Elder & Co) in 1865.

The impact that the ideology of ‘separate spheres’ had on the role and status of women, has already been ably addressed elsewhere.⁷³ Amongst recent publications, the collection of essays that Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus brought together in *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850: an Introduction* (2005) has offered important new insights into the ‘ideology of female domesticity [...] encapsulated in the notion of “separate spheres”.’ Arguing for a ‘modified’ understanding of this model, Barker and Chalus highlight ‘[...] women’s agency in the formation of modern society, without ignoring the constraints and complexities of life in what was still a highly patriarchal world.’⁷⁴ Similarly, writing specifically of actresses, Cockin has suggested that

On stage, the female body provided an opportunity to challenge the prevailing separate spheres ideology which relegated the middle-class woman in this period to the private and domestic sphere and attempted to ban her from the public world of politics and work.⁷⁵

Taking into account the re-evaluations continually occurring across all fields of research, the primary focus of this thesis is upon the impact that developments within Social and Women’s History have had upon literature and theory relating directly to ‘the actress’ and her status within society.

⁷³ An early contribution to this field, which still remains relevant to the discussion, was the collection of essays brought together in Martha Vincus eds., *Suffer and be Still* (London: Methuen, 1980); Pat Jalland’s *Marriage and Politics 1860-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), provided a crucial bridge between the fields of social and women’s history studies. Whilst Jane Purvis’ *Women’s History: Britain 1850-1945, An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1995) demonstrated the expansion in women’s and gender history. Significant recent contributions include Hannah Barker, and Elaine Chalus, *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850: an Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2005); Krista Cowman and Louise A. Jackson. *Women and Work Culture: Britain C. 1850-1950*. Aldershot: Ashgate Pub, 2005; Ruth Watts, *Women in Science: A Social and Cultural History* (London: Routledge, 2007) and Susan Shifrin, *Reframing Representations of Women: Figuring, Fashioning, Portraiting, and Telling in the 'picturing' Women Project* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008). There are also an increasingly wide range of specialist journals such as *Women’s History Review* (established in 1992) and *Women's Studies International Forum* (formerly *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, established in 1978).

⁷⁴ Hannah Barker, and Elaine Chalus, *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850: an Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2005), 5-6.

⁷⁵ Katharine Cockin, “Dame Ellen Terry and Edith Craig: suitable subjects for teaching,” *Word Play, Online Newsletter, Issue 2*, (York: The Higher Education Academy, English Section, October 2009).

2.5 'The Actress'

My reconsideration of Terry draws upon an increasingly wide and diverse body of research into the status and significance of 'the actress.' The willingness of theatre historians to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to research ensures that the field remains open to continual evolution and expansion. This aspect of the discipline was discussed by Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait in their 2010 publication *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*.⁷⁶ In spite of their positive appraisal of the current state of theatre historiography, however, Canning and Postlewait recognise that there remain limitations to the scope of contemporary enquiry: an issue also addressed by Susan Bennett in her contribution to the volume.⁷⁷ Referring back to T.C. Davis' article "Questions for a Feminist Methodology in Theatre History" (1989), Bennett argued that, whilst many valuable texts have been published since this date, research into women's contribution to theatre 'remains collectively marginal, still in the shadow of theatre history's customary archives.'⁷⁸ Bennett's view accords with that of Bush-Bailey, who has also expressed frustration at the continued 'marginalisation and occlusion of female narratives' in theatre history.⁷⁹

Even if still working to move beyond this 'marginal position' within the wider body of theatre history, the expansion of interest in rediscovering the history of 'the actress' since the publication of Julie Holledge's *Innocent flowers: women in the Edwardian theatre* (1981), T.C. Davis's *Actresses as Working Women: their social identity in Victorian*

⁷⁶ Charlotte Canning and Thomas Postlewait, *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010) 3.

⁷⁷ Susan Bennett 'The Making of Theatre History', *Representing the Past: Essays in Performance Historiography*. Ed. Canning, Charlotte, and Thomas Postlewait. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2010) 64-5.

⁷⁸ Bennett 'The Making of Theatre History', 65. Bennett is amongst those who have contributed to this body of literature in 2003. She published a chapter entitled 'Decomposing History (Why Are There So Few Women in Theater History)' in *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

⁷⁹ Gilli Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds: Actresses and playwrights on the Late-Stuart stage* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2006) 5.

culture (1991) and Kristina Straub's *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-century Players and Sexual Ideology* (1992) is evident in the breadth of the research which has been initiated by their initial considerations of this theme.⁸⁰ Amongst the figures currently leading research in the field are Gale and Gardner. Their joint publication *Women, Theatre, Performance: New Histories, New Historiographies* (2001) heralded the first in a series of publications which actively sought to retrieve 'hidden histories' of women who had made a creative contribution to the theatre as both writers and performers.⁸¹

The Cambridge Companion to the Actress (2007), jointly edited by John Stokes and Gale, drew further attention to the scope for research into this area of theatre history.⁸² Divided into three themed sections the wide time period and range of issues addressed by the contributors to this volume make apparent the diversity of this field and the range of methodological approaches which can be employed to facilitate research. Marshall's work on the relationship between the actress and her audience, Mayer's research into early photography and Gardner's exploration of the part that autobiography played in shaping identity and legacy, are of particular relevance to this thesis. The work of all three researchers will be drawn upon to consider the importance Terry, as an actress, would

⁸⁰ Publications which have followed J. Holledge, *Innocent flowers: women in the Edwardian theatre* (London, Virago, 1981) and Tracy C. Davis's *Actresses As Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture*. (London: Routledge, 1991) and Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton, N. J: Princeton University Press, 1992) include: Jane K Curry, *Nineteenth-century American Women Theatre Managers*. Westport (Conn.: Greenwood press, 1994); Vivien Gardner and S. Rutherford. *The New woman and her sisters: feminism and theatre, 1850-1914* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1992); Maggie B Gale. *West End Women: Women and the London Stage, 1918-1962* (London: Routledge, 1996); Kerry Powell. *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Gillian Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations: Viewing the Actress in British Art and Theatre, 1768-1820*. (London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2007); John Stokes, *The French Actress and Her English Audience* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005). There has also been an increase in the range of journal articles published on this theme appearing in periodicals such as *Nineteenth Century Theatre*, *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film*, *Theatre Notebook*, *Theatre Journal* and *The Drama Review* (amongst many others).

⁸¹ Maggie B. Gale, and Vivien Gardner, *Women, Theatre, and Performance: New Histories, New Historiographies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.) As this chapter will discuss, subsequent titles in the series have included Maggie B. Gale and Vivien Gardner, *Auto/biography and Identity: Women, Theatre, and Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

⁸² Maggie B. Gale, and John Stokes, *The Cambridge Companion to the Actress* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

have attached to controlling her public ‘persona’ and the tools available to shape her ‘cultural’, ‘professional’ and ‘private’ identity.’

‘Wo-managers’

This thesis will reassess how Terry has been presented within existing literature on ‘the actress,’ and question her characterisation as a subordinate partner to Irving and ‘A Victorian actress’ overshadowed by more dominant figures such as Bernhardt and Duse.⁸³

Bratton’s *The Making of the West End stage: marriages, management and the mapping of gender in London, 1830-1870* (2011) marks a crucial step towards establishing the significance of women’s contribution to the development of theatre in the mid-nineteenth century. *The Making of the West End* builds upon T.C. Davis’s earlier investigations carried in *Actresses as Working Women* and *Economics of the British Stage* (2000) which examined the nature of the profession and the conditions within which actresses were working and sheds further light on the diverse roles and pressures operating on women within the theatrical profession during the nineteenth century.⁸⁴ Whilst T.C. Davis explored ‘The geography of sex in society and the theatre’ through an examination of the ‘erotic zones outside the playhouse,’ Bratton employs a tighter focus on 1830-1870, rather than the entire nineteenth century, and also a specific zone within London.⁸⁵ This facilitates a detailed consideration of ‘the parts played by women, not only on the stage but also in management and creative entrepreneurship.’⁸⁶ Bratton’s examination of ‘The shaping of West End management’ is particularly useful for this thesis, as it is one of the

⁸³ This characterisation of Terry emerges from work such as Michael Booth, *Bernhardt, Terry, Duse: The Actress in her time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Kerry Powell. *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). It is addressed and questioned however in more recent publications, in particular Gail Marshall, “Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress” (2007) and *Shakespeare and Victorian Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁸⁴ T.C. Davis, *Actresses As Working Women* and *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁸⁵ T.C. Davis, *Actresses As Working Women*, vi.

⁸⁶ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 7.

few studies to explore women's ability to engage with theatre in 'an important managerial or empowered capacity at its centre.'⁸⁷ As her research demonstrates, 'a fresh look at even the male commentators in the mid and early Victorian periods suggests a less embattled, more even handed appreciation of the managerial achievement of women.'⁸⁸ Bratton reaffirms T.C. Davis' argument that 'in order to understand how women participated in the public sphere of theatre business it is necessary to regard them as 'a category unique among performers and possibly among the categories of people typically excluded from and uncontested public participation.'⁸⁹ T.C. Davis focused her attention on what she termed 'wo-managers', such as Marie Wilton (1839-1921) and Madame Vestris (1797-1856), who entered into management and then recruited their husbands to join them in the business.⁹⁰ Bratton also considers the case of Ellen Tree 'a successful actress whose fame was - quite deliberately - entirely subsumed into her choice of role and title of Mrs. Kean.'⁹¹ Both present convincing evidence for the argument that forming marital and professional partnerships with men allowed the work of these women to be 'read by their contemporaries entirely within the frame of their femininity', 'conveying the conjunction of the intimate sphere [family life] with business.'⁹² Though Terry was not married to Irving, their professional partnership endured for over twenty years. Whilst Irving clearly began the partnership in a dominant role this thesis will present evidence of Terry's growing influence within the Lyceum Company and of the mutual respect and personal affection upon which their partnership was founded.

Active 'Performer' – on and off stage

⁸⁷ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 145.

⁸⁸ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 146.

⁸⁹ T.C. Davis, cited in Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 147.

⁹⁰ T.C. Davis, *Economics of the British Stage*, 290.

⁹¹ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 159.

⁹² Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 147.

This thesis will demonstrate Terry's active engagement in the direction and design of theatrical productions, both at the Lyceum and during a brief career as a manager in her own right. Bush-Bailey's examination of 'the performing women's influence in the creation and realisation of the female characters written for her' offer a useful starting point from which to commence an analysis of the level of control Terry had over the interpretation and presentation of her roles, even if not in their creation.⁹³ Whilst comparatively few of the roles performed by Terry were specifically created for her, Chapter 6 will show that surviving original prompt copies and annotated editions of the productions, which survive in the actress's library at Smallhythe, contain clear evidence of 're-authoring' on the part of the actress. This is an aspect of Terry's approach to performance which Marshall has examined in *Shakespeare and Victorian Women* (2009). Citing the 'lectures, and Terry's more explicitly autobiographical writings' which 'sit in her library alongside her annotations of play scripts and critical texts,' Marshall describes Terry as 'an actress ever engaged in the process of interpretation, retrieval, intervention and disputation.'⁹⁴ Though recognising that the marginalia within these texts was not intended for public view, Marshall draws on Laura Mayali's work on annotation to explore the 'relationship of annotation to the text [as one of] power.' On this basis Marshall argues that whilst,

As an actress, Terry's opportunities for intervening within the public remit of her texts was limited to appearances, and to her appearance, on the stage. As a writer or annotator she might legitimately hope to influence more effectively and strategically how these plays might be read, and her own role might be understood.⁹⁵

⁹³ Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds*, 10.

⁹⁴ Gail Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 160.

⁹⁵ Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 161.

This observation offers a new stance from which to commence Chapter 6's consideration of the routes through which Terry extended the fashioning of her on-stage identity extended beyond her public performances. The same chapter will also address Terry's creation of the collection now held at Smallhythe and, the hypothesis that, if created in private for future public eyes, this collection, of which the texts to which Marshall refers form a key part, might have been established to secure and shape the actress' long term legacy.

Theatrical Aristocracy

Also of relevance to Terry's success and legacy is the concept of a 'theatrical aristocracy' referred to by both Bratton and Gardner.⁹⁶ As Chapter 3 will discuss, Bratton has suggested that, 'Deep theatrical roots provided a kind of aristocracy of theatrical rather than landed property within which women could take a leading place, if their talents so enabled them [...].' Her argument offers one explanation for the level of professional and financial success Terry, trained for a career in the theatre from birth, was to able achieve, particularly given the scandals within her personal life.⁹⁷ Gardner's related concept of an 'aristocracy' within the theatre, admittance to which was dependent upon, and a reflection of, a performer's status and level of success, has particular significance for the discussion of Terry's fashioning of her legacy, which is the focus of Chapter 6.

2.6 Self-Fashioning

An evaluation of the extent to which Terry was also able to shape her 'public' and 'private' identity through a process of 'self-fashioning' is a central theme within this

⁹⁶ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 148. Viv Gardner, "The Three Nobodies: Autobiographical Strategies in the work of Alma Ellerslie, Kitty Marion and Ina Rozant," *Auto/biography and Identity: Women, theatre and performance*, ed. Maggie B. Gale and Viv Gardner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 33.

⁹⁷ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 148.

research. Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning, from More to Shakespeare*, published in 1980, was one of the first publications to outline a methodology and terminology through which to articulate the process of 'self-fashioning.' Greenblatt argued that the 'fashioning of human identity' [can be] 'a manipulable, artful, process' and employed the term 'self-fashioning' to designate the 'forming of a self.'⁹⁸ Although Greenblatt's research drew upon literary sources and focussed upon the Renaissance period, this research will demonstrate that his theories can also be successfully applied to a late nineteenth century context. The analysis undertaken here will expand Greenblatt's previous focus to consider the role of garments and photographic portraits, within the context of 'the cultural system of meanings,' current in late nineteenth century society.⁹⁹ Building upon Greenblatt's research, in particular his suggestion that human identity can be self-consciously 'fashioned,' this thesis will consider the cultural and social forces which shaped the 'selves' Terry presented to her audience, and will analyse the manner in which Terry constructed 'a distinctive personality' to win public affection and respect.¹⁰⁰

Dress and Identity

In their introduction to the collection of essays brought together in *Dress History Now*, Charlotte Nicklas and Annebella Pollen declare that '[...] dress is a fundamental means, indeed sometimes one of the only ways, by which groups and individuals express and negotiate their identities.'¹⁰¹ For Nicklas and Pollen, dress should therefore not be viewed 'merely [as] a mouthpiece,' researchers should rather engage with 'the particular material qualities and affordances of clothing.' Noting that dress represents a material object which

⁹⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. (London: University of Chicago Press, 1980) 2.

⁹⁹ Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning*, 3.

¹⁰⁰ Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning*, 2-3.

¹⁰¹ Charlotte Nicklas, and Annebella Pollen, *Dress History Now: New Directions in Theory and Practice* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015) 1.

is ‘sensual, intimate and proximate to the body, while simultaneously public, declarative and performative,’ they argue that clothing occupies a place at ‘centre stage culturally as well as at the heart of lived experience.’¹⁰²

Christine M.E.Guth’s contribution to *Dress History Now* focuses on the American art collector Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840-1924), a woman who, as Guth demonstrates, understood the ‘active power of dress and textiles.’¹⁰³ Taking her lead from Penny Sparke’s observation that ‘dressing in fashionable clothes and selecting the decoration of their private surrounds not only permitted modern women to express their personalities to others, but also, more importantly, to themselves’ Guth shows how, for Gardner, dress and textiles offered a tool for fashioning not only the body, but also a means of controlling and ‘clothing’ physical space.¹⁰⁴ Guth demonstrates the prominent role that dress and textiles played in the creation of a museum which established ‘[...] an enduring aesthetic environment for and material representation of her identity both as a woman and a collector.’¹⁰⁵ The manner in which Gardner employed dress and textiles, whether as a form of decoration, or as depicted in portraiture, to ‘assert her presence’ within a space ‘implicitly designed to materialise her presence,’ is of particular relevance to Chapter 6 of this thesis.¹⁰⁶ This chapter will examine how Terry’s personal dress and domestic space, functioned within a complex and carefully controlled process of self-fashioning.

Roach has also considered the power of ‘costuming’ both for public display and predefined roles.¹⁰⁷ In what he terms ‘the sorcery of clothing,’ clothes become objects

¹⁰² Nicklas, and Pollen. *Dress History Now*, 12.

¹⁰³ Christine M.E. Guth, “Dress, Self-fashioning and Display at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum,” *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, ed. Charlotte Nicklas, and Annebella Pollen (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015): 113-125, 123.

¹⁰⁴ Penny Sparke, ‘Framing the Modern Woman: From Clothes Horse to Interior Decorator,’ *Fashion, Interior Design and the Contours of Modern Identity*, ed. A Myzelev and J.Potvin, (London: Ashgate, 2010), 206. Quoted in Guth, “Dress, Self-fashioning and Display” 118-9, 123.

¹⁰⁵ Guth, “Dress, Self-fashioning and Display” 113.

¹⁰⁶ Guth, “Dress, Self-fashioning and Display,” 123.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Roach, *it* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

which have the potential to ‘make things happen.’ They can become ‘provocations to enact behaviours or initiate social processes. They *perform*, in a word, and by performing, they carry the charismatic potential to turn personalities into events, events into occasions, and occasion into precedents.’¹⁰⁸ This thesis will draw directly on Roach’s arguments regarding the performative power of clothing and the manner in which personality can be expressed and created through costuming. It will look at parallels between Terry’s on and off stage dress, and consider the degree to which Terry ‘costumed’ herself in both public and private to ‘perform’ specific ‘identities’ for her audiences.

‘Public’ and ‘Private’ selves

Gale and Gardner’s *Auto/biography and Identity: Women, Theatre, and Performance* (2004) explores self-fashioning as achieved through a specific medium. Gale and Gardner acknowledge that they are not the first researchers to foreground the role of ‘performance’ and ‘performativity’ in relation to ‘autobiography and identity formation.’¹⁰⁹ Where they depart from their predecessors is in their consideration of the autobiographical writings specifically in relation to the actress, their examination of the ‘analysis or representation of self in a professional or national context,’ and their discussion of ‘the relationship between autobiography as evidence and historic practice.’¹¹⁰ They suggest that evidence for the ‘perceived particularly of the actresses’ private/public self’ can be seen in the quantity of ‘[female] performers’ autobiographies, [relative] to non-performers’ works.’¹¹¹ It was the volume of autobiographies published by leading actresses which

¹⁰⁸ Roach, *It*, 87.

¹⁰⁹ They cite the important contributions made by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Interfaces: Women, Autobiography, Image, Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Mary J. Corbett, *Representing Femininity: Middle-class Subjectivity in Victorian and Edwardian Women's Autobiographies* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992) and Deborah Pye, "'Irreproachable Woe and Patient Workers": The Memoirs of Victorian Leading Ladies', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* (2001): 73-91.

¹¹⁰ A wide ranging survey of contemporary attitudes to biography as a form of historic research can be found in Barbara Caine, *Biography and History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹¹¹ Maggie B. Gale and Vivien Gardner. *Auto/biography and Identity: Women, Theatre, and Performance*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) 1-3.

inspired Mary Corbett's comparison of actresses' autobiographies with those of their non-theatrical female contemporaries. Significantly for this study, Gale and Gardner note that Corbett was surprised to identify 'as many resemblances as differences between actresses' and writers' [autobiographical] text.'¹¹² Gale and Gardner explore and evaluate these perceived similarities and differences further. The essays brought together in *Auto/Biography and Identity* are united in their exploration of issues of 'identity and the female performer' and the manner in which actresses 'have used autobiography and performance as both a means of "expression" and "control" of their public selves.'¹¹³

The two worlds of autobiography and performance are central to the issues raised in this research. As Terry's own autobiography, *The Story of My Life* (1908) demonstrates, autobiographical writings can reveal key details about their writer's 'professional lives, sometimes their private lives, and sometimes their sense of a place in the world.'¹¹⁴ *Auto/biography and Identity* offers a valuable critical framework from which this thesis will interpret the evidence gathered from Terry's autobiographical writing, and a foundation from which it will consider the part these texts played in Terry's fashioning of her 'self' and her legacy.

Celebrity

Issues of self-fashioning and celebrity are central to the analysis of the 'public' and 'private' personas of Ellen Terry. Sos Eltis is amongst those who have examined the pressures faced by the late Victorian actress, continually 'under the curious gaze of the public.'¹¹⁵ She argues that 'celebrity actresses had to negotiate a more complex set of

¹¹² Mary J. Corbett, cited in Gale and Gardner. *Auto/biography and Identity*, 3.

¹¹³ Gale and Gardner, *Autobiography and Identity*, 3.

¹¹⁴ Gale and Gardner, *Autobiography and Identity*, 3.

¹¹⁵ Sos Eltis. "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress." Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Eds.) *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 169-188. This theme has also been addressed by writers such as Macdonald Russ, *Look to the Lady: Sarah Siddons, Ellen Terry and Judi Dench on the Shakespearean Stage* (Athens and London:

prejudices and assumptions than their male counterparts.’¹¹⁶ These women were obliged to find ways ‘of maintaining their popularity whilst protecting their private lives, negotiating traditional ideas of female virtue without abandoning their personal claims to respectability.’¹¹⁷

Hindson offers an important insight into the commercial element of this ‘celebrity.’¹¹⁸ Looking specifically at Paris and London, she contends that,

Rapid urbanisation and population growth made the city a powerful force and signifier of the fin de siècle and, as a result of this, modern metropolises became sites where current ideas about performance, spectatorship and identity were realised: not only on the stage, but also on the streets.¹¹⁹

She focuses her investigation on the position and status of the female performers who appeared on the stages of the two cities, paying particular attention to the expansion of print and visual material relating to the theatre and its star performers. She argues that the entertainment industry which evolved in expanding cities, ‘framed the female celebrity performer in its popular “spaces”’: a set of real, conceptual and ideological environments that simultaneously created and enabled celebrity identity.’¹²⁰ Together, Eltis and Hindson offer another useful framework through which to examine the ‘high profile female celebrity’ who, ‘[d]uring a period when ideas about gender were contested and challenged, [...] became a significant and powerful figure.’¹²¹

Georgia University Press, 2005) and, more broadly by Michael Quinn in “Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting,” *New Theatre Quarterly* 22, (1990) and Chris Rojek in *Celebrity*. London: Routledge, 2010.

¹¹⁶ Eltis, “Private Lives and Public Spaces”, 171.

¹¹⁷ Eltis, “Private Lives and Public Spaces”, 171.

¹¹⁸ Hindson, *Female Performance Practice*, 12.

¹¹⁹ Catherine Hindson. *Female Performance Practice on the Fin-De-Siècle popular stages of London and Paris: Experiment and advertisement*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). 9.

¹²⁰ Hindson, *Female Performance Practice*, 24.

¹²¹ Hindson. *Female Performance Practice*, 3.

With such power at their disposal, successful actresses were, as Luckhurst and Moody observe, required to become ‘agents of their own celebrity’ maintaining careful, and constant control over the ‘performance of public selves on and off the stage.’¹²² Under pressure to manage their ‘public personas,’ Hindson suggests that ‘ [...] the lithograph, the interview, and the autobiography were strategically employed by performers to establish and disseminate strong on-and off-stage images.’¹²³ These notions of ‘performance,’ ‘control’ and a division between ‘public’ and ‘private’ selves will be central to Chapter 6, which will investigate the manner in which Terry, a ‘high profile female performer,’ was able to balance the scandalous nature of her off stage life, with a career founded upon what Luckhurst and Moody term ‘performing virtue.’¹²⁴

“It”

As descriptions of Terry’s performances and personality examined in Chapters 3 and 6 will show, constant references were made to Terry’s ‘charm.’ Roach’s work, in particular his 2007 book *it*, offers means through which to analyse the ‘charm’ which Terry exercised over the public and her friends. As Roach shows this concept of ‘charm’, which he refers to as ‘It’, is not a quality unique to Terry. ‘It’ is, Roach explains, by its nature multifaceted and hard to define, ‘It’ is a quality which is not restricted to a single school of thought or public arena and is associated with notions of charm, charisma, presence, aura, attraction, glamour, radiance and sex.¹²⁵

In a definition which encapsulates the powerful attraction to an audience inherent to the ‘It factor,’ Roach establishes ‘It’ as,

¹²² Luckhurst and Moody, eds, *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*, 8.

¹²³ Hindson, *Female Performance Practice*, 4.

¹²⁴ Luckhurst and Moody, “Introduction: The Singularity of Theatrical Celebrity”, 8.

¹²⁵ Roach, *it*, 3-7.

the power of apparently effortless embodiment of contradictory qualities simultaneously: strength *and* vulnerability, innocence *and* experience, and singularity *and* typicality among them. The possessor of “It” keeps a precarious balance between such mutually exclusive alternatives, suspended at the tipping point like a tightrope dancer on one foot; and the empathetic tension of waiting for the apparently inevitable fall makes for breathless spectatorship ¹²⁶

This is a definition which, as Roach observes, ‘moves beyond the tautology of innate charm and enters into the realm of theatrical and cinematic technique [...]’¹²⁷ As Chapter 3 and 6 will discuss, whether Terry’s ‘charm’ was performed or innate, it arguably played a crucial part in her success and long standing appeal. As Roach suggests,

Theatrical performance and social performance that resemble it consist of struggle, the simultaneous experience of mutually exclusive possibilities – truth and illusion, presence and absence, face and mask. Performers are none other than themselves doing a job in which they are always someone else [...] with an intensity of focus beyond the reach of normal people, those with It can project those and other antinomies apparently at will. From moment to moment on the stage or on the set, they must hold them together with the force of their personalities, but in the service of a representation to which their personalities are supposedly excrescent ¹²⁸

Roach makes repeated references to the paradoxes which are an inherent part of the attraction exercised by the possessors of ‘It’ which offers a valuable perspective from which to consider Terry’s ‘performances’ both on and off the stage. The seeming

¹²⁶ Roach, *it*, 8.

¹²⁷ Roach, *it*, 8.

¹²⁸ Roach, *it*, 9.

inconsistency between the ‘womanly’ and ‘naïve’ roles Terry was frequently called upon to perform on stage, and the scandals within her off-stage life, will be a key discussion point in the analysis of her theatrical career carried out in Chapter 3. Similarly, Chapter 6 will reconsider Terry’s public and private ‘performances’ in the light of Roach’s work, and will establish the extent to which the contrast between Terry’s on and off stage personas may have been an inherent part of the ‘charm’ she exercised over her audiences.

Public Intimacy

Roach traces the origins of the growing power of ‘It’ to a process of ‘increasingly invasive saturation and ingenious manipulation from the seventeenth century, when popular celebrities began to circulate their images in the place of religious and regal icons.’¹²⁹ This is an observation which prompts a reconsideration of the significance that should be accorded to the global dissemination of photographic portraits of Terry from 1856 onwards. Such images, be they paintings, drawings, or photographs, provided their subjects with a means through which to strategically convey what Roach described as ‘the effortless look of public intimacy’ which is an important component of ‘the multifaceted genius of It.’¹³⁰ Gardner has argued that these photographic images could act as a substitute for actually witnessing an actress perform. As such, as Gardner notes, by the early twentieth century, the picture postcard, rather than the performance itself, represented the site where the ‘point of intersection of public demand (the star as a phenomenon of consumption) and the producer initiative (the star as phenomenon of production)’ met.¹³¹ Engel, who has also examined the part images of actresses play in their interaction with ‘the public’ drew attention to the ‘agency’ an actress can exert when

¹²⁹ Roach, *it*, 1-2.

¹³⁰ Roach, *it*, 3.

¹³¹ This comment is drawn from Gardner’s consideration of the role of the picture postcard in relation to both the self-promotion of the actress, and also her relationship with an ‘audience’ who may never actually has witnessed her perform and yet collected her image. See “Gertie Millar and the “Rules for Actresses and Vicar’s Wives”, *The Celebrated actors as Cultural Icon*. (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), 96-112.

employing ‘self-fashioning for her own professional purposes.’¹³² Engel attributes much of the ‘danger’ associated with ‘female celebrity’ to this threat that ‘[...] regardless of the success or failure of the process, the “it” factor can be shaped and manipulated by the performer herself.’¹³³ She references Felicity Nussbaum’s examination of the ways in which eighteenth actresses employed memoirs, portraits and other elements of a burgeoning ‘celebrity culture’ (loosely categorised by Engel into ‘print’ ‘stage’ and ‘pictures’) to construct ‘private personas’ and to generate, and sustain, a sense of ‘public intimacy’ with their patrons.¹³⁴ As Engel demonstrates, by employing such tools to manipulate their ‘public image’ actresses could become ‘revered and adored’ even in an ‘era when the popular feminine ideal dictated that women should be passive, demure and domestic.’¹³⁵

This practice continued, and arguably expanded, throughout the nineteenth century. Chapter 6 will unite the work of Roach, Engel, Gardner and Hindson to consider the manner in which Terry could connect with the public through her visual and physical presence. Their work will also inform analysis of photographs, drawings and paintings of the actress undertaken throughout the thesis, particularly in relation to the role these images played in Terry’s at self-fashioning and in heightening the affection the actress inspired in her audiences, both on and off the stage.

‘Ghosting’

Terry’s ability to entrance audiences, which endured throughout her career, will also be examined in relation the concept of ‘ghosting’ presented by Marvin Carlson in *The*

¹³² Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 295.

¹³³ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 295.

¹³⁴ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 283. Engel specifically references Felicity Nussbaum’s contribution to “Actresses and the Economics of Celebrity,” *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*, ed. Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) and her book *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press, 2010).

¹³⁵ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 285.

Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine (2002).¹³⁶ Carlson's work articulates key ideas surrounding any theatrical performance's 'inescapable and continuing negotiations with memory' and is founded upon a consideration of the theatre as 'the repository of cultural memory,' with the present experience 'always ghosted by previous experiences.'¹³⁷

Marshall touches upon comparable concepts in her discussion of the final decades of Terry's career, during which, she argues, Terry's performances entered a form of stasis in which 'The only way in which she might remain on stage was through the turning back of the theatrical and social clock, which the illusion of an ever-youthful Terry enabled.'¹³⁸ In the light of Marshall's observations, Carlson's description of the theatrical experience as a 'retelling of stories already told, the re-enactment of events already enacted, the re-experience of emotions, already experienced' offers an new perspective from which to consider Terry's enduring appeal to audiences seeking to recapture and sustain 'their initial enamoured response.'¹³⁹

Bratton attaches equal importance to the part that 'memories' of both 'performers and players' plays in the 'theatrical experience,' suggesting that they are 'woven upon knowledge of performers' other current and previous roles, and their personae on and off the stage.'¹⁴⁰ She therefore advocates an 'intertheatrical' approach to analysis which looks beyond the specific performance and considers the interdependence of theatrical productions, connected by traditions which shape 'not only the speech and systems of the

¹³⁶ Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machines* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

¹³⁷ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 2.

¹³⁸ Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 157.

¹³⁹ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 3 and Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 155.

¹⁴⁰ Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, 37-38.

stage - scenery costumes, lighting and so forth' but also 'genres, conventions, and, very importantly, memory.'¹⁴¹

Read together, Bratton, Marshall, and Carlson offer a framework through which to analyse the extent to which the 'memories' carried by audiences shaped responses to Terry's performances and sustained her success in later years.¹⁴²

The 'Body' of the Actress

Acknowledging the influence of Carlson's work, Roach has described how this process of 'ghosting' creates of a constant dichotomy in the minds of an audience watching a performance. They are therefore continually conscious of the discrepancy between the 'vulnerable body' of the performer, and the 'enduring memory' of past performances which 'haunts' the role.¹⁴³ Roach suggests however that it is these 'enduring memories' which enable celebrated performers to overcome age or physical infirmity. Sustained by 'public memory,' they are able to transcend 'the body of flesh and blood' and inhabit another body consisting of 'actions, gestures, intonations, vocal colours, mannerisms, expressions, accustoms, protocols, inherited routines, authenticated traditions – "bits."¹⁴⁴

The performer's physical body, in particular the body of the actress, as shaped, and perceived within Victorian Society, is also a central concern within the thesis. The relation between these preconceptions, and Terry's costumes, in particular the evidence relating

¹⁴¹ Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, 37-38. Bratton acknowledges the influence that the work of Richard Schechner, in particular *Performance Theory* (London: Routledge, 1988) has had upon her methodology and also the inspiration that the concept of 'intertextuality' as discussed within Semiotics by Barthes and Kristeva (amongst numerous others) provided for the terminology she employs. See in particular Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (London: Cape, 1974) and Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

¹⁴² Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, 37-38.

¹⁴³ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 80.

¹⁴⁴ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 93.

to the ‘physicality’ of the ‘body’ preserved within surviving garments, will also be considered.

Engel, though focusing on the eighteenth century, engages with important debates surrounding ‘[...] the ambivalent position of actresses as female celebrities.’¹⁴⁵ As she notes, the body of the actress occupies a dual position as both a ‘female body’ and a ‘theatrical body,’ ‘available for public consumption both on canvas and on the stage.’¹⁴⁶ By the late nineteenth century images of an actress might appear in mass produced photographs and illustrated newspaper reviews. Engel argues that actresses ‘were caught in a representation dilemma: how could they present themselves as respectable and sympathetic at the same time that their livelihoods were based on theatrical display?’¹⁴⁷ As Eltis has shown, this dilemma became increasingly pressing as distinctions between ‘[...] an actress’s life on stage and her activities in the “real” world’ became increasingly blurred.¹⁴⁸

Chapter 3 will address this issue directly, considering how Terry’s body functioned both as ‘the tool of her craft’ and part of ‘her public, performed, identity.’¹⁴⁹ Herman Roodenburg’s research, although focusing upon the modes of ‘self-presentation’ that operated within the late seventeenth century Dutch Republic, touches upon many themes which are extremely pertinent to this thesis.¹⁵⁰ Drawing attention to what he terms ‘the eloquence of the body,’ Roodenburg demonstrates that physical and social behaviour can be used not only to communicate, but also to secure, an individual’s place within society. As Chapter 3 will show, his argument that the body is ‘socially constituted’ and ‘culturally

¹⁴⁵ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 281.

¹⁴⁶ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 281.

¹⁴⁷ Engel, “The Muff Affair,” 284.

¹⁴⁸ Eltis. “Private Lives and Public Spaces”, 171.

¹⁴⁹ Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds*, 17.

¹⁵⁰ Herman Roodenburg, *The Eloquence of the Body, Perspectives on Gesture in the Dutch Republic* (Zwolle: Waanders Publishers, 2004).

shaped in its performances' is of particular relevance to the body of an actress, which is required to 'perform' both on the 'public stage' and within the 'private sphere.'¹⁵¹

Simon Shepherd and Mick Wallis' offer further insights into the function of 'the body on the stage', and the theme of 'Embodiment.' As they argue, a performance presents the audience with 'two sets of bodies – the body scripted by society and the body scripted by theatrical practice and value.'¹⁵² Chapter 3 will draw upon Roodenburg, Shepherd and Wallis, together with literature relating specifically to the actress, to examine the role Terry's body, in particular her gestures and movement, played in communicating and establishing her professional identity and cementing her position within 'the theatrical aristocracy.'

The 'Body' in the costumes

Notions of 'embodiment' and 'the body' are central to Roach's discussion of a concept he calls the 'kinesthetic imagination.' This 'faculty of memory' which, he suggests, '[...] flourishes in that mental space where imagination and memory converge,' provides 'a way of thinking about movements-at once remembered and reinvented - the otherwise unthinkable.' As Roach shows this also offers a means through which to analyse '[...] patterned movements made and remembered by bodies' and the 'residual movements retained implicitly in images and words.'¹⁵³

Historic theatre costumes, preserve a record of the body and movement patterns of their original wearer(s) within their structure. This information, and particularly the pace and physicality of performance evidenced through wear to seams, elbows, knees and hems, is

¹⁵¹ Roodenburg draws upon and acknowledges the influence of Paul Connerton on this aspect of his work and cites Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Herman Roodenburg, *The Eloquence of the Body*, 18.

¹⁵² Simon Shepherd and Mick Wallis, *Drama/Theatre/Performance* (London: Routledge, 2004), 193.

¹⁵³ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 16-17

never captured in static photographs. Such garments therefore have the potential to play a crucial part in Roach's process of 'kinesthetic imagination.'

2.7 Theatre Costume

With the notable exceptions of books such as James Laver's *Costume in the Theatre* (1964), a text now fifty years old, and Diana de Marley *Costume on the Stage 1600-1940* (1982), the history of theatrical costume has remained, until recently, relatively unexplored.¹⁵⁴ Laver's *Costume in the Theatre* was one of the earliest twentieth century surveys of theatrical costume. This book, like De Marly's *Costume on the Stage*, provided a useful narrative of key moments in the history of the development theatrical costume. Whilst De Marly did consider the impact of artistic taste and technological advancements such as the sewing machine on costume design, neither text engaged in more than a descriptive analysis of the surviving material.

Amongst researchers who have already identified this weakness is Aoife Monks, whose 2010 book *The Actor in Costume* takes important steps towards exploring the way audiences respond to actors 'in' and 'out' of costumes. As Monks acknowledges however:

There is an important book to be written about the actor's emotional and aesthetic relationship to costume but this is not it. Instead [she tries] to imagine what the costumed actor might do to - or for - the spectator at the theatre.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ James Laver, *Costume in the Theatre* (London: Harrap, 1964) and Diana De Marley, *Costume in the Theatre 1600-1940* (London: BT Batsford, 1982). Some discussion of costume also features in Ann R. Jones and Peter Stallybrass. *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2000) and Ann Hollander, *Seeing through Clothes* (New York: Viking Press, 1978), but in neither case is it the primary focus of the text.

¹⁵⁵ Aoife Monks, *The Actor in Costume* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 12.

Although, the book and its chapter titles are structured around notions of ‘dress’ and ‘undressing,’ Monks’ focus remains firmly on the wearer, rather than the ‘garments’ in which they are dressed. It is not until the Epilogue that Monks begins to consider costumes as objects and, specifically their function as carriers of memory. Chapter 5 of this thesis will draw upon Carlson and Roach to explore Monks’ suggestion that ‘costumes [can] act as a literally material memory of performance, permeated and formed by the work of performer.’¹⁵⁶ Building on Monks’ initial description of the ‘imprint of the work [production]’ which ‘continues in the textures, smells and shapes of the fabric left behind,’ the close reading of Terry’s costumes will draw attention to evidence preserved in ‘the traces’ they contain ‘of a lost performance and a lost body.’¹⁵⁷ It will also challenge Monks’ contention that a theatrical costume, although imprinted with key information, remains ‘stubbornly mute in its unwillingness to tell us “what really happened”’ and will demonstrate that, through the application of a specific object based methodology, previously ‘mute’ costumes can be made ‘to speak.’¹⁵⁸

In *Shakespeare and Costume* (2015) Patricia Lennox and Bella Mirabella seek to address the lack of publications which ‘[...] consider the importance of costumes as an interpretative element that goes beyond the production’s design aesthetic.’¹⁵⁹ They propose an approach which combines ‘theatre, performance and costume [dress] history with material culture’ to facilitate an ‘interdisciplinary conversation’ about Shakespeare and Costume.¹⁶⁰ This interdisciplinary approach facilitates important discussions about the costume practices from the sixteenth century to the present day, and illuminates the range of source material available to stimulate such ‘conversations.’ The book opens with

¹⁵⁶ Monks, *The Actor in Costume*, 140.

¹⁵⁷ Monks, *The Actor in Costume*, 140.

¹⁵⁸ Monks, *The Actor in Costume*, 140.

¹⁵⁹ Patricia Lennox, and Bella Mirabella, *Shakespeare and Costume* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015), 3.

¹⁶⁰ Lennox, and Mirabella, *Shakespeare and Costume*, 4.

a useful stage overview of the history of costume practices within Shakespeare productions. However, despite stressing the importance of material culture within their research, the ‘costumes’ themselves remain absent from the discussion.¹⁶¹ The range of theatre costumes connected with Shakespeare’s plays preserved in accessible collections within United Kingdom and beyond makes this a particularly a surprising omission.¹⁶²

Whilst Monks’ previous work concentrated almost entirely on the actor, her recent publication, in collaboration with the freelance designer and lecturer Ali Maclaurin, restores costumes and those who make and design these garments, to the discussion.¹⁶³

They aim to engage with costume,

[...] from multiple perspectives, thinking about its relationship to historicism and modern dress; examining its role onstage for actors and backstage in the ‘craft’ work of designers; thinking about the work it does to produce, reinforce or deconstruct systems of identity.¹⁶⁴

To achieve this they focus specifically on the twentieth and twenty first centuries, a parameter which allows them to incorporate interviews with a range of current ‘theatre artists’ into their text. These interviews offer important new perspectives on the design, function and power of theatre costume. They also acknowledge the crucial creative input of makers and designers, figures whose contribution to the creation of theatre productions is rarely documented within, and occasionally deliberately omitted from, records of historic theatrical productions.¹⁶⁵ Whilst, as was the case in *Shakespeare and Costume*,

¹⁶¹ Russell Jackson, ‘Brief Overview: A Stage History of Shakespeare and Costume,’ *Shakespeare and Costume*, ed. Patricia Lennox and Bella Mirabella (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2015) 9-20.

¹⁶² Examples include The Royal Shakespeare Company who hold their own archive of costumes, a variety of theatre costumes connected with Shakespeare productions are also held by the Victoria & Albert Museum, and the Museum of London. Within America the Stratford Shakespeare Festival also hold their own archive of costumes from their productions.

¹⁶³ Ali Maclaurin, and Aoife Monks, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice* (London, Palgrave, 2015).

¹⁶⁴ Maclaurin, and Monks, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 4.

¹⁶⁵ Helen Walter, for instance, notes how the actor/manager Henry Irving was credited with the ‘design and realization of all aspects of performance’ and that on at least one occasion, the name of figures responsible

there is no detailed analysis of extant costume, or indeed the fate of costumes after productions finish, the authors do convey the dramatic and emotional power of costume. They argue that costume does not stop ‘performing’ backstage, but ‘performs differently’ and consider the shifts which occur in the ‘qualities of their materiality’ which occur as their context and status alters¹⁶⁶ These initial discussions offer important insights into ‘the typical biography’ of a theatre costume, and the implications of the new ‘status’ accorded to costumes transferred into a ‘museum context.’ Also of particular relevance to this thesis is Monks’ suggestion that costumes can function as ‘the connective tissue’ between different productions. Her observation suggests that, as Chapter 5 will discuss, costumes also have the potential to play a part in the process of ‘ghosting’ described by Carlson and Roach.¹⁶⁷

One of the few dress historians to attempt to create a methodology and theory for research into theatrical costume has been Cumming (2004). In her book *Understanding Fashion History*, Cumming proffered a key and significant ‘introductory consideration of the how and why the clothing worn for performance can afford an extra dimension to the understanding of dress in society.’¹⁶⁸ Of particular relevance to the themes of this thesis is Cumming’s argument that theatrical costume can provide a vehicle through which to discuss topics which include ‘the relationship between artists and the theatre and the consequent impact on the changing styles of theatre costume.’ The focus of her writing in this instance however, is specifically upon ‘the changing attitudes towards fashions outside and within the theatre and the impact of one on the other.’¹⁶⁹ The case studies she discusses facilitate her exploration of the close parallels that can be traced between

for creating the costumes were omitted from Lyceum Theatre programmes. Walter, “Van Dyck in Action,” 167-9.

¹⁶⁶ Maclaurin and Monks, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 78.

¹⁶⁷ Monks refers specifically to costumes worn by Mark Rylance’s (b.1960) in the title role of two different productions of *Hamlet*. Maclaurin and Monks, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 73-4.

¹⁶⁸ Valerie Cumming, *Understanding Fashion History* (London: B.T. Batsford, 2004) 114.

¹⁶⁹ Cumming, *Understanding Fashion History*, 114.

fashionable and theatrical dress, and draw upon source material ranging from theatrical souvenirs and paintings, to extant garments. This chapter, whilst only touching upon ‘the supplementary evidence [available] to contextualise [a theatrical costume’s] production and use,’ provides ample support for Cumming’s concluding assertion that there remains ‘considerable scope for new work looking at the connections between performance and fashion.’¹⁷⁰

Theatre and Fashion

As Cumming’s work indicates, much of the current research relating to historic theatre costume within dress focuses on the relationship which developed between theatre and fashion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Partly in consequence of the profitable commercial partnerships established between couturiers and theatre managers during this period, the ‘theatre’ became an increasingly important ‘context’ for the formation and display of new fashions.¹⁷¹ Christopher Breward has made a series of significant contributions to the development of this discussion, particularly in relation to actress and their dress in the Edwardian period.¹⁷²

One of the most recent additions to the writing on this theme, is *Staging Fashion, 1880-1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, Billie Burke*.¹⁷³ Published to accompany an exhibition at the Bard Graduate Center, New York in 2012 it includes contributions from a range of

¹⁷⁰ Cumming, *Understanding Fashion History*, 129.

¹⁷¹ This link between theatre and Haute Couture was also the subject of an article by Nancy J. Troy entitled ‘The Theatre of Fashion: Staging Haute-Couture in Early 20th Century France’ which examines the relationship from the perspective of the couturier, rather than the theatre or performer. Nancy J. Troy, ‘The Theatre of Fashion: Staging Haute-Couture in Early 20th Century France’, *Theatre Journal* 53 (2001), 1-32.

¹⁷² Two of his key publications are ‘The Actress: Covent Garden and the Strand 1880-1914’ (2004) and ‘“At Home” at the St James’s: Dress, Décor and the Problem of Fashion in Edwardian Theatre’ (2010). Both pieces formed part of larger works, the first of the two was published in Breward’s 2004 *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis* (Oxford: Berg, 2004). The second was a contribution to Morna O’Neill, and Michael Hatt (Eds.). *The Edwardian Sense: Art, Design, and Performance in Britain, 1901-1910* (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 2010).

¹⁷³ Michele Majer, Lenard R. Berlanstein, Marlis Schweitzer, and Sheila Stowell. *Staging Fashion, 1880-1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, Billie Burke*. (New York: Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture, 2012).

established and emerging scholars within the field, and builds upon the foundations laid by Christopher Breward.

The majority of the book is shaped around the detailed examination of the dress worn by three actresses who dominated the stage during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: Jane Hading (1859-1941); Lily Elsie (1886-1962) and Billie Burke (1884-1970), each of whom was dressed by a leading couturier. All three cases studies examine surviving photographs, articles and garments to explore the actress' relationship with 'Fashion'; 'The Press'; 'The Photographer's Studio', and 'Advertising' to argue that the success achieved by these performers owed much to the distinct "personalities" they created on stage and cemented through their dress. Whilst this publication demonstrates the potential for further research in this area, and showcases a wealth of surviving material, surviving garments (though featured in the exhibition and illustrated in photographs within the text) remain largely absent from the discussion.

Respectability and taste

In 'The Actress: Covent Garden and the Strand 1880-1914' Breward's research centred upon the part Gaiety and Musical Comedy played in the establishment of what he terms 'a modern iconography of fashionable celebrity which set up alternative models for stylish contemporary living to those previously promoted by the dictates of the aristocratic 'Season' or the West End and the Parisian dressmaker.'¹⁷⁴ Within his discussion Breward considers the extent to which turn of the century actresses, conscious that they were operating within 'a well networked fashion culture which bracketed the thespian identity to a sartorial renaissance,' began to take control of their presentation both on and off the stage.¹⁷⁵ This 'public persona' was, Breward argues, of necessity

¹⁷⁴ Breward, *Fashioning London*, 72.

¹⁷⁵ Breward, *Fashioning London*, 87.

‘manufactured and inauthentic’ and an actress such as Marie Tempest (1864-1942), who was ‘an expert in self-promotion,’ could use her ‘personal style’ to appeal to the tastes and outlook of her ‘rising lower middle-class audience.’¹⁷⁶ Breward’s discussion established the significant role dress played in the process of self-fashioning by actresses. This, together with the arguments Breward raises regarding ‘authenticity’ and notions of ‘control,’ will be a central concern within discussions of Terry’s use of dress in the creation and management of her ‘public persona’ in Chapters 6.

In ‘At Home’ at the St James’s: Dress, Décor and the Problem of Fashion in Edwardian Theatre’ (2010) Breward contends that the Victorian and Edwardian ‘Popular Theatre’ played a significant role in ‘promoting powerful versions of fashionable femininity, through the figure of the celebrity actress.’ He suggests that from circa 1892 a form of drama developed, ‘whose primary function was the promotion of contemporary trends.’¹⁷⁷ The result was that not only the figures appearing on the stage, but the stages themselves, became part of what Breward describes as ‘a parallel process of presentation.’¹⁷⁸

To explore this process of presentation further, Breward focuses specifically on the period during which the St. James Theatre was under the management of George Alexander (1858-1918) and his wife Florence (1858[?]-1946). He credits Florence Alexander, described in *The Sketch* as ‘one of the best dressed women in London,’ with a ‘crucial creative role’ in the presentation of both the theatre and its productions. He outlines her close collaboration with the set and costume designer W.G. Robertson and her profitable partnerships with West End dressmakers such as Mesdames Savage and Purdue who

¹⁷⁶ Breward, *Fashioning London*, 88-91.

¹⁷⁷ Breward makes specific reference to the 1892 production of *In Town* staged at the Prince of Wales Theatre, which he suggests, established the precedent for this form of drama. See Breward, “‘At Home’ at the St. James’s,” 144-5.

¹⁷⁸ Breward, “At Home at the St James,” 148.

produced costumes for thirteen productions between 1892 and 1897.¹⁷⁹ Although Breward focuses on the Edwardian Theatre, his examination of Florence Alexander's dominant role in the design of both set and costume at St James' offers a parallel case study against which to set an investigation of the partnership between Irving and Terry at the Lyceum: in particular, the evidence surrounding Terry's involvement in the design not only of her costumes, but those of fellow performers, which will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Costume as a deliberate 'Challenge' and 'Statement'

An area which, as yet, remains comparatively underexplored, is 'the complex relationship between theatre, fashion and society.'¹⁸⁰ One of the first texts to draw attention to the potential for research into this area was Sheila Stowell and Joel Kaplan's ground breaking book, *Theatre and Fashion from Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes* (1994).¹⁸¹ Kaplan and Stowell explore the significance of theatrical costume not only as part of a 'theatricalised fashion show' but also as a potential political statement. They also examine efforts by Edwardian feminists 'to use both Haute couture and the stage to challenge gender stereotypes and aesthetic conventions.'¹⁸² Whilst the connection between fashion and theatre is already established, Kaplan and Stowell set out 'to reassess [the] self-conscious employment of stage dress,' particularly in relation to the Suffrage Movement, opening up new and fertile ground for future research.¹⁸³ Their work is particularly relevant to Chapter 5, which examines some of the costumes Terry wore during her involvement

¹⁷⁹ Breward, "At Home at the St James'", 155.

¹⁸⁰ Joel H. Kaplan, and Sheila Stowell. *Theatre and Fashion: Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) n.p.

¹⁸¹ Joel H. Kaplan, and Sheila Stowell. *Theatre and Fashion: Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

¹⁸² Kaplan and Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, n.p.

¹⁸³ Kaplan and Stowell present their work as a challenge to Roland Barthes' condemnation of couture houses and as a case study through which to discuss in relation to arguments about signification. They refer specifically to Barthes' "The Disease of Costume" *Critical Essays*, trans. B.Howard (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972). Kaplan and Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, 2.

with the ‘Pioneer Players’ (the theatrical company founded by Terry’s daughter in 1911, which staged work to promote women’s suffrage and related social reforms).¹⁸⁴

Kaplan and Stowell also touch upon the control actresses could exert over their stage dress during this period. Their examination of Mrs. Patrick Campbell (1865-1940) offers an insight into the manner in which a successful actress, such as Terry, could fashion her on and off stage identity through her costumes. Kaplan and Stowell demonstrate how ‘the body and wardrobe of a single actress’ were ‘used to create and ultimately dismantle a peculiarly English form of drama.’¹⁸⁵ They show how, by working with her personal dressmaker, Campbell was able to employ her costumes to ‘resist’ and ‘rewrite’ the text she was performing, and to reject her previous reputation as a ‘lady in couture house gowns.’¹⁸⁶ Their analysis demonstrates the communicative power of dress both on and off the stage within Victorian and Edwardian society, a theme which will be explored further in Chapters 5 and 6.¹⁸⁷

Costumes as ‘material objects’

As this overview has shown, whilst theatrical costumes have not been entirely absent from either dress or theatre history, few researchers have exploited the unique evidence preserved within their physical structure.¹⁸⁸ Signs of a move towards the examination of

¹⁸⁴ This chapter will discuss her role as Nance Oldfield in *A Pageant of Great Women*, staged at the Scala Theatre, London in 1909 and her revival of this role in *The First Actress*, at the Kingsway Theatre in 1911 and also her 1906 performance as Kniertje in *The Good Hope* which she reprised during the second season of the company.

¹⁸⁵ Kaplan and Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, 3-4.

¹⁸⁶ Kaplan and Stowell focus on Campbell’s performance as the seamstress Theodosia Hemming in the 1904 production of *Warp and Woof*. This production sought to draw attention to ‘the abuses of an exploitative dress trade’ and audiences expecting to see Campbell as ‘a vision in tulle, furs and feathers, gliding gracefully through a succession of West End parlors’, whose gowns ‘they themselves had come to copy’, were instead confronted with ‘a towering Mrs. Pat, clad entirely in dressmaker’s black’ ruling over a shabby dress shop. Kaplan and Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, 3-4, 94-65.

¹⁸⁷ Kaplan and Stowell, *Theatre and Fashion*, 60.

¹⁸⁸ Though interesting and valuable articles has been published on theatre costume, the same ‘absence’ of the surviving garments is also apparent. See for instance, Lydia Edwards, “Trilby’s Dress: Reception, Inspiration and Interpretation,” *Theatre Notebook* 65.3 (2011): 171-188 and Rachel Fensham, “Designing for Movement: Dance Costume, Art Schools and Natural Movement in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Design History* 28.4 (2015): 348-367.

physical garments within dress and theatre history can be seen in Walter's (2013) advocacy of a methodology which looks more closely at the costumes themselves. It was her detailed examination of Irving's costumes for the role of *Charles I* (a part Irving first played in 1872) which led her to conclude that '[...] it seemed to be the overall impression of Irving's figure,' rather than the design of the costume itself 'upon which his appearance was authenticated [by audiences and critics] as a "startling reproduction of Charles I's dress.' Significantly for this thesis, Walter's new perspective on Irving's approach to costuming, directly contradicts '[...] the idea that costume design in this period was specifically "archaeological" in nature' and suggests that '[...] although portraits were used for inspiration, other factors, such as the nature of the theatrical space, practical considerations, and ideas of character were just as important to the realisation of theatrical costume.'¹⁸⁹

Donatella Barbieri (2013) has also demonstrated the rewards of working with theatre costumes as 'material objects.' Using Prown's process of description, deduction and speculation as a starting point, she proposes a '[...] methodology of enquiry based on analysing costume as a material, performative object.'¹⁹⁰ For Barbieri, whilst '[...] existing historical studies provide readings of the context of performance, it is ultimately necessary to return to consider technology and production to really understand the paradoxes presented by this mute costume/museum object.'¹⁹¹

Writing from the perspective of an experienced 'costume practitioner' who considers 'the performativity of materials [...] at every stage of producing the specifically costumed body,' Barbieri emphasises the importance of recognising that theatre costumes are garments constructed '[...] through the application of expert embodied, material and

¹⁸⁹ Walter, "'Van Dyck in Action,'" 167, 172.

¹⁹⁰ Donatella Barbieri, "Performativity and the historical body: Detecting performance through the archived costume," *Studies in Theatre and Performance* 33.3 (2013): 281-301, 281.

¹⁹¹ Barbieri, "Performativity and the historical body," 282.

culture knowledge.’¹⁹² This expertise enables Barbieri to appreciate the ‘technical complexity’ of costumes and to identify evidence ‘of the expert engineering deployed in the construction.’¹⁹³ Barbieri therefore positions theatre costumes as an embodiment not only of its original wearer but also of the individuals responsible for their design and construction whose ‘voice,’ as she notes, ‘remains largely unheard.’¹⁹⁴

Through her close engagement with a jacket worn by the clown, Charlie Keith (1836-1895), she seeks to expose not only ‘[...] the “text,” inscribed in the archived costume redolent of the performer’s body’ but also to ‘[...] articulate the performativity of the “impertinent” costume of the clown’ by separating the costume, from the performer.¹⁹⁵ In endeavouring to separate ‘costume’ from ‘performer,’ Barbieri does not overlook the relationship between ‘body’ and ‘costume,’ and pays close attention to the evidence surviving garments reveal regarding adaptations to accommodate props, facilitate movement and emphasise, or conceal, the physicality of their wearers.¹⁹⁶

For Barbieri, costume has the potential to ‘empower its wearer’ endowing them with dignity and presence and creating a ‘self-sufficient stage persona.’ It can become a literal ‘second body’ distorting the proportions of the wearer and altering their movement.¹⁹⁷ Barbieri demonstrates that successful costumes have the potential to ‘become a blueprint’ for future designers and performers. She also considers ‘The ‘agency’ of costume, suggesting that it ‘could be greater than the body inside,’ indeed, on occasion, actually acting as a substitute for the body of performer: an idea which Chapter 5 will explore further.’¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 283-4.

¹⁹³ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 289.

¹⁹⁴ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 283.

¹⁹⁵ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 283.

¹⁹⁶ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 287-92.

¹⁹⁷ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 295.

¹⁹⁸ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 297.

Barbieri's discussions resonate with Bill Brown's interrogation of Jean Baudrillard's arguments surrounding 'the object' and 'the subject', in particular Baudrillard's assertion that 'the object is often intelligible only as 'the alienated, accursed part of the subject.'¹⁹⁹ The gap Brown identifies between 'the function of objects and the desire congealed there' is particularly apparent in historic theatre costumes which, in becoming 'museum objects,' cease to fulfil their practical 'function' and are 'reconstituted' by society as garments which represent the 'desire and affection' inspired by the performer or production for which they were originally created.²⁰⁰ Brown's arguments offer a means through which to analyse the theatre costumes selected for preservation within museum collections, which derive their privileged status as historic objects from an association with a celebrated wearer or production, rather than through their original function.

The implications of this connection between historic theatre costumes (objects) and their original wearers (subjects) will be explored in Chapter 5. This chapter will also draw upon Susan Pearce's theories surrounding the 'chains of meanings' that can be present simultaneously within a single object, which provides a further route through which to investigate the ability of costumes to embody a series of individuals or productions, rather than a single performer.²⁰¹ Uniting Pearce's theories with Barbieri's discussions, it will examine the extent to which Terry's costumes might act as a 'substitute' for, or 're-embodiment of' the actress. In the course of this discussion Chapter 5 will also engage with Hodgdon's exploration of the 'material memory system' within which historic costumes become enmeshed when they are deliberately resurrected and worn again by other performers and will consider the material and emotional link this creates between

¹⁹⁹ Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, trans. Philip Beitchman and W.G.J. Niesluchowski, ed. Jim Fleming (New York, 1990) 111. Cited by Bill Brown in "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28.1, Things (Autumn, 2001), 8

²⁰⁰ Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28.1, Things (Autumn, 2001): 1-22, 13, 15

²⁰¹ Susan Pearce, "Objects as meaning; or narrating the past," *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994).

past and current wearers and productions.²⁰² The significance of this ‘material link’ will be examined further by drawing upon Roach’s discussion of ‘effigies,’ specifically their ability to ‘produce memory through surrogation’ and thereby fill a vacancy created by the absence of an original.’²⁰³ For Roach ‘performed effigies – those fabricated from human bodies and the associations they provoke’ are particularly significant, as they offer ‘[...] communities a means of perpetuating themselves through specially nominated mediums or surrogates.’²⁰⁴ Chapter 5 of this thesis will argue that historic theatre costumes, through their intimate material and symbolic connections with now ‘absent’ performers, have the potential to, and indeed have acted as, ‘surrogates,’ which literally ‘re-member’ the bodies which once inhabited them.²⁰⁵

2.8 Conclusion

As Chapter 1 discussed, this thesis adopts an object based approach to research, drawing upon a multiplicity of source material to re-examine and analyse Terry’s dress on and off the stage, and the social, historic and artistic context which shaped her clothing choices. This chapter has introduced the interrelated themes which this material culture approach will be used to illuminate. It has also outlined breadth of the literature within dress history, theatre history, material culture and related disciplines upon which this discussion will be founded. Through this process it has identified key gaps within existing research, specifically, the general absence of surviving theatrical costume from within the source material currently employed within both dress and theatre history and, consequently, much analytical discussion of its value in either field.

²⁰² Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 160-1.

²⁰³ Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36.

²⁰⁴ Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36. Roach has explored this idea further through the specific case study of the royal effigy of Charles II and the role this ‘traditional royal effigy’ played in efforts to ‘[...] preserve and publicise the image of an individual in the absence of his person.’ Roach, *It*, 46-7

²⁰⁵ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 36.

This thesis, by contrast, will highlight the crucial evidence which can be gathered from extant costumes, and demonstrate the important role these garments play both in the original performance and in its ‘recovery.’ As Chapter 4 will show, in order to carry out a complete and successful analysis of surviving theatrical costume, it is essential that such garments are examined in relation to their original historical and theatrical context. The physical evidence revealed through a close examination of a surviving costume, must therefore be combined with information drawn from related primary source material, be it visual material, written commentary or comparable extant garments. Only then, does it become possible to reanimate what Monks termed, this ‘incomplete body.’²⁰⁶

As Nicklas and Pollen have declared ‘[...] dress has a uniquely expressive capacity to carry a range of cultural information and meanings, past and present.’²⁰⁷ The analysis of Terry’s costumes undertaken here will therefore extend far beyond the practical purpose of theatrical costumes as physical objects, by considering their role as carriers of ‘meaning,’ ‘identity’ and ‘memory.’

This thesis is therefore not only concerned with theatre costumes, but also with the bodies which once inhabited them. It will show that both historic theatre costumes, and the performers who wear them, have the capacity to carry both personal and public memories acting as, what Roach termed, ‘an eccentric but meticulous curator of cultural memory [and] a medium for speaking with the dead.’ The next chapter will therefore examine the ‘theatrical traditions’ and ‘memories’ within which Terry was enmeshed and the influence these factors had upon her approach to performance and dress.²⁰⁸ This chapter will also establish the social and historical environment within which Terry rose to prominence and will provide vital context for the analysis of Terry’s personal dress and

²⁰⁶ Monks, *The Actor in Costume*, 140.

²⁰⁷ Nicklas and Pollen, *Dress History*, 12.

²⁰⁸ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 80.

theatrical costume which follows. It will provide a foundation from which Chapters 4 and 5 will establish a methodology for the research and analysis of historic theatre costume, whilst Chapter 6 will illustrate the crucial role that Terry's dress played in her 'self-fashioning' both on, and off, the stage.

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CHAPTER 3 – ELLEN TERRY: ACTRESS

Introduction

When seeking to analyse a ‘theatrical event,’ as Postlewait argues, the ‘theatre historian’ must not limit his or her ‘attention to the aesthetic qualities’ of a production, but also examine the ‘[...] many intentions, factions, actions, and aims that were distributed not only among the production team, and performers but also a [...] community of spectators and reviewers’: the ‘historical context.’¹ Whilst a theatrical costume is only one element of the total ‘theatrical event’ Postlewait describes, any analysis of theatrical costume is equally dependent on possessing a full understanding of the ‘historical conditions’ which contributed to their ‘identity and meanings.’² Of specific significance to the analysis of a theatrical costume, or indeed any example of historic dress, is an awareness of the factors which shaped the process of design, construction and use (action), and which influenced the public reception of the garment and its wearer (reaction).³

This chapter therefore provides the historical context required to understand and analyse Terry and her theatre costumes. It will establish the theatrical environment within which she was trained and rose to prominence and will introduce the figures who had a formative influence on her attitude to dress and movement on the stage. It will examine her career in relation to broader contextual issues, in particular, the social position of actresses and their status within the theatrical profession during this period. This will feed into an initial

¹ Postlewait, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 21, 225.

² Postlewait, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 119.

³ Postlewait, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, 124-5. As Chapter 1 discussed, Riello and McNeill attach the same importance to gaining an understanding of the context which shaped clothing choices in their introduction to *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives*, 8.

consideration of the impact Terry's celebrity had upon her 'public' and 'private' identity, a theme that shall be explored further in Chapter 6.

The focus throughout the discussion will be on the manner in which the historic, theatrical, artistic and social context within which Terry was performing, shaped her attitude towards costume and performance.

3.1 Early Years and Training

'A child of the stage'⁴

The daughter of two 'strolling players,' Benjamin (1818–96) and Sarah Terry (1819–92), Terry was immersed in the world of the theatre from her birth in 1847.⁵ Four of her eight surviving siblings also became actors and, as Terry explained in her autobiography, she could not recall

[...] when it was first decided that I was to go on the stage, but I expect it was when I was born, for in those days theatrical folk did not imagine that their children *could* do anything but follow their parents' profession.⁶

The theatrical career selected by her parents was unstable and did not offer a regular, or reliable, income. Prior to the introduction of 'long runs' in the 1860s, most actors relied

⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 1.

⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 5. Roger Manvell offers a useful account of Terry's parents in his biography of the actress. Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography*, 3-6. Manvell's research also uncovered the first proof, in the Register of births for the district of St Johns and St Michaels Coventry, that Terry was born, not in 1848 as the actress herself believed, but in 1847. Manvell, *Ellen Terry: A Biography*, vi.

⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 3. Terry's parents had eleven children, two of whom died in infancy, Of Terry's surviving siblings her elder sister Kate (1844-1924), and her younger siblings Marion (1853-1930), Florence (1856-1896) and Fred Terry (1863-1933) all pursued successful careers on the stage. Her brothers George (1852-1928) and Charles (1858-1933), though not performers, also followed careers connected with the theatre. Little is known about Terry's two remaining brothers, Benjamin (born 1839) and Tom (born 1860). The elder Ben, emigrated first to Australia and then to India, whilst Tom, whose career and life were often disreputable and insecure, was continually in need of financial support from his more successful siblings. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 48, 146 and Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 30-36.

upon ‘run of the piece contracts,’ and even actors who were hired for ‘provincial summer tours and long overseas tours of many months or years duration [...] forfeited the stability of a permanent residence.’⁷ As her parents were generally obliged to follow ‘engagements,’ Terry’s childhood was characterised by frequent travel in which there was limited opportunity for any formal education in a ‘*real school*.’⁸ This upbringing departed significantly from the private, domestic, environment, which, as Chapter 2 discussed, was traditionally advocated for young middle class women in the late nineteenth century.⁹ Furthermore the education Terry did receive was intended only to equip her with the skills required for a career on the stage, and focused on her movement and elocution, rather than on domestic skills or academic subjects. Her teachers were drawn from amongst her employers, colleagues, and family and the training she received could take place at any time and anywhere. In her autobiography Terry described how:

At breakfast father would begin the day's “coaching.” Often I had to lay down my fork and say my lines. He would conduct these extra rehearsals anywhere—in the street, the 'bus—we were never safe! I remember vividly going into a chemist's shop and being stood upon a stool to say my part to the chemist! ¹⁰

⁷ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 7 and 22. For a more detailed discussion of the unstable nature of the theatrical profession see also T.C. Davis, *Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 56. Although Terry received no formal education, her younger siblings were sent to school. Indeed, as Terry notes in her autobiography, their education was, to some extent, funded by the earnings of Terry and her sister, Kate. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 35.

⁹ As Chapter 2 noted, the idea of separate of ‘spheres’, with women confined to the domestic space and the role of mother, carer and passive support for her husband has been discussed in detail elsewhere. Jeffrey Richards’ account of Irving’s career, and the actor’s partnership with Terry, provides a valuable outline of how the education, social, and professional environments experienced by members of the acting profession of both sexes, departed from the ideals and traditions which characterised nineteenth century society. Jeffrey Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and his World* (London: Hambledon, 2005), 42-44.

¹⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 16.

Both she, and her sister Kate (1844-1924), were taught to strive for ‘clear articulation’ and Terry recalls that her father ‘[...] never ceased teaching me to be useful, alert, and quick [...] and always he corrected me if I pronounced any word in a slipshod fashion.’ As she reflected, [...] if I now speak my language well it is in no small degree due to my early training.’¹¹

Examining reviews of Terry’s lecture tour to New Zealand and Australia in 1914 Katherine E. Kelly noted that critics frequently mentioned Terry’s ‘[...] extraordinarily expressive voice as one of the remarkable qualities of her performance.’¹² Similarly in 1888 another reviewer praised Terry’s mastery of the ‘[...] art of voice projection,’ and described how ‘without the slightest effort, [Terry] can be heard, even if she whispers. Every note in her voice is distinct and audible.’¹³ The quality of Terry’s voice and delivery consistently earned the actress praise throughout her career, and played a significant part in Terry’s continuing ability to ‘charm’ audiences, even in her final years.

Systematic training

Terry was unusually fortunate to receive such comparatively intensive and systematic professional training. Until the last decades of the nineteenth century, when the employment market became increasingly competitive for performers, the training available to aspiring actors and actresses within Britain remained informal and relatively unstructured.¹⁴ Julie Holledge describes how most actresses therefore relied upon lessons

¹¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 8.

¹² Katherine E. Kelly, “The After Voice of Ellen Terry,” *Ellen Terry Spheres of Influence*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), 71.

¹³ “Revival of *The Amber Heart*,” May 23rd, 1888, Press Cutting, pasted in Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1884-1892*, Garrick Club, London.

¹⁴ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as working women*, 36. This was in contrast to European Theatre practices in countries such as France where state theatres provided more regimented training systems and career trajectories. John Stokes touches upon the French approach to training and performance in Stokes, *The French Actress and her English Audience* (2005). A related discussion of the contrast between European and British attitudes to acting and performance styles is offered by Marshall in “Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress” (2007) and also Hindson in *Female Performance Practice* (2007).

from fellow performers. She suggests that it was not until 1896 that the first acting academy was established by the actor/manager Sir Philip Barling [Ben Greet] (1857–1936) in Bedford Street, The Strand.¹⁵ As Ross Prior notes however, Greet was not the only figure seeking to encourage systematic training of performers. In 1883, the actor Sir Francis Robinson Benson [Frank Benson] (1858-1939) had established his Shakespeare Company and the actress and theatre manager Sarah Thorne (1838-1899) had also set up at school at the Theatre Royal, Margate in 1885. Another prominent figure seeking to promote more formal training for performers, was Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree (1852-1917). Tree established a training school at the Haymarket Theatre in 1904, the popularity of which was such that it soon moved to a larger venue in Gower Street and remains in operation as the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art today.¹⁶

Before such schools were established most novice performers spent several years building up experience and contacts within the profession. As Jeffrey Richards has explained, Terry's stage partner, Henry Irving (1838-1905) was amongst those performers obliged to rely upon the 'slovenly and haphazard training of minor and provincial theatres.' Here he had little opportunity to learn the 'proper stage bearing, good elocution and artistic self-containment' which were instilled in Terry from a young age.¹⁷ As a result, an eighteen-year-old Irving spent ten years in the provinces working with various stock companies and a further five working at theatres in London, in order to acquire the experience needed to earn a long-term engagement with the Bateman's Company at the Lyceum Theatre, in 1871. Irving then served another seven years apprenticeship with the

¹⁵ Julie Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre* (London: Virago, 1981) 11.

¹⁶ Ross W. Prior, *Teaching Actors: knowledge transfer in actor training* (Bristol: Intellect, 2012), 7-8.

¹⁷ Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, 306-7. Richards is responding to the particularly harsh critique of Irving's acting published jointly in 1877 by William Archer, Robert Lowe and George Halkett. See William Archer and Robert W. Lowe, *The Fashionable Tragedian: A Criticism* (Edinburgh: T. Gray and Co, 1877).

Batemans before rising to a position where he could take over the management of the Theatre in 1878.¹⁸

An alternative route to success was, as Bratton discusses, ‘from a base within a theatrical family.’ Whilst Bratton recognises that there were opportunities for women who were not part of a theatrical family, she emphasises that ‘Deep theatrical roots provided a kind of aristocracy of theatrical, rather than landed property, within which women could take a leading place, if their talents so enabled them.’¹⁹ Gardner also refers to the concept of a ‘theatrical aristocracy,’ arguing that one manner in which a performer sought to cement their position within this exclusive circle was through the ‘insertion of self, and *assertion* of self, in *The Green Room Book*.’²⁰ The significance of appearing in this publication, which contained the biographies of ‘eminent actors, dramatists and critics,’ lay, Gardner asserts, in its self-proclaimed status as a ‘serious guide to the contemporary stage’²¹ She argues that figures featured in its pages, among them ‘Ellen Terry and Mrs. Kendal,’ therefore represented ‘not only the “aristocracy” of theatre families, but also the acme of theatrical and artistic success and respectability.’²²

Being born into a theatrical family certainly played a crucial part in enabling both Terry and Dame Madge Kendal (1848-1935) to reach positions within the acting hierarchy that were deemed worthy of recognition in first edition of *The Green Room Book*. Kendal, like Terry, was brought up parents who worked on the stage, soon joining them on ‘the

¹⁸ Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 88. The challenges faced by Irving during the early years of his career are discussed in Madeleine Bingham, *Henry Irving and the Victorian Theatre* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1978) and more recently in Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World* (2005); Richard Foulkes, *Henry Irving: a re-evaluation of the pre-eminent Victorian actor-manager* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008) and Holroyd in *A Strange Eventful History* (2008).

¹⁹ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 148.

²⁰ Gardner, “The Three Nobodies,” 33. The full title of this publication, first printed in 1906, was *The Green Room Book or Who’s Who on the Stage: An Annual Biographical Record of the Dramatic and Musical Variety World*, it was published in London by T.Sealey and Clark and edited by Bampton Hunt.

²¹ *The Green Room Book*, 1907, p.xi. Quoted in Gardner, “The Three Nobodies,” 33.

²² Gardner, “The Three Nobodies,” 33.

Lincoln circuit' and making her stage debut, under the management of her father, the actor, William Robertson (d.1872), at the Marylebone Theatre in 1854. Kendal subsequently went on to work in Bristol and Bradford in the 1860s, before gradually establishing herself as a leading performer on the London stage.²³ During her time in Bristol, Kendal worked in the same stock company as Terry, and also performed alongside her in a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, at the Theatre Royal, Bath, in 1863. Portrayed as antagonistic rivals in the press, both Terry and Kendal used their autobiographies to deny that any hostility existed between them. They certainly proved willing to work together in the later years of their careers, appearing alongside one another as Mistress Page (Terry) and Mistress Ford (Kendal) in the 1902 Coronation production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* at His Majesty's Theatre.²⁴

Stage debut

Terry received her first theatrical 'engagement' from the actor/manager Charles Kean (1811-1868) in 1856 and she soon came to appreciate the importance of her early training. Kean, who became joint lessee of the Princess' Theatre, London in 1850, was amongst the 'small and large scale entrepreneurial managers' who had exploited a change in the legislation governing the theatrical industry which took place in 1843, four years before Terry's birth.²⁵

The 'Theatre Regulation Act' abolished 'the monopoly which, since 1660, had restricted performances of legitimate plays in London to Covent Garden and Drury Lane,' thereby dissolving '[...]the separation between "major" and "minor theatres"; and between

²³ Kendal provides a vivid account of her early life and career in her autobiography written in collaboration with Rudolph de Cordova and published in 1933. Madge Kendal and Rudolph de Cordova, *Dame Madge Kendal: by herself* (London: J. Murray, 1933.)

²⁴ Kendal, *Dame Madge Kendal*, 25-27 and Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 104-5.

²⁵ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 6.

“legitimate” and “illegitimate” drama.’²⁶ As Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow show, the theatres which were successful in the period between the passing of the Act in 1843, and the ‘boom’ of the mid 1860s ‘tended to be those with a well-defined repertoire.’²⁷ The result was that, as T.C. Davis explains, many West End houses became ‘inextricably associated with their particular genre, production style, and material.’²⁸ Kean’s company presented, what Alan Hughes describes as, ‘a solid repertory of “gentlemanly melodrama” and scholarly productions of Shakespeare.’ Kean was not the only manager reclaiming Shakespeare’s plays however, and he faced competition from Samuel Phelps and the Sadler’s Wells Company (1844-62) who also played a significant part in firmly re-establishing Shakespeare on the popular stage.²⁹ As Chapter 5 will discuss, Kean’s productions were distinguished by the importance attached to ‘historical authenticity.’³⁰ In fact, though Terry admired Kean’s acting, the actress attached far greater importance to the manager’s legacy as ‘a stage reformer than as an actor’ and felt that, whilst

²⁶ Foulkes, *Henry Irving: a re-evaluation of the pre-eminent Victorian actor-manager*, 1 and Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2001) ix. Whilst it is difficult to provide a precise definition of ‘legitimate drama’ T.C. Davis employs the phrase ‘legitimate drama’ to encompass ‘tragedy, comedy and farce.’ The category can be defined as ‘spoken drama’ as opposed to either the ‘opera’ and ‘the circus,’ both of forms of entertainment that could include ‘ballet’ and which T.C. Davis identifies as the competitors of legitimate drama. T.C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914*, 19. As Mayer has noted, by the late nineteenth century the category of ‘illegitimate drama’ had expanded to include further ‘music based entertainments’ and might also encompass ‘burlesques, extravaganzas, pantomimes, variety theatres, aerialists, acrobats, gymnasts, contortionists, cyclists, Indian club virtuosi and other [performers] exhibiting physical skills.’ Mayer, “The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film,” 75-6.

²⁷ Whilst, as Davis and Emeljanow discuss, the period between 1843 and 1866 was marked by uncertainty and an ongoing financial depression, by circa 1866 a ‘boom in theatre building’ was taking place, and this continued until the end of the century. Alongside the licensed venues there were also saloon theatres and music halls, with their own specific venues and repertoire. As Davis and Emeljanow stress, theatre going was not strictly divided on a class basis, and ‘both theatres and music halls catered to mixed clienteles, sometimes within one building, sometimes according to neighbourhood.’ Davis and Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880*, x, 170.

²⁸ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 20.

²⁹ Alan Hughes, *Henry Irving, Shakespearean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 3. Michael Booth also provides an illuminating outline of Kean and the nature of theatre in London during this period in Michael Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). See in particular 47-49.

³⁰ This policy was, Hughes argues, enormously assisted by the Queen’s patronage. Hughes, *Henry Irving, Shakespearean*, 3.

[...] the old happy-go-lucky way of staging plays, with its sublime indifference to correctness of detail and its utter disregard of archaeology, had received its first blow from Kemble and Macready [...] Charles Kean gave it much harder knocks and went further than either of them in the good work.³¹

An eight-year-old Terry made her debut with Kean's company in the role of Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale* in April 1856. An insight into Kean's attention to detail can be gleaned from Terry's recollections of the production. She remembered not only the 'little red-and-silver dress' and 'very pink [and baggy] tights' she wore in the production, but also the pride inspired by her 'beautiful "property."' This 'property,' '[...] a go-cart, which had been made in the theatre by Mr. Bradshaw,' was '[...] an exact copy of a child's toy as depicted on a Greek vase.'³² [FIGURE 3.1] As Terry's descriptions suggest, Kean's productions attracted audiences by offering them an experience in which 'Archaeological findings and the Mediaeval Court could [...] come to life,' a 'simulacra' which 'gained an immediacy and authenticity [through its] integration with the fictional lives of the characters on stage.'³³ Booth, Davis and Emeljanow, trace the long-term impact of Kean's 'antiquarian approach' in the spectacular and laboriously researched Shakespearean productions subsequently staged by managers such as the Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales Theatre in the 1870s. They also identify clear connections to 'the living historical pictures' presented by Irving at the Lyceum Theatre, and also by Beerbohm Tree at the Haymarket Theatre from 1887-1889 and, latterly, at Her Majesty's Theatre.³⁴

³¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 9.

³² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14-15.

³³ Davis and Emeljanow attribute some of Kean's success to the popularity and proximity of the 1851 Great Exhibition and the interest this spectacle stimulated in the cultures and objects of the past. Davis and Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880*, 197-199.

³⁴ Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age*, 48 and Davis and Emeljanow, *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880*, 200.

Significantly for this thesis Terry would work with all these figures at various stages in her career.



Figure 3.1 - Photographer unknown. Charles Kean as Leontes and Ellen Terry as Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale*, Princess's Theatre, 1856. Sepia photograph on paper. 19.4 x 14.5cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:146-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry spent three years, (between the ages of eight and eleven), as part of Kean's company, performing in Shakespearean productions, melodramas and pantomimes and leaving only when the Kean's management of the Princess Theatre ended in 1859.³⁵ During this period Terry received instruction in skills that were to prove crucial to her subsequent stage success. As the actress recalled, one of 'the most wearisome, yet

³⁵ Whilst part of the Kean's company Terry's principal roles included Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale* and Puck in *Midsummer Night's Dream* (both 1856), Fairy Goldenstar in the Christmas Pantomime (1857), Prince Arthur in *King John* (October 1858) and Karl in a revival of *Faust and Marguerite*. Never 'out of the bill' except when recovering from a broken toe in 1857, Terry was also cast in smaller parts in the 'extra productions' required to 'fill the bill', was 'a little boy "cheering" in several other production and performed non-speaking roles in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Richard II* and *Henry VIII*. See Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 21.

essential details' of her education, was connected with the costume that she was required to wear as Fairy Goldenstar in the Princess Theatre's 1857 Christmas Pantomime.³⁶

This costume, 'as pink and gold as it was trailing,' was Terry's 'first long dress.' It was Mr. Oscar Byrn (fl.1856), at that time employed by the Keans as 'the dancing-master and director of crowds,' who taught Terry how to manage her trailing skirts. Under his guidance Terry learnt to achieve the 'uprightness of carriage and certainty of step' essential to 'the art of deportment.'³⁷ Her graceful movement 'won high praise from Mr. Byrn' and Terry emphasises the long-term 'value [of] all his [Byrn's] drilling.' She continued to attach great importance to being able to move gracefully, and appropriately in her costumes throughout her career. Indeed, as Chapter 4 and 5 will discuss, and her costume designer Comyns-Carr regretfully observed, Terry, though possessing 'a fine sense' of historical dress, would 'jib at fashions that she fancied might interfere with her movement while acting.'³⁸

Formidable role models

Another figure who had a significant long-term impact on Terry was Kean's wife, née Ellen Tree (1805-1880). Terry expressed immense gratitude for the patience and industry exhibited by her extremely 'accomplished', if 'formidable,' teacher, and recognises the significance of the training she received.³⁹ Her recollections present Mrs. Kean as '[...]

³⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 20.

³⁷ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 20-21.

³⁸ Comyns-Carr contrasts Terry's attitude with that of the actress Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) who had a reputation for a 'love of correctness of detail [which] amounted almost to a passion' and once assured that 'a certain costume was absolutely authentic [...] never flinched from wearing it.' Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences* (London: Hutchinson, 1926), 215-6.

³⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 11. When preparing for the role of Puck Mrs. Kean, provided Terry with further lessons in clear enunciation and also taught the actress how to 'draw [her] breath in through my nose and begin a laugh,' which was, as Terry notes, 'a very valuable accomplishment!' Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 18.

the leading spirit in the theatre; at the least, a joint ruler, not a queen-consort.⁴⁰ An assessment of the Kean's working partnership which supports Bratton's assertion that Ellen Kean represents the '[...] most obviously hidden influence on the development of the West End [...], a successful actress whose fame was - quite deliberately - entirely subsumed into her choice of role and title of Mrs. Kean.' Whilst Bratton feels that the Kean's marriage was a 'love match', she suggests that it was also a 'shrewd career move' for Ellen Tree. For in marrying Kean she effectively moved into high class management under his name. As Ellen Kean she was able to establish a successful career for herself in her own right, and in performances alongside her husband proved herself 'a brilliant teacher of other performers and what in modern terms is called a director.'⁴¹ Bratton argues that whilst later in her career Terry came to resemble '[...] the theatre-managing women who taught her [...] in many ways as a performer and as an independent woman,' she did not achieve a position as 'the Lyceum's co-manager.' In Bratton's view, Terry was hired by Irving to play opposite him, and remained a 'leading lady' rather than a business partner.⁴²

Working under the supervision of this formidable teacher soon taught Terry that '[...] if [she] did not work, [she] could not act.' When rehearsing the role of Prince Arthur in *King John* in 1858 Terry was eager to equal the success her elder sister, Kate, had previously achieved in the role. She therefore began to '[...] get up in the middle of the night and watch [her] gestures in the glass.' She also practiced her lines, trying to bring her voice '[...] down and up in the right places.' In spite of these efforts however, Terry still struggled to '[...] express what [Kean] wanted and what she could not teach me by

⁴⁰ The couple were married in 1842, but Kean's wife had made her professional stage debut some twenty years earlier and had achieved success first in the provinces and subsequently in London. Their professional and personal partnership endured until Kean's death in 1868, at which point Ellen Kean retired from the stage.

⁴¹ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 159.

⁴² Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage*, 207.

doing it herself.’ It was only after an enraged Kean ‘stormed’ at and slapped her, that Terry experienced, and could finally capture, ‘the mortification and grief’ required for the part. Mrs. Kean, finally satisfied, ordered Terry to use the experience, and to ‘[...] remember what [she] did with [her] voice, reproduce it, remember everything, and do it!’⁴³

The fourteen year old Terry drew on this experience during her first engagement at the Royalty Theatre, Soho in 1861.⁴⁴ This theatre was then under the management of the French dancer and actress Madame Albina de Rhona (fl.1860s.) and Terry remained part of the company until February of 1862.⁴⁵ The ‘expressive’ and ‘quick tempered’ Frenchwoman offered Terry another powerful and ambitious female role model, and she was ‘[...] filled with great admiration for her.’⁴⁶ She was eager to impress de Rhona when appearing in her first role, that of Clementine; ‘an ordinary fair-haired ingénue in white muslin’ in the melodrama *Attar Gull*.⁴⁷ At the climax of the play Clementine is slowly strangled by a venomous snake and Terry was required to produce screams of ‘wild terror.’ During rehearsals however, she struggled repeatedly to achieve these ‘frantic, heartrending screams.’ Finally, and only after being shaken and shouted at by an increasingly frustrated de Rhona, ‘the wild, agonized scream that Madame de Rhona

⁴³ Terry, *The Story of my Life*, 26.

⁴⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life* 37.

⁴⁵ Madame Albina de Rhona was one among an increasing number of female theatre managers in the mid to late nineteenth century. As T. C. Davis has discussed, the independent lease which the actress and singer Madame Elisa Vestris (1797-1856) signed for the Olympic theatre in 1831 signalled a ‘turning point in women’s managerial participation, not only setting a trend in her own day, but also marking the point after which women could no longer be excluded.’ T.C. Davis, *Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914*, 275. Bratton has recently built upon T.C. Davis’s research in her in depth investigations into ‘[...] the parts played by women, not only on the stage but also in management and creative entrepreneurship’ between 1830 and 1870. Bratton. *The Making of the West End Stage*, 7.

⁴⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 36-40.

⁴⁷ The melodrama was, Terry recalls, adapted from a short story written by the author Eugène Sue (1804-1857) in 1831. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 8.

wanted came to [Terry].'⁴⁸ Reconsidering her performance, Terry reflected that whilst she 'had the emotional instinct to start with,' if she performed well

[...], it was because I was able to imagine what would be *real* in such a situation. I had never *observed* such horror, but I had previously *realized* it, when, as Arthur, I had imagined the terror of having my eyes put out.⁴⁹

Terry attributes her ability to perform with such conviction directly to her earlier training under Mrs. Kean. Lynn Voskuil, in her examination of Terry's approach to acting, also attaches especial importance to the initial influence of Kean, arguing that '[...] Mrs Kean's early lesson in using her own emotion as a tool shaped [Terry's] practice profoundly, especially in the development of her imaginative powers.'⁵⁰ Terry herself declared that amongst the qualities 'necessary for success upon the stage,' 'Imagination, industry, and intelligence [...] are all indispensable to the actress,' of which '[...] the greatest is, without any doubt, imagination.'⁵¹

The central role that 'imagination' played in Terry's performances is also apparent in Terry's description of the research she undertook, over a decade later, in 1878, to prepare for the role of Ophelia. Visiting a 'madhouse,' Terry was disappointed to discover that 'There was no beauty, no nature, no pity in most of the lunatics,' who seemed 'too *theatrical* to teach [her] anything.' Upon the point of leaving, the actress finally found the inspiration she was seeking when she '[...] noticed a young girl gazing at the wall.' Though the girl's face 'was quite vacant' her 'body expressed that she was waiting,

⁴⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 38.

⁴⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 39.

⁵⁰ Lynn M. Voskuil, *Acting Naturally: Victorian Theatricality and Authenticity* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004) 207.

⁵¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 39.

waiting. Suddenly she threw up her hands and sped across the room like a swallow [...] She was very thin, very pathetic, very young, and the movement was as poignant as it was beautiful.’ It was an experience which, as Terry explains, convinced her ‘[...] that the actor must imagine first and observe afterwards. It is no good observing life and bringing the result to the stage without selection, without a definite idea. The idea must come first, the realism afterwards.’⁵²

Significantly it was the movement, both the stillness, and sudden darting across the room, that struck Terry, and which would influence her own interpretation of the role throughout her career. Contemporary descriptions convey both the physical and emotional style of Terry’s performances. One reviewer, from 1881, for instance, remarked upon Terry’s

[...] change of action at the first allusion in her presence to Hamlet; her placing her hand upon her brother’s shoulder as though to add weight to the counsel given to him by Polonius, her lingering look at the presents as she returned them to the giver.⁵³

A review published in *The Evening Telegraph* in 1884, for instance, makes apparent the degree to which Terry succeeded in her endeavour to convey emotional intensity, and yet avoid ‘theatricality,’ in her performance. They describe her interpretation of Ophelia as ‘[...] the embodiment of a broken-hearted, distracted woman [...] of extraordinary loveliness, in her original nature, and [in which] the touch of frenzy only seemed to invest

⁵² Terry does not specify which madhouse but the visit is described in detail, both in her autobiography and in her *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 154-155 and Ellen Terry, Christopher St. John, and William Shakespeare eds., *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, (London: Hopkinson, 1932) 165-167.

⁵³ “Our Biographies: Being brief sketches of the lives of Managers, Authors, Actors and Actresses, No. XV. Ellen Terry,” *Unidentified Periodical*, ca.1881. Press Cutting, pasted in Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883* Garrick Club, London.

her with a certain spiritual radiance.’ Yet, as they add ‘The execution is as free as a summer wind [...]’,⁵⁴

Surviving photographs showing Terry in the character and costume of Ophelia capture a sense of the ‘emotional intensity’ she sought to project. A series of head and shoulder portraits from circa 1878 show Terry gazing intensely at, or even slightly beyond, the camera, her hands are clasped and held tightly to her chest [FIGURE 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4]. Not only her pose, but also Terry’s expression, in particular her unfocused, yet direct gaze, are intentionally unsettling and vulnerable.



Figure 3.2- Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878. Sepia photograph on paper. 9.3 x 5.9cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:246-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁵⁴ *The Evening Telegraph*, ca.1884. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 32, Garrick Club, London.



Figure 3.3 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878, Sepia photograph on paper. 7.7 x 5.2cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:249-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 3.4 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878. Sepia photograph on paper. 8.8 x 5.8cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:250-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

As Walter has observed commercial photographs, produced to promote productions and collected by fans of the performers, were created to capture a ‘moment of performance.’ As objects which provided ‘[...] only one opportunity for the exposition of character,’ such photographs were, Walter suggests, in effect ‘[...] a distillation of the traits which the actor and photographer considered most important.’⁵⁵ Regarded from this perspective, these images of Terry offer an important insight into her interpretation of the role, and tools she employed to convey this interpretation to her audience on, and off, the stage.

On a Lyceum Company tour of America in 1883-4, Terry’s performance as Ophelia was singled out for specific praise.⁵⁶ One reviewer declared that ‘[...] in the character of Ophelia she reached a height of emotional power which thrilled a vast audience’ and that ‘with a poetic insight and an excess of sensibility, which were unsurpassed, she afforded a revelation of the grandest art [...]’⁵⁷ Another American reviewer, praised Terry’s ‘charmingly natural’ performance, reporting that,

[...] Miss Terry imbues the character with so much spirituality that we forget all else [...] The conflict of emotions which swept over her heart, was reflected in every lineament of her face, and in her tear-stained eyes, and the mad scene, with its snatches of plaintive song, its fitful gleams of reason and protracted outbursts of grief, was marked by great power and originality.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action,’” 167, 170.

⁵⁶ It received a standing ovation in Chicago. This is described by one reviewer, *Chicago Tribune*, 14 February 1884. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 190, Garrick Club, London.

⁵⁷ “Amusement: The Drama,” Unidentified periodical. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 195, Garrick Club, London.

⁵⁸ *Daily Baltimore*, December 1883. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 195, Garrick Club, London.

All these reviews convey the impression that, as one author claimed, the performance was felt to be particularly ‘intense and true.’⁵⁹ One writer attributes this quality to the fact ‘Ellen Terry is unique among actresses in possessing a nervous organisation fine enough, to conceive the character of Ophelia.’ They suggest that such ‘[...] sensibility, wedded to such poetic insight, and embodied in such sincere expression,’ enabled Terry to give a performance in which ‘[...] all the pathos of the great poet’s conception weighed upon her soul.’ Indeed the success of Terry’s efforts to ‘imagine’ and ‘identify’ with Ophelia’s position was such that the reviewer felt, ‘Acting ceased to be acting and became inspirational interpretation [...]’⁶⁰

The tone and content of these assessments of Terry’s performance uphold Marshall’s argument that an actress can, ‘enter into the leading character’ or ‘substitute herself for it.’⁶¹ Many of the adjectives employed to praise Terry’s performance, though positive, also illustrate her continual struggle to overcome her characterisation as a ‘charming’, ‘personality actress.’ This chapter will explore the constraints this ‘public identity’ imposed upon Terry and the means through which she sought to challenge this ‘persona,’ and earn recognition as a serious performer.⁶²

Life in a stock company

Terry’s ability to achieve such a compelling performance owed much to the breadth of her early experience on the stage. A phase in Terry’s early career at the age of 15, which

⁵⁹ “Amusement: The Drama,” *Unidentified periodical*. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 195, Garrick Club, London.

⁶⁰ *Chicago Tribune*, 14 February, 1884. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 190, Garrick Club, London.

⁶¹ Marshall, “Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress,” 67. Marshall’s discussion of this process is focussed upon two of Terry’s contemporaries Bernhardt and Duse and engages with Shaw’s article on their contrasting performance styles, “Duse and Bernhardt,” *Our Theatres in the Nineties, Vol.1*, (London: Constable, 1932) 148-54.

⁶² Richards, touches upon this element of Terry’s characterisation in *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, 44-45.

provided crucial training for her future work, was the time she spent as part of a stock company in Bristol, between 1862 and 1863. Working in a stock company was a common apprenticeship for a future theatrical career. As Terry records, Marie Wilton (1839-1921) had left the company just before she joined it, and Madge Robertson was still part of the company, as was Henrietta Hodson (1841–1910).⁶³ Such companies were generally based in one venue, but presented a different play each night, drawn from a repertory of productions and costumes, and depended on a cast who could specialise in dramatic ‘types.’⁶⁴ Terry described a stock company as,

[...] a company of actors and actresses brought together by the manager of a provincial theatre to support a leading actor or actress -“a star” from London [...] these companies were ready to support them in Shakespeare. They were also ready to play burlesque, farce, and comedy to fill out the bill.⁶⁵

In *Actresses as Working Women* T.C. Davis outlines the range of ‘theatrical specialisations’ that were open to women. She explains that these depended not only upon the particular talents, but also, to a large degree, upon the age and appearance of the performer.⁶⁶ If seeking to earn a position within ‘The Drama’ an actress would usually begin as a supernumerary, assisting with group scenes, and was seldom listed in the

⁶³ As Terry notes, both Wilton and Robertson would go on to act under their married names, Bancroft, and Kendal. Terry, *The Story of My Life* 41. Hodson also married, though only after a long-term affair with the journalist and politician Henry Labouchère and three years after the birth of their daughter. W. J. Lawrence (rev. J. Gilliland), ‘Henrietta Hodson (1841–1910),’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004 [online edition, Oct 2009]).

⁶⁴ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as working women*, 6 and 20-23.

⁶⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 41-2.

⁶⁶ As T. C. Davis explains a pretty young actress might therefore be cast as the Ingénue or ‘love interest.’ Another, might achieve a reputation as a reliable ‘Character Actress’, often playing in low comedy or dialect. Those with a good voice and appealing personality, might establish themselves as a ‘soubrette’ and also obtain employment in musical genres. These ‘soubrettes’ gained increasing status over the course of the nineteenth century, achieving star billing, and evolving from the beautiful Burlesque actress, into the glamorous star of the Gaiety Theatre. T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 22.

playbills. They might progress to a ‘walking lady’, playing smaller supporting roles, but it was only the few, particularly successful performers, who finally graduated to the role of ‘leading lady.’ As an actress aged, concessions to both ‘maturity and experience’ would often necessitate another shift towards ‘heavy business’ in secondary, and more mature, female roles.⁶⁷ For Terry, seeking to maintain her position as leading lady of the Lyceum Theatre some thirty years later, it was the transition towards ‘mature’ roles which presented a particular challenge.

Terry’s experience in Bristol, trained her in many of the ‘specialisms’ required for a career in ‘The Drama.’ She had already performed the role of ‘supernumerary’ and ‘walked on’ with the Keans, whilst Madame de Rhona had engaged Terry as an ‘Ingénue.’ As part of stock company in 1862 however, a far greater range of skills was demanded of her, and despite her protests that she could not sing, or dance, Terry’s first part in a Burlesque required her to do both. As she relates ‘It was in the stock companies that we learned the great lesson of usefulness [...] There no question of parts “suited” us; we had to take what we were given.’⁶⁸ Terry attaches particular importance to this quality, declaring that on the stage ‘Usefulness’ is ‘[...] the first thing to aim at.’ For, as she argues

Not until we have learned to be useful can we afford to do what we like.

The tragedian will always be a limited tragedian if he has not learned how to laugh. The comedian who cannot weep will never touch the highest levels of mirth.⁶⁹

The value of the training Terry received through working in both stock and repertory companies became apparent when in 1863, aged 15, she was offered the part of

⁶⁷ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 22.

⁶⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life* 41.

⁶⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life* 41.

Desdemona. The part, in a matinee production of *Othello* at the Princess's Theatre, London, was Terry's first lead role in a play by Shakespeare. In her autobiography she recalls how the agents sent her the part on Saturday, expecting her to perform the role on Monday.

But for my training [Terry explains], how could I have done it? At this time I knew the words and had *studied* the words—a very different thing—of every woman's part in Shakespeare.⁷⁰

'A six year vacation'

Terry's career is punctuated by what she described as a 'six year vacation.' Her initial departure from the stage in 1864 was prompted by her marriage to the forty-seven-year-old artist Watts, at the age of sixteen. Though she returned to the stage for a brief period following the collapse of the marriage in 1865, she did so reluctantly.⁷¹ Her subsequent elopement with the architect and designer Godwin, in 1868, therefore offered her both a professional and personal escape. The long-term impact that her relationship with Watts, and the six years she spent living (unmarried) with Godwin, had upon Terry and her career, will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 6. Of primary significance to Terry's professional status however, was the moment, in 1874, when financial necessity, and the offer of a leading role, compelled Terry to return to London and the stage.⁷² The fact that the actress was, as she phrased it, able to 'rest so long without rusting' resulted, Terry felt, from the fact that, she '[...] had been thoroughly trained in the technique of acting

⁷⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life* 66.

⁷¹ Terry is frank about her unhappiness at this period in her life and reveals the extent to which she felt controlled by 'well meaning' friends and family. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 9, 61.

⁷² Terry confesses that her peaceful retreat from London and society was soon disturbed by '[...] shadow of financial trouble' and, it was the recollection of '[...] the bailiff in the house a few miles away' which encouraged her to accept an invitation from actor/manager Charles Reade to return to the stage. See Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 82-3.

long before [she] reached her twentieth year – an age at which most students are just beginning to wrestle with elementary principles.’⁷³

3.2 Our Lady of the Lyceum

A triumphant return?

Terry returned to the stage in February 1874 at the age of twenty-seven having been offered forty pounds a week by the actor/manager Charles Reade (1814-1884) to play Philippa Chester in *The Wandering Heir*.⁷⁴ Yet despite her success in this and several other leading roles, the threat of financial instability remained. By 1875 Terry’s relationship with Godwin had ended, and the actress was in debt and living alone in a house which ‘had been dismantled of some of its most beautiful treasures by the brokers.’ The offer she received that year from the Bancrofts to play Portia in a production of *The Merchant of Venice* therefore provided her with a crucial respite from these ‘domestic troubles and financial difficulties.’⁷⁵ Auerbach suggests that this opportunity to perform in Shakespeare was particularly important for Terry’s career. She contends that whilst Reade had ‘rescued Ellen Terry from privacy and returned her to audiences,’ it was Marie Bancroft who rescued the actress ‘from Reade’s melodrama and returned her to art.’⁷⁶ As Chapter 6 will show the Bancrofts’ lavish production, though not a critical success, played a key part in establishing Terry as a celebrated actress and leading figurehead of the Aesthetic Movement.

⁷³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 9, 77.

⁷⁴ Terry’s return to the stage was carefully stage managed by Reade who delayed the revelation of the identity of his new leading lady until the night before Terry’s first appearance. As Melville explains ‘The heroine in the play was advertised as being “an eminent actress” returning “after a long period of retirement.”’ See Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 64.

⁷⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 100-1.

⁷⁶ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry, Player in her time*, 168.



Figure 3.5 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Olivia*, Royal Court Theatre, 1875. Sepia photograph on paper. 8.8 x 5.8cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:233-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry's year with the Bancrofts, was followed by an engagement at the Royal Court Theatre, then under the management of John Hare (1844-1921). In 1878 Hare cast Terry in the role of Olivia in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, a part that she would later revive at the Lyceum. The production, and the costumes, were designed by Marcus Stone to reproduce 'the eighteenth century spirit,' but with a silhouette which reflected the fashions of the late 1870s in the fit of the bodice and the narrowness of the skirt, appealed to the public [FIGURE 3.5]. Terry's success was such that, 'Every one was "Olivia" mad' and her costumes inspired fashions in which 'The Olivia cap shared public favour with the Langtry bonnet.'⁷⁷ This was not the only instance upon which Terry's costumes inspired

⁷⁷ As Terry explains, 'That most lovely and exquisite creature, Mrs. Langtry [Lillie Langtry (1853-1929)], could not go out anywhere, at the dawn of the 'eighties, without a crowd collecting to look at her! It was no

fashions in both theatrical costume and off stage dress. The riding habit worn by Terry as Lucy Ashton in the production of 1890 *Ravenswood* ‘set a fashion in ladies coats’ and the singer Nellie Melba (1861-1931) commissioned Terry’s costumier, Nettleship, to copy the costume worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust* (1885) [FIGURE 3.6 and 3.7].⁷⁸



Figure 3.6 - Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1885, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.6cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:405-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

In 1878, a journalist reflecting upon Terry’s position ‘in the very front rank of our actresses,’ suggested that it owed much to the fact that Terry ‘[...] not only has convictions of her own as to the reading of any character with which she may be entrusted, but has the courage of her convictions,’ and consequently made her ‘mark’ upon a performance.⁷⁹ Terry discusses the value of the criticism she received from colleagues,

rare thing to see the crowd, to ask its cause, to receive the answer, "Mrs. Langtry!" and to look in vain for the object of the crowd's admiring curiosity.’ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 141-2.

⁷⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 310-1 and 355-6.

⁷⁹ “The Future of the Lyceum Theatre,” *The Examiner*, Saturday September 21 1878, Issue 3686.

notably Reade and the playwright Tom Taylor (1817-1880) in her autobiography. She was ready to acknowledge the value of the advice offered by these figures, but she was also quick to challenge any observations which she felt to be inaccurate or misguided. As Terry explained

It is through the dissatisfaction of a man like Charles Reade that an actress *learns*—that is, if she is not conceited. Conceit is an insuperable obstacle to all progress. On the other hand, it is of little use to take criticism in a slavish spirit and to act on it without understanding it. Charles Reade constantly wrote and said things to me which were not absolutely just criticism; but they directed my attention to the true cause of the faults which he found in my performance, and put me on the way to mending them.⁸⁰



Figure 3.7 - Aimé Dupont, Nellie Melba as Marguerite in *Faust*, 1896. Albumen cabinet card. 14 x 10.3cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x135901.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁸⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 91. See also 91-98 and 110-112.

Terry's confidence in her interpretation of a role was to prove particularly important in the later stages of her career when the actress sought to challenge preconceptions relating not only to roles she was performing, but also regarding her own 'public' and 'private' identity.

A Shakespearean actress – The Lyceum Theatre 1878-1902

In 1878 Henry Irving, became the manager of the Lyceum Theatre and invited Terry to join the company. Her appointment as Irving's leading lady at the age of thirty-one owed much to the personal recommendation of a mutual friend, Lady Juliet Pollock (d.1899), who had, Terry explains

[...] told him that I was the very person for him; that "all London" was talking of my Olivia; that I had acted well in Shakespeare with the Bancrofts; that I should bring to the Lyceum Theatre what players call "a personal following."⁸¹

It is clear that by 1878, Terry's success had established her as a 'general favourite' who, as Martin Meisel suggests, '[...] brought Irving a great deal more than pictorial appeal, aesthetic credentials, and a following alert to decorative elegance.'

The nature of Irving and Terry's professional partnership developed as their trust in each other's judgement grew. As Meisel argues, and this thesis will show, '[...] Irving, with his traditional stage wisdom and sense of scenic effect, assimilated Ellen Terry's gifts and knowledge to an idea of a theater [sic] that bridged the widening gap between aesthete and philistine.'⁸² Irving soon gave Terry control over the design of her own costumes and

⁸¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 147.

⁸² Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1983) 403.

also consulted her regarding those worn by other members of the cast. Terry also came to appreciate that, although she '[...] knew more of art and archaeology in dress than [Irving] did, he had a finer sense of what was right for the *scene*.'⁸³

Many biographies of Terry have portrayed the actress as a subordinate figure, content to curtail her ambitions and sacrifice her talent, in order to maintain a partnership in which Irving retained a dominant and controlling role. This was certainly the manner in which Auerbach presented their professional relationship. She claims that Terry was 'reinvented' by Irving as his 'stage wife and Ophelia to his Hamlet' a 'composite identity' that would simultaneously 'bless and shackle her.'⁸⁴ She also stresses the inequality of the partnership noting that 'At least until the turn of the century, Ellen Terry never received billing equal to Irving's at the Lyceum.'⁸⁵ Powell shares Auerbach's views, suggesting that Terry whilst '[...] a preeminent star in her own right was 'as dependent on Henry Irving as Victorian wives were upon their husbands'⁸⁶ Similarly Sos Eltis notes that 'For all her personal successes, Terry was figured primarily as a faithful, Ruskinian helpmeet to her theatrical partner.'⁸⁷ As a counter this, however, Eltis acknowledges that 'The extent to which this image of the selfless actress, unmotivated by ambition, was constructed or was created by a general desire to view this woman herself as a reflection of her stage roles remains difficult to determine.'⁸⁸ Chapter 6 will therefore consider the significance of Terry's subordinate, feminine, identity within the context of late nineteenth century society and Terry's increasing celebrity. As it will discuss, Terry's

⁸³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 157.

⁸⁴ Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 175. Marguerite Steen also highlights the extent to which Terry's talents and ambition was curtailed by her partnership with Irving, See Marguerite Steen, *Pride of Terrys* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd, 1962), 147, 160, 183.

⁸⁵ Auerbach stresses that 'only in 'the more egalitarian America' did Terry obtain the 'equality of billing England denied her.' Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in Her Time*, 194.

⁸⁶ Kerry Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 51.

⁸⁷ Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 180.

⁸⁸ Eltis. "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 181.

controversial off stage life arguably necessitated the cultivation of respectability and placed the actress in a position where her reputation, and popularity, however high, remained extremely vulnerable to threat from scandal.⁸⁹

Writing before a recent cache of letters revealed the intimacy of Terry and Irving's off-stage relationship, Cockin raised the possibility that, rather than a sexual relationship (as has since been proved), their bond might be regarded as one of parent and child.⁹⁰ Such a relationship, she argues, had the potential to be 'a dynamic exchange which was mutually supportive, nurturing and disciplinary.' As Cockin suggests, evidence of Irving's trust in Terry's judgement can be found in the very limited critical feedback Irving's provided on her performances, particularly during the rehearsal period.⁹¹ Cockin acknowledges that this was often very frustrating for Terry, but she suggests that Irving may have 'refrained from giving [Terry] public direction about her performance because he knew that her studies were thorough and he trusted her judgement.'⁹²

A range of evidence testifying to Terry's committed and conscientious preparations for her roles does survive. This includes Terry's autobiography and her surviving letters.⁹³

Comyns-Carr's *Reminiscences* also offer an insight into the intensive research undertaken

⁸⁹ One route through which it has been suggested Terry sought 'respectability' was through her marriage to the actor Charles Wardell (1839-1885). Terry met this actor/journalist during the original run of *Olivia* in 1878 and married him the same year. Their marriage was not a success, Wardell proved to be an alcoholic and the pair separated in 1881. He did however give his name to Terry's children who were given temporary 'legitimacy' under the names Edith Wardell and Edward Wardell. See Auerbach, *Ellen Terry Player in Her Time*, 183-5 and Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 80-86. As Melville notes, in spite of this separation, Terry paid Wardell's debts, and also provided financial support to the sisters of his first wife for several years. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 117.

⁹⁰ As mentioned in Chapter 1, these letters were donated to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2010 and form part of the Ellen Terry Collection. The letters are catalogued under the archive number THM/384/6.

⁹¹ Terry notes that her scenes with Irving in *Hamlet* were still 'unrehearsed' when only ten days remained before the opening of the production. See Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 153.

⁹² Katharine Cockin, "Ellen Terry and Henry Irving: A Working Partnership", *Henry Irving: a re-evaluation of the pre-eminent Victorian actor-manager*, ed. Richard Foulkes (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2008) 37-48.(42).

⁹³ As this Chapter has noted, Terry visited a madhouse to gain inspiration for her performance of Ophelia and in her autobiography Terry recalls that she actually learnt to spin when rehearsing for the role of Marguerite in *Faust*. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 243.

when preparing for Lyceum Productions.⁹⁴ As Marshall has shown, the extent of Terry's preparation is particularly apparent in the detailed annotations the actress made on the acting copies of her scripts, which, together with a range of texts related to the history of dress, theatre and acting, survive in the library at Smallhythe.⁹⁵

It seems most likely, therefore, that the partnership was founded upon a mutually beneficial compromise, rather than inequality or competition, and it is evident that Irving appreciated the value of Terry's practical and artistic experience.⁹⁶ Similarly Terry, whilst acknowledging that she was often obliged to play 'second fiddle' parts, makes it '[...] quite clear that [she also] had [her] turn of "first fiddle" ones.' Indeed, she maintains that, "Romeo and Juliet," "Much Ado About Nothing," "Olivia," and "The Cup" all gave [her] finer opportunities than they gave Henry' and that 'In "The Merchant of Venice" and "Charles I," they were at least equal to his.'⁹⁷ Terry's evaluation of their partnership is reaffirmed by a critic's response to her performance as Portia in 1878. As they suggested, the quality of the actress's 'accomplished' performance indicated that

[...] the actor-manager [Irving] does not contemplate the fatal mistake of trying to reign alone in an art-kingdom where, could the ideal conditions

⁹⁴ This included a trip to Nuremberg when researching the 1885 production of *Faust* on which both Joseph Comyns-Carr (a playwright and journalist) and his wife, Alice (Terry's principal costume designer from 1887) accompanied Irving and Terry. They were also subsequently joined by the Lyceum's 'scenic artist' Hawes Craven who came to make sketches of local scenery which could be used to add 'realism' to the Lyceum scenery. Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 149-152.

⁹⁵ As Marshall discusses many of Terry's acting copies of plays are preserved within the library at Smallhythe. These texts are filled with Terry's notes which record the mood and movement required for scenes. These notes also include Terry's personal annotations regarding the direction and design of productions. This library also includes a wide variety of reference books and a full catalogue can be found in F T. Bowyer, *Catalogue of the Working Library of Ellen Terry at Smallhythe Place, Tenterden, Kent* (Rolvenden, Kent: Rother Valley Press and National Trust, 1977). See also Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 154-160.

⁹⁶ Terry records several ways in which she advised Irving early in their partnership. This included persuading the actor to '[...] give up that dreadful, paralyzing waiting at the side for his cue.' As she explains, '[...] after a time he took my advice. He was never obstinate in such matters. His one object was to *find out*, to *test* suggestion, and follow it if it stood his test.' Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 155.

⁹⁷ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 164.

be attained, all who are deemed worthy of a share in the labours would be equal.⁹⁸

Although Irving granted Terry independence regarding specific elements of the production, in decisions relating to the overall ‘direction’ of a production she was required to submit to his judgement. This could prove frustrating as Terry had strong opinions regarding not only the interpretation of her own characters, but also the narrative in which they appeared.⁹⁹ She was particularly disappointed by Irving’s determination to include a traditional “gag” in the 1882 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. As she explained, Irving was convinced this “gag”, ‘was necessary: otherwise the “curtain” would be received in dead silence [...]’ Even though Terry ‘[...] used every argument, artistic and otherwise’ to persuade Irving to relent, the actor/manager though ‘gentle’, as was ‘his custom’, ‘would not discuss it much, [and] remained obdurate.’ She also felt hampered by Irving’s performance, in particular his ‘[...] rather finicking, deliberate method as Benedick’ which meant that Terry, convinced that ‘Beatrice must be swift, swift, swift!’ felt that she ‘[...] could never put the right pace into [her] part.’¹⁰⁰ In spite of her misgivings however, Beatrice, like Portia, was soon established as one of the roles which the critics, and public, felt to be ideally suited to her temperament, with one critic regarding it as Terry’s ‘[...] finest part in pure comedy.’¹⁰¹ Furthermore, and as Terry notes, ‘Such disagreements occurred very seldom’ and ‘[...] for one thing [she] did not

⁹⁸ “The Future of the Lyceum Theatre,” *The Examiner*, 1878.

⁹⁹ The strength of Terry’s views are apparent both in her published writing, and the annotation with which she covered her working texts. Chapter 6 will explore this evidence further using the examples of Terry’s scripts and reference texts which survive in museum collections, including The Garrick Collection, the Department of Theatre and Performance and in the library at Smallhythe Place.

¹⁰⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 162-3.

¹⁰¹ “The Theatres – Mr. Irving and Miss Terry at the Royalty,” Press Cutting, possibly *The Saturday Review*, June 9 1883: 732. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 39, Garrick Club, London.

like doing at the Lyceum, there would probably be a hundred things [she] should dislike doing in another theatre.’¹⁰²

It is clear that Terry’s partnership with Irving placed restrictions on the parts available to the actress. Irving’s ‘hurry’ to produce *Macbeth*, for instance, denied Terry the opportunity to perform the role of Rosalind in *As You Like It*, a part which Terry deeply regretted never playing.¹⁰³ Yet, whilst it is apparent that Terry was obliged to conform to Irving’s selection of productions, she was also subject to the preconceptions and demands of the public. Indeed, Marshall maintains that it was, in actuality, ‘the dual pressure of the public’s desire to see the actress appear in ‘an Ellen Terry part’, together with the Lyceum’s focus upon productions of Shakespeare’s work, [which] confined Terry firmly within her role as a ‘Shakespearean actress.’¹⁰⁴

‘An icon of traditional feminine tenderness and virtue’

Eltis contends that, in spite of the controversial nature of her private life, Terry’s celebrity was founded, at least in part, on her position as ‘[...] an icon of traditional feminine tenderness and virtue.’¹⁰⁵ The financial independence and success Terry had gained through her professional career by the 1880s certainly freed her, to some extent, from the

¹⁰² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 164. See also Ellen Terry, Christopher St. John, and William Shakespeare. *Four Lectures on Shakespeare* (London: Hopkinson, 1932), 96.

¹⁰³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 302. See also Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in her Time*, 230-1. Looking back upon her career Terry confessed that this sacrifice ranked amongst ‘[...] the greatest disappointments of her life.’ Terry, St. John, Shakespeare, *Four lectures on Shakespeare*, 97.

¹⁰⁴ The role of Leonora in *The Adored One*, by J.M.Barrie, (1913) was created by Mrs. Patrick Campbell, but described in *The Era*, 10 September 1913, as ‘an Ellen Terry part’. See Eltis, “Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress,” 179. Similarly, as Marshall comments, ‘During the Victorian period, the concept of the ‘Shakespearean actress’ was one which carried transparent cultural connotations of an actress defined primarily by, and known mainly for, her work in Shakespeare’s plays.’ Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 153.

¹⁰⁵ Eltis, “Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress,” 179. Eltis discusses this element of Terry’s ‘public identity’ further in Sos Eltis, *Acts of Desire: Women and Sex on Stage, 1800-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 94, 154, 156.

constraints of this role. Even so, she was repeatedly called upon to portray the feminine and submissive qualities valued by society in her on-stage roles and celebrity persona.

Powell, argues that Terry was a ‘less dominating, more sentimental actress,’ contrasting her acting style, with the unashamed ferocity and power of Bernhardt and the ‘subdued’ strength of Duse.¹⁰⁶ Citing Oscar Wilde’s (1854-1900) review of Terry’s performance as Olivia in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Powell suggests that the “power” of Terry’s acting arose from ‘[...] her genius for thrilling an audience with tender emotions.’ As Powell notes however, ‘[...] even this quieter “power” [...] was difficult to reconcile with the private and passive roles that Victorian woman were usually asked to play in life.’ She suggests that a specific rhetoric was therefore used in the press to subdue Terry, and reassure audiences, one in which reviewers characterised the actress as a performer ‘on the margin of humanity – [...] a delicate flower or a “mystical force,”’ portraying Terry as ‘not so much a woman, as a nonhuman, vaguely spiritualised essence – a “wan lily.”’¹⁰⁷

Critics also repeatedly remarked upon Terry’s ‘charm’, ‘beauty’ and ‘grace’ and this focus on Terry’s feminine qualities, was combined with a concentration upon, what was perceived to be, the fragile nervous state of the actress.¹⁰⁸ Upon Terry’s arrival in America in 1883 for instance, the *New York Herald* declared,

The actress is evidently a woman of extreme nervous sensibility, with an organisation so highly strung, that [...] she always has her heart in her

¹⁰⁶ Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre*, 14-16.

¹⁰⁷ Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre*, 16-17.

¹⁰⁸ Instances of such descriptions include reviews published the *Pall Gazette*, 4 November 1879, Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume II: 222 and Henry James, *The London Theatres*, Vol XXI, 26, 1881, Press Cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume III: 361, both Garrick Collection, London.

mouth. The muscles of her face respond to that slightest excitement, and her emotions are clearly reflected on it [...] ¹⁰⁹

Similarly, a reviewer commenting upon Terry's performance as Henrietta Maria in *Charles I*, contended that 'Her acting has less mind in it than that of Mr. Irving, [...] it proceeds essentially from the nervous system which is the soul.'¹¹⁰

This careful 'scripting' of Terry's on-stage persona shaped responses to her performance and dominated the public perception of the actress. As Powell suggests, attributing the emotional intensity of Terry's performances to the 'weak' and 'vulnerable' nature of the actress allowed the public to control Terry's "power," and re-fashion the actress as a safe, dependent, figure, constrained, and contained, by her femininity. The restrictions this characterisation placed on Terry become apparent in the controversy provoked by the announcement that she was to play Lady Macbeth in 1888. Many critics declared that Terry was 'too good, too gentle, too feminine for the part' citing the '[...] old stage idea was that a big woman, with harsh features and a strident voice could best express the terrible creature who urged on her hesitating lord.'¹¹¹ Indeed one critic suggested that

[...] there is a gentle womanliness about Miss Terry which makes it impossible to for her to utter convincingly such a speech as that hideous invocation to "thick night" and the Spirits of Evil. To read this and

¹⁰⁹ [Untitled, but written in response to Terry's arrival] published in *New York Herald*, October 1883, Press Cutting, mounted in Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883*, Garrick Club, London.

¹¹⁰ *The Tribune*, October 1883, Press Cutting, mounted in Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883*, Garrick Club, London.

¹¹¹ "Macbeth at the Lyceum," *The Standard*, December 1888, Press cutting, mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume V: 333, Garrick Collection, London. Another reviewer, made comparable observations about Terry's physicality, arguing that '[...] the part [was] ill-suited to the actress's physique and dramatic manner.' They were, nevertheless, adamant that Terry, rather than yielding '[...] to the temptation of adopting a new and untenable reading of the part, with a view to bringing it more fully within the compass of her powers,' should have '[...] accepted this inevitable drawback, and to have combated it as best she might.' *The Saturday Review*, ca. 1888: 10-11. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V, 332, Garrick Club, London.

suppose that Lady Macbeth was other than diabolical and fiendish is impossible; and these are qualities to represent which is beyond the wide scope of Miss Terry's genius, great as it unquestionably is.¹¹²

Such criticism indicates, as Powell suggests, that the actress struggled to escape the rhetoric which controlled her performance and compelled Terry to supply '[...] a masculinist public with what it demanded – a representation of itself, its prejudices and ideals.'¹¹³ Powell contends that as a result even Terry's '[...] enactment of Lady Macbeth was trimmed to the proportions of a Victorian Dame.'¹¹⁴ Yet there is evidence to suggest that the actress sought to resist and challenge this perception of her performance.



Figure 3.8 -Delattre (engraver), Mrs Siddons as Lady Macbeth in Act V of *Macbeth*, London, 1784, Engraving on paper, 15.4 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.2381-2013.

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¹¹² "The Real Macbeth," *Unidentified periodical*, ca. December 1888, Press Cutting, mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume V: 311, Garrick Collection, London.

¹¹³ Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre*, 54.

¹¹⁴ Powell cites Walter Macqueen-Pope's summation of Terry as 'womanliness personified,' in support of her argument, quoting from Macqueen's 1952 publication *Ladies First: Women's Conquest of the British Stage* (London: W.H. Allen) Powell. *Women and Victorian Theatre*, 57.

A 'womanly' Lady Macbeth

Discussing the theatrical importance of 'Lady Macbeth', Marshall notes that the role '[...]' had a recognised part in an English theatrical tradition going back most notably to Sarah Siddons.' Significantly however, she notes that this Shakespearean character did not '[...]' have a similar role within expectations of English femininity.'¹¹⁵ As such it offered Terry a crucial opportunity to perform a role which was certainly neither 'charming' nor 'winsome.'

As an experienced actress she would have been conscious of the long tradition in which Sarah Siddons (1775-1831) was popularly felt to have provided the definitive interpretation of the part.¹¹⁶ [FIGURE 3.8] Terry also owned a copy of Siddons' *Remarks on the Character of Lady Macbeth* (as published by Thomas Campbell in 1834) and would therefore have been familiar with Siddons' personal account of her reading of the character.¹¹⁷ As her 'Remarks' reveal, Siddons was determined that Lady Macbeth represented a '[...]' woman in whose bosom the passion of ambition has almost obliterated the characteristics of human nature, in whose composition are associated all the subjugating powers of intellect and all the charms and graces of personal beauty [...]'¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Marshall, "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress," 64.

¹¹⁶ Robert Shaughnessy notes that 'Not only her contemporaries but many later commentators have considered her portrayal to be definitive; in 1812 Charles Lamb, who tended to doubt that Shakespeare's tragedies could or should be staged at all, wrote that "we speak of Lady Macbeth, while we are in reality thinking of Mrs S."' Robert Shaughnessy, "Sarah Siddons (1755–1831)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, [online edition, May 2008]). Similarly, the essayist, William Hazlitt (1778-1830) described Siddons as 'Tragedy Personified'. See William Hazlitt, *Selected Writings*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 339-340. Furthermore, an article entitled published in *The Era* on December 15, 1888, describes Terry's praise for the 'stupendous performance' of Siddons. See "The Revival of 'Macbeth,'" *The Era*, Saturday, December 15, 1888, Issue 2621, n.p.

¹¹⁷ Siddons' 'Remarks' were published by Thomas Campbell in his *Life of Mrs. Siddons* in 1834. A first edition of Thomas Campbell's text forms part of the library at Smallhythe place. Siddons' *Remarks on the Character of Lady Macbeth* appear in Volume 2 of the two volume work by Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons*, Vol. 2 (London: Effingham Wilson, 1834) 10-34.

¹¹⁸ Siddons, quoted in Thomas Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons, Volume 2* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1834), 10-11. Laura Rosenthal also offers an interesting assessment of Siddons interpretation of the role in Laura J. Rosenthal 'The sublime, the beautiful, "The Siddons", *The Clothes That Wear Us: Essays on Dressing and Transgressing in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, ed. Jessica Munns and Penny Richards (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999).

Terry agreed with Siddons that Lady Macbeth was driven by the ambition and ‘craving for power’ which she felt to be a ‘true to woman’s nature.’¹¹⁹ She placed far greater emphasis, however, on the degree to which Lady Macbeth’s love for her husband motivated her actions. Consequently, despite her praise for, and acknowledgement of, Siddons’ success, Terry believed that ‘[...] Siddons soared in this part higher than Shakespeare, and that Shakespeare, had he foreseen such a woman, would have shaped his character accordingly.’ She therefore returned to Shakespeare’s original text for her ‘inspiration’ and ‘guidance.’¹²⁰



Figure 3.9 - Unknown photographer. Sarah Bernhardt as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, ca.1884, Sepia photograph on paper. 13.8 x 10.5cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.137:118-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹¹⁹ Ellen Terry, handwritten annotation in pencil in Joseph Comyns-Carr, *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: An Essay* (London: Bickers & Son, Leicester Square, 1889) 20. This book forms part of the library at Smallhythe place, Pressmark E.V.2.18.

¹²⁰ “The Revival of ‘Macbeth,’” *The Era*, 1888.

In addition to studying past performances and reading essays and commentaries on the text, Terry would also have been conscious of more recent interpretations of the role, not least those of her contemporary, Bernhardt, for whom the '[...]' part became a seminal one.¹²¹ [FIGURE 3.9] Indeed, as Marshall stresses, whilst Terry's 1888 performance is '[...] usually read in comparison to Siddons' innovations in the part,' it is equally likely that Terry was also '[...] responding to recent European and American performances.'¹²² When Bernhardt first attempted the part of Lady Macbeth in 1884 her performance provoked mixed responses from the critics. Some described it as 'one of her most original and most carefully elaborated characters' and 'the one character in the list of Shakespeare's heroines that exactly and completely suits her idiosyncrasies.' Other critics however, particularly those based in England, recast the emotional intensity and energy of Bernhardt's performance 'as a specifically sexual one,' suggesting that her Lady Macbeth represented a fulfilment of that "'character" of serpentine sexuality which was her trademark.'¹²³ When comparing Terry's performance with Bernhardt's Lady Macbeth, critics identified an important distinction between

[...] the sensuality of the French Lady Macbeth seeking to work upon her lord's nature by means of animal passion and the sweet winning womanliness of the character as now presented at the Lyceum.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Marshall, "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress," 64.

¹²² Marshall, "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress," 64.

¹²³ Marshall suggests that this perception of Bernhardt continued to '[...] determine [the] reception of her performances in England, no matter what her motivations.' The reviews quoted are "Madame Bernhardt's Lady Macbeth," *The Times*, 25 June 1884: 10 and "Gaiety Theatre: Madame Sarah Bernhardt in *Macbeth*," *The Times*, 5 July 1884: 7. Both reviews are cited in Marshall "Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress," 67-8.

¹²⁴ Untitled newspaper clipping, dated by hand December 29th 1888. Press Cutting mounted in Ruth Canton Album, Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre (1884-92), Vol II. Garrick Collection, London.

As the tone of this review suggests, critics continued to reinforce and emphasise Terry's 'womanliness.'¹²⁵ Her performance was also repeatedly contrasted with the strength and passion of Siddons' earlier portrayal. One reviewer, focusing on the lines 'Come you spirits /That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here' contrasted the 'faltering' delivery of Terry, struggling to 'repress her feminine instincts,' with the dominating force of Siddons' performance, in which the actress spoke 'The great invocations' in 'blood-curling tones.'¹²⁶

In spite of the criticism attracted by her 'feminine' interpretation of the role Terry's personal papers, and published writings testify to her conviction that Lady Macbeth was 'A woman (all over a woman)' who 'was *not* a fiend, and *did* love her husband.'¹²⁷ The force of Terry determination to persist with her personal understanding of the character is manifest in a letter she sent to her daughter in 1888. Indeed, Terry actually quotes from this correspondence in her autobiography, using it to justify and explain her interpretation of Lady Macbeth. As the letter stresses, despite the criticism provoked by her interpretation, Terry resolved 'not [to] budge an inch in the reading of it, for that I know is right.' She was therefore prepared to 'what is vulgarly called "sweat at it," each night' in order to counter any critics who claimed she wanted to 'make [Lady Macbeth] a "gentle, lovable woman"', for, 'She was nothing of the sort.'¹²⁸

Examined in the light of the theatrical traditions and social preconceptions that shaped her performance, Terry's 'Lady Macbeth' represents a carefully judged compromise between her personal interpretation of the character, and the expectations of her audience.

¹²⁵ One author, noting that Terry 'is not cast in the masculine mould' anticipated a Lady Macbeth 'with a winsome face and a fascination of personal charm.' See "The Revival of 'Macbeth,'" *The Era*, 1888.

¹²⁶ "Macbeth at the Lyceum," *The Times*, ca.1888. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V, 299, Garrick Club, London.

¹²⁷ Terry, handwritten annotation on her copy of Joseph Comyns-Carr's *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: An Essay*, 28; Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 307.

¹²⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 307.

Recognising the limitations imposed on her by her reputation for ‘femininity’ and ‘charm,’ Terry was obliged to present a Lady Macbeth which would maintain this established ‘public identity,’ and yet fulfil her ambition to play an assertive and commanding figure. Her portrayal of Lady Macbeth as a woman whose actions were motivated by passionate love for her husband, enabled Terry to emphasise the feminine qualities within the character, and thereby sustain her reputation for ‘womanliness.’ This interpretation of the role simultaneously enabled Terry to create a ‘new Lady Macbeth,’ whose ‘femininity,’ though associated with weakness and ‘fragility,’ represented a source of strength, and the means through which she was able to manipulate her male counterparts, and satisfy her craving for absolute power.¹²⁹ As one critic concluded:

Is this Lady Macbeth? Who shall decide? That it is not the Lady Macbeth of Mrs. Siddons we know. It is scarcely a Lady Macbeth we realise. It is perhaps, one of which we have dreamed. [...] This is Miss Terry’s Lady Macbeth.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ A reviewer writing for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, described ‘The new Lady Macbeth’ as an ‘exquisite creature’ who was both ‘passionate [...] sensuous and finely strung’. “Macbeth at the Lyceum,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 31st, 1888. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V, 330, Garrick Club, London.

¹³⁰ “Lyceum Theatre,” December 31st 1888. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V, 331, Garrick Club, London. Another reviewer reached a similar conclusion, writing that ‘[...] Though certain passages of Shakespeare may give colour to the Lyceum interpretation of the text, personally I must admit I hold with the traditional reading; at the same time, the “startling innovations” once accepted, there is such subtle power in Mr. Irving’s conception, and such a picturesqueness and melancholy charm in Miss Ellen Terry’s rendering, as to enthral the sense and afford the spectator an intellectual feast.’ *Dramatic Notes*, 29th December 1888, Press cutting, Production file Lyceum Theatre, Macbeth, 1888. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 3.10 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.2 x10.1cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:426-2007.

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3.3 – Harmonious Costume

Costume as ‘armour’

Whether in a deliberate anticipation of the controversy her performance was likely to provoke, or in pursuit of a specific artistic effect, Terry’s costumes played an important part in her portrayal of Lady Macbeth and provided an immediate statement of her reading of the character. This is particularly evident in the dress in which Terry made her first appearance [FIGURE 3.10]. This costume, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, was deliberately designed to reproduce the effect of ‘chain mail,’ an

impression heightened by the serpentine gleam of the blue green beetle wing cases and metal tinsel which covered its surface.¹³¹ It therefore provided Terry with a form of ‘armour’ which conveyed her Lady Macbeth’s majesty and power and yet retained sufficient signs of femininity and beauty to placate even the harshest of critics.

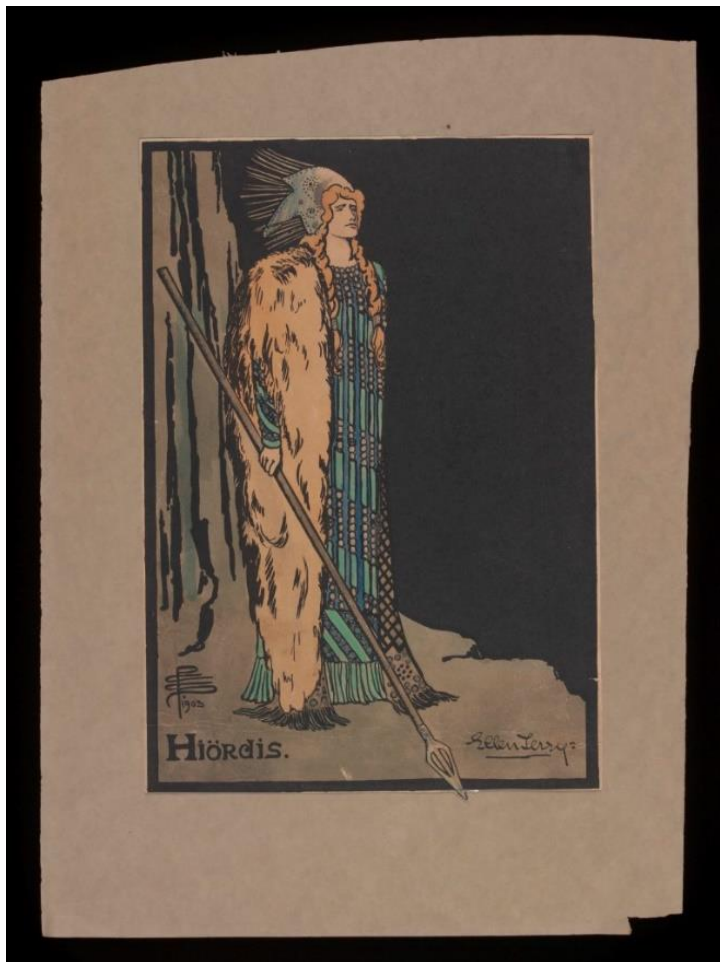


Figure 3.11 - Pamela Coleman Smith (1877-1925). Ellen Terry as Hiördis in *The Vikings* by Henrik Ibsen, Hand coloured print on paper. 27.2 x 19.1cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.952-2014.

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The 1903 production of Henrik Ibsen’s (1828-1906) early work, *The Vikings*, offers a further significant example of Terry’s use of costume to communicate her departure from her established ‘womanly’ role, both on and off the stage. Staged some fifteen years after the Lyceum Company production of *Macbeth*, this production marked Terry’s first

¹³¹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 211-2.

independent venture into management and her departure her previous status as Irving's leading lady. In this instance Terry's costume needed to act as a visual embodiment of the 'primitive, fighting, free, open-air person' she sought to portray.¹³² [FIGURE 3.11]

The floor length tunic, which she wore as Hiördis in the first act survives in the collection at Smallhythe [FIGURE 3.12]. Designed by her son, Edward Gordon Craig and made by her daughter, Edith Craig, this tunic is formed from lengths of sea green leather and indigo blue wool, set on a black cotton net ground. As with the chain mail construction employed for Terry's more famous 'Beetlewing dress' in *Macbeth*, the colour palette and decoration used for the tunic, in particular the discs of burnished metal with which the costume is embellished, and the bronze silk velvet which edges the neckline, explicitly reference armour [FIGURE 3.13]. This warrior-like costume, which was worn with a 'cap of steel' covered with upstanding 'quills, standing up behind,' set the tone for the production and provided an apt costume for the 'magnificent' figure of Hiördis, a 'superb' woman who, in Terry's assessment, combined the force of '3 Lady Macbeths.'¹³³ The significance of Terry's decision to select this Ibsen play, and in particular this cold and remorseless role to mark her first venture into independent management, will be considered in Chapter 6.

¹³² Terry offers this description of Hiördis in Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 325.

¹³³ "Imperial Theatre, *The Vikings*," *Unidentified Periodical*, 1903. Press Cutting, mounted in Ruth Canton Album, *Henry Irving*, Garrick Club, London. Terry made this observation in a letter sent to her son, Edward Gordon Craig on 19th November 1902. Auerbach quotes from the letter in *Ellen Terry: Player in her time*, 334. She cites Edward Antony Craig's book, *Gordon Craig: The Story of His Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968) 174 as her source.



Figure 3.12 - Costume worn by Terry as Hiördis in *The Vikings*, Imperial Theatre, 1903, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 23 May 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.116, [1118841].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 3.13 -Detail of costume worn by Terry as Hiördis in *The Vikings*, Imperial Theatre, 1903, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 23 May 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.116, [1118841].

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‘Archaeologically correct, and artistically appropriate’¹³⁴

As noted in Chapter 1, and in the introduction to this chapter, in order to understand the design, construction, dramatic impact, and historical significance of stage costumes, it is vital to establish the artistic, social, and historic context within which these garments were designed, created, used, seen and preserved. The significant changes in attitude towards stage costume over the course of the nineteenth century are of particular relevance to this thesis. As Cummings has observed ‘most performers in the 18th century and into the 19th century mixed contemporary dress with costumes suggestive of character type.’¹³⁵ Indeed T.C. Davis suggests that ‘before the movement for historical authenticity took hold, the cloth and decoration of theatrical costume alone signalled the dramatic role.’¹³⁶ The result was that whilst it ‘was recognised that a few characters had to have historical costumes as this was part of their identity’ in many instances budgetary constraints and contemporary taste meant that ‘the rest of the cast had to make do with the contemporary suits in the wardrobe.’¹³⁷

Though contemporary fashions and established conventions continued to govern costume design throughout the eighteenth century there were some ‘early idealists’ who sought to reform stage costume.¹³⁸ Jackson has identified evidence of a shift in attitude towards ‘[...] the costuming of plays set in other periods and places with increased (or novel)

¹³⁴ Oscar Wilde, “Truth and Masks,” *Intentions: The Decay of Lying. Pen, Pencil, and Poison, The Critic As Artist, The Truth of Masks* (London: Osgood, 1891. [Online edition, Project Gutenberg, Transcribed from the 8th edition published by Methuen and Co. in 1913].) n.p.

¹³⁵ Cummings, ‘Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?’ *Understanding Fashion History* (London: Batsford, 2004) 118. See also Maclaurin, ‘The Stage Picture,’ *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice* (London, Palgrave, 2015) 48-50.

¹³⁶ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 109.

¹³⁷ De Marly, *Costume of the Stage*, 42, 45. See also Russell Jackson, “Brief Overview: A Stage History of Shakespeare in Costume,” *Shakespeare and Costume*, ed. Patricia Lennox and Bella Mirabella (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 13.

¹³⁸ Cummings, De Marly and Maclaurin cite the example of Aaron Hill’s 1731 production of *The Generous Traitor, or Aethelwold* at the Drury Lane Theatre. Cummings, ‘Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?’, 118, De Marly, *Costume on the Stage 1600-1940*, 49-50 and Maclarin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 48-49.

attention to the places and times represented in them, but also the period of their composition' in the mid eighteenth century.¹³⁹ As Peter Holland suggests however, many actors felt that further reform was required.¹⁴⁰ John Philip Kemble (1757-1823) and his sister Sarah Siddons are amongst those credited with taking steps to promote reform in costuming, but the classical styles adopted by both, whilst rejecting 'theatrical tradition,' arguably owed more to the contemporary enthusiasm for Neoclassicism, than an in-depth study of the architecture and dress of the classical world.¹⁴¹

The antiquarian James Robinson Planché (1796-1880) played a crucial part in altering attitudes to theatrical costume during the nineteenth century.¹⁴² Writing in 1836 he suggested that Edmund Kean's (1787-1833) productions at Drury Lane (staged between circa 1814 and 1820) should be credited with initiating 'considerable improvements in point of scenery and dress.'¹⁴³ It was, Planché argued, Kean's willingness to consult (if not also follow) the guidance of authorities on historic dress, that established an

¹³⁹ He cites Hogarth's portrait of David Garrick (1717-1779) as Richard III (now in the Walker Art Gallery), painted in circa 1745 as an illustration of the beginning of this 'second phase' and notes that Garrick's successors Edmund Kean and George Frederick Cooke both wore outfits in a similar style to the costume depicted in Hogarth's painting of Garrick. Jackson, *Shakespeare and Costume*, 14. Maclaurin also credit Garrick with an influential role in stage reform and suggest that a shift in approach and attitudes to stage costume occurred from around 1760, See Maclaurin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 49.

¹⁴⁰ Peter Holland, "Performing in the Middle Ages," *Medieval Shakespeare: Pasts and Presents*, ed. Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper, and Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 208-9. Cummings, Jackson, Laver and De Marly, also recognise the importance of another key challenger of tradition, the Irish actor, Charles Macklin (1699-1797). They attach specific importance to reforms Macklin made to the costumes traditionally worn for the role of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* in 1741 and the title role of *Macbeth* in 1773. These costumes are discussed in further detail by Laver, *Costume in the Theatre*, 98 and Cummings, 'Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?' 119. See also Jackson, *Shakespeare and Costume*, 13 and De Marly, *Costume on the Stage*, 51.

¹⁴¹ For an in depth examination of both Siddons' and Kemble's approaches to theatrical costume see De Marly, *Costume on the stage*, 57-63. J.P. Kemble's approach to costumes was also analysed by James Robinson Planché (1796-1880) in "A Brief History of Stage Costume," *The Book of Table Talk*, eds. Charles Macfarlane, and J.R. Planché (London: Charles Knight, 1836), 172-174.

¹⁴² The important part that Planché played in changing the approach to design for the stage, not least through his six year partnership with Charles Kemble (1775-1854) at Covent Garden, is noted by figures writing on this theme in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including Terry in her autobiography, *The Story of My Life*, and Mrs. Aria in *Costume, Fanciful, Historical and Theatrical* (London, Macmillan and Co Ltd., 1906), 237-8. Subsequent researchers including Paul Reinhardt, "The Costume Designs of James Robinson Planché (1796-1880)," *Educational Theatre Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (December, 1968), 524-544; De Marly, *Costume on the Stage*, 69; Cummings, *Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?*, 119, Jackson, *Shakespeare and Costume*, 14 and Maclaurin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 50-51 and Taylor, *Establishing Dress History*, 25, have reaffirmed its significance.

¹⁴³ Planché, "A Brief History of Stage Costume," 173-4

environment in which Charles Kemble (1775-1854) could ‘set about the reformation of the costume of Shakespeare’s plays in good earnest.’¹⁴⁴

The production of *King John* staged by Kemble in 1823, is cited by Cumming, De Marly, Jackson and McClaurin as marking a major turning point in costume design.¹⁴⁵ This production opened at Covent Garden Theatre, London and Planché was engaged to design the costumes. The production sought to promote ‘an attention to Costume which has never been equalled on the English Stage’ and the playbills promised audiences that ‘Every character will appear in the precise habit of the period – the whole of the Dresses and Decorations being executed from indisputable authorities.’¹⁴⁶

The success of the productions staged by Kemble and Planché during their six year partnership, can be attributed in part to the fact that their efforts to reform theatrical costume were combined, and very probably encouraged by, a burgeoning interest in the history of dress in the late eighteenth century.¹⁴⁷ This interest in the study of past fashions continued through the nineteenth century and by the late 1830s, as Planché declared, the ‘spirit of critical enquiry’ had been sufficiently ‘aroused’ to prompt ‘an entire and complete reformation of [...] theatrical wardrobes.’¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Planché, “A Brief History of Stage Costume,” 174.

¹⁴⁵ Cummings, *Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?*, 119, Jackson, *Shakespeare and Costume*, 14 and Maclaurin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 50-51.

¹⁴⁶ Playbill, *King John*, Covent Garden, 15 November 1823. Covent Garden Theatre, Production Box, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

¹⁴⁷ Taylor refers to publications across Europe, noting however that the emphasis in this period remained ‘on illustration with only brief text’. She notes in particular the four volumes which formed Thomas Jeffreys’ ‘ambitious *Collection of the Dresses of Different Nations, ancient and Modern* [which] came out over the 1757-72 period’ and Joseph Strutt’s works *The Regal and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of England* (1773); *Complete View of the Manners, Customs, Arms, Habits etc. of the Inhabitants of England* (1774, 1775 and 1776) and *Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England* (1796 and 1799). Taylor, *Establishing Dress History*, 10, 23.

¹⁴⁸ Planché, “A Brief History of Stage Costume,” 174-5. As Paul Reinhardt has shown, Planché was amongst the figures engaged in the study of historic dress, publishing the results of his research in a range of archaeological journals. In 1834 these articles were brought together in J. R. Planché, *History of British Costume, from the Earliest Period to the Close of the 18th Century* (London: Charles Knight, 1834). Paul Reinhardt, “The Costume Designs of James Robinson Planché (1796-1880),” *Educational Theatre Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (December, 1968), 524-5. By the time Terry was born in 1847, a second edition of this text was already being printed and a copy formed part of the actress’s library. Terry’s copy was the 1847 edition, it is now part of the collection at Smallhythe Place, National Trust Inventory Number 3052812.

This was certainly the spirit in which Charles Kean approached the productions he staged at the Princess Theatre, London, between 1849 and 1859. Indeed, Terry subsequently argued that Kean's 'Shakespearian productions' marked 'the real beginning of a serious attempt to clear the air of anachronisms.'¹⁴⁹

Terry made her first stage appearance at the Princess Theatre in 1856. She spent three years working with the Keans and, as her memoirs suggest, this apprenticeship clearly had a formative influence on her attitude towards costume and design for the stage.¹⁵⁰ As Maclaurin suggests, Kean's '[...]' emphasis on education as well as entertainment allowed audiences to feel that they could enjoy a visual feast while learning about a real episode in history.'¹⁵¹

'A sense of decorative effect'¹⁵²

By the time Terry joined the Lyceum Company in 1878 the actress had spent a significant period of time living with two leading figures in art and design: between 1864 and 1865, with Watts and between 1868 and 1874, with Godwin. The same committed attention to precise historical details for which Charles Kean's productions were famous characterised Godwin's approach to design both on and off the stage. It was whilst Terry was working with a 'stock company' in Bristol in the 1860s that she received her first introduction to Godwin, whose role in shaping her taste will be discussed in Chapter 6. The commencement of Godwin's impact on the Terry's views regarding design and costume can be traced to the dress that he created for the actress to wear as Titania in *A Midsummer*

¹⁴⁹ Ellen Terry, "Stage Decoration", *The Windsor Magazine* (Copyright by S.S.McClure Company in the United State of America, 1911) 71-2.

¹⁵⁰ Terry describes the succession of productions in which she appeared during this three year period. As she relates even when not performing she was studying the other members of the company and was frequently entranced by the set and costumes of her fellow performers. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 12-29.

¹⁵¹ Maclaurin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 51.

¹⁵² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 150.

Night's Dream in a production which opened at the Theatre Royal Bath in 1863. As Terry recalled in her autobiography

Mr. Godwin designed my dress, and we made it at his house in Bristol. He showed me how to damp it and "wring" it while it was wet, tying up the material as the Orientals do in their "tie and dry [sic]" process, so that when it was dry and untied, it was all crinkled and clinging. This was the first lovely dress that I ever wore, and I learned a great deal from it.¹⁵³

Unfortunately neither the dress, nor an image of Terry in the role survive. Significant similarities can however be traced between this description and first dress created for Terry by her newly appointed costume designer, Comyns-Carr over twenty years later. Worn by the actress as Ellaline in the 1887 Lyceum Company production of *The Amber Heart*, this dress was also 'crinkled' in appearance and draped softly around her figure.¹⁵⁴ [FIGURE 3.14]

Following her return to the stage in 1874, Terry's success had established her position as one of the foremost actresses in London. Her education in art and design, if not complete, had at least reached a point at which Terry could be confident in her ability to bring Irving 'help in pictorial matters,' declaring that,

Judgement about colours, clothes and lighting must be *trained*. I had learned from Mr. Watts, from Mr. Godwin, and from other artists, until a sense of decorative effect had become second nature to me.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 47.

¹⁵⁴ As subsequent discussions will establish, the 1887 production of *The Amber Heart* was the first in which Alice Comyns-Carr took primary responsibility for the design of Terry's costumes and was staged at the height of the Aesthetic Movement.

¹⁵⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 150.

The interest in researching and documenting an accurate ‘archaeology of dress,’ increased throughout the course of Terry’s career. Planché continued to play a leading part in the field, publishing his *Cyclopaedia of Costume* in 1876 but Frederick William Fairholt made an equally significant contribution.¹⁵⁶ Like Planché, Fairholt ‘had strong interests in the theatre,’ having worked for some time as a scene painter. Fairholt adopted a systematic ‘antiquarian’ approach for his book, *Costume in England – a history of dress to the end of the eighteenth century* published in 1860, and accompanied his text with high quality engravings.¹⁵⁷



Figure 3.14 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:413-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁵⁶ J.R.Planché, *Cyclopaedia of Costume* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1876).

¹⁵⁷ Taylor, *Establishing Dress History*, 36. F.W.Fairholt, *Costume in England – a history of dress to the end of the eighteenth century* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1860). Taylor also observed that the quality of the Fairholt’s text was such that his text ‘served to inspire many other dress historians right through to the 1930s.’ Taylor, *Establishing Dress History*, 37. The rise and significance of antiquarianism within Victorian England has been widely discussed elsewhere, not least in Levine, Philippa’s Levine’s important publication on this theme, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians, and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) and, more recently in Susan Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1995).

At the Lyceum Theatre, Irving engaged the actor Walter Lacy (fl.1840-1899), who had worked with Charles Kean when Terry had been a child, as an advisor for his Shakespearian productions.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, in 1888 he employed the antiquarian and painter Charles Cattermole (1832-1900), to design the costumes (with the exception of those worn by Terry) and also the set, for the production of *Macbeth*. Cattermole carried out extensive research, spending over a month seeking out ‘authoritative’ sources for costume, decoration and architecture in London Museums. His commitment to ‘authenticity’ was such that, as Booth records, ‘[...] the vessels in the banquet scene were exact copies of originals in the British Museum, and the patterns for some embroideries came from an eleventh century cope in the South Kensington Museum.’¹⁵⁹

Writing in 1891 in a piece entitled, *The Truth of Masks*, Oscar Wilde reflected upon this ‘desire for archaeological accuracy in dress’ which, he claimed, ‘has distinguished the great actors of our age.’¹⁶⁰ Archaeology was not, Wilde explained ‘a pedantic method, but a method of artistic illusion’ in which ‘costume is a means of displaying character without description, and of producing dramatic situations and dramatic effects.’¹⁶¹ Wilde’s comments draw attention to the role that costume plays in communicating the inner nature of the character being portrayed. His additional observation regarding the need for some harmony between set and costume on the stage as one would demand in a room, or picture, shows further understanding of theatrical practice during this period. As Terry notes in her autobiography, she always took pains to discuss designs with the scene painters, consulting them ‘about the colour, so that I should not look wrong in their

¹⁵⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 156.

¹⁵⁹ Michael Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre 1850-1910* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) 46-7.

¹⁶⁰ Oscar Wilde, “Truth and Masks,” *Intentions: The Decay of Lying. Pen, Pencil, and Poison, The Critic As Artist, The Truth of Masks* (London: Osgood, 1891 [Online edition, Project Gutenberg, Transcribed from the 8th edition published by Methuen and Co. in 1913].) n.p.

¹⁶¹ Oscar Wilde, “Truth and Masks,” n.p.

scenes, nor their scenes wrong with my dresses.’¹⁶² Indeed Terry’s strong sympathy with Wilde’s viewpoint is apparent in her decision to quote directly from Wilde’s article, and to praise his observations regarding theatrical costume, when presenting her own views on ‘Stage Decoration’ twenty years later in 1911.¹⁶³

Much of Wilde’s emphasis on the beauty which results through ‘harmony’, and the desire for dress that is ‘archaeologically correct and artistically appropriate,’ can also be connected with the quest for synaesthesia, or the unity of all the senses, promoted by the Aesthetic Movement. The number and range of productions Wilde is able to cite as exemplifying successful harmonious and archaeologically correct stage costume indicates, however, that this approach to design had spread beyond acolytes of Aestheticism.¹⁶⁴ The Lyceum Theatre is amongst the theatres which Wilde credits with a realisation of this achievement. He reserves particular praise for the 1882 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Terry’s partnership with Irving at Lyceum Theatre clearly provided the actress with the ideal environment within which to capitalise on her experience, and also to refine her own artistic taste. As the actress reflected in 1908:

Neither when I began nor yet later in my career have I ever played under a management where infinite pains were not given to every detail. I think that far from hampering the acting, a beautiful and congruous background and harmonious costumes, representing accurately the spirit of the time in which the play is supposed to move, ought to help and inspire the actor.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 69.

¹⁶³ Ellen Terry, “Stage Decoration”, *The Windsor Magazine*, 90.

¹⁶⁴ Wilde cites the perfect accuracy and beauty of productions ‘[...] such as Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft’s eighteenth-century revivals at the Haymarket, Mr. Irving’s superb production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, and Mr. Barrett’s *Claudian*’. Wilde also praises Godwin, and his impact of stage design, in particular the production of *As You Like It*, staged in Coombe Wood in 1885. Wilde, “Truth and Masks”, n.p.

¹⁶⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 10.

As Maclaurin observes however, ‘The Victorian quest for accuracy required the costumes to follow the interpretative vision of its pioneering antiquarian researchers [...] and showed scant regard for period cutting and appropriate fabric.’¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, as Chapter 4 will acknowledge, the costumes Terry wore in *Macbeth*, in particular her ‘beetlewing dress,’ though justifiably described by Jackson as ‘one of the most exotic achievements of the costumier’s art,’ also contrasted dramatically with the garments worn by the other members of the cast. In actuality therefore the Lyceum Theatre is more accurately viewed as a ‘Temple of Art,’ dedicated to presenting productions in a ‘grand historical-pictorial style’ which, though inspired by detailed ‘antiquarian’ research, privileged dramatic effect over historical accuracy.¹⁶⁷

The shift in attitude towards costume design during the nineteenth century coincided with the point at which Terry began her stage career. She worked closely with many of the figures, such as Kean and Godwin, who played a leading part in these reforms and they had a lasting impact on her approach to, and views upon, stage design. As Chapter 5 will show, Terry’s privileged position at the Lyceum Theatre allowed her to create costumes that not only achieved the ‘aesthetic harmony’ between set and costume so highly valued by the Aesthetic Movement and Terry herself, but which also fulfilled their dramatic purpose, reinforcing and expressing the characters being represented. The close partnership Terry established with Comyns-Carr from 1887 onwards allowed Terry to create even more ambitious costumes which, though shaped by the narrative and period

¹⁶⁶ Maclaurin, *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice*, 52. Her views are supported by Walter’s findings regarding the numerous discrepancies between the reality of the costumes worn by Irving when performing the role of *Charles I*, and the portraits and fashions which these garments were popularly believed to replicate. Walter, “‘Van Dyck in Action’: Dressing Charles I for the Victorian Stage,” 161-179.

¹⁶⁷ Jackson, *Shakespeare in Costume*, 16. Meisel provides a detailed and informative analysis of Lyceum Productions and Irving’s engagement with ‘art’, and ‘artists’ in *Realisations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England*, 402-432.

in which they featured, were frequently adapted to suit her personal taste and views on dress.

3.3 The 'Body' of 'The Actress'

From 'chainmail' to 'gauze and spangles'

Terry was thus a strong advocate of 'harmonious costumes' believing that they could and ought to 'help and inspire the actor.'¹⁶⁸ The financial and artistic freedom she was granted over her costumes both at the Lyceum, and during her later engagements with other theatres was, however, extremely unusual.¹⁶⁹ Star performers, such as Terry, might be able to work with their own costumier to create and control their own garments.¹⁷⁰ Other members of the company, such as those working at the Lyceum Theatre, where there was still an 'in-house' wardrobe, would have had costumes provided for them. In the mid to late nineteenth century however, most actors, particularly those in Stock Companies or those travelling in pursuit of engagements, seem to have built up their own stock of theatrical costume as they were frequently required to provide their own garments for performance.¹⁷¹ Noting the significant costs associated with obtaining such garments, T.C. Davis found evidence that '[...] women 'supers' were only provided with their wardrobes in West End and touring original cast productions.'¹⁷² As the actress and

¹⁶⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 10.

¹⁶⁹ As Chapter 5 will discuss Terry was able to appoint her own costume designer and her costumes. Whilst these generally harmonised with the rest of the company and the set, they were distinct and created separately. When engaged to play Mistress Page in the production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, staged at the Haymarket Theatre by Beerbohm Tree in 1902, Terry employed her daughter, Edith Craig, to provide many of her costumes. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 323.

¹⁷⁰ As Chapter 2 noted, Kaplan and Stowell discuss Mrs. Patrick Campbell's use of costume in *Theatre and Fashion*, 3-4, 94-65. Breward also examines star performers who exercises careful control over their dress in Breward, *Fashioning London*, 87-91. As Breward also shows, women such as Florence Alexander, who gained a role in management, might have the opportunity to determine not only their own dress, but also those of other performers. Breward, "At Home at the St James'." 153-6.

¹⁷¹ Cummings, 'Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?', 118 and De Marly, *Costume on the Stage*, 25.

¹⁷² T.C. Davis is referring here to 'supernumerary' actors, generally engaged to play small roles stock characters or 'walk-on' and perform 'business' in crowd scenes. T.C. Davis, *Actresses as working women*, 27.

playwright Cicely Hamilton recalled in her autobiography, whilst clothes were often provided for the men in a company, women '[...] often had to find their own.' Furthermore, Hamilton adds, if such dresses were deemed unsuitable, it would be noted by the management, who would look 'askance' at their unfortunate wearers.¹⁷³

The other alternative for actresses, particularly those who, like the anonymous author of *The Diary of An Actress or the Realities of Stage Life* (1885), moved from one company to another, was to submit to wearing whatever costumes were provided by their employers regardless of their own artistic ideals.¹⁷⁴ The author of this account was, for instance, forced to abandon her dreams of 'Shakespeare and black velvet' and think herself 'fortunate to go for a fairy queen in gauze and spangles.'¹⁷⁵

Communicating 'respectability'

As T.C. Davis has shown, another aspect of theatre costume which would have been a particular concern for actresses, was the role it could play in communicating respectability. Commencing from the standpoint that the 'historical meaning of sexuality is assimilated in clothing,' T.C. Davis has examined the evolutions in costume in relation to '[...] the assignment of sexually 'innocent' and 'guilty' body parts.'¹⁷⁶ Looking specifically at the costumes worn by dancers during this period, she contends that their soft 'diaphanous gowns' and freedom from 'stiff-boning' carried undesirable connotations of 'loose morals and easy virtue' that 'fuelled the misapprehensions of performer's accessibility and sexual availability.'¹⁷⁷ As Monks has discussed, this was a

¹⁷³ Cicely Hamilton, *Life Errant* (London: J.M.Dent, 1935) 43.

¹⁷⁴ This diary has been examined in detail by Gardner in "The Three Nobodies," 10-37 As she explains the exact details of the diary's author are not known, but the British Library has attributed the work to Alma Ellersie.

¹⁷⁵ Alma Ellersie[?], ed. H.C.Shuttleworth *Diary of an Actress or the Realities of Stage Life*, (London: Griffin, Farren & Co, 1885), 155,159.

¹⁷⁶ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 108-111.

¹⁷⁷ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 109.

period during which costume was both ‘producing and imagining bodies.’ She suggests that the ‘diaphanous’ and ‘abbreviated’ costumes often worn by dancers and in pantomimes allowed the spectator to ‘[...] vacillate between two kinds of costume – the costume that produces the imaginary body of the [character being] represented, and the scanty costume that displays the ‘real’ body of the girl.’¹⁷⁸ Engaging with Ellersie’s account of her costumes, T.C. Davis pays particular attention to the relief the actress expresses at not having to wear ‘the abbreviated skirts of the ballet,’ arguing that,

Without an impeccably chaste stage appearance [Ellersie] recognised that both her professional and private personae would be compromised. By going on the stage she had lost the good reputation of her private self, so she anxiously sought to retrain the respectability of the half she could control through judicious image-making and co-optation of The Drama’s vestimentary legitimacy.¹⁷⁹

As Ellersie’s recollections suggest, and surviving images and descriptions of performers reveal, different dramatic conventions governed the costumes worn in productions for the ‘illegitimate stage,’ in particular pantomimes and ballets and those worn within theatres who staged ‘legitimate’ drama. In the 1880s and 1890s, for instance, the stars of the Gaiety Theatre (a venue associated with ‘illegitimate drama’), wore costumes which, whilst encasing and containing the upper part of their torso in bodices which followed the fashionable silhouette of the day, provided titillation for their audiences by exposing the lower part of the body, from hip to ankle. A representative example of this is the costume worn by Connie Gilchrist (1865-1946) as Abdallah in *The Forty Thieves* at the Gaiety Theatre, 1888, in which her ‘abbreviated’ tunic follows the then fashionable ‘Princess

¹⁷⁸ Monks, *The Costume Reader*, 104-5.

¹⁷⁹ Ellersie, *Diary of an Actress*, 159 quoted in T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 111.

line' silhouette, before being cut away at the upper thigh.¹⁸⁰ [FIGURE 3.15] During the same period however, most actresses appearing on the legitimate stage would be wearing floor length garments which fulfilled the criteria then required to 'communicate respectability' by covering their wearer's legs and ankles.¹⁸¹ Great excitement was therefore provoked by the appearance of Lillie Langtry (1853-1929) as Rosalind in *As You Like It* (1889) in which her loose fitting costume exposed her leg up to a point just above the knee.¹⁸² [FIGURE 3.16]



Figure 3.15 - Samuel Alex Walker. Connie Gilchrist as Abdallah in *The Forty Thieves* at the Gaiety Theatre, 1888, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.135:398-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁸⁰ An insight into the nature of the productions staged at this theatre can also be gleaned from the *Reminiscences of John Hollingshead* (1827-1904) who ran the theatre for a number of years. See John Hollingshead, *Gaiety Chronicles* (Westminster: A. Constable & Co, 1898) and "*Good Old Gaiety*": *An Historiette and Remembrance* (London: Gaiety Theatre Co, 1903).

¹⁸¹ The conventions which governed dress and the body during this period have been widely discussed elsewhere. Examples of such examinations include Stephen Marcus, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2009); Jill L Matus, *Unstable Bodies: Victorian Representations of Sexuality and Maternity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) and Valerie Steele, *Fetish: Fashion, Sex and Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Specific insights into the manner in which dress, and context, can shape the reaction provided by the 'dressed body' are also offered by Joanne Entwistle in *The Fashioned Body: fashion, dress, and modern social theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000).

¹⁸² Eltis has argued that Langtry, an actress alert to the important role a careful 'marketing strategy' played in her success, exploited the 'sexual opportunity' of this 'breeches role' deliberately, wearing only a 'short tunic and cross gartered tights.' Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 173.



Figure 3.16 - Lafayette Ltd. Lillie Langtry as Rosalind in *As You Like It*, 1890. Albumen Cabinet Card. 14.5 x 11.1cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG 46489.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

During her time as part of a stock company, Terry was occasionally obliged to wear the ‘abbreviated skirts’ dreaded by Ellersie. A case in point is the ‘short tunic’ which the actress wore as Cupid in *Endymion* in 1862. As surviving images show this tunic finished just above Terry’s knees.¹⁸³ [FIGURE 3.17] Terry was 13, an age at which such costumes could potentially have compromised her respectability. As she recalled, her tunic was ‘[...] considered too scanty to be quite nice.’¹⁸⁴ Whilst Terry does not reveal whether she

¹⁸³ Terry was not the only figure in the production wearing a garment which exposed her legs, and a further image of Terry alongside her sister Kate and the actress Henrietta Hodgon shows all three figures wearing costumes which expose part of their legs, and in Kate’s case, her arms too. See Horatio King, Terry as Cupid, alongside Henrietta Hodgon as Endymion and Kate Terry as Diana in *Endymion*, Theatre Royal, Bristol, ca.1862. Sepia photograph on paper. 9.3 x 5.9 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:165-2007.

¹⁸⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 45.

felt any degree of apprehension wearing this garment, she does record the care with which her parents guarded the reputation of their daughters.

A particular concern within this thesis is the importance attached to the female body as expressed and emphasised by their costumes. As T.C. Davis notes, ‘In the Victorian theatre, adult female performers were never sexless: sex was always apparent in gendered costume whether through tight breeches, skirts, corseted silhouettes, hairstyles, or headgear.’¹⁸⁵ The result was that

No matter how scrupulous their conduct was as private citizens, actresses had no authority or control over their public sign-making of bodily coverings, gestures and spatial relationships lodged in a separate but symbiotically dependent source.¹⁸⁶



Figure 3.17 - Horatio King, Terry as Cupid in *Endymion*, Theatre Royal, Bristol, ca.1862, Sepia photograph on paper. 9.5 x 5.6cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:164-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁸⁵ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 114.

¹⁸⁶ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 108.

The body of the actress

Much of the concern surrounding female performance stemmed not from the ‘bodily coverings,’ but rather the erotic ‘meanings’ which, as T.C. Davis has argued, ‘the Victorian male playgoer’ had the ‘power’ to ascribe to ‘the objects of his gaze.’¹⁸⁷ For Roach, the ‘actor’s body constitutes his instrument, his medium, his chief means of creative expression.’¹⁸⁸ Bush-Bailey, focusing specifically on female performers, stresses that ‘The actress’s body is the canvas/paper on which she creates, her use of movement, gesture and voice the colours she uses to demonstrate her skills.’ As Bush-Bailey stresses, ‘[...] the objectification of her body has successfully deflected revisionist theatre histories from considering the actress’s body as the essential tool of her craft.’ The shift in emphasis Bush-Bailey advocates is significant, and prompts a re-consideration of the manner in which the professional actress used her body in, what Bailey terms, ‘her public, performed, identity.’¹⁸⁹

Citing evidence from contemporary reviews, Powell argues that whilst critics were ‘[...] concerned with the acting of a man’ they were ‘interested mainly in the appearance of a woman – the pathetic expression of her face, her charming features.’¹⁹⁰ Similarly, in his discussion of *The French Actress and her English Audience*, Stokes, demonstrates that the body of the actress was often a focus of preoccupation and concern for audiences.¹⁹¹ Indeed comparisons between actresses often centred upon ‘specifications of voice (sometimes almost of pure sound) [...] ‘body language’ (grace, pertinence, redundancy),

¹⁸⁷ T.C. Davis, ‘The Actress in Victorian Pornography’ *Theatre Journal*, 41.3, Performance in Context (October, 1989) 294-315, 314.

¹⁸⁸ Joseph Roach, *The Player’s Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (London: University of Delaware Press, 1985), 11-12.

¹⁸⁹ Bush-Bailey, *Treading the Bawds*, 17.

¹⁹⁰ Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre*, 158.

¹⁹¹ Stokes, *The French Actress and her English Audience* (2005).

of rhythm, control and release.¹⁹² Stokes maintains however, that there were benefits to be gained from this intense focus on the body of the actress for, he contends, '[...] by playing to her audience, the actress is rewarded by the most intense scrutiny of her bodily and auditory signs.'¹⁹³ Actresses such as Bernhardt, therefore gained the respect of an audience by presenting a performance of extreme, yet controlled, emotion.¹⁹⁴ Such representations attracted praise because they 'introduced a crucial element of reflexiveness' and demonstrated an actresses' 'skills in controlled self presentation.'¹⁹⁵

Roodenburg's argument that the body is 'socially constituted' and 'culturally shaped in its performances,' illuminates Roach's descriptions of the cultural and intellectual preconceptions that influence both an actor's approach to performance, and the audience's response.¹⁹⁶ As Roach has observed,

When an actor takes his place on a stage [...] and his audience begins to respond to his performance, together they concentrate the complex values of a culture with an intensity that less immediate transactions cannot rival. They embody its shared language of spoken words and expressive gestures, its social expectations and psychological commonplaces, its conventions of truth and beauty, its nuances of

¹⁹² Stokes, *The French Actress and her English Audience*, 16.

¹⁹³ Stokes, *The French Actress and her English Audience*, 17.

¹⁹⁴ The importance attached to the 'control' of emotions throughout both the eighteenth and nineteenth century has been discussed by Joanna Townsend. Using the career of the actress and playwright Elizabeth Robins (1862-1952) as a case study, Townsend considers the impact that the growing influence of Freudian theory, in particular increasing 'diagnoses of hysteria' on attitudes to psychology and 'performance'. Joanna Townsend 'Elizabeth Robins Hysteria, Politics & Performance', *Women, Theatre & Performance: New Histories, New Historiographies*, eds. Maggie B. Gale and Viv Gardner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001)102-20.

¹⁹⁵ Stokes, *The French Actress and her English Audience*, 19.

¹⁹⁶ Roodenburg draws upon and acknowledges the influence of Paul Connerton on this aspect of his work and cites Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Herman Roodenburg, *The Eloquence of the Body*, 18.

prejudice and fear, its erotic fascinations and frequently its sense of humor [sic].¹⁹⁷

Addressing the idea of body on the stage and the theme of ‘Embodiment,’ Shepherd and Wallis contend that ‘While all bodies display their social education, bodies on stage also display their theatrical education.’ They suggest that, ‘[...] even without explicit training the actor makes assumptions about the proper way of moving and standing on the stage.’ These are assumptions which ‘[...] derive both from a conscious sense of theatrical genre and from an unconscious assimilation of what “works”.’¹⁹⁸ As they go on to show, in addition to expressing their own sense of ‘what works,’ the actors’ bodies are also shaped by social expectations and are ‘loaded with social and theatrical *habitus*.’¹⁹⁹ A performance therefore presents the audience with ‘two sets of bodies – the body scripted by society and the body scripted by theatrical practice and value’²⁰⁰

Reading Roodenburg in conjunction with Shepherd and Wallis, and alongside Bratton’s concept of a ‘theatrical aristocracy,’ offers a new perspective from which to examine the terms in which Terry’s performances are described in contemporary reviews. If the ‘actions, gestures and habits’ of performers could be employed to communicate their position within this emerging ‘aristocracy,’ then the frequency with which reviewers remark upon the quality of Terry’s gestures, in particular her ‘graceful movement’ on the stage acquires new significance. The phrases one reviewer employed to describe Terry’s

¹⁹⁷ Roach, *The Player’s Passion*, 11-12.

¹⁹⁸ Shepherd and Wallis, *Drama/Theatre/Performance*, 192.

¹⁹⁹ Shepherd and Wallis, *Drama/Theatre/Performance*, 193. Their use of the term *habitus* draws explicitly on Marcel Mauss’s use of the term in his essay ‘Techniques of the Body’ (1934) (Wallis and Shepherd cite the 1992 translation of this work Crary, Jonathan, and Sanford Kwinter. *Incorporations*. (New York, NY: Zone, 1992) and Nobert Elias’s subsequent employment of the term in *The Civilising Process* (first published in German in 1939, a translated version having been published in a single volume by Blackwell: Oxford, in 1994.)

²⁰⁰ Shepherd and Wallis, *Drama/Theatre/Performance*, 193.

performance as Portia offers an example of the manner in which she was presented to and perceived by the public.

[...] as we watch the slender, swaying figure, passing to and from with long, graceful, gliding steps, the freely extending, bended arms and lightly waving hands[sic], and well manipulated form pointing each airy utterance, we recognise a refined and accomplished comedienne, preserving the valuable traditions of her noble heart, and showing to what perfection it has attained²⁰¹

The emphasis placed on her ‘refined’ and ‘graceful’ gestures which, by implication, establish her as an ‘accomplished comedienne,’ indicates that the importance Terry attached to movement throughout her career. These qualities stemmed not simply from her training, but also from her awareness that gesture could communicate her status as an educated performer, and cement her position within the highest ranks of her profession.

For the same reason, Terry was keenly aware of the risk that her gestures might be misconstrued by her audience. In her autobiography she refers to two specific instances when her ‘sexual identity’ intruded upon and influenced the public responses to her performance. On both occasions it was a misinterpretation of the actress’s body language which provoked criticism.

The first instance Terry discusses is the condemnation attracted by her performance as Portia in 1878-9. Terry’s interpretation of Portia expressed a deeper level of emotion than the restrained performance of actresses such as Helen Faucit (1817-1898) to which

²⁰¹ “Our Biographies: Being brief sketches of the lives of Managers, Authors, Actors and Actresses, No. XV. Ellen Terry,” Garrick Club, London.

audiences had become accustomed.²⁰² Faucit, ‘a leading tragic actress of the middle and late nineteenth century’ first appeared as Portia in 1836 and was still performing the role, aged 54, in 1869.²⁰³ [FIGURE 3.18] Faucit’s Portia had, as James Bulman explains, ‘[...] epitomised traditional Victorian womanhood – mature, not at all girlish’ and ‘emphasised such values as self-sacrifice in love, obedience to her father’s will and righteousness in pleading the Christian cause.’²⁰⁴ Whilst many critics were entranced by the ‘beauty’ of Terry’s ‘charming’ and ‘graceful’ interpretation of the role, the ‘emotional acting in the casket scene’ and the ‘spontaneity’ and ‘naturalness’ of Terry’s approach led others to express disapproval.²⁰⁵ Terry’s ‘natural’ approach was singled out for specific criticism by Henry James in 1881, who expressed his desire to see less ‘nature’ and ‘a little more art’ from the actress. James cited Terry’s interpretation of Portia in support of his argument that Terry’s ‘[...] comprehension of character is sometimes weak,’ declaring that the actress ‘[...] giggles too much, plays too much with her fingers, is too free and familiar, too osculatory in her relations with Bassanio.’ James was particularly critical of Terry’s ‘deportment’ in the Casket Scene in which he protested that the actress failed to enact the role of a ‘splendid spinster’ and struck a ‘false note’ by approaching Bassanio and beginning to ‘pat and stroke him.’ James revealed that this physical contact shocked

²⁰² John W. Mahon, and Ellen M. Mahon. *The Merchant of Venice: New Critical Essays*. New York: Routledge, 2002) 27.

²⁰³ William Baker and Brian Vickers explanation in *The Merchant of Venice* (London: Thoemmes, 2005) 183-4.

²⁰⁴ James C Bulman, *The Merchant of Venice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991) 43. Faucit cemented her legacy and status in 1885, by publishing a long account of her interpretation of Portia and other key Shakespearean roles entitled Lady Helena F. Martin (née Faucit). *On Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters: Ophelia, Juliet, Portia, Imogen, Desdemona, Rosalind, Beatrice*. (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1885.) See in particular 25-44.

²⁰⁵ *The World*, Nov 5th 1879. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume I, 220, Garrick Club, London. The critic in the *Daily Baltimore* was equally impressed by Terry’s approach to the role. *Daily Baltimore*, ca.1883. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 152, Garrick Club, London. Similarly the author of a review in the *Chicago Herald*, actually singles out the Casket Scene for particular praise. *The Chicago Herald*, 10 January 1884. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume VI, 167, Garrick Club, London

one ‘unerring critic’ into making an audible condemnation of Terry’s actions declaring, ‘Good heavens, she’s touching him!’²⁰⁶



Figure 3.18- Siegmund Hildesheimer & Co. Paper scrap depicting Gustavus Vaughan Brooke (1816-1866) as Shylock and Helen Faucit (1914-1898) as Portia, in Act IV, Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice*, ca.1890. Chromolithograph on paper. 14.8 x 13.3 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.1:4-2008.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The *Blackwood's Magazine* also ‘made a particularly ‘severe attack’ upon Terry’s ‘coquettish’ performance.²⁰⁷ As Bulman shows, however, the condemnatory tone of this review may stem from its author’s strong allegiance to Faucit: it was written by the actress’s husband, Theodore Martin.²⁰⁸ Even Terry’s awareness of the biased nature of

²⁰⁶ James recalls overhearing the exclamation ‘Good heavens she’s touching him.’ He records this, and the related criticism, in an article originally published in ‘The London Theatres,’ *Scribners Monthly*, 31, no.3 January 1881) 354-69. The criticism quoted here is reproduced in William Baker, and Brian Vickers, *The Merchant of Venice* (London: Thoemmes, 2005) 145-146.

²⁰⁷ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 183; Anon, *Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1879, 653.

²⁰⁸ Bulman, *The Merchant of Venice*, 42-43. Terry herself makes a subtle but deliberate reference to this connection, in her autobiography. She includes an extract from a letter the dramatist Tom Taylor, in which he praises her performance as Portia and declares Theodore Martin’s review a ‘[...] foolish article.’ Terry takes care to note that Taylor’s letter was ‘refers to an article which attacked my Portia in *Blackwood's Magazine*’ and also quotes Taylor’s remark that ‘Of course, if — found his ideal in — he must dislike

the criticism could not dispel its power, however, as she confessed in her autobiography. The condemnation of her performance and in particular the suggestion that she ‘[...] showed too much of a “coming-on” disposition in the Casket Scene’, affected her for years, and made [her] self-conscious and uncomfortable.’²⁰⁹

Terry faced comparable criticism on a subsequent occasion, when the author Charles Dodgson (1832-1898), a long-term acquaintance of the actress, wrote to condemn her performance in the 1885 production of *Faust*.²¹⁰ As Terry revealed in her autobiography, Dodgson’s concern related to Act II, Scene 1 in which she, as Margaret, began to undress. He warned Terry of the dismay this action had provoked in the young girl who had accompanied him to the performance and suggested that ‘in consideration that [her performance] had the potential to affect [even] a mere child disagreeably, [Terry] ought to alter [her] business.’ Though emphasising her long friendship with ‘dear Mr. Dodgson,’ Terry admits that she was infuriated by his criticism. This anger stemmed largely from the fact that ‘any suggestion of *indelicacy* in [her] treatment of a part always blighted [her]’ and Dodgson’s insinuations left the actress feeling ‘felt ashamed and shy whenever [she] played that scene.’ For Terry it had become ‘the Casket Scene over again.’²¹¹ The fact that the actress also employs her autobiography to make a determined and deliberate, defence of her interpretation of both characters and did not alter her performance of either role, is however worthy of remark and is an aspect of Terry’s approach to ‘self-fashioning’ which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 6.

you in Portia, or in anything where it is a case of grace and spontaneity and Nature against affectation, over-emphasis, stilt, and false idealism—in short, utter lack of Nature.’ Tom Taylor, quoted in Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 115.

²⁰⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 183.

²¹⁰ Dodgson recalled witnessing Terry’s performance as Mamillius in 1856, and took a series of photographs took Terry and her family in ca.1865 when Terry was 17. Jo Jones and J.F. Gladstone note that, whilst at the Lyceum, Terry took pains to provide Dodgson with seats for performances. Jones, Jo E., and J F. Gladstone, *The Alice Companion: A Guide to Lewis Carroll's Alice Books* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998) 257-8.

²¹¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 183.

‘They love me, you know, not for what I am, but for what they imagine I am’²¹²

As her career progressed Terry grew conscious of additional aspects of ‘the physical body,’ in particular the signs and consequences of ageing that even the most accomplished performance or elaborate costume could not overcome or conceal. In 1889 she had been dismayed and frustrated when ‘[...] in the very noonday of life, fresh from Lady Macbeth and still young enough to play Rosalind, [she was] suddenly called upon to play a rather uninteresting mother in *The Dead Heart*.’²¹³ Three years later therefore, Terry, then aged forty-five, was persuaded to play Cordelia in *King Lear*, even though this was a role her sister Kate, had performed aged fourteen.²¹⁴ [FIGURE 3.19, 3.20] The production required Terry, once again, to undertake the role of a ‘young’ and ‘fair’ heroine but provided a crucial opportunity for Irving to give a performance which was described by actor J.L.Toole (1830-1906) as ‘[...] the finest thing of Irving’s life.’²¹⁵ Despite the discrepancy in age between Terry and her character, her performance earned praise from the critics. One reviewer felt that Terry ‘illuminated the play,’ adding ‘Whether arrayed in pale blue or virgin white, she seemed to have cast away ten or fifteen years of anxious and harassing life. She looked as young as when she played Beatrice [...]’²¹⁶

²¹² Terry, Letter from Ellen Terry to George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), 23rd September 1896. Letter, published in Christopher St. John, ed, *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence* (London: Reinhardt & Evans Ltd.) 70.

²¹³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 308.

²¹⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 21.

²¹⁵ Toole’s praise is reported by Bram Stoker in Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (London: Heinemann, 1906), 356.

²¹⁶ “‘King Lear’ at the Lyceum,’ *Unidentified Periodical*, Dated by hand, November 19 1892. Press cutting mounted in Ruth Canton Album, ‘Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1892-1989’, Garrick Club, London, n.p.



Figure 3.19 - Martin Laroche, Kate Terry as The Boy (right) in *Richard II*, Princess Theatre, 1857. Sepia Photograph on paper. 21.2 x 16.2 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133.5-2007.

No photograph showing Kate Terry as she appeared in the role of Cordelia in 1858 has survived, but this image (taken the year before) conveys a sense of her extreme youth, as contrasted with Terry's maturity.

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By the 1894 tour to America, however, the actress's confidence in her youth was faltering. Writing to W.G. Robertson, Terry, now forty-seven, revealed that she no longer felt able to play 'young parts,' in particular the innocent and virginal Marguerite in *Faust*. She complained that although she 'begged' Irving to 'let Marion [Terry's sister] play 'Margaret' – just that one part,' he refused. Yet, whilst clearly frustrated by this situation, Terry also declared that she was willing to 'go on [...] until [she was] entirely worn out' and to succumb to Irving's demands in order to maintain 'peaceful harmony.'²¹⁷

²¹⁷ W.G. Robertson, *Time Was* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1931), 287.

Sustaining the illusion of ‘eternal youth’ became an increasingly oppressive burden for Terry during her final years as the leading lady of the Lyceum Company.²¹⁸ As previously discussed, it was generally the case that as an actress aged she progressed from leading lady towards ‘heavy business’ in secondary and more mature, female roles, graduating in Shakespeare’s *Othello* from Desdemona to Emilia, and in *Hamlet* from Ophelia to Gertrude.²¹⁹ The fact however, that Terry’s partnership with Irving and their joint success was founded upon Terry’s continuing to perform the role and ‘roles’ of a ‘leading lady’ represented an insurmountable barrier to this traditional career trajectory.



Figure 3.20 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Cordelia in *King Lear*, the Lyceum Theatre, 1892, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133.487-2007.

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²¹⁸ Bloodworth touches upon this issue, and also the extent to which Terry was also willing to exploit this element of her celebrity persona in Jenny Bloodworth ‘The Burden of Eternal Youth: Ellen Terry and *The Mistress of the Robes*’, *Ellen Terry: Spheres of Influence*, ed. Katharine Cockin (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011) 49-64.

²¹⁹ Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 22. This was the career path followed by Terry’s contemporaries and role models in their later years, including Ellen Kean, who played Gertrude in the productions of *Hamlet* in which her husband played the title role. Similarly Westland Marston, writing in 1890, describes how the actress Mary Warner (1804-1854) became the ‘[...] recognised Lady Macbeth, Emilia, Gertrude, and Volumnia’ of the Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres. See Westland Marston, *Our Recent Actors: Being Recollections Critical, And, in Many Cases, Personal, of Late Distinguished Performers of Both Sexes, with Some Incidental Notices of Living Actors* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1890) 275. Whilst Terry played Lady Macbeth in 1888, and Volumnia in the 1901 production of *Coriolanus*, she continued to play Desdemona in *Othello* and Ophelia in *Hamlet*.



Figure 3.21 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, 1896, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.2 x 10.1cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:497-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

There were still fleeting moments of brilliance. Terry's performance as Imogen in *Cymbeline* in 1896 was, for instance, 'accounted one of her greatest triumphs' and, though aged fifty, Terry was described as 'full of girlish spirits', 'radiant' and 'a figure that dwells in the memory as one of absolute beauty.'²²⁰ [FIGURE 3.21] Yet, in Terry's view, this production represented her 'only inspired performance of these later years.'²²¹ By 1902, she was conscious that 'the Lyceum reign was dying' and understood the pragmatic motivation that prompted Irving to revive 'his biggest "money-maker"' *Faust*. She was nevertheless determined that 'it was [now] impossible that [she] could play Margaret.'

²²⁰ A.B. Walkley, quoted in Jeffrey Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005), 44. Richards cites Charles Hiatt, *Ellen Terry and her Impersonations*, (London: George Bell & Son, 1898) 242-3, as the source of this quotation. See Jeffrey Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005), 44.

²²¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 316.

There are some young parts that the actress can still play when she is no longer young: Beatrice, Portia, and many others come to mind. But I think that when the character is that of a young girl the betrayal of whose innocence is the main theme of the play, no amount of skill on the part of the actress can make up for the loss of youth.²²²

Marshall attaches specific importance to the emphasis placed on Terry's 'eternal youth' evident in many of the reviews from the later years of the actress's career. She argues that, when faced with the pressure to continue performing these 'young parts,' the '[...]' only way in which she might remain on stage was through the turning back of the theatrical and social clock, which the illusion of an ever-youthful Terry enabled.²²³ Building on this point Marshall suggests that,

[Terry's] perpetual charm is precisely that, a perpetuation of her audiences' initial enamoured response. That stasis begins to explain why it is not only possible, but necessary, for Terry to play the parts of much younger characters, or to reprise some of her earlier successes in later life: it enables the repetition of the terms of her success, reminds her audiences of why they have adored her, and enables them to keep on loving her, and watching her play.²²⁴

As Chapter 2 indicated, Carlson's exploration of the relationship between memory and performance, offers a framework through which to consider Terry's ability to sustain this 'illusion of youth' and, indeed, the audience's willingness to collaborate in and sustain the deception. Carlson contends that 'All theatre is a cultural activity deeply involved

²²² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 313.

²²³ Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 157.

²²⁴ Marshall. *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 155.

with memory and haunted by repetition.’²²⁵ He describes the theatrical experience as a ‘retelling of stories already told, the re-enactment of events already enacted, the re-experience of emotions, already experienced.’²²⁶ In any analysis of a performance, it is therefore essential not to discount the important role played by ‘the audience’s memory and associations’ in the reception of a theatrical event.²²⁷ These ‘memories’ and ‘associations,’ can, Carlson suggests, enable an ‘aging actor’ to overcome the ‘apparent folly and vanity’ of ‘playing youthful roles,’ because

[...] every new performance of these roles will be ghosted by a theatrical recollection of the previous performances, so that audience reception of each new performance is conditioned by inevitable memories of this actor playing similar roles in the past.²²⁸

The ‘power of performance’ is such, Carlson proposes, that ‘the theatrical body, [unlike the physical body] cannot be ‘invalidated by age or decrepitude’ and physical age can be ‘ghosted by years of memory of it in its full vigour.’ In the case of celebrities, such as Terry, this ‘halo effect’ means that all performances are ‘ghosted by fond personal memories of previous high achievement’ and these ‘ghosts’ can ‘mask failing that would be troubling in someone less celebrated.’²²⁹ His comments are borne out by Kelly’s exploration of Terry’s performances in Australia in 1914. As Kelly noted reviews of these performances repeatedly praised the ‘[...] wonderful, superb, alluring, exquisite, grave, endearing Ellen Terry voice,’ which was combined with ‘wonderfully modulated intonation [and] superb gestures.’ This expert manipulation of voice and gesture, skills developed in Terry during her early training, might well have enabled the sixty-seven-

²²⁵ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 8.

²²⁶ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 3.

²²⁷ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 58.

²²⁸ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 58.

²²⁹ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 58-9.

year-old actress to enchant her audiences. As Kelly acknowledges however, Terry's voice would have shown the effects of age and it therefore possible that the praise lavished upon 'the Ellen Terry voice,' may also have been prompted by 'the memory of its power', rather than its current quality.²³⁰ A description of the fifty-year-old actress' performance as Imogen in 1896, lends further weight to Carlson's observations and also reveals the significant part Terry's own 'public identity' and 'celebrity' played in her attraction. It declared that:

[...] Ellen Terry's Imogen is Ellen Terry with twenty years or more off her merry shoulders. We can only describe Ellen Terry's Imogen as her Beatrice, which was mingled with the Rosalind that might have been. No, it was not that, it was Ellen Terry, that peculiar amalgam of witchery, charm and wilfulness which has baffled every critic of her work [...] and she held her audience in the palm of her hand last night.²³¹

Roach has also explored the ability of a charismatic actor to dissolve the boundary between illusion and reality, a capacity which he suggests is all part of 'the *It* effect.'²³² He provides a myriad of definitions and examples of the qualities associated with '*It*,' central to which is the 'strange magnetism, which attracts both sexes.'²³³ As Roach notes, Michael Quinn identified an 'extraordinarily powerful' shift of perception, generated by celebrity in which – 'the audience's attitude shifts from an awareness of the presence of

²³⁰ Kelly, "The After Voice of Ellen Terry," 71.

²³¹ Unidentified paper, ca.1896, Press cutting, Production file, Lyceum Theatre, Cymbeline, 1896. Victoria & Albert Museum. The same reviewer claimed that '[...] in the grand reconciliation scene she [Terry] played with the romance and activity of a girl of eighteen.' Similarly W.G. Robertson recalling Terry's performance, described the forty-nine year old actress as 'a radiant embodiment of youth', and remarked upon the awed silence, followed by 'thunders of applause' which greeted her entrance. W.G. Robertson, *Time Was*, 287.

²³² Roach, *It*, 6.

²³³ Roach, *It*, 4.

fictional illusion to the acceptance of an illusion, however false, of the celebrity's absolute presence.²³⁴ For Roach,

Theatrical performance and social performance that resemble '*It*' consist of struggle, the simultaneous experience of mutually exclusive possibilities – truth and illusion, presence and absence, face and mask. Performers are none other than themselves doing a job in which they are always someone else.²³⁵

Roach's statement raises key questions about Terry's self-fashioning, which will be explored further in Chapter 6. The work of all three theorists (Roach, Carlson and Quinn), emphasises the extent to which the 'attraction' that performers exercise over their audience is dependent upon some form of illusion. As Carlson makes apparent, the audience plays a crucial part in the creation and perpetuation of these fantasies. In the case of Terry, her performances were haunted by the 'ghosts' of her past performances. These powerful 'memories' enabled Terry to sustain the illusion of 'eternal youth' but in doing so, they threatened to imprison the actress within the roles which conformed to this reputation for 'ageless beauty and charm.'²³⁶

²³⁴ Michael Quinn, "Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting", *New Theatre Quarterly*, 22, (1990) 156, quoted in, Roach, *It*, 6. Roach also acknowledges the influences Carlson has had upon his work, and references him directly in the text.

²³⁵ Roach, *it*, 9. Roach also discusses the power and significance of illusion in relation to the theatre, in particular the long career of the actor Thomas Betterton (ca.1635-1710) in his earlier work, *Cities of the Dead*, 92-101.

²³⁶ Jenny Bloodworth 'The Burden of Eternal Youth: Ellen Terry and *The Mistress of the Robes*', *Ellen Terry: Spheres of Influence*, ed. Katharine Cockin (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011) 58. Bloodworth's phrase echoes earlier descriptions of Terry from figures such as Marguerite Steen, *Pride of Terrys* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd, 1962) 220 and 232, and 261-5, and descriptions of Terry's 'fascinating fairy-godmother like personality' from her grand-nephew Sir John Gielgud (1904-2000). Foreword to Madeleine Bingham, *Henry Irving and the Victorian Theatre*, 7.

Conclusion

By the time of her death at the age of eighty-one in 1928, Terry had secured her standing as an actress of national and international importance and as a leading figure within the ‘theatrical aristocracy.’ In 1925, she had become only the second actress to be made a Dame Grand Cross of the British Empire, an award which provided an official testament of Terry’s preeminent position. As this chapter has made apparent, the fact that Terry was born into a theatrical family and received a high level of training in her early years played a significant role in this success. It provided Terry with a direct and early entry into the inner ranks of the theatrical profession and enabled her to return to the stage after a six year absence with the skills, confidence, and knowledge to recommence her career. As an experienced actress, trained from birth, Terry had a strong belief in her personal interpretation of roles, however controversial and this self-assurance contributed directly to her eventual success.

The crucial part that Terry’s professional partnership with Irving made to her celebrity must also be acknowledged however. This chapter has challenged previous characterisations of Terry’s partnership with Irving and presented evidence to show that the relationship was founded upon a mutually beneficial compromise, rather than inequality or competition. Terry’s position as leading lady also allowed her to achieve financial independence.²³⁷ Furthermore, as this chapter has revealed, and as Chapter 5 and 6 will discuss in further detail, Terry’s artistic opinion, if not always accepted, was

²³⁷ As Powell has shown, at the peak of her career Terry’s salary was up to ‘£200 a week’ in comparison to the £25 to £40 which was the average weekly income of a leading lady at this time. Kerry Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 7.

clearly valued by Irving. Indeed, by the final years of their partnership, Terry was contributing not only professional, but also financial support to the Lyceum Company.²³⁸

As this chapter has demonstrated, one of the principal constraints on the roles that Terry was able to perform, were the preconceptions and prejudices of her audience. Terry's increasing celebrity placed her 'public' and 'private' life under increasing scrutiny. This was a period during which, as has been discussed, body language communicated and secured status and respectability. As Chapter 6 will show, Terry's continued success was therefore dependent upon the careful management of her 'body,' and of the 'identities' it might communicate, both on and off the stage.

Of central importance to this thesis is the exceptional level of control Terry was able to exercise over the design and creation of her costumes. As this chapter has indicated the nature of Terry's partnership with Irving, together with her position as a celebrated and highly paid actress, placed her in an unusually privileged position. The next two chapters will focus specifically on Terry's stage costumes and will consider the significance of Terry's involvement in their design and creation. This close analysis of Terry's surviving garments will also take into account the social, artistic and theatrical context within which they were created and will highlight the important part such factors can play in shaping their design and public reception.

The primary aim of Chapters 4 and 5 is to demonstrate the important evidence which can be obtained through close engagement with extant costumes and to present methodological approaches through which it is possible to analyse this key information. Chapter 5, in particular, will also engage with the additional challenges presented by

²³⁸ In a letter from sent from Terry to her costumier. Nettleship on the 3rd of June, 1901, Terry explains that as the Lyceum Company cannot no longer afford to pay for new dresses she will 'pay the bill' herself. See THM/14/20/TERRY/7, Letter to Ada Nettleship, dated 3rd June 1901. Autographed Letter Series, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

garments which not only play a part in the biography of the people who wear them, but also have the potential to accumulate complex 'biographies' of their own.

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CHAPTER 4 - 'FASHIONING' A PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL MODEL FOR ANALYSING HISTORIC THEATRE COSTUME

Introduction

This chapter will address the specific challenges posed by the interpretation and study of historic theatre costume. These include: the significance of social, artistic and historic context; parallels and contrasts between on and off-stage dress; the collaborative process of design and making; the function of costume as both performance object and expression of 'identity'; the issue of multiple and complex 'biographies'; and the crucial evidence offered from material culture sources, most importantly, surviving costumes.

As this thesis demonstrates, research into the history of theatrical costume is not dependent upon the existence of extant garments. Evidence gathered through the close analysis of Terry's surviving theatrical costumes carried out in this chapter will, however, establish the key position that theatrical costumes, where they do survive, should occupy in such research. Surviving costumes will be examined not only for the specific details they reveal regarding the life and career of Terry herself but also as an illustration of their ability to illuminate wider issues connected with the history of the actress and the development of costume and dress during the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This thesis presents a methodology which, though employed here for an in depth investigation of a single figure and time period, has wider applicability and which will facilitate the expansion of the discussion to include the study of historic theatre costume more generally, and to address the costumes of other performers and eras. Reference will

therefore be made to the critical debates within which extant theatre costumes are enmeshed.

4.1: Defining Costume

Costume vs. Dress

To create a methodology for the study of historical theatrical costume it is essential to establish the criteria which demarcate theatrical costume as a distinct and unique category of dress. As Nicklas and Pollen have observed, ‘terminology is a perpetual difficulty in the study of dress history’ and it certainly is a pressing concern within this thesis.¹ One of the principal difficulties presented by the existing terminology within dress history is the long standing tradition of referring to historic clothing as ‘costume’ as well as ‘dress.’ Indeed the two terms have often been used interchangeably without any consciousness of the distinction which exists between ‘personal dress’ and ‘theatrical costume’ within the categories of clothing.

‘Dress’ or ‘fashion’

Cumming has shown how, in the past, the perceived congruity between the words ‘dress’ and ‘costume’ was such that ‘dress for performance’ was often called ‘dress or habits’ and seldom explicitly marked out as ‘stage costume.’² The meaning conveyed by the word ‘costume’ has altered over time however, particularly over the past decade, resulting in a growing preference for the terms ‘dress’ or ‘fashion,’ rather than ‘costume,’ within both academic and curatorial practice. This can be seen in the launch of the journal *Fashion Theory* in 1997. Distancing itself from the approaches and language employed by existing journals such as *Costume and Dress*, *Fashion Theory* rejects the terms ‘costume’ and even

¹ Nicklas, and Pollen, *Dress History: New Directions in Theory and Practice*, 1.

² Cummings, ‘Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?’, 114.

‘dress.’ Instead the journal seeks to promote the ‘critical analysis’ of ‘fashion’ and ‘self-fashioning’ through the body. Defining ‘fashion’ as ‘the cultural construction of the embodied identity’ *Fashion Theory* places a clear emphasis on the role of ‘dress’ as ‘fashionable clothing.’³ In the academic world both ‘fashion’ and ‘dress’ are increasingly used in preference to ‘costume’ within critical theory, publications and course titles.⁴ Within the museum and heritage sector, the term ‘costume’ retains a firmer hold, preserved in job titles, descriptions of museum’s dress and textile collections, and even the names of museum’s themselves.⁵

Negley Harte addressed the ongoing debate surrounding terminology in a review for *Costume* (2009). Harte made the key observation that definitions of ‘*dress, fashion, clothing* and *costume*’ are further complicated by the fact that ‘each of these four words contain intrinsic indicators of different approaches, and each of them can be used to describe the field itself.’⁶ Taylor, writing in *The Handbook of Fashion Studies* (2013), engaged with Harte’s comments to develop this debate further. Of the four terms introduced by Harte, Taylor consistently uses the word ‘dress.’ She notes that this was the term employed by Ruth Barnes and Joanna Eicher in *Dress and Gender* (1992) who proposed a ‘sociocultural approach [to ‘dress’ history], comprehensive, cross-cultural,

³ “Fashion Theory: The journal of dress, body and culture,” *Academic Journal – Fashion Theory*, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2014. [n.d.]

⁴ University courses relating to ‘fashion’ tend to include a practical and practice based element within the degree. A sense of the overlap and distinction between the approaches signified by the two terms can be seen in the title of the BA course offered at the University of Brighton, which is advertised as ‘Fashion and Dress History’ and encompasses the study of both historical dress and contemporary fashion. ‘Course in Brief,” *Fashion and Dress History BA (Hons)*, University of Brighton [n.d.] Similarly, the focus of academic publications on ‘dress’ in its broader historic or ethnographic context, or specifically on ‘fashionable’ clothing, is often signalled by the terminology they employ. Cases in point are Breward’s ‘*A Culture of Fashion: A New History of Fashionable Dress*’ (1995) and *Fashion* (2003) and Taylor’s *The Study of Dress History* (2002) and *Establishing Dress History* (2004).

⁵ The fact that when undertaking the re-branding of the *Museum of Costume* in Bath in 2007 (first opened in 1963) the decision was taken to name it *The Fashion Museum*, marked a significant change within the sector. Replacing ‘costume’ with ‘fashion’ provided a clear statement of the museum’s intentions, reflecting an awareness of current trends within academic study, and a commitment to continual engagement with both historic and contemporary fashion.

⁶ Negley Harte, “Review: John Styles, *The Dress of the People*,” *Costume: The journal of the Costume Society*, 43, (2009) 176.

and grounded in ethnography.’⁷ Taylor also cites Daniel Roche’s work, specifically his use of the term ‘clothing’ in preference to ‘costume.’ As she explains, Roche argues that ‘clothes’ is the word ‘best suited to a social and cultural history of appearances’ and rejects the term ‘costume’ on the grounds that it is ‘too ambiguous in its double meaning of custom and or way of dressing.’⁸ As Taylor demonstrates, Roche’s view is shared by many writers within the field, particularly as further layers of ambiguity arise from the association of costume with ‘exceptional dress’ which is ‘outside the context of everyday life.’⁹

The enduring and negative association of ‘costume,’ with an outdated and undisciplined approach to the study of dress history and consequent rejection of the term within academic research, threatens to undermine efforts to encourage investigations focusing specifically on ‘theatre costumes.’¹⁰ In order for the study of theatrical garments to become established as a distinct and valid area of dress and theatre history, it is therefore vital to reclaim the word ‘costume’ as an academically recognised designation for clothes

⁷ Lou Taylor, ‘Fashion and Dress History: Theoretical and Methodological approaches,’ *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, ed. Sandy Black et al. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013) 27. Taylor has addressed the full extent and history of efforts to establish dress history as a discipline in her books *The Study of Dress History* (2002) and *Establishing Dress History* (2004). The wider use of the term ‘dress history’ can be seen in publications such as Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress: clothes through history 1500-1914* (London: National Trust, 1996); Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson, *Defining Dress: Dress as object, meaning and identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Barbara Burman, and Carole Turbin, *Material Strategies: Dress and Gender in Historical Perspective* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2003) and Styles, *The Dress of the People* (2007), amongst many others.

⁸ Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4.

⁹ Taylor cites the work produced by Suzanne Baizerman, Joanne Eicher and Catherine Cerny, specifically, “Eurocentrism in the Study of Ethnic Dress,” *Dress* 20 (1993) 19-32; and also the research carried out by Emma Tarlo in *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India* (London: Huest, 1996). Taylor, ‘Fashion and Dress History,’ 27.

¹⁰ This is exemplified by the definitions applied to terminology by Tarlo in *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India*, 5. Specifically her association of ‘Costume’ with ‘History’ and ‘Theatre’ and something to be studied in isolation from the dress of ‘everyday living.’ Taylor has also address the history of this long standing struggle in her books *The Study of Dress History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) and *Establishing Dress History* (2004). Indeed, Deborah Landis, when describing her professional identity as a ‘Costume Designer’ suggest, ‘The word “costume” works against us. The word is vulgar when what we do is incredibly refined.’ Deborah N. Landis, *Costume Design* (Waltham, MA: Focal Press, 2012), 8.

designed for stage and film and thus a term specifically reserved for, and relating to, garments used for performance.

A ‘subcategory of dress’?

In seeking to define and reclaim the garments encompassed by the term ‘costume’, ‘costumes’ as garments must be recognised not as distinct from, but as a subcategory of, ‘dress.’ Taking the term ‘dress’ as the overarching designation for all worn garments, regardless of purpose, date or context, it becomes possible to identify distinct subcategories for study and discussion. The range and scope of such categories is a topic which has been debated elsewhere, the focus in this instance however, is upon establishing the status of ‘costume’ as a category in its own right.¹¹

The fact that stage costumes exploit visual codes and cultural references within society to signal and express status, profession, gender, age and character, means that these garments and their related accessories draw upon conventions within many other sub-categories of ‘dress.’¹² These visual codes were, as Cumming explains, particularly important before literacy became widespread. Costumes retain this function as a ‘visual signpost’ within contemporary productions, providing important signals about the

¹¹ One of the first figures to address this debate within academic research and conservation practice was Hilda Mayer Buckley in her initial discussion, “Toward an Operational Definition of Dress,” *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 3.2 March (1985): 1-10. The continued relevance of the debate is evident in publications such as M.E. Roach-Higgins & J.B.Eicher, “Dress and Identity,” *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 10.4 (1992): 1-8; Christopher Breward, “Cultures, Identities, Histories: Fashioning a Cultural Approach to Dress,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 2:4 (1998): 301-313; Amy de la Haye and Elizabeth Wilson, eds., *Defining Dress, Dress as object, meaning and identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Joanne Entwistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress, and Modern Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000); Efrat Tseëlon, “Fashion Research and its discontents,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 5:4 (2001): 435-451, Peter McNeil, “Conference Report: ‘The Future of Fashion Studies’,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 14:1 (2010): 105-110 and, most recently, Shaun Cole “Costume or Dress? The Use of Clothing in the Gay Pornography of Jim French’s Colt Studio,” *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body & Culture* 18:2 (2014): 123-148.

¹² Cummings, ‘Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?’, 115. Cummings is not the only researcher to explore these ‘visual codes’. A case in point being Robert Lublin’s 2011 publication *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage: Visual Codes of Representation in Early Modern Theatre and Culture* (London: Ashgate, 2011).

dramatic significance of a character, and often hinting at their inner nature.¹³ There are two categories of dress which are of particular relevance to the study of ‘costume.’ The first is ‘fashionable dress,’ here encompassing all garments influenced by trends and in which seasonal fashion style can, but does not always, take precedence over function. The second is ‘ceremonial dress’, defined here as ensembles and uniforms for which the purpose is explicitly non-practical, and which are worn for formal events, celebrations, rituals, and to indicate membership of a specific group or institution.¹⁴

The connection between ‘costume’ and ‘ceremonial dress’ lies in the fact that specific garments or styles of dress, such as the ‘wedding dress’ or ‘christening robe,’ have come to perform an intrinsic role within religious and cultural ceremonies.¹⁵ It is the potential for cross-fertilisation of trends within fashionable dress and stage costume, however and the fact that, as will be discussed, ‘fashionable dress’ has the potential to become ‘stage costume’, which results in the overlaps and strong connections between these two categories.

‘Costume’ and its relationship to ‘Fashion’

Jackson suggests that “‘clothing’ ‘what gets worn’ and “‘costume” (what is put on for a purpose)’ are both ‘shadowed by the influence of fashion.’ This ‘fashion’ might include

¹³ Deborah Landis has explored this element of ‘costume’ in great detail. See in particular Deborah N. Landis, *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design* (New York: Collins Design, 2007) and Deborah N. Landis and Ellen M. Harrington, *50 Designers, 50 Costumes: Concept to Character* (Beverly Hills, CA: Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 2004).

¹⁴ There are uniforms which fall outside the category of ‘ceremonial dress’, such as those worn for professional work, or specific practical tasks. These fall into the category of ‘functional dress’, which encompasses all garments designed with a specific purpose in mind.

¹⁵ A full discussion of the development of the ‘costumes’ traditionally adopted for such ceremonies, is beyond the scope of this thesis. As the range of articles addressing this theme published in journals such as *Costume* illustrate however, this topic offers strong potential for future debate and research. An indication of the breadth of topics covered can be found in the titles of articles such as: Joan Rendell’s discussion of “Japanese Bridal Custom and Costume,” *Costume Vol. 27:1* (1993), 92-99; Anthea Jarvis’s examination of confirmation robes, “The Dress Must Be White, and Perfectly Plain and Simple: Confirmation and First Communion Dress, 1850–2000,” *Costume Vol. 41:1* (2007), 83-98 and Kimberley Chrisman-Campbell’s contribution, “Mourning and La Mode at the Court of Louis XVI,” *Costume Vol. 39:1* (2005), 64-78.

‘theatrical fashion (how plays usually get performed in a given era),’ or ‘fashion as a conscious pursuit of aesthetic goals in clothing, both in our own time and in that represented.’¹⁶ Deborah Landis’ work, though focussing on film costume, has much to contribute to the discussions surrounding costume for the stage. Landis argues that ‘Fashion and costume are not synonymous; they are antithetical.’ She also acknowledges however that the two categories of dress have features in common, not least their ability to ‘express identity.’¹⁷ As descriptions of fashionable society promenading along Rotten Row in London, or the Bois de Boulogne in Paris from the mid to late nineteenth century suggest, within specific environments and social circles ‘fashionable dress’, as with theatre costume, can also fulfil a ‘performative’ function.¹⁸ Accounts of the splendour of court rituals and ecclesiastical ceremonies convey the role that sumptuous garments play within this atmosphere of excessive and lavish display.¹⁹ Maria Hayward, who has published widely on dress worn at the Tudor Court, has drawn attention to the ‘distinction’ drawn between ‘everyday work clothes and the robes of court’ and the crucial part these carefully regulated garments played in defining an individual’s place in society during this period.²⁰

¹⁶ Jackson, “Brief Overview: A Stage History of Shakespeare in Costume,” 11.

¹⁷ Landis and Harrington, *50 Designers, 50 Costumes: Concept to Character* (Beverly Hills, CA: Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 2004), 6 and Landis, *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design*, xxi.

¹⁸ When considering the role of ‘Fashion’ in ‘the city’ Elizabeth Wilson refers to the ‘fashion parade’ on the Bois de Boulogne and important place of dress within public spaces during this period. Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd: 2011), 135-8. Breward’s *Fashioning London: Clothing and the Modern Metropolis* (2004), offers an equally thought provoking discussion of the dynamic relationship which exists between fashion and the city and the role of ‘dress’ within this urban context.

¹⁹ A useful exploration of the important part ceremonial dress can play in such rituals was offered by Bruna Niccoli in her contribution to J R. Mulryne, *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), entitled “Official Dress and Courtly Fashion in Genoese Entries.”

²⁰ Hayward, though recognizing that the sumptuary laws governing dress during this period were not always obeyed, notes the important part they play in regulating dress and communicating status. Maria Hayward “Dressed to rule: Henry VIII’s wardrobe and his equipment for horse, hawk and hound”, *The Inventory of King Henry VIII: Volume II*, eds. David Starkey, Maria Hayward, and Philip Ward (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2012), 67-8. Hayward’s publications on a similar theme include: *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII* (Leeds: Maney, 2007) and *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII’s England* (Farnham: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2009).

Laver addressed this potential ‘blurring’ of the distinction between what he terms ‘theatrical’ and ‘ordinary’ clothes in the introduction to *Costume in the Theatre* (1964). He concluded that ‘So soon as clothes are anything more than a mere device of decency of a protection against the weather they inevitably assume a dramatic quality of some kind.’²¹ His observations are echoed in a telling reference Wilson makes to the role that dress has played and continues to perform, ‘in the theatre of life.’²² It is, as both writers suggest, precisely the elements of ‘performance’ and ‘spectacle’ both associated with and cultivated by ‘fashionable’ and ‘ceremonial’ dress, which creates the close links between these categories of attire and ‘costumes’ created for the stage. As many commentators have recognised, this ‘dramatic quality’ is particularly evident on ‘the catwalk.’ Chapter 2 addressed the recent research, drawing attention to the profitable partnerships which developed between the theatrical world and high fashion in the late nineteenth century.²³ Whilst, as Chapter 6 will discuss, Terry rejected the offers of couturiers to make her garments, her contemporaries, Langtry, Bernhardt and Duse, worked closely with fashionable dressmakers, and in the case of Langtry, her partnership with Worth played a crucial part in her success. Elizabeth A. Coleman discusses such partnerships in *The Opulent Era: Fashions of Worth, Douvet and Pingat*. As she notes amongst the performers who are known to have patronised the House of Worth are Cora Pearl (1835-1886), Adelaide Ristori (1822-1906) and Duse. Coleman also discusses Bernhardt’s engagement of Worth to design a series of costumes for her role in Sardou’s *Fedora* in

²¹ Laver, *Costume in the Theatre*, 15. Laver’s interest in ‘stage costume’ may stem in part from his professional career as a museum curator, during which time he worked with both theatrical material and fashionable dress.

²² Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 248.

²³ As discussed in Chapter 2, the partnerships between theatres and couturiers were particularly important at the turn of the century and important initial research has been carried out by Kaplan and Stowell in *Theatre and Fashion: Oscar Wilde to the Suffragettes* (1994) and developed by Troy, ‘The Theatre of Fashion: Staging Haute-Couture in Early 20th Century France’ (2001) and, most recently, Majer, eds., *Staging Fashion, 1880-1920: Jane Hading, Lily Elsie, Billie Burke* (2012). Cumming also drew particular attention to the connections between theatre and fashion in ‘Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?’, 114.

1882-3. Their partnership was short lived however as in the event Bernhardt chose to wear only two of the five dresses created for the production, and, to ensure that she seemed never to appear in the same gown twice, had the garments slightly altered, adding additional flounces, or fichus and drapes, each evening.²⁴ As Laura Beatty explained in her biography of Lillie Langtry, Langtry's partnership with Worth proved satisfactory for both parties. Indeed the actress wore gowns by 'her favourite designer' both on and off the stage and 'cleverly negotiated acknowledgement in her programme as part payment.'²⁵

'Costume'

Whilst recognising the evident connections between 'costume' and other categories of 'dress', it is important to remain conscious of what Cumming termed 'the disjuncture between clothing for performance and personal clothing.'²⁶ As Landis stresses, 'Costumes are never clothes,' and 'Unlike real-clothes costumes are required to meet extraordinary physical demands without restricting the actor or showing up badly on camera [or on the stage].'²⁷ It is therefore necessary to specify exactly which type of garments and related accessories will be encompassed by this term.

The most obvious area of distinction between 'costume' and other categories of dress, lies in the context within which the garments are worn. A garment originally intended as a piece of 'fashionable dress' can, for instance, become a piece of theatrical costume if worn on the stage. Such a transformation occurred in the case of the large collection

²⁴ Elizabeth A. Coleman, *The Opulent Era: Fashions of Worth, Doucet and Pingat* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989) 106.

²⁵ Laura Beatty, *Lillie Langtry: Manners, Masks, and Morals* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1999), 254.. Pierre Sichel also discusses this mutually beneficial partnership in *The Jersey Lily: The Story of the Fabulous Mrs. Langtry* (London: W.H. Allen, 1958) 202.

²⁶ Cummings, 'Theatrical dress: costume or fashion?,' 117.

²⁷ Landis, *50 Designers, 50 Costumes*, 6 and Landis, *Dressed*, xx.

historic dress and textiles now held by Petersfield Museum. These garments, all originally items of everyday and fashionable dress which were worn by, or belonged to, families and individuals connected with Bedales School, were donated to the school's drama department specifically to be used for theatrical productions. Modifications made to fastenings and trimmings, together with areas of wear, testify to the years these garments spent as stage costumes. A large number of garments within the collection exhibit modifications undertaken, or components added, to adjust the fit and length of garments or to replace fastenings with twentieth century alternatives. The impact of these modifications can be seen in a bodice and skirt, from circa 1890-1895, where the drawstring fastening originally present at the waist of the skirt has been replaced by a pair of plastic buttons ensuring the secure and adjustable fit required for multiple wearers. [FIGURE 4.1] Trimmings have also frequently been added to cuffs and bodices as appears to be the case in the bodice which forms part of an ensemble from circa 1883.²⁸ [FIGURE 4.2] Their recent donation to the museum collection however, returned those garments which were not fundamentally and irreparably altered, to their previous position, and privileged historic status, within the category of 'fashionable garments.'²⁹ The fact that 'fashionable dress' has the potential to become 'stage costume,' whether temporarily or permanently, indicates that it is the 'function' of these garments and the context within which they are worn, rather than their 'physical form,' which distinguishes a stage costume from other forms of dress.

²⁸ Further information about 'The Bedales Collection' is available on the museum website, "Historic Costume," Petersfield Museum [n.d].

²⁹ Roach refers to a garments undertaking a comparable temporary 'transition' from 'fashionable dress' and 'stage costume' in *it*. He describes a production of *Henry V* in which the actors performed in genuine coronations robes loaned to them for this purpose by the then King, Charles II (1630-1685), and members of his court. As Roach discusses Thomas Betterton (1635-1710) performed the title role, and wore the King's robes. Whilst worn by Betterton these robes, although still representing ceremonial garments, took on a new identity. They became a 'stage costumes' fulfilling a practical function in a theatrical performance. Roach, *it*, 229.

As the modifications identified in the garments held by Petersfield Museum demonstrate, the physical characteristics of the clothes themselves offer a further route through which to identify more precise characteristics of ‘costumes’ as garments. One clear difference between ‘fashionable dress’ and ‘costume,’ for example, lies in the fact that rather than fastidiously replicating the reality, costumes may seek to capture the essence of a style or era. ‘Fashionable dress’ being subject to closer scrutiny and commercial constraints, is inevitably bound by, and promotes, the practical and seasonal stylistic conventions of the day.



Figure 4.1 - Evidence of modification to the waistband of a skirt from circa 1890-1895, Bedales Collection, Petersfield Museum. Personal photograph by the author. 8 April 2013. Museum Number 2007.4854.2.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The fact that ‘costumes’ specifically created for performance are designed to take into account the impact of lighting, distance and the physical demands of the performance, has a clear impact upon their design. With quick changes and restricted budgets to consider, visual impact often take precedence over quality of materials and finish,

particularly as lighting effects and clever trompe l'oeil, make it possible to create the impression of splendour and lavishness for the distant audience, even when the reality is far less glamorous.³⁰ There are of course exceptions to this rule, and many extant costumes which reveal that, where budget permits and designers demand, a costume can be constructed to the same high standard as an example of 'fashionable' or even, 'couture', dress. Indeed the quality of finish demanded from 'costumes' is becoming a more pressing concern with the recent expansion of 'live' recording and screening of theatre and opera productions, as cameras now bring the audience's gaze far closer to garments than would be possible even in the front row of the stalls.³¹ As this thesis will discuss, the views and demands of the actors for which they are being created is another factor which has the potential to influence the design and fit of stage costumes.³² There are, for instance, methods of construction and cutting which can be used to flatter the wearer and deceive the eye. Terry was keenly aware of and took care to exploit these techniques, noting in circa 1895 (and then aged forty-eight) that whilst, a 'waistband

³⁰ Costumes created for the Ballets Russes production of the *Rite of Spring (Sacre de Printemps)* 1913 by Nicholas Roerich relied on painted and stencilled decoration for their effect. See, for instance, Costume for an Ancestor, Scene 2, Museum Number S.685-1980, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Similarly the large 'jewels' which feature on Terry's costumes in *Cymbeline* (1896) and *King Arthur* (1892) are 'paste' gems rather than genuine precious stones. These both form part of the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Imogen, *Cymbeline*, SMA.TC.105, 1118830 and Ellen Terry, Guinevere, *King Arthur*, SMA.TC.118, 1118843. Further examples are also discussed in 'Decoration in Stage Costume,' *Theatre and Performance Galleries*, Victoria and Albert Museum [n.d.].

³¹ Such proximity may lie behind the commissioning of ever more elaborate garments for theatrical and operatic productions, including the Metropolitan Opera New York's 2011 production of Gaetano Donizetti's *Anna Bolena*. The costume designer Jenny Tiramani, already known for her "Original Practice" Productions at the Globe Theatre, London, in which the costumes were produced using carefully researched and reproduced Elizabethan techniques, was engaged by the MET to create costumes for the production. Tiramani's brief was that the construction, design and fabrics reflected those techniques and fashions of the sixteenth century as accurately as possible. The only sacrifice to 'accuracy' was the restricted red, black, grey and white colour palette adopted for the production. Jenny Tiramani, "Anna Bolena (c.1536) at the MET." *Exploring the Art and Narrative of Dress*, 15 July 2010. Nottingham Trent University. Conference Paper.

³² Landis also discussed the crucial part costumes play in creating character – not only for the viewer, but also for the actors who wear them. Landis, *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design*, xviii – xxii and Landis, *50 Costumes, 50 Characters*, 4-6.

sloping downwards doesn't do for me at all, a 'velvet band straight round & the front soft stuff falling over [...] makes me look half the size.'³³



Figure 4.2 - Detail of a wool and silk velvet bodice from circa 1883 showing the oversized ceramic and metal buttons added at the centre front fastening. Bedales Collection, Petersfield Museum. Personal photograph by the author. 21 March 2013. Museum Number 2007.4843.1.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

'Stage' costume

The range of environments and art forms encompassed by the field of live performance necessitates a recognition of the diverse types of 'costumes' which are created and used for performance. With this in mind, the term 'stage costume,' as introduced by Cumming in 2004, will be employed as the overarching designation for all costumes which were specifically created for live performance. Within the category of 'stage costume' there

³³ Letter from Terry to Nettleship, Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/5, the date of July 1895 has been subsequently added in pencil.

are clearly types of costume which are specific to certain types of performance including, but not restricted to, theatre, opera and dance.

This thesis employs the term 'stage costume' specifically to signify: a garment, or associated accessory, specifically created to be used, or worn, in a live performance before an audience. The type of performance in which the 'stage costume' is worn is not restricted to, but will in most cases be connected with, a production in a theatre or equivalent arena, be this spoken theatre or opera. While the garment in question may have been designed to replicate the fashions associated with a particular country or historic period, in this instance 'stage costume' will also be taken to encompass dress with no distinctive historic or regional features. It will exclude any garments that were not used for a live performance, but outside the bounds of this thesis, the term 'live performance' could be expanded to include costumes created for twentieth- and twenty-first century Rock and Pop performance and also the masques and private theatricals staged in courts and private houses from the late sixteenth century onwards. This definition of 'stage costume' deliberately excludes costumes created for film or television, which represent a separate sphere and style of costume with its own unique conventions.³⁴

Having established a clear definition of the garments encompassed by the term 'stage costume', this chapter will now focus specifically on 'theatre costumes' and the particular challenges associated with the analysis of such garments. The practical application of a

³⁴ This is an area of dress which has received much attention in recent years, a notable contribution to the field being Deborah's Landis's 2012-3 exhibition and accompanying publication Deborah N. Landis, *Hollywood Costume* (London: V&A Publishing, 2012). Landis also published *Dressed: A Century of Hollywood Costume Design* (2007). Other significant publications include Susan P. Prichard, *Film Costume, an Annotated Bibliography* (Metuchen N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1981); Sue Harper, *Picturing the Past: The Rise and Fall of the British Costume Film* (London: British Film Institute, 1994); Sarah Street, *Costume and Cinema: Dress Codes in Popular Film* (London: Wallflower, 2001) and Tamar J. McDonald, *Hollywood Catwalk: Exploring Costume and Transformation in American Film* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

methodology for the study and analysis of ‘theatre costume’, will then be demonstrated through the close analysis of series of theatre costumes worn by the actress Ellen Terry.



Figure 4.3 - Detail of the under-tunic showing contrasting fabric. Part of a costume worn by Terry as Desdemona in *Othello*, 1881. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 29 Oct 2010. Museum Number 67.89.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

4.2: Working with Historic Theatrical Costumes

‘A thing of shreds and patches’³⁵

A crucial barrier to research using historic stage costume lies in the fact that the surviving costumes seldom conform to the researcher’s vision of the original production. Not only are they likely to be damaged through use or faded and tarnished over time, they also rarely live up to the exotic and dramatic images suggested in the original designs, or preserved in intricate drawings and souvenir programmes. To mitigate the risk of

³⁵ W.S. Gilbert, *The Mikado: or the town of Titipu*, (London: Bell & Sons, 1911), 2.

disillusionment and to fully understand stage costumes, it is therefore essential to maintain an awareness of the original purpose of these garments.

Stage costumes are constructed to project an illusion which, while effective under stage lights, was never intended to be subject to close and sustained inspection. Restricted budgets and time, mean that the more elaborate decoration and costly materials are often reserved for the section of the costumes visible to the audience, with panels of plain cheaper fabric being used for areas that could be concealed under cloaks, skirts, and jackets. An example of this can be seen in a costume worn by Terry as Desdemona in 1881 within the Museum of London collections. The bodice of the under-tunic was masked by a jacket and whilst the skirt of the tunic is made from a ribbed cream silk and decorated with appliqué, a plain, lightweight silk has been used for the bodice [FIGURE 4.3].³⁶ Re-imagining the effect that scale, distance and lighting have on a costume is a challenge that all those analysing such garments have to confront. Researchers must also consider the practical accommodations costume designers are obliged to make to assist movement on stage, to facilitate the athletic art of singing and voice projection, to flatter the wearer, and to appeal to contemporary taste and imagination.

Moreover, the stage costumes that do become part of a historic costume collection after a production are an exception to the norm. Indeed, the majority of costumes are either discarded or returned to the wardrobe to be recycled and adapted at a future date. For costume designers and makers the key considerations are therefore the short term visual impact of the garment, together with its ability to withstand hard and repeated wear. Designers such as Oliver Messel (1904-1978), battling with the shortage of fabrics in the year following the Second World War, were therefore content to employ materials such

³⁶ For full details see Appendix 2, Museum of London Collection, Desdemona, *Othello*, Museum Number 67.89.

as sweet wrappers, dishcloths, and gilded pipe cleaners to achieve the desired effect for their stage costumes and gave little thought to the eventual fate of garments that were never intended to be retained for a long period of time.³⁷ It is the curators, conservators and researchers, rather than the original creators and wearers, who are concerned about the long term stability of the materials used and the fact that paste stones and synthetic fabrics look stunning from a distance or under dramatic lighting, but are often something of a disappointment when inspected at close range.

All historic dress and textiles are also vulnerable to the damage that can result from long term exposure to light, dust, and fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity. Perspiration also breaks down fibres and stains fabric. This is a particular problem in garments which were worn under hot stage lights and, in the case of dance costumes, used in physically demanding performances. A production that proves particularly successful is likely to have a long run of performances and possibly remain within a company's repertoire for an extended period. Indeed, as Terry notes, she and Irving performed *Charles I* together for the first time in 1879 and by the last time the piece was staged, in 1902, Irving's 'clothes were really threadbare' and would 'have been consigned to the dust-bin' by most actors.³⁸

For this reason, costumes for both chorus members and leading performers will often need to be repaired and frequently re-made, particularly if a role is re-cast or a costume is especially fragile. Furthermore, whilst, as surviving costumes from the Bolshoi Ballet's 1901 production of *Swan Lake* demonstrate, several almost identical versions of the same

³⁷ The costume Oliver Messel designed for an attendant on the Queen of the Waters in Frederick Ashton's ballet *Homage to the Queen* in 1953, for instance, used the newly invented material 'sellotape' to replicate the effect of water. This costume is held by the V&A Museum, Museum Number S.648-1981. For further details see Sarah Woodcock, "Messel on Stage" in *Oliver Messel: In the Theatre of Design*, Thomas Messel (New York: Rizzoli, 2011) 80-81.

³⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 180.

outfit might be made for members of the chorus, makers generally only create one, or perhaps two, versions of a costume intended for a leading role. Several groups of ‘duplicate’ costumes survive from this production of *Swan Lake*. Two examples from one such group were worn by female dancers in the Mazurka in *Swan Lake* and were designed by Alexandre Golovine, Moscow 1901 [FIGURE 4.4 & 4.5]. They both have carmine yellow silk velvet dresses, decorated with applique motifs at the sleeves and across the close fitting bodice. The flared skirts of the dresses are supported on vivid orange and magenta tarlatan skirts. Both dresses were worn with matching hats and shoulder capes.³⁹ As a result the costumes associated with principal roles often accumulate much more significant structural damage than those used by members of the chorus or in smaller parts.



Figure 4.4 - Costume for a female dancer in the Mazurka in *Swan Lake* designed by Alexandre Golovine, Moscow 1901. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. 14 April 2016. Museum Number S.107-1977.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

³⁹ These costumes form part of the collection held by the Department of Theatre and Performance at the V&A Museum. Their museum numbers are S.90-1977 and S.107-1977.



Figure 4.5 - Costume for a female dancer in the Mazurka in *Swan Lake* designed by Alexandre Golovine, Moscow 1901. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. 14 April 2016. Museum Number S.90-1977.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Deliberate damage

Another issue with which curators, conservators and researchers working with stage costume have to contend, is the damage that designers and makers inflict upon costumes for dramatic effect. Surviving costumes from the 1892 production of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* at the Lyceum Theatre, in which Irving played the title role, exemplify the impact of this deliberate 'distressing' or 'breaking-down' of fabrics. In fact, the garments which Irving wore in the storm scene (Act III, Scene 2) are 'broken down' versions of the elaborate tunics and cloaks used in previous acts of the play [FIGURE 4.6]. These 'duplicate robes' are made from much rougher and less expensive fabrics, the body of the costumes being constructed from terry cotton cloth, rather than finely woven wool, on which lines of paint have been used to represent decorative details that were

embroidered and appliquéd on the earlier costume [FIGURE 4.7].⁴⁰ Comparable strategies were employed when creating two of the costumes Terry wore as Marguerite in *Faust* (1885). A dramatic contrast to the feminine dresses and delicate fabrics used in earlier scenes, these two costumes are loosely cut, t-shaped tunics, gathered with a drawstring at the neck, and have been made from woollen flannel blankets. Worn by Terry in the prison scene, they have been deliberately kept plain and were roughly stitched together to reflect Marguerite's poverty and distress at this stage in the play [FIGURE 4.8]⁴¹



Figure 4.6 - Part of a costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. 14 April 2016. Museum Number S.2742:1-3-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁴⁰These costumes survive in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the ensemble encompassed by the Museum Number S.2742:1 to 3-2010 is a broken down version of the costume with the Museum Number S.2741:1 to 6-2010.

⁴¹ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Marguerite, *Faust*, SMA.TC.169, 1118894 and SMA.COST.102.



Figure 4.7 - Part of a costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. 14 April 2016. Museum Number S.2741:1-3-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.8 - Detail of a costume worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 4 September 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.102.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

One role, several costumes

An additional challenge faced when researching and documenting extant costumes stems from the fact that not only were costumes seldom reserved for a single scene within a production, but that they also frequently reappeared in other works within a performer's or company's repertoire. The damage which occurs through wear and travel is inescapable and clearly visible in surviving garments in the form of tears, fabric breakdown at hems and seams, and the loss and damage to fastenings and decorative detailing. The fact that Terry, described by her dresser as 'the worst tear girl I ever knowed,' habitually arrived late, dashing on to the stage with moments to spare, suggests that her garments would have required particularly frequent repairs and replacements.⁴² In the case of Terry's costumes, further complications arise in the process of identification as several productions in which she appeared were repeatedly revived, both in London and on tours, and remained in the Lyceum Company repertoire for decades. Correspondence between Terry and her costume maker, Nettleship, alongside evidence gathered from the costumes themselves, reveals that the costumes Terry wore in long running productions were often altered in response to damage or re-made altogether.⁴³ There were also some occasions on which certain garments were re-designed to reflect a new aesthetic and to suit Terry's changing figure.⁴⁴

⁴² Alice Comyns-Carr, *Mrs. J. Comyns Carr's Reminiscences* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1926) 209-210.

⁴³ Letter from Terry to Nettleship, 14th June 1901, Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/7.

⁴⁴ A costume created for a revival of *Much Ado About Nothing*, in 1903, is a case in point, designed and made by Terry's daughter and both the colour palette and elements of the silhouette differ from the aesthetic adopted for Terry's costumes in the Lyceum productions. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, SMA.TC.107, 1118832.

Case studies in Chapter 5 will explore this issue further, but there are, for instance, at least two surviving versions of a costume she wore as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*.⁴⁵ Similarly, the conservation treatment carried out on Terry's costume for Act I, Scene 5 costume of *Macbeth* revealed that at least two different bodices for the dress had survived.⁴⁶ The existence of multiple costumes for the same role is not surprising given the fact that both productions remained in the company's repertoire for over ten years and were frequently revived in London and on tours throughout the United Kingdom and America. Establishing whether the 'duplicate costumes' were part of a group of costumes made for the original production, or created for a revival is challenging. One point of comparison can be the level of wear evident in a costume and, where a performer's body shape has altered over the course of their career, size can also offer a guideline. With costumes from the late nineteenth century however, the disproportionate level of deterioration which occurs in many silk fabrics, or fur and feather trims from this period means that level of wear cannot be regarded as definitive evidence of an authentic connection with the 'original' production.⁴⁷

For instance, at least three versions of the crimson silk robes which Irving wore as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII* (1892) survive. Designed by the artist Seymour Lucas (1849-1923) and made by the court and theatrical costumiers L & H Nathan, 17 Coventry Street, London, the complete costume consists of: two short capes; a full length cassock,

⁴⁵ The first, museum number SMA.COST.110, 1118835 survives in the Ellen Terry Collection at Smallhythe Place (see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*), the second, though listed as a costume for Hero, rather than Beatrice, is directly comparable to the costume in Smallhythe and is held by the Museum of London, Museum Number 65.90/4a-c (See Appendix 2).

⁴⁶ Zenzie Tinker, Interim report on the conservation of the Lady Macbeth beetle wing dress, July 2009. Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studio Ltd. Unpublished, private report. 2-4.

⁴⁷ Fur, feathers and silk and cotton velvets are particularly vulnerable to pest damage. Silk, particularly that used in garments made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, often 'shatters' over time. This 'shattering' is the result of the breakdown of the fibres within the fabric and often occurs because during this period many fabric producers chemically bonded metal salts to the silk fibres. At this time silk was sold by weight and the metal salts gave the fabric more body, giving cheaper silk the drape and weight of higher quality silk.

with a vertical row of covered buttons running up the centre front; a wide ribbed silk sash and a matching crimson biretta and boots. As Terry noted in her autobiography, Irving's attention to detail was such that the silk from which the vivid crimson robes were made was sent to the Cardinal's College in Rome to be dyed.⁴⁸ One such ensemble, in the Museum of London, is in very good condition, complete, and exhibits comparatively little signs of wear [FIGURE 4.9].⁴⁹ The other two costumes survive at the V&A and at Smallhythe.⁵⁰ The set held by the V&A is complete but in extremely poor condition, exhibiting not only signs of past repair, but also extensive shattering and breakdown to the fabric, particularly in the fabric used for the cassock [FIGURE 4.10]. At Smallhythe a full length cassock, and cape survive, though in a slightly better condition than those held at the V&A [FIGURE 4.11].⁵¹



Figure 4.9 - Catherine Leonard. Costume worn by Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Record Photograph, 4 March 2013. Museum Number 46.61.1.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁴⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 311.

⁴⁹ This costume is held by the Museum of London, Museum Number 46.46/1.a-1.

⁵⁰ The robes are held by V&A Museum and have the Museum Number, S.2718:1 to 8-2010.

⁵¹ Smallhythe References, Robe, Appendix 1, Other Performers, Henry Irving, Cardinal Wolsey, *Henry VIII*, SMA.TC.177a, 1118902.1 and the matching cape, SMA.TC.188a 1118913.1. At Smallhythe they also hold the lining connected with a version of Irving's Cardinal Robes the National Trust Inventory Number for which is [1118913].



Figure 4.10 - Museum Record Photograph. Costume worn by Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S. 2718:1 to 8-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.11 - Costume worn by Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 6 April 2016. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.177a

[1118902.1]. [ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.12 - W&D Downey Photographers Ltd. Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, 1892, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.1 x 9.9 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.145:710-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.13 - W&D Downey Photographers Ltd. Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, 1897 (published 1899), Photogravure. 13.5 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax41235.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The Lyceum Company production of *Henry VIII* opened in January 1892 [FIGURE 4.12]. It ran for several months, both before and after a summer intermission, but was not revived. Wolsey dies at the end of Act 3, Scene 2, two acts before the conclusion of the play, so the survival of at least three versions of his robes is slightly surprising. The poor condition of those in the V&A and Smallhythe collections implies heavy wear, or a predisposition within the fabric towards breakdown, yet this surmise is challenged by the good condition of robes held by the Museum of London. One strong hypothesis for the contrasting condition however, is that whilst the V&A and Smallhythe hold costumes used for performance, the robes in the Museum of London might have been reserved, and possibly created, for a very specific occasion; the Devonshire House Ball of 1897 [FIGURE 4.13]. Photographs record, and Terry recalled, the impression Irving created when he

[...] swept up the staircase, his long train held magnificently over his arm, a sudden wave of reality seemed to sweep upstairs with him, and reduce to the prettiest make-believe all the aristocratic masquerade that surrounded him.⁵²

Whilst no documentation survives to prove this theory, the existence of a large amount of excess fabric can be substantiated in a letter Terry sent to Nettleship in which she commissioned the dressmaker to transform remnants from Irving's robes into a cape.⁵³

'Haunted by the absent body'

Hodgdon has described how as objects 'haunted by the absent body,' stage costumes '[...] work to remember, if not restore the bodies that inhabited them.'⁵⁴ As her observations suggest, material traces of wear, original construction, and modifications, preserved

⁵² Terry, *Story of My life*, 313.

⁵³ Letter from Terry to Nettleship, July 1892. Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/5.

⁵⁴ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 137, 143.

within extant garments, whether fashionable dress, or stage costume, all provide evidence of how these clothes were worn and used. These traces also offer a route through which to reconstruct an outline of the, now absent, body for which they were originally created.

Until recently the only more precise record of Terry's height is in the form of annotation on the rear of a photograph taken of her in 1862. This records the actress's height, then fifteen, as five foot, five inches, which equates to approximately one hundred and sixty-five centimetres.⁵⁵ When mounting the one surviving example of Terry's personal dress within the collection conservators therefore set the mannequin at a height of about five feet, five inches (about 165 centimetres), basing their decision on the measurements taken for the shoulder to front hem of this garment, together with what little information is known about Terry's height. As they acknowledged however, it was likely that Terry was taller and this hypothesis would fit with the greater height suggested by her surviving costumes.⁵⁶

It was thought that Terry's adult height had never been formally recorded but a from information discovered on a passenger list for a journey she made to New York in 1907, it has been possible to confirm that she was 5 feet 10 inches tall.⁵⁷ This explains contemporary descriptions of Terry as unusually tall and is substantiated by measurements taken from her surviving garments.⁵⁸ It is clear therefore that Terry was a

⁵⁵ The photograph, reference NT/SMA/PH/3278, actually shows Terry's sister Kate, as Diana in *Endymion* at the Theatre Royal, Bristol. Terry appeared alongside Kate as Cupid and it was at this time that Terry first met Godwin. The annotation on the rear, written by Godwin, is dated to the 21st of December 1862.

⁵⁶ Zenzie Tinker (the conservator responsible for treating and mounting the dress, SMA.TC.201), Personal communication with the author. 11 March 2014. Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios, Brighton.

⁵⁷ n.a. "Passenger list for the SS Philadelphia leaving Southampton Jan 12th 1907 – arriving Port of New York Jan 19th 1907." Microform Serial T715, 1897-1957, Microfilm Roll: 0821, Line: 1, Page Number: 2.

⁵⁸ It is recognised that measurements taken from garments can only provide a guide to Terry's height and that allowances must be made for the manner which the weight of decorations and the fabric can cause garments to stretch and distort over time. Even allowing for these factors however, average measurements taken from surviving costumes consistently indicate that Terry was between five feet, eight inches and up to five feet, ten inches, in height.

tall woman, and when young appears to have been very conscious of this fact. Recalling the training which she received from a French actress, Madam de Rhona, Terry, then aged thirteen, explains how

When I watched the way she moved her hands and feet, despair entered my soul. It was all so precise, so “express and admirable.” Her limbs were so dainty and graceful—mine so big and unmanageable! “How long and gaunt I am,” I used to say to myself.⁵⁹

Bram Stoker (1847-1912), Irving’s business manager at the Lyceum, made similar observations regarding Terry’s height. He describing Terry as a ‘fine, tall woman’ and in his *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving*, recalled how Irving both sought to exploit and minimise the actress’s height, depending on the role and production. Stoker refers specifically to both *Madame Sans Gene* (1897) and *Cymbeline* (1896). In *Madame Sans Gene* Terry’s height was an advantage, helping Irving, playing Napoleon, to minimise his own height in comparison. In *Cymbeline* however, Terry had to represent ‘a timid young girl’:

Matters had therefore to be so arranged that size should be made a comparative and not an absolute matter. To this end Imogen was surrounded by the tallest and biggest women obtainable. [...] The towering height and girth of the trees and the architecture and stonework lent themselves to the illusion. All the men too were tall and of massive build, so that the illusions of size and helplessness were perfect.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Terry, *Story of My Life*, 37.

⁶⁰ Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (London: William Heinemann, 1907), 170.

Extant garments can also provide an insight into alterations in Terry's body shape visible in surviving photographs. These images illustrate her transition from extreme slimness in youth and her early thirties, to the fuller figure which was the joint result of aging and, in all likelihood, a better diet and more reliable income.⁶¹ On first examination the surviving costumes appeared to exhibit relatively little evidence of the kind of modification at the seams which would indicate alterations to accommodate Terry's changing figure. What became clear through analysing Terry's correspondence however, is that many of the costumes she wore in long running productions were replaced, with additional costumes being added to the wardrobe for touring productions.⁶²

Furthermore, comparing waist measurements for productions from early in her career, with those from a later stage, has provided some indication of these physical changes. A dress reputedly worn by Terry aged thirty-one when playing Ophelia for the first time, provides a key starting point for this process.⁶³ Evidence supporting the link between this costume and the original 1878 production of *Hamlet* can be found in Terry's own observation that,

My Ophelia dress was made of material which could not have cost more than 2s. a yard, and not many yards were wanted [...] I have the dress still, and, looking at it the other day, I wondered what leading lady now would consent to wear it.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Terry remained extremely slim until her early thirties, even after the birth of her two children (the first in 1869 when she was 22 and the second three years later in 1872 when Terry was 25). Terry was increasingly conscious of her changing figure, as is evident in correspondence and exchanges with her dresser recorded in her autobiography. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 222.

⁶² Of particular relevance to this discussion are the letters, sent by Terry to her dressmaker, Nettleship, which are part of the Autographed Letters Series THM/14/20/TERRY in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

⁶³ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Ophelia, *Hamlet*, SMA.TC.168, 1118893.

⁶⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 129-130.

The garment which survives at Smallhythe, is a pale salmon pink asymmetrical surcoat, worn over a long sleeved, rose pink, bodice [FIGURE 4.14]. The surcoat and undergarment are made from a damask silk and wool blend fabric woven with a stylised floral pattern and trimmed with lines of white rabbit fur, dyed to resemble ermine, at the neckline and cuffs. Bands of pale cream linen have been used to create a sleeve cuffs and an integral collar for the undertunic. These have been softly gathered to fit the wrist and neck [FIGURE 4.15 and 4.16]. The colour of the garment certainly fits the palette originally outlined by Terry, in particular the ‘pinkish dress’ which Terry intended to wear in the first scene.⁶⁵ The measurements taken for this costume suggests an extremely small waist size of only slightly over sixty centimetres, or about 23 ½ inches.



Figure 4.14 - Costume worn by Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 26 August 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.168 [1118893].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁶⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 156.



Figure 4.15 - Detail of the costume worn by Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 26 August 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.168 [1118893].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.16 - Detail of the costume worn by Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1878, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 26 August 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.168 [1118893].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Also amongst the earliest surviving examples of Terry's theatrical costume in the collection are the costumes for Henrietta Maria in the 1879 Lyceum Company production of *Charles I*.⁶⁶ The costumes created for this production were inspired by Van Dyck portraits of the Monarch and his family.⁶⁷ Terry's surviving costumes include a deep brown and bronze silk bodice and skirt [FIGURE 4.17] and a deep blue/black silk velvet bodice and skirt [FIGURE 4.18], both have full sleeved, waist length bodices and the skirts are wide, flaring out towards the hem.⁶⁸ The internal waist measurements for the costumes worn by Terry in this production range between sixty-four centimetres (25 inches) and sixty-nine and a half centimetres (27 inches); a range in measurements which could be accounted for by the length of time which the production remained in the repertoire of the Lyceum Company, during which time some of Terry's costumes were replaced.⁶⁹ These measurements would indicate a waist measurement of about sixty-five centimetres (25 ½ inches) and this accords with Terry's description of herself at this time as, 'thin to vanishing point.'⁷⁰

Terry's preference for loose fitting garments makes it harder to establish a reliable waist measurement from the costumes worn by the actress later in her career. The closer fit of the ca.1750-1780 inspired styles which characterised Terry's costumes in *Nance Oldfield* (1891) and *The Dead Heart* (staged in 1889) does however offer a clearer sense of Terry's changing figure, and a comparable 'fit' to the costumes worn by the actress in *Charles I* [FIGURE 4.19] and [FIGURE 4.20]. The integral bodice which forms part of the Watteau

⁶⁶ It must be noted however, that this production remained in the Lyceum Company's repertoire into the 1900s so the possibility that some of these garments are later remakes cannot be discounted.

⁶⁷ Clement Scott, *From the Bells to King Arthur* (London: John MacQueen, 1897), 17-18.

⁶⁸ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, *Charles I*, SMA.COST.147a&b, 1118872.1 & 2 and SMA.TC.139a & b, 1118864.1 & 2.

⁶⁹ In a letter from Terry to Ada Nettleship dated 14th June 1901, Terry notes that 'My first dress must be replaced!' Letter from Terry to Nettleship, 14th June 1901, Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/Terry/7.

⁷⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 129.

back style costume from *Nance Oldfield* (held by the Museum of London), has an internal waist measurement of approximately sixty-seven centimetres (26 inches). The costumes from *The Dead Heart* follow a comparable silhouette for the bodice, but are softer and looser in fabric and fit. The internal waist measurement for these costumes was between seventy-four and seventy-eight centimetres (29 and 30 inches).⁷¹ This general increase in the waist measurement would be in line with what can be seen and is recorded, of Terry's shifting figure.

Whilst not providing definitive measurements for the actress, the details gathered through close analysis offer an important insight into Terry's theatrical wardrobe. They confirm her unusual height, and exemplify the physical changes which were shaping Terry's attitude to design later in her career.



Figure 4.17 - Bodice, part of a costume worn by Terry as Queen Henrietta Maria in *Charles I*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 4 March 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.147a [1118872.1]

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁷¹ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, *Nance Oldfield*, SMA.TC.109 a & b, *The Dead Heart*, SMA.TC.161a&b, 111886.1&2.



Figure 4.18 - Bodice, part of a costume worn by Terry as Queen Henrietta Maria in *Charles I*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 4 March 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.139a [1118864.1]

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.19 - Bodice, part of a costume worn by Terry as Catherine Duval in *The Dead Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1889, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 May 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.161a [111886.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.20 - Bodice, part of a costume worn by Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Authenticity

The existence of multiple versions of ‘a costume’ raises important questions regarding the perceived ‘authenticity’ of surviving garments. Particularly when, as will be discussed later, modification, repair, re-use and replacement are inherent stages in the traditional biography of a stage costume. What is the historical significance of a costume which, whilst known to have used by a performer in the role, was not worn in the ‘original’ production in which they first created the part? Should researchers question the ‘authenticity’ of a costume which, whilst an exact replica of the costume used in the ‘original production’ and worn by the same performer, was created and used at a later date?

To respond to such questions it is first necessary to establish exactly what ‘authenticity’ signifies in relation to the analysis and interpretation of theatre costume. As Philip Vannini and J.P. Williams demonstrate in *Authenticity in Culture, Self and Society* (2009), ‘authenticity’ is a malleable concept which ‘[...] refers to a set of qualities that people in a particular time and place have come to agree represent and ideal or exemplar.’⁷² Their definition of authenticity as a ‘[...] cyclical process rather than a static characteristic [and] once constructed it is used to build or validate its very own manifestations and performances,’ is particularly pertinent to this thesis and the study of stage costume more widely.⁷³ Terry revived many of her most famous roles within different contexts and often wore different costumes for the same part over the course of her career.⁷⁴ Her costumes therefore offer an ideal case study through which to address the implications of these debates and to illustrate the relevance of Vannini and William’s definition.

Further problems for researchers stem from the fact that many surviving costumes have reputed, but unsubstantiated, links to performers. Within the V&A collections, for instance, are a pair of elbow length gloves, embroidered with an ‘S’ at each cuff, reputedly worn by the actress Sarah Siddons, but with no substantiated provenance to connect them to the actress. They also hold a dress ‘reputedly worn by Terry as Juliet’ [FIGURE 4.21]. Terry performed this role in 1882 and surviving photographs and sketches provide a clear sense of the costumes worn [FIGURE 4.22]. None of the full length heavy silk brocade gowns that Terry is depicted wearing in these images resemble this surviving garment; a

⁷² Phillip Vannini and J P. Williams, *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society* (Farnham: Ashgate Pub, 2009), 3

⁷³ Vannini and Williams, *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society*, 12

⁷⁴ Terry revived the role of Portia, first played in 1875, in 1879 and throughout her subsequent career. The role of Beatrice was another favoured character, and was a part Terry revived in 1903 to recovered finances after the failure of her production of *The Vikings* at the Imperial Theatre. The actress also first played the role of Olivia in 1878 at the Royal Court, but revived the part at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885. Similarly Terry played the part of Nance Oldfield in 1891 at the Lyceum, but revived this role as part of the in *A Pageant of Great Women* staged by the Pioneer Players in 1909.

calf length dress, made from a cream silk fringed Cantonese shawl embroidered with a floral design in cream silk and with long cream chiffon sleeves. Whether or not the surviving garment was ever worn by Terry is difficult to prove or disprove, but the silhouette is clearly influenced by the fashions of the 1920s, and differs so greatly from the garments worn by Terry as Juliet in 1882, that any link between this costume and the original production is extremely unlikely.⁷⁵



Figure 4.21 - Costume reputedly worn by Terry in *Romeo and Juliet*, in 1882, but probably dating from 1920 and not worn by Terry. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author 14 April 2016. Museum Number, S.9-1976.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁷⁵ Both items are held by the V&A Museum. The elbow length gloves reputedly worn by Siddons have the Museum number, S.188-1978. The dress ‘reputedly worn by Terry as Juliet’ has the Museum Number S.9-1976.



Figure 4.22- Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, 1882, Sepia Photograph on paper. 13.8 x10.4 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:326-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

There are similar issues in determining the provenance of some items within the Ellen Terry Collection itself. As discussed the collection had not been fully catalogued before this research was undertaken, and includes several unidentified garments which are recorded as having ‘possible connections to Terry’ (See Appendix 1). Such cases make apparent the importance of charting internal measurements and recording evidence of damage through wear, as distinctions between Terry’s measurements, and the size of the garments supposedly connected with Terry, may immediately rule out the actress as a potential wearer. A costume in the collection which demonstrates this point is a fine wool

mustard yellow dress, wearer unknown, for which the inner waist measurement is approximately fifty-eight centimetres (22 inches) [FIGURE 4.23]. This measurement is smaller than that recorded for any of Terry's surviving garments and therefore makes it very unlikely the garment was originally worn by the actress.⁷⁶



Figure 4.23 - Detail of costume previously thought to have been worn by Terry, production and date unknown, circa 1890-1900. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 20 July 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.150 [1118875]

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Doubts could also be raised about a costume, reputedly worn by Terry as Desdemona, within the Museum of London collections. Both the museum catalogue records, and the associated acquisition files date the costume to 1916.⁷⁷ This date (late in Terry's career)

⁷⁶ See Appendix 1, Theatre Costume, Wearer Unknown, *Production Unknown*, SMA.TC.150 a+b, 1118875.1+2. Another dress where the size and also the associated history, seems to undermine the reputed links to Terry survives in the Leeds Discovery Museum Collections. The provenance which accompanied the pale gold brocaded silk dress was that it was 'originally designed for Ellen Terry' but was actually worn by the actress K.L.Langstaffe (fl.1898) when playing Desdemona in 1898 at the Grand Theatre in Leeds (For further details of this item see Appendix 2, Leeds Discovery Museum, Museum Number, LEEDM.E.2002.0011.0003).

⁷⁷ This dress is part of the Museum of London collection, See Appendix 2, Museum of London, Desdemona, *Othello*, Museum Number 67.89 and 67.89a. This date is recorded on the museum catalogue record, and in the related acquisition documents. Personal communication with Sarah Demb, Museum Archivist & Records Manager, Museum of London, 14 May 2014.

immediately calls into question the costume's 'authenticity,' as the actress is only known to have played the role of Desdemona in 1881, and the production was not revived by the Lyceum Company.⁷⁸ As the following analysis will show, a detailed examination of the surviving costume alongside surviving images, has revealed key information about its possible origins and 'authenticity.'



Figure 4.24 - Part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Desdemona in *Othello*, dated 1916, but probably 1881. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2010. Museum Number 67.89 and 67.89a.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁷⁸ Terry records in her autobiography how on the final night of the production, Irving, felt he had failed in the role of Othello 'rolled up the clothes that he had worn as the Moor one by one, carefully laying one garment on top of the other, and then, half-humorously and very deliberately said, "*Never again!*"' Terry, *Story of My Life*, 207. No biographies record any future performances of Terry in the role, but an undated letter from circa 1901 sent by Terry to her brother Fred Terry and his wife, Julia Neilson, describing her preparations for *Coriolanus* does however include the phrase 'but first, more Desdemona' with, unfortunately, no additional details to illuminate the reference. Letter from Terry to Fred Terry and Julia Neilson (undated), Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/3.



Figure 4.25 - Part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Desdemona in *Othello*, dated 1916, but probably 1881. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2010. Museum Number 67.89 and 67.89a.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

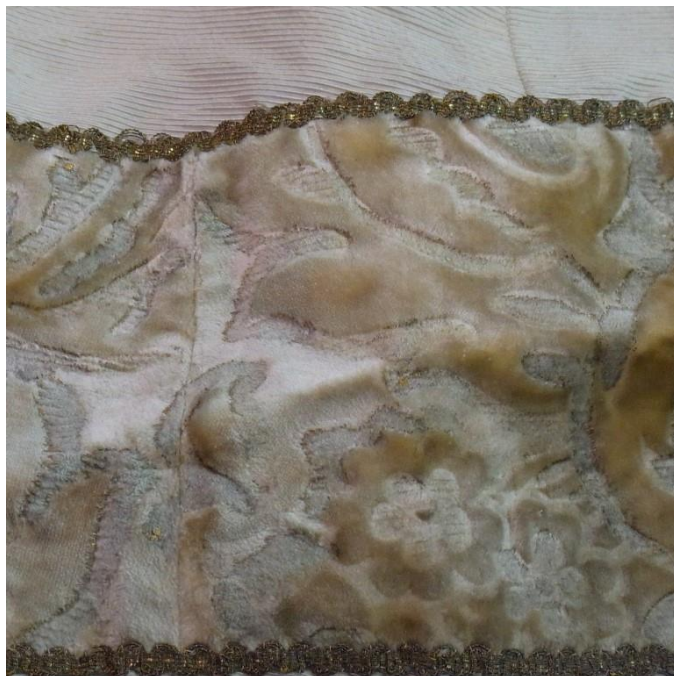


Figure 4.26 - Detail of the applied decoration used on the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Desdemona in *Othello*, dated 1916, but probably 1881. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2010. Museum Number 67.89 and 67.89a.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.27 - Detail of fabric used for a costume worn in the Lyceum Production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, circa 1882. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 29 October 2010. Museum Number 65.90/4a-c.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.28 - Detail of the decoration used on the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Desdemona in *Othello*, dated 1916, but probably 1881. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2010. Museum Number 67.89 and 67.89a.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.29 - W. Palmer. Line drawing of Terry as she appeared in the role of Desdemona. This drawing was originally published as W. Palmer, "Theatrical Sketches Othello at the Lyceum Theatre" in 1881. Press cutting mounted in the Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume 5, 258. Garrick Club Collection, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.30 - W. Palmer. Line drawing of Terry as she appeared in the role of Desdemona. This drawing was originally published as W. Palmer, "Theatrical Sketches Othello at the Lyceum Theatre" in 1881. Press cutting mounted in the Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume 5, 258. Garrick Club Collection, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The costume consists of a sleeveless floor-length undertunic, worn with a long sleeved coat [FIGURE 4.24 and 4.25]. The sleeves are full at the top, but fit closely to the arm after this point and the tunic extends into a slight train at the rear. Both the high upright collar of the coat, and the sleeve cuffs are edged with gold metallic braid, and panels of gold silk velvet have been added to the undertunic. The gold silk velvet used for the appliquéd decoration strongly resembles the fabric used on the costume Terry wore at Beatrice in 1882 (the year after staging *Othello*) [FIGURE 4.26 and 4.27]. The measurements for this second dress are also much closer to other garments known to have been worn by the actress. The full length (collar to hem) is one hundred and fifty centimetres (equating to a height of about 5 foot, 9 inches), and the internal waist measurement is approximately sixty-eight centimetres (26 inches). These measurements fit within what is known about Terry's size during the earlier part of her career and, specifically, the period during which she played the role of Desdemona (1881). The reason for assigning the later date to the dress is unclear, the only recorded provenance for the dress being that it was donated by a great granddaughter of the actress (unnamed) in 1967, who stated that the costume was worn by Terry as Desdemona in 1916.⁷⁹ Terry's last full stage appearance was when she played the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* in 1919, but by 1916 the actress' eyesight was beginning to fail.⁸⁰ It is therefore unlikely that in 1916 a sixty-nine year old Terry would have been capable of playing such a major role and, moreover, the part of a young, naive girl.

⁷⁹ The acquisition record for this garment includes a letter from the curator than the donor (unnamed for Data Protection Reasons, but identified as a descendent of the actress) from November of 1967. Transcript of the Acquisition Records for Museum of London items, Reference 67.89 and 67.89a. Sarah Demb (Museum Archivist and Records Manager, Museum of London), Personal communication with the author (email), 16 May 2014.

⁸⁰ Terry's final stage appearance was in 1925, when she played Susan Wildersham in *Crossings* at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith in 1925. It was a non-speaking role and she was by then almost entirely blind.

In cases such as this, where a link to Terry seems more probable, one of the most reliable means of identification is to compare the surviving costume with contemporary photographs and illustrations. The majority of Terry's roles are well documented in both photographs, sketches, and contemporary reviews. Furthermore, the fact that these images can generally be linked to specific dates, greatly aids this process of comparative dating. Unfortunately the 1881 production of *Othello* is amongst the least well documented production from Terry's career. The only surviving photograph of her in role is of the final act, in which she is wearing the nightdress in which Desdemona is murdered. Surviving sketches by W. Palmer however, make it possible to trace clearer details of the costumes Terry wore earlier in the play. Whilst none of these sketches appear to depict an exact match for the dress, the bands of gold silk velvet appliquéd to the undertunic recall the striped detailing visible on Terry's gown in [FIGURE 4.28 and 4.29].⁸¹ The same series of sketches also reveal similarities in elements of the detailing used at the cuffs and the collar of the jacket, and close parallels in the sleeve shape [FIGURE 4.30]. On the basis of these images, together with the details discovered within the surviving costume, a strong argument can be made for confirming the identification of the dress as one of the costumes worn by Terry as Desdemona, but in 1881, not 1916.

'Indelibly imprinted with performance'

There are many challenges specific to research employing extant costume and this discussion has focussed upon the inescapable challenges and disappointments that can result during the analysis of extant stage costumes. As Hodgdon declared however, 'one of the pleasures of the archive is the thrill of touching a costume's fabric, feeling its

⁸¹ These sketches are part of a series of drawings created by W.Palmer and published as W.Palmer, "Theatrical Sketches Othello at the Lyceum Theatre", Press Cutting, Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume 5: 258, Garrick Club, London.

weight and drape in one's hand.'⁸² The opportunity to study such garments closely not only exposes evidence of wear, but also makes apparent the skill of their creators which manifests itself in the construction and decoration of these garments. A direct encounter with costume, such as that worn by Irving in the title role of *Vanderdecken* in 1878, can, for example, reveal evidence of the manner in which fabrics have been combined for theatrical effect. The faceted beads that were sewn across the surface of the cloak have been covered in a layer of black gauze. This muffling layer of gauze rendered the actor invisible when lurking at the rear of the stage and meant that he could emerge dramatically from the shadows when the beads were illuminated by a beam of gaslight, to great effect.⁸³

Similarly, the costumes Terry and Irving wore as Beatrice and Benedick in the 1882 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, make evident the skill of the costumiers who created them and the money the Lyceum Company invested in their stage garments. One of Irving's costumes for the role was decorated with in excess of one thousand tiny seed pearls, each pearl hand sewn to the pale blue silk beneath [FIGURE 4.31].⁸⁴ Equal care was devoted to the gold stamped velvet gown Terry wore as Beatrice, each section of the meandering pattern appliqued to the skirt and stomacher being outlined in glass bugle beads [FIGURE 4.32].⁸⁵ Both the pearls and bugle beads would have looked spectacular under limelight. Although comparable effects could have been achieved with much more simplistic detailing, and at far lower cost, the decision was clearly made to use these expensive beads and this time consuming method of decoration. The damage which is an inevitable consequence of wear and time has tarnished the metallic braid used on both costumes and many of the original beads and pearls are now lost, but in spite of this, their

⁸² Hodgdon, "Shopping in the Archives," 140.

⁸³ This costume is held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2762:1 to 3-2010.

⁸⁴ The costume is now held by the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2761:1-4-2010.

⁸⁵ This example of Terry's costume survives at Smallhythe Place. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1881, SMA.COST.110, 1118835.

original splendour remains apparent. Surviving theatre costumes are all, as Hodgdon observes, ‘indelibly imprinted with performance,’ but as the case studies which follow will show, it is these material traces which make them such a valuable source for researchers.⁸⁶



Figure 4.31 - Museum Record Photograph. Detail of the costume worn by Henry Irving as Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S. 2761:1 to 4-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.32 - Detail of the bead embellishment used on a costume worn in *Much Ado About Nothing*, circa 1882 (possibly later). Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 29 October 2010. Museum Number 65.90/4a-c.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁸⁶ Hodgdon, “Shopping in the Archives” 140.

4.3- Making and Designing

Terry's costumes

This section of the chapter focuses specifically on the theatre costumes worn by Terry and will examine the process of making and designing specific to her stage dress. It concentrates directly upon the 'indelible evidence of performance' imprinted within Terry's surviving costumes. Paying particular attention to the construction, fabric choices, decorative effects and fit of these garments, it will consider what these elements of Terry's extant costumes reveal about her personal taste, approach to design and movement patterns on the stage. This close examination will demonstrate the extent and significance of the material evidence preserved within these garments and their ability to illuminate and inform wider discussions within this thesis relating to dress, fashion, art, design, performance, and self-fashioning.

A sense of what is 'right for the scene'

Terry first performed with the Lyceum Company in the 1878 production of *Hamlet*. The play opened on December 20th with Irving in the title role and Terry as Ophelia. Terry's descriptions of the preparations she made for the production make it apparent that, even at this early stage in their partnership, Irving allowed her a significant degree of control over the designs of her costumes.

As she explains in her autobiography, Terry's original intention was that the colours and fabrics of the costumes would reflect her character's deteriorating state of mind. Ophelia, confident that she was loved by Hamlet, would therefore be introduced in pink, to show that 'it's all rose coloured with her,' with 'a pale, gold amber dress' selected for the 'nunnery scene,' a colour chosen to signal a subtle shift in mood, and also, to 'tone down' Terry's hair. In Ophelia's last scene however, the heroine's decline would be reflected in

the transition to ‘a transparent black dress.’ Terry’s decision to choose black, rather than the ‘red’ which she had discovered to be ‘the mourning colour of the period,’ was prompted by her sense that black would express both Ophelia’s character and situation.⁸⁷ So confident had Terry been in her decisions that this black dress of ‘crêpe de Chine and miniver’ was made before an initial consultation with Irving.⁸⁸ Terry soon became aware however, that, when designing costumes for the Lyceum Company it was crucial to consider not only the historic context and narrative of the play but also the aesthetic of the production as a whole. Of equal importance, particularly in this production, was the foregrounding of the protagonist. As Irving’s production advisor, Walter Lacy, explained to the actress, ‘there must be only one black figure in this play, and that’s Hamlet!’ This realisation laid the foundations for the mutual respect and willingness to compromise upon which Terry’s professional partnership with Irving was predicated. As the actress later recalled

[...] After this he always consulted me about the costumes but if he said:
“I want such and such a scene to be kept dark and mysterious”, I knew
better than to try and introduce pale-coloured dresses into it.⁸⁹

No wanton extravagance

When narrating this anecdote, Terry was careful to express her concern at ‘having been the cause of needless expense’ and notes that the replacement ‘Ophelia dress’ was made from ‘Bolton sheeting’ (one of the cheapest types of cotton furnishing fabric) and was trimmed with ‘rabbit fur’, rather than the ‘miniver’ used for the previous costume.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 156-157.

⁸⁸ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 157.

⁸⁹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 157.

⁹⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 157. Phyllis G. Tortora and Ingrid Johnson define Bolton Sheeting as ‘A coarse unbleached twilled English cotton fabric, sometimes dyed a cream colour, originally it was woven. 72in (80cm) wide. Uses: ground for crewel embroidery, also dresses, aprons, draperies.’ Phyllis G.

Though by the late 1890s up to £150 might be spent on a single costume, Terry stresses that in contrast to comparable theatres ‘At the Lyceum *wanton* extravagance was unknown.’⁹¹ Terry’s pride in the ability shown by designers and makers to achieve stunning visual effects at minimal financial cost is evident throughout her writing and in many of her garments. As she remarked in 1911

[...] it is not always necessary to spend a great deal of money. I think I may say, without boasting, that I have always been well dressed on the stage, but I doubt if there has ever been a more cheaply dressed actress.’⁹²

The use of rabbit fur to imitate ermine is a case in point and was a common theatrical device in this period. Surviving costumes worn by both Terry and Irving exemplify this practice, which is also referred to in Terry’s correspondence with her costumier Nettleship [FIGURE 4.33].⁹³ Scrap materials and costumes might also be recycled. W.G. Robertson was particularly struck by the ‘rich gown’ in which Terry made her first entrance in *Becket* in 1893 which conveyed a ‘wondered Rossettian effect of dim gold and glowing colour veiled in black, her masses of bright hair in a net of gold and golden hearts embroidered on her robe.’ As W.G. Robertson reveals however, this costume was actually formed from ‘[...] an old pink gown, worn with stage service [...] the mysterious veiling was the coarsest and cheapest black net,’ ‘the glory of hair through golden meshes was a bag of

Tortora and Ingrid Johnson, *The Fairchild Books Dictionary of Textiles* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc, 2014) 66.

⁹¹ *New Zealand Herald*, 25 November 1900: 2. See also Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 171.

⁹² Ellen Terry, “Some Ideas on Stage Decoration,” *McClures Magazine*, (January, 1911), 293.

⁹³ The same effect was used for the Archbishopal pallium worn by Irving in the title role of *Becket* (1893), now in the V&A Museum, Museum Number S.2752:2-2010. In a letter sent by Terry to Nettleship in ca.1895, Terry she asks for a ‘cheap cloak, looking like Ermine, but really innocent bunny rabbit.’ Letter from Terry to Nettleship, sent from 22 Barkston Gardens at one o’clock in the morning. (the letter is not dated but mentions Miss Gibson and Miss Brenda Gibson played Estelle in *The Corsican Brothers* in 1895). Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/5.

gold tinsel stuffed with crumpled paper’ and ‘the broidered hearts were cut out of gold paper and gummed on.’⁹⁴



Figure 4.33 - Detail of fur trim on costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *King Lear* Lyceum Theatre, 1892. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. 14 April 2016. Museum number S.2743:1-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

More sophisticated techniques were also employed when required however, as was the case when Terry discovered ‘a saffron silk with a design woven into it by hand with many-coloured threads and little jewels’ perfectly suited to a costume required for the 1881 production of *The Cup*. Unfortunately this silk was being sold in Liberty’s for ‘twelve guineas a yard,’ a price which Terry declared prohibitive. A solution was found by Mr. Arnott (the Stage Carpenter and Property Manager) however, who proved able to reproduce the effect by having ‘some raw silk dyed the exact saffron’ and creating two printing blocks, ‘one red and the other black’ to print the pattern. With the addition of ‘a few cheap spangles...to replace the real jewels’ the ‘toga looked beautiful.’⁹⁵ Whilst the

⁹⁴ W.G.Robertson, *Time Was*, 154. Valerie Cumming provides further instances of Terry’s frugality in Cumming, ‘Ellen Terry: An Aesthetic Actress and her Costumes’, *Costume* 21 (1987): 72-73.

⁹⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 170-171.

original costume has not survived, Terry's description can be matched to photographs of the production, and these images illustrate the visual impact of Arnott's fabric [FIGURE 4.34]. Newspaper reviews offer a further insight into the colour and weight of the material, in their descriptions of Terry's 'classical draperies and sea green robes' which were 'seemingly spun from gossamer.'⁹⁶



Figure 4.34 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup*, Lyceum Theatre, 1881. Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x10.1cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:312-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁹⁶ *The Daily Telegraph*, 4th January, 1881. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume I: 141-143, Garrick Collection, London.

Patience Harris

Terry's friend, couturier Lucile (Lady Duff Gordon, 1863-1935), declared the actress 'intensely particular' about her 'theatre clothes' and described how Terry '[...] would spend hours choosing her costumes, and studying her make up.'⁹⁷ This observation is borne out in surviving correspondence and interviews and also in the attention Terry herself made to recording details about her costumes in her autobiography and her personal scripts for Lyceum productions.⁹⁸ Whilst taking a leading role in the design of her costumes, she also relied upon the skill of artists, costume designers and dressmakers in their creation.

For much of the first decade of Terry's career at the Lyceum Theatre Patience Harris (1857-1901) is credited with overseeing the creation of Terry's costumes.⁹⁹ Very little has been written about Harris. It is known that she was the sister of Sir Augustus Glossop Harris (1852-1896), manager of the Drury Lane theatre between 1879 and 1896 and at the time of her death she was working as theatrical costumier under the name Auguste et Cie (maker's labels woven this name appear in costumes worn by both Terry and Irving).¹⁰⁰ Harris appears to have worked with Terry until circa 1887 but very little information has survived relating to their professional relationship.¹⁰¹ Terry makes no

⁹⁷ Lady Duff Gordon, *Discretions and Indiscretions* (London: Jarolds, 1932), 33-4.

⁹⁸ The annotations and images contained within Terry's private copies of *Macbeth* now held at Smallhythe Place, are a case in point and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Terry holds at least two copies of the script, National Trust Inventory Number 3119096 and National Trust Inventory Number 3119105. Also part of the library at Smallhythe, Terry's copy of J.R.Planché, *British History of Costume* (London: C.Cox, 1847) is also heavily annotated. Two copies of this book survive in the library National Trust Inventory Number 3052812 and National Trust Inventory Number 3052813.

⁹⁹ Whilst, as is discussed, little information survives relating to Patience Harris, she is known to have been the sister of Augustus Harris (1852-1896), and actor and dramatist who also acted as Manager of the Drury Theatre from 1879. Both were the children of the dramatic Augustus Harris and his wife, neé Maria Ann Bone, who had also worked as a theatrical costumier.

¹⁰⁰ Reports into the inquest provoked by Harris's death in December 1901 suggest that she may have died from alcoholism. They also allege that, though unmarried, she had a 'male companion' who was also the primary beneficiary in her will. "Death of Miss Patience Glossop Harris," *The Derbyshire Times*, Saturday 4 January 1902. [n.d].

¹⁰¹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 79.

reference to Harris in her autobiography and the only information regarding her role as Terry's costume designer yet discovered, is in Comyn-Carr's description of the disagreement between herself and Harris over Terry's costumes for *The Amber Heart*, 1887 and Harris' subsequent resignation. The only real route into discovering more about the impact Harris had upon Terry's on stage dress is therefore through the costumes themselves.

The fact that the specific individuals responsible for designing or making costumes are rarely credited in the theatre programmes presents a challenge when seeking to identify costumes for which Harris had specific responsibility. Another barrier to determining precise identification, is the frequent absence of maker's labels in the costumes themselves. By examining photographs and surviving garments from the 1878 to 1887 period of Terry's career however, it is possible to identify clear patterns within the style and fit of Terry's on stage garments between these years. During this period Terry played leading roles in: *Hamlet*; *Charles I*; *The Merchant of Venice*; *Iolanthe*; *The Cup*; *Othello*; *The Belles Stratagem*; *Romeo and Juliet*; *Much Ado About Nothing*; *Olivia* and *Faust*.¹⁰² Of these productions, costumes Terry wore as Ophelia, Henrietta Maria, Portia, Iolanthe, Beatrice, Olivia and Marguerite survive. Amongst these, only the costumes for Ophelia, Iolanthe and Olivia can be reliably matched with photographs documenting the original productions. The other productions were frequently revived, and related correspondence and images, together with the level of wear, indicates that the surviving costumes are copies or adaptations of the garments which featured in the original production. Comparing the surviving costumes and photographs from this period reveals key details

¹⁰² Lists of the productions in which Terry appeared can be found in biographies of the actress, including Manvell, *Ellen Terry*, 367-268 (though he only lists her roles whilst in the Lyceum Company) and Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 262-264.

regarding the fabric choices for, and construction of, these garments, all which are likely to have been overseen by Harris.



Figure 4.35 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Sepia Photograph on paper. 8.9 x 5.9 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:277-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The robes Terry is depicted wearing in the photographs connected with original, 1879, Lyceum production of *The Merchant of Venice* provide a clear illustration of the more elaborate styles favoured by Harris. Whilst these robes have not survived, the images of Terry in the robes from Act IV, Scene One, make apparent the weight, quality and weave of the silk from which they were made [FIGURE 4.35]. This fabric is particularly significant as it can be traced to the offices of a specific textile company, Watts of Westminster, which had opened just five years earlier. Remarkably little information survives documenting where and when the actress purchased items for her on or off stage attire. The account books in the archive of Watts confirm both that Terry was a customer

of the firm and the amount of money she spent there. They therefore represent a unique insight in the actress's purchasing choices.

Still operating today, Watts of Westminster was the joint venture of three architects, George Frederick Bodley, George Gilbert Scott the Younger and Thomas Garner. The firm supplied fittings and furnishings for both ecclesiastical and domestic interiors and advertised their ability to supply items of,

Artistic character. Embroidery and Textile Fabrics, such as Damask, Silks, Velvets, Woollen and other Hangings, still be included in the List of Goods, which will also comprise Wall Papers and Stained Glass, together with all the usual articles of Household Furniture.¹⁰³

The three founders formed a limited company in 1874 and opened an outlet 30 Baker Street in 1879. Surviving account books from this period record that Terry purchased fabric from Watts between 1878 and 1882, a period which marks the peak of her partnership with Harris and pre-dates the recruitment of Comyns-Carr. Unfortunately, these account books record only the amount spent by Terry and contain no precise details of what she was buying from the company. However, by comparing the dates when Terry is recorded as spending substantial amounts, with the productions in which she was performing, it has proved possible to develop some hypotheses regarding the nature and purpose of Terry's purchases. The photographic record of Terry's costumes have proved crucial to this process, in particular an image of Terry as Portia taken by Window & Grove in 1879 [FIGURE 4.36]. David Gazeley (Creative Director of the Watts Company) identified the fabric in this image as most likely to be 'Abbey', a silk brocade woven by

¹⁰³ "Watts History and Timeline," *Watts of Westminster*. [n.d.]

Perkins [FIGURE 4.37].¹⁰⁴ In 1881 Terry spent a total of £39 on materials from Watts, and these later purchases coincide with the productions of *Romeo and Juliet* (1881) and *Much Ado About Nothing* (1882).¹⁰⁵



Figure 4.36 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Woodburytype. 14.6 x 9.7 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax7705.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁰⁴Uthra Rajgopal, then Archivist at Watts of Westminster has confirmed that Watts had a trade account with Perkins this period and is investigating whether further information can be found in the stock books of the period (though not all such purchases were recorded).

¹⁰⁵ These figures are recorded in the surviving Account Books and are part of the Watts of Westminster Company Archive, London.



Figure 4.37 - Image of the design for the “Abbey” Brocade pattern, courtesy of Watts of Westminster, Archive, London. Courtesy of Uthra Rajgopal. Watts of Westminster, Archive, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry described the production of *Romeo and Juliet* as ‘very sumptuous, impressive and Italian’ and declared that it ‘was the most *elaborate* of all the Lyceum productions’ and one in which all the scenes ‘[...] were all treated with a marvellous sense of pictorial effect.’¹⁰⁶ Her costumes, which appear to have been Renaissance in their inspiration, were designed in accordance with this aim. Though the fabric of one is plain, the sleeves are

¹⁰⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 208.

pleated to create a puffed ‘mameluke’ effect, and are decorated with strands of beads, as is the bodice [FIGURE 4.38]. Another has simpler, close fitting sleeves, with a pleated lace cuff at the wrist, but is formed from a fabric woven with a design of stylised leaves, with a further band of darker material woven with a pattern of large closed flowers, added at the hem [FIGURE 4.39].



Figure 4.38 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14 x 9.6 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:336-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.39 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14 x 9.6 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:343-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The spectacular setting of *Romeo and Juliet* was eclipsed by that of *Much Ado About Nothing* the following year, and Terry’s costumes created by Harris were even more elaborate. At least three costumes worn by Terry as Beatrice whilst part of the Lyceum Company have survived. Whether or not they date from the original production is open to debate, as the success of the 1882 production was such that the play was frequently revived and became a favourite role for Terry for the remainder of her career. Labels present in the interior of two of the surviving costumes, both identical and constructed

from a pale gold stamped velvet, offer a partial insight into their respective dates.¹⁰⁷ The first, part of the collection at Smallhythe, has a maker's label reading 'Auguste et Cie' at the interior waist, the second is labelled 'Edith Craig.' [FIGURE 4.40 and FIGURE 4.41]. The 'Auguste et Cie' label indicates an association with Harris, and that this garment was either made for the original 1882 production, or at least before Terry's professional relationship with Harris ended in 1887. The presence of Craig's name in the second garment, suggests that this costume was a re-make, created by Craig for Terry after 1899 when Craig first began producing costumes for the Lyceum Company.¹⁰⁸ Regardless of the date on which they were originally made however, these surviving garments exemplify both the silhouette and key decorative features which characterised the costumes Terry wore in this role. Photographic records show that Terry wore a number of different dresses during the production. All the costumes shared the same close fitting bodice however, which had a wide, square neckline, and extended into a slight point at the centre front waist [FIGURE 4.42 and FIGURE 4.43]. The skirts of the dresses were wide and full, spreading out into a train at the rear [FIGURE 4.44]. The sleeves of each costume are distinct, but all were equally elaborate and were generally full from the shoulder to the elbow, fitting closely from this point to finish in a tight cuff at the wrist [FIGURE 4.45]. Of the surviving costumes, two are virtually identical, being made from the same pale gold stamped velvet fabric and consisting of a bodice and skirt with a separate stomacher. The front panel of the underskirts and the stomacher used in both dresses are decorated with a stylised pattern formed from interconnecting lines and shapes and outlined with bugle beads [FIGURE 4.46 and FIGURE 4.47]. The other two

¹⁰⁷ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, SMA.COST.110 [1118835] and Appendix 2, Museum of London, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Museum Number 65.90/4a-c.

¹⁰⁸ Craig worked as director, designer and theatrical costumier. For part of her career she operated a business making theatre costumes, Edith & Co, in Henrietta Street, London. For further information see Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 171-2 and Ann Rachlin, *Edy was a Lady* (Leicester: Matador, 2011) 142-158.

costumes which can be connected with the Lyceum productions of *Much Ado About Nothing*, share many of the decorative features present in the stamped velvet dresses, but are made from silk damask, one in a deep rose pink, the other in a vivid yellow.¹⁰⁹



Figure 4.40 - Detail of a maker's stamp, woven waistband of skirt, part of a costume worn by Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 5 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.110 [1118835].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.41 - Detail of a label in a waistband of the skirt which forms part of a costume worn in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, probably after 1899. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 29 October 2010. Museum Number 65.90/a-c.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁰⁹ See Appendix 1, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1882, SMA.TC.149a&b [1118874.1] and SMA.TC.157 [1118882] A further costume from a revival in 1903, after Terry left the Lyceum Theatre, SMA/TC/107 [1118832] also survives in the collection at Smallhythe.



Figure 4.42 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.6 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:369-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.43 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:383-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.44 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:367-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.45 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Albumen Cabinet Card. 14 x 9.9 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number, NPG 16981.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.46 - Detail of a costume worn by Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 5 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.110 [1118835].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.47 - Detail of a costume worn by Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 5 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.110 [1118835].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.48 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Lyceum Theatre, 1882, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.2 x 10.1 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:375-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Many of Terry's costumes in this production featured a distinctive, Elizabethan inspired, upstanding collar [FIGURE 4.48].¹¹⁰ Formed from lace and supported on a wire frame, the visual impact of this collar is immediately apparent both in the surviving garments and in the photographs. The use of a stiffened collar, rather than the starched ruffs also worn during this period, may have been prompted by the desire to ensure that Terry's expressions were visible to the audience and that her movement was not impeded by her clothing. Nevertheless, Terry had clearly been persuaded by Harris to sacrifice some degree of comfort and freedom when wearing these heavy costumes, with their long trains, and close fitting, boned, bodices.

The weight of the silk damasks and silk velvets chosen for *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* contrasts starkly with the 'gossamer' style draperies worn by Terry in *The Cup* in 1881. The extent to which Harris contributed to the creation of these robes, formed from 'stuff that seems spun out of the wings of a dragon fly,' is unclear. Neither she nor Godwin (whose involvement in the design of her costumes Terry acknowledged in her autobiography), are mentioned in the programmes for the production.¹¹¹ The hypothesis that Godwin, rather than Harris, played the leading role in designing Terry's costumes for this production, would certainly explain this stylistic departure from the stately and ornate gowns seen in her earlier Shakespearian roles. As Chapter 6 will discuss, Godwin was an established costume designer and advocate of Aesthetic Dress. His writing on dress emphasised the importance of 'beauty of form', 'the gift of colour' and 'the element of motion.'¹¹² These qualities were clearly a high priority when

¹¹⁰ See for instance 'The Ditchley Portrait of Elizabeth I', NPG 2561, National Portrait Gallery, London.

¹¹¹ The programme only records that 'The Costumes [were] executed by Mrs. White, Mrs. Reid, and Mons. Alias. The armour by Leblanc-granger.' Theatre Programme, 'Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883', Ruth Canton Album I, Garrick Collection, London, (1879) n.p.

¹¹² Godwin discusses these ideals in his introduction to *Dress and its Relation to Health* (London: William Clawes & Sons Ltd., 1884) 1-3.

designing the softly draping robes Terry wore for this production and which the actress praised as ‘simple, fine and free.’¹¹³



Figure 4.49 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Bromide postcard print. 13.9 x 8.7 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number, NGP 197942.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.50 - Bodice worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 15 August 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.145 [1118870].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹¹³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 198.



Figure 4.51 - Bodice, part of a costume worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 23 May 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.144 a+b [1118869].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.52 - Detail of a costume worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre circa 1885. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 29 October 2010. Museum Number 57.20/1.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.53 - Costume worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 24 May 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.170.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Alice Comyns-Carr

Describing Terry and her approach to costume, the actress's friend, and subsequent biographer, Marguerite Steen (1894-1975) declared,

In whatever she wore for the stage, Ellen Terry gave the impression of being authentic 'to the skin' – which is not to say she carried her passion for archaeological perfection so far as the cotton shift, the padded and pocketed petticoat worn over nothing at all [...] Ellen Terry never confined her lithe expressive body in a corset; when necessary for the period, her bodices were boned to give her more bust and waist than were

hers by nature. She knew that an actress's physical equipment did not stop short at face, hands and feet, but included spine and ribs and things [...]'¹¹⁴

As Steen's declaration suggests, whilst Terry was willing to wear heavier and more restrictive garments where the production or period demanded it, her preference was always for lighter costumes that facilitated graceful and easy movement on the stage and this influenced the actress' approach to design.¹¹⁵ It was arguably in pursuit of this aim Terry engaged Alice Comyns-Carr (1850-1927), a known advocate and wearer of Aesthetic Dress, to assist with the design of her costumes in circa 1882.¹¹⁶ Comyns-Carr initially worked alongside Harris, but the collaboration was not a success. Comyns-Carr implies that the main cause of the disharmony between herself and Harris lay in the fact that, 'Patience was always in favour of elaborate and pretentious gowns and had but little use for the simple designs I suggested.'¹¹⁷ Though their working relationship seems to have been tense, it endured until 1887, at which point Harris left the Lyceum and Comyns-Carr was given primary responsibility for Terry's costumes. Terry continued to work closely with Comyns-Carr for nearly twenty years; their partnership ending when Terry left the Lyceum Company in 1902.

Early indications of Comyns-Carr's influence on Terry's costumes can be identified in the 1885 production of *Faust*. The extensive research carried out before the production,

¹¹⁴ Marguerite Steen, *A Pride of Terrys: Family Saga* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd, 1962) 290.

¹¹⁵ Comyns-Carr remarked upon Terry's preference for 'comfort' over historical accuracy and the actress's complaints at 'fashions which she fancied might interfere with her movement while acting.' Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 214-216.

¹¹⁶ Comyns-Carr notes that she was first engaged by Terry shortly after she designed costumes for Terry's sister, Marion, to wear in a production of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which was staged at The Prince of Wales Theatre in 1882. Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 79. Images showing Marion Terry as she appeared in the production survive in the V&A Collections. See Museum Numbers S.133:569-2007 and S.133:607-2007. Comyns-Carr also describes how in the Wedding Gown she wore in 1873 she '[...] struck a Bohemian note myself by abandoning the paths of fashion and appearing in an unconventional wedding gown of soft, uncrinolined cream brocade' Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 26.

¹¹⁷ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 79.

included a trip to Nuremburg with Irving and Terry.¹¹⁸ As Comyns-Carr recalled in her *Reminiscences*, she and Terry sought out ‘[...] jewellery or characteristic material which would heighten the realistic effect of the Faust costumes’ and actually discovered ‘[...] a beautiful old bonnet, thickly embroidered in tinsel’ which Terry wore in the ‘church scene.’¹¹⁹ The aesthetic adopted for Terry’s costumes in this production departed from ‘the traditional trailing blue and white robe which up to this time had been considered inseparable from the role.’¹²⁰ In their search for something ‘realistic,’ Comyns-Carr looked for images of the ‘types of dress which the real Gretchen, whom [she] imagined to be a fifteenth century burgess’s daughter, would have worn’ and based her designs upon the ‘tightly kilted full skirts, plain bodices laced across the chest, and bell sleeves’ she found depicted in ‘old German books.’ [FIGURE 4.49] In fact the catalogue record for the dress from Faust, which is in the Museum of London collection, describes the dress as an ‘imitation of German Dress, Kronach, c.1520-30.’¹²¹ Of the dresses which survive, four realise the design outlined by Comyns-Carr. Each costume is differentiated from one another by slight variations in decoration, sleeve shape and colour.¹²² Comparing the garments reveals further subtle variations in the tones of blue silk blend damask bodices, and in the finely woven blue wool used to create the pleated skirts [FIGURE 4.50, 4.51 and 4.52].¹²³ The fourth costume in this group is deep yellow in colour, and the skirt is joined to the bodice at the slightly raised waistline [FIGURE 4.53].¹²⁴ The success of the dresses in the 1885 production was such that, as Comyns-Carr

¹¹⁸ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 149.

¹¹⁹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 151.

¹²⁰ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 149.

¹²¹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 149-150 and, in Appendix 2, the catalogue record Marguerite, *Faust*, Museum of London, 57.20/1.

¹²² As discussed earlier, two further costumes from *Faust* survive in the collection at Smallhythe. These were worn by Terry in the prison scene and their construction and materials are far rougher. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Marguerite, *Faust*, 1885, SMA.TC.169 1118894 and SMA.T.C/COST.102

¹²³ For further details of these garments see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Marguerite, *Faust*, 1885, SMA.TC.145, 1118870 and SMA.TC.144 a&b, 1118869 and also Appendix 2, Marguerite, *Faust*, 1885, Museum of London, 57.20/1.

¹²⁴ For further details see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Marguerite, *Faust*, 1885, SMA.TC.170.

claimed, ‘the full kilted skirts were so much in demand amongst women of fashion that machines were set up to make what became known as ‘accordion pleating.’¹²⁵ As discussed in Chapter 3, the costumes also set fashions within stage costumes and Terry observed that ‘Two operatic stars did me the honour to copy my Margaret dress—Madame Albani and Madame Melba.’¹²⁶

The Amber Heart

Comyns-Carr’s promotion to a position as the lead designer of Terry’s costumes took place in 1887. This coincided with Terry’s appearance as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart* and the introduction of a new approach to Terry’s stage costumes is immediately evident in the dress Terry wore in this production. According to Comyns-Carr, it was an example of her own personal dress which first inspired the design. As she explains, Terry came to dine at home with the Comyns-Carrs and ‘happened to admire a simple, unstarched muslin frock [she] was wearing.’ Looking more closely at the fabric Terry asked Comyns-Carr to ‘tell Pattie Harris just how to get than crinkly effect, and let her make me up one at once.’¹²⁷ Comyns-Carr confessed to having employed the rather unorthodox method of twisting the fabric of the dress ‘up into a ball and boil[ing] it in a potato steamer to get the crinkles.’¹²⁸ This was not a method approved of by Harris, but Terry, already accustomed to unorthodox approaches through her past collaborations with Godwin, proved willing to sanction any technique necessary to achieve the required effect and,

¹²⁵ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 150.

¹²⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 243. Dame Emma Albani, DBE (1847–1930) was a leading Canadian soprano who established an International career, and Dame Nellie Melba GBE (1861–1931), born Helen ‘Nellie’ Porter Mitchell, was an equally successful and influential Australian operatic soprano.

¹²⁷ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 79.

¹²⁸ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 79.

upon Harris's subsequent departure, invited Comyns-Carr 'to undertake the designing of all her stage clothes.'¹²⁹

Until recently existing records at Smallhythe suggested that the dress Comyns-Carr eventually created for the production survived in the collection [FIGURE 4.54]. This surviving costume does strongly resemble the photographs of Terry in the costume she wore for *The Amber Heart*, 1887. These images also document the 'crinkly effect' described by Comyns-Carr [FIGURE 4.55 and 4.56]. Examining the surviving costume more closely however, raised the possibility that it was actually worn by Terry in as Fair Rosamund in the 1893 production of *Becket* [FIGURE 4.57 and 4.58]. Even if made for this later production, the costume would have been designed for Terry by Comyns-Carr. Furthermore, the strong similarities between the 1887 and 1893 costumes reveals that this was a design and fit in line with Terry's taste, and a costume which Terry deemed successful enough to return to, and re-work, six years after it was originally devised. The surviving dress is made from very fine translucent silk through which the inner tunic, made from a pale yellow silk and fitting slightly closer to the body than the loose outer dress, is visible. Decoration has been added at the 'V' shaped neckline, at the edges of the cuffs of the wide, 'angel' sleeves, and at the hem, using metallic braid, spangles and cut glass beads [FIGURE 4.59 and 4.60].¹³⁰ Much of the stitching has been carried out by hand and, whilst the construction of the garment is based around a comparatively simple T-shape, weights added at the centre front bodice and at the interior hem of the inner tunic have been used to control the fall of the garment [FIGURE 4.61]. In both productions the style of Terry's costumes and the photographs taken in role, highlight Terry's prominent position within the Aesthetic movement and the extent to which her

¹²⁹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 80.

¹³⁰ For further details see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Ellaline/Rosamund, *Amber Heart/ Becket*, SMA.TC.160, a,b,c [1118885].

approach to design, both on and off the stage, was shaped by the values of Aestheticism. Close stylistic links can, for instance, be traced between these costumes and the pale silver blue gowns with their soft pleats and raised waistline which are depicted in the work of leading artists within the Aesthetic movement, in particular *The Golden Stairs* painted by Edward Burne-Jones in 1880 [FIGURE 4.62].¹³¹ Terry's Aesthetic sensibilities are made particularly apparent in another image of Terry in the role (Figure 3.14) in which she was shown positioned next to a lily, a prominent symbol of the movement that recurred within Aesthetic designs for dress and interior décor. The manner in which Terry's costumes advertised her status within the Aesthetic Movement will be explored further in Chapter 6.



Figure 4.54 - Costume previously thought to have been worn by Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 18 June 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.160 [1118885].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹³¹This painting is now part of the collection at Tate Britain, Museum Number N04005.



Figure 4.55 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Albumen cabinet card. 14.5 x 10.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number, NPG x16973.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.56 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.2 x 10.4 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:411-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.57 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Fair Rosamund in *Becket*, Lyceum Theatre, 1893, published by J. Beagles & Co 1900s. Bromide postcard print. 12.3 x 8.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x26804.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.58 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Rosamund in *Becket*, Lyceum Theatre, 1893, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:484-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.59 - Detail of the neckline of a costume previously thought to have been worn by Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 18 June 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.160 [1118885].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.60 - Detail of decoration used on the hanging sleeves of a costume previously thought to have been worn by Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 18 June 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.160 [1118885].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.61 - Detail of the weights used to control the fall and fit of a costume previously thought to have been worn by Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 18 June 2013. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.160 [1118885].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.62- Edward Burne Jones, *The Golden Stairs*, 1880. Oil on canvas, 316.2 x 163.7 x 122 cm. Tate Britain, London. Museum Number N04005.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The 'Art' of Costume

As her *Reminiscences* make clear, Comyns-Carr, though playing a leading role in the design of Terry's costumes and working closely with the actress, was also guided by the artists Irving engaged to assist with the set and costume design for Lyceum productions. For the 1895 production of *King Arthur*, Irving asked the painter Burne-Jones to design both the scenery and the costumes. Burne-Jones agreed, '[...] stipulating only that he should not be required to superintend the carrying out of his designs in detail.'¹³² For this production Comyns-Carr was required to produce designs for Terry's dress, based upon the 'coloured sketches showing his ideas for the costumes' which Burne-Jones had produced. She was soon given a relatively 'free hand' by the artist however, who, recognising the value of Comyns-Carr's experience with designing for the theatre, approved the substitutions the designer made with regard to the colour and fabric selected for Terry's costumes.¹³³

Through a comparison of Burne-Jones' original sketches with a surviving costume in the collection at Smallhythe, it is possible to explore the manner in which Comyns-Carr translated his ideas into a finished costume [FIGURE 4.63].¹³⁴ The extant dress has an olive green silk ground, overlaid with panels of crochet in varying tones of the same olive green on the bodice, sleeves and skirt [FIGURE 4.64 and 4.65]. The cuffs fit more closely than those suggested by Burne-Jones and Comyns-Carr has introduced panels of bronze gauze, shaped into a fretwork of diamonds and decorated with cut glass jewels, at the upper arm of the sleeves, to capture the detailing the artist included at this point. The neckline of the dress is higher than the gentle 'V' suggested by Burne-Jones, but this may

¹³² Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 205.

¹³³ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 206.

¹³⁴ Both the sketches (National Trust Inventory Number 1117135 and 1117135.2), and the costume are part of the collection at Smallhythe, See Appendix 1, Guinevere, *King Arthur*, SMA/TC/118, 1118843.

reflect the preference for high collars identifiable in Terry's personal dress, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. Comyns-Carr has achieved a clever compromise between these two styles by introducing a 'V' shaped cream silk infill at the centre front of the dress [FIGURE 4.66].



Figure 4.63 - Edward Burne Jones, Detail from a costume design for Ellen Terry as Guinevere in *King Arthur*, Lyceum Theatre, 1895. Personal photograph by the author. 4 April 2016. National Trust, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1117135.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.64 - Upper section of costume worn by Ellen Terry as Guinevere in *King Arthur*, Lyceum Theatre, 1895. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.118 [1118843].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.65 - Skirt of the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Guinevere in *King Arthur*, Lyceum Theatre, 1895. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.118 [1118843].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.66 -Detail of collar on the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Guinevere in *King Arthur*, Lyceum Theatre, 1895. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.118 [1118843].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The 'Beetlewing Dress'

Strong parallels exist between the construction and fit of Terry costumes for *King Arthur* (1895) and those she had worn seven years earlier in the production of *Macbeth* (1888).¹³⁵ In particular the iridescent green and silver/blue gown covered with beetle wing cases worn by Terry in Act I discussed in Chapter 3, which is now known as 'the beetlewing dress.'¹³⁶ [FIGURE 4.67] Terry clearly appreciated the dramatic impact of her costumes and was particularly pleased by the 'beetlewing dress.' Describing the costume as a 'lovely robe', she explained to an interviewer: 'It is so easy and one does not have to wear corsets', demonstrating her point by 'making a few delightfully graceful movements to show with what ease she could move.'¹³⁷ The distinctive feature of this costume is the internal knitted silk jersey bodice which provides the foundation for the dress and also acts as a support for the body of the wearer [FIGURE 4.68]. The internal support provided by this knitted structure and the addition of a hanging weight at the centre front hem to control the fall of the bodice, made it possible to create a costume which did not rely upon internal boning or a corset to achieve the desired silhouette [FIGURE 4.69].

Whilst this internal bodice was not replicated in Terry's costume for *King Arthur*, the dropped waistline, emphasised by a hanging belt (See Figure 4.65), which lengthened and flattered Terry's torso, did reappear [FIGURE 4.70]. Similarities can also be traced between the colour palettes of the two dresses, though the green fabric used for the

¹³⁵ Zenzie Tinker. Personal communication with the author. 14 July 2010. Zenzie Tinker's Conservation Studio, Brighton. Zenzie operates under the name of Zenzie Tinker Ltd and intends to publish a full report on the discoveries she made during the complex treatment carried out on the 'Beetlewing Dress' in the future. Zenzie Tinker. Personal communication with the author. 28 October 2011.

¹³⁶ Several of the costumes worn by Terry in this production have survived, see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Lady Macbeth, *Macbeth*: SMA.TC/COST.115a, 1118840.1; SMA.TC.115b, 1118843; NT/SMA/TC/114a, 1118839.1 and NT/SMA/TC/114b, 1118839.2.

¹³⁷ The actress actually inserted a copy of this interview entitled 'How I Sketched Mrs. Siddons Shoes, A visit to Miss Ellen Terry's Dressing Room' into the final page of a copy of the script for this production. The name of the author and title of the publication are not recorded. See Terry's copy of *Macbeth*, National Trust Inventory Number 3119105.

Macbeth costume is bluer in tone. The most striking parallel lies in the use of crocheted yarns on the bodices and skirts of both gowns. As both Comyns-Carr and Terry would have been aware, the strands of metal thread running through this crochet made the dresses particularly magnificent when illuminated by gaslight [FIGURE 4.71].



Figure 4.67 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.1 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:427-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The visual impact of the costumes worn by Terry in *Macbeth* was also evident in contemporary reviews, which remarked upon ‘the marvellous costumes designed by Mrs. Comyns-Carr’ and declared Terry’s performance to be ‘a continual feast to the eye.’¹³⁸ For many reviewers the ‘beauty’ and ‘picturesque’ qualities of the scenery and costumes actually led them to soften their criticism of Terry’s performance, as one reviewer noted

¹³⁸ *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 31 1888: 4. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V: 330, Garrick Club, London.

[...] difficult to deal with is the Lady Macbeth of Miss Ellen Terry. That it is convincing few will maintain. It is, however, divinely beautiful. The woman who, in a quaint and indescribably beautiful costume, read by the light of the fire the letter of her husband [...] might have stood in the Court at Camelot, and gained the wondering homage and obeisance of Sir Galahad, as well as Sir Lancelot [...] ¹³⁹



Figure 4.68 - Exterior of bodice, part of the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Image taken during conservation treatment at Zenzie Tinker Ltd, Brighton. Personal photograph by the author. 14 July 2010. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹³⁹ *Morning Post*, December 31 1888, Press cutting, Lyceum Theatre, Production Box, *Macbeth*, 1888, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 4.69 - Interior of bodice, part of the costume worn by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Image taken during conservation treatment at Zenzie Tinker Ltd, Brighton. Personal photograph by the author. 14 July 2010. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Much attention is given to Terry's controversial interpretation of the role, which, as discussed in Chapter 3, 'emphasise[d] the feminine side of Lady Macbeth's nature.'¹⁴⁰ Indeed one reviewer comments specifically upon the '[...] red wig and long plaits descending almost to the ground [which Terry wore] in place of the customary dark locks and sobriety of personal adornment,' suggesting that this element of the costume could be read as 'the outward and visible tokens of the inward change that has been wrought in the accepted reading of Lady Macbeth.'¹⁴¹ The most striking aspect of Comyns-Carr's designs, however, is the contrast between the lavishness of Terry's garments and the simpler, more subdued, tones of the costumes of other performers, Irving included. This discrepancy did not pass unremarked, and is made apparent in Wilde's pointed

¹⁴⁰ *Gazette*, n.d.: 4. Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V: 312, Garrick Club, London.

¹⁴¹ *The Standard, Monday December – Macbeth at the Lyceum*, n.d., ca.1888, Press cutting mounted in Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V: 334, Garrick Collection, London.

observation that whilst ‘Lady Macbeth seems to be an economical housekeeper and evidently patronises local industries for her husband's clothes and servant's liveries,’ ‘[...] she takes care to do all her own shopping in Byzantium.’¹⁴² The same contrast is evident in sketches and photographs of Irving and Terry as they appeared in the play. The fact that costumes worn by Irving in the role of Macbeth also survive, makes it possible to compare the actual garments worn by the two performers.



Figure 4.70 - Overview of the costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888 as now mounted at Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 15 March 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁴² Wilde's statement was recalled and quoted by W.G. Robertson in *Time Was*, 151

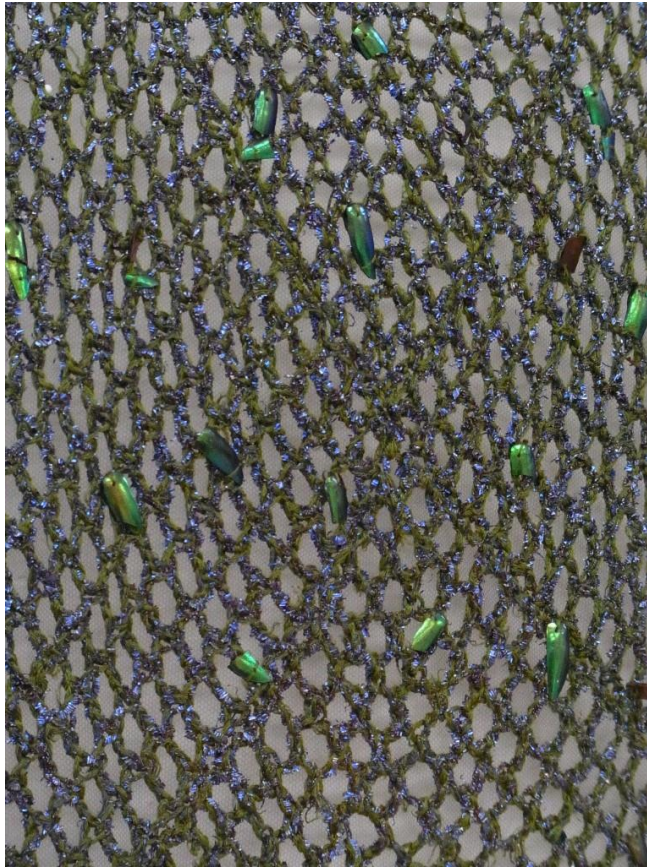


Figure 4.71 - Detail of the crochet structure of the skirt showing the beetlewing cases and strands of metal thread which form part of the structure. Part of the costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Image taken during conservation treatment at Zenzie Tinker Ltd, Brighton. Personal photograph by the author. 14 July 2010. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114 [1118839.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry's costumes also included a crimson silk velvet cloak appliquéd with green silk velvet griffins, each outlined with gold braid, and a further pale gold cloak, decorated with cut glass jewels and appliqué [FIGURE 4.72 and 4.73]. The 'regal robes' worn by Terry in the banquet scene, which were woven with strips of gold metal braid and decorated with further embroidery and cut glass jewels, were described by one reviewer as 'the crowning achievement. Beside [which] Sarah Bernhardt's Byzantine stole pales in ineffectual splendour' [FIGURE 4.74].¹⁴³ The majority of Irving costumes are simple knee-length asymmetrical tunics, cut in a wrap-over style and were worn with semi-

¹⁴³ *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 31 1888: 4. Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V: 330, Garrick Club, London.

circular wool cloaks.¹⁴⁴ Most are drawn from an earthy colour palette of deep purples and browns, the one exception being the robes worn by Irving in the banquet scene. These were designed to harmonise with the cream and gold tones of Terry's costume for this scene, and consisted of an under-doublet formed from cloth-of-gold style silk brocade, trimmed with gold braid and imitation 'ruby' glass jewels set on a burgundy ground [FIGURE 4.75].¹⁴⁵ Though his costumes in this production remained comparatively plain, Irving was conscious of the importance of spectacle and the dramatic effect of colour on the stage. Witnessing the effect of a vivid blood red' cloak Comyns-Carr had designed for Terry at a dress rehearsal, the actor/manager had remarked upon the 'wonderful splash of colour.' As Comyns-Carr recorded, 'when the first night came it was he [Irving] who was wrapped in that scarlet cloak, whilst Nell wore the less striking [...] heather coloured wrap which I had hurriedly designed at the last moment.'¹⁴⁶

Neither Terry nor Comyns-Carr discuss the contrast between Terry's costumes and those worn by the rest of the cast. One explanation could lie however, in the public interest attached to Terry's performance as Lady Macbeth. Audiences had already seen and formed their judgement of Irving's characterisation of Macbeth in 1875. For Terry however, this production marked her debut in the role of Lady Macbeth, and, as Chapter 3 established, a dramatic departure from the womanly characters portrayed by the actress in previous roles. Surviving reviews, whether criticising or praising her interpretation, attest to the impact of the theatrical event and the important role Terry's costumes played in heightening the effect of her performance.

¹⁴⁴ Irving's surviving costumes include an ensemble consisting of two cloaks, tunic, under-doublet and boots in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2722:1 to 6-2010 and a further ensemble consisting of cloak, tunic, jerkin/underdoublet, pair of boots and brooch, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum number S.2724:1 to 6-2010.

¹⁴⁵ The ensemble, which included red silk velvet slippers is also in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2723:1 to 3-2010.

¹⁴⁶ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 213.



Figure 4.72 - Museum Record Photograph. Crimson silk velvet cloak part of a costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114b [1118839.2].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.73 - Pale gold cloak part of a costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Personal photograph by the author. 16 April 2013. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.115b.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.74 - Dress, part of a costume by Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.115a.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.75 - Museum Record Photograph. Part of a costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *Macbeth*, Lyceum Theatre, 1888. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.2723:1-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Engagement in design

As has become apparent in this chapter, Terry engaged closely in the design of costumes. Emma Slocombe has drawn attention to the wealth of evidence relating to Terry's involvement in the design process which is preserved within the collection at Smallhythe.¹⁴⁷ Examining texts from Terry's library, Slocombe discovered extensive annotation within the actress's personal copy of Planché's *History of British Costume* (1847 edition). This included distinct 'crosses' next to two engravings of costumes from the early medieval period (c.1100–1300); an 11th century setting having been chosen for the Lyceum Production as research had revealed that 'Macbeth was slain by Macduff on December 5, 1056' [FIGURE 4.76].¹⁴⁸ Slocombe also discovered parallels between the style of the dress and a further engraving of a brass of Clothilde, Queen of the Franks, in the Notre Dame Cathedral (attributed to the architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc), inserted into the back pages of one of Terry's personal copies of *Macbeth* [FIGURE 4.77].¹⁴⁹ As Slocombe noted, Comyns-Carr acknowledged that she had actually 'cut out the patterns [for the dress] from the diagrams in the wonderful costume book of Viollet le Duc' and then crocheted the fine yarn 'a twist of soft green silk and blue tinsel' purchased by Nettleship in Bohemia, 'to match them.'¹⁵⁰ Her aim was to create a dress as 'like soft chain armour as [she] could, and yet have something that would give the appearance of the scales of a serpent.'¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷Emma Slocombe currently acts as Regional Curator for the National Trust in the South East. Her findings were published in Emma Slocombe, "Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum," *National Trust Historic Houses and Collections Annual 2011* (London: National Trust in association with *Apollo*, 2011), 4–11.

¹⁴⁸ Slocombe, 'Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum,' 10. The book is part of Terry's library, National Trust Inventory Number – 3052813. Similarly, the production designer Charles Cattermole discussed this setting in an interview, published as an "Interview with Charles Cattermole," *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 31st 1888: 5. Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume V: 317, Garrick Club, London.

¹⁴⁹ Slocombe, 'Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum', 10.

¹⁵⁰ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 211-212.

¹⁵¹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 211-212.

Despite the eerie glow offered by the crocheted soft green silk and blue tinsel bodice however, the dress was still not felt to be ‘brilliant enough.’¹⁵² Cumming, who has also examined the costumes in the Lyceum production of *Macbeth*, suggested that it was at this point that contemporary fashions also provided crucial ideas for the design. Cumming cites the fact that Terry’s recalled telling Comyns-Carr how impressed she had been by the effect of a dress worn by Lady Randolph Churchill, the bodice of which was ‘trimmed all over with green beetle's wings.’¹⁵³ It was, Terry claims, the remembrance of this earlier discussion which prompted Comyns-Carr to decide to sew the costume ‘all over with real green beetlewings,’ with the further addition of ‘a narrow border in Celtic designs, worked out in rubies and diamonds’ at the hem and sleeve cuffs.¹⁵⁴

One of the factors which has helped to secure the dress’s continued fame is the pictorial record provided by the portrait of Terry as Lady Macbeth painted by John Singer Sargent (1856-1925).¹⁵⁵ [FIGURE 4.78] Sargent was amongst the spectators present at the opening night of the production. Comyns-Carr claims that it was upon witnessing Terry’s striking entrance, together with the moment in the next scene when Terry re-appeared with a heather velvet cloak embroidered with fiery griffins and swept out of the castle keep to greet the old King, that Sargent first conceived the original idea for the portrait.¹⁵⁶ [FIGURE 4.79 and 4.80] This portrait captures elements of the costume missing from the

¹⁵² Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 211–212.

¹⁵³ Cumming, “Macbeth at the Lyceum”, 58.

¹⁵⁴ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 211–212.

¹⁵⁵ Now in the collection of Tate Britain, Museum Number N02053, this portrait was originally exhibition at The New Gallery in 1888, This ‘New Gallery’ was the successor to The Grosvenor Gallery, the decline of which began in 1887, and opened in 1888. Like the Grosvenor Gallery it was a central meeting point for leading figures within the Aesthetic Movement and exhibition work by artists whose work was often rejected by traditional institutions such as the Royal Academy.

¹⁵⁶ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 299–300. Sargent presented a version of the preparatory sketch that this scene inspired to Terry and it now survives in the collection at Smallhythe. The style and composition of the sketch contains a much greater sense of movement and pace than the finished portrait but does lack the menace of the pose in which Terry was eventually shown. Sargent also produced a further version of this sketch for Terry’s 1906 Jubilee. This second version now survives in the National Portrait Gallery, Museum Reference NPG 2273 (Figure 4.81).

photographs which, as Terry stated in a letter to her daughter, ‘give no idea of it at all, for it is in colour that it is so splendid.’ Although the finished painting lacks the movement and pace present in Sargent’s preparatory sketches, and in fact depicts a scene which never appeared in the play, it does record ‘the dark red hair ... [and] Rossetti-rich stained-glass effects’ which Terry loved. Most significantly for the actress however, the finished portrait suggested ‘all that [she] should like to have conveyed in [her] performance of Lady Macbeth.’¹⁵⁷

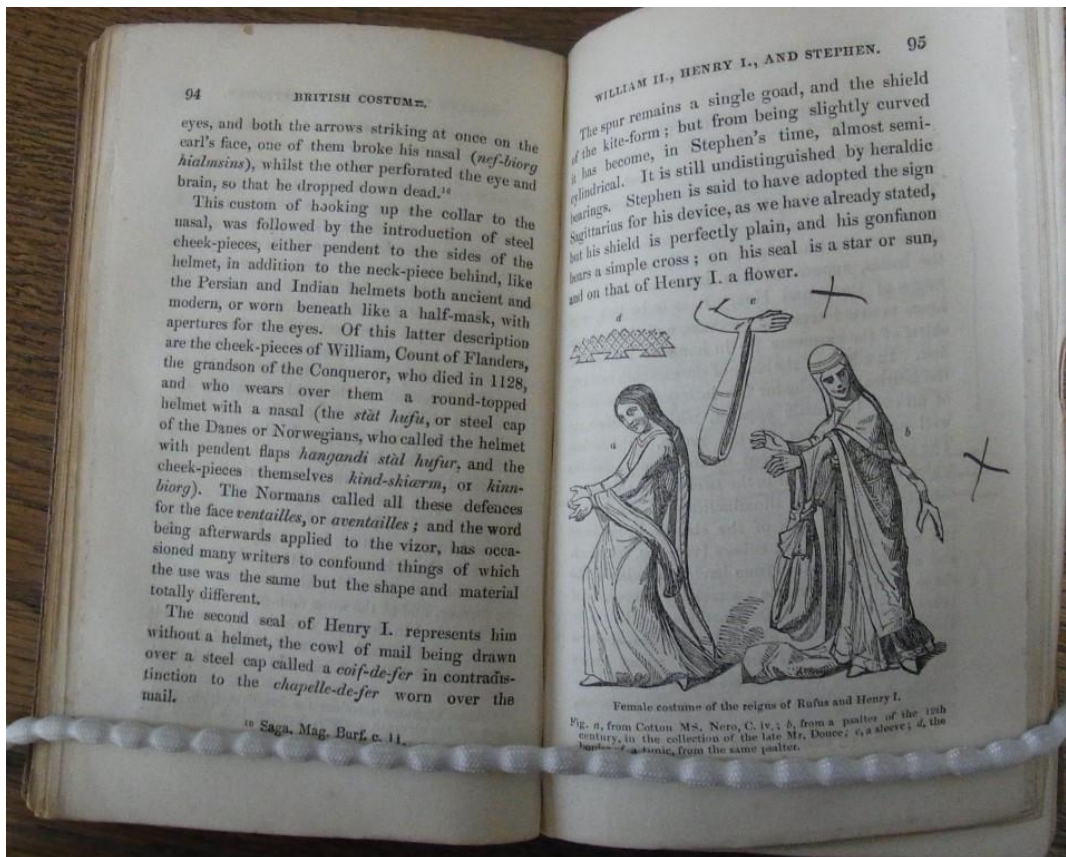


Figure 4.76 - Annotation in Terry’s personal copy of James Robinson Planché’s *History of British Costume* (1847 edition). National Trust, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author, 23 March 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [3052813].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁵⁷Terry, *Story of My Life*, 293–4.

Figure 4.77 - Engraving of a brass of Clothilde, Queen of the Franks, in the Notre Dame Cathedral (attributed to the architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc), inserted into the back pages of one of Terry's personal copies of the script for *Macbeth*. Personal photograph by the author, 23 March 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [3119105].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

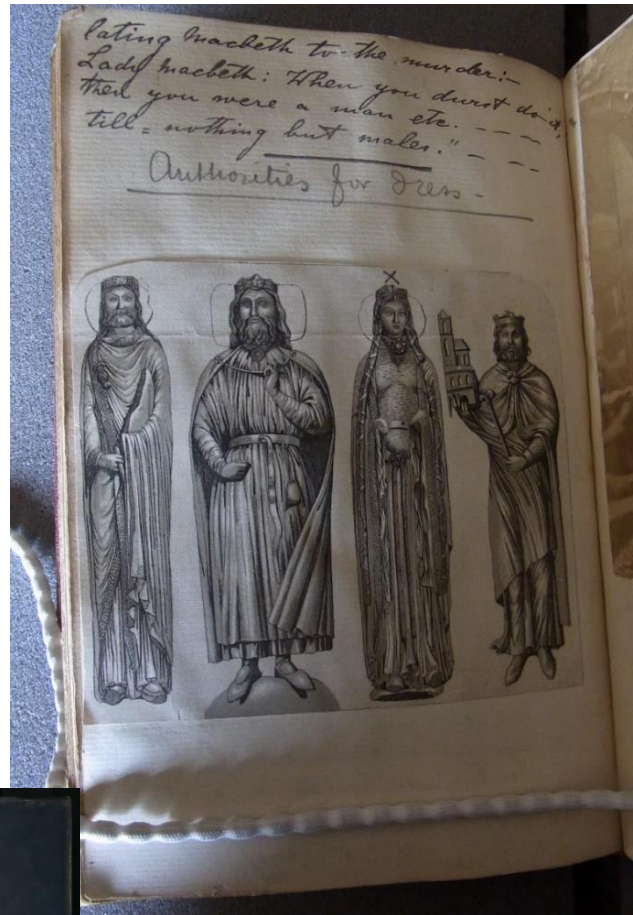


Figure 4.78 - John Singer Sargent, *Portrait of Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 221 x 114.3cms. Tate Britain, London. Museum Number N02053.



Figure 4.79 - John Jellicoe and Herbert Railton 'Scenes from "Macbeth" at the Lyceum Theatre, No.3 – Act 1, Scene 5.' Line drawing, 1888. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by the author. Lyceum Theatre, Production box, Macbeth, 1888.



Figure 4.80 - John Singer Sargent, *Replica of a preparatory sketch for Portrait of Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth*, ca. 1906. Oil on canvas. 86.3 x 72.5cms. National Portrait Gallery Collection, London. Museum Number NPG 2273.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Engagement in creation

Although not credited in many of the surviving programmes, Terry's primary costume maker from 1887 onwards was Ada Nettleship (1856-1932). Described by Comyns-Carr merely as '[...] the wife of a well known animal painter, an old friend of mine, and an extremely clever dressmaker, who was anxious to find some means of adding to a slender income;' the origins and career of Nettleship have yet to be fully explored.¹⁵⁸ It is known however that she had a particular specialism in embroidery, both designing her own patterns, and training her staff to carry out such work under her supervision.¹⁵⁹ An article published in the *Boston Evening Transcript* in 1893 sheds some light on her career. Originally '[...] distinguished as an art embroiderer in the style of William Morris' daughter,' in response to the pleas of her clients, she expanded into dressmaking and has since established a reputation in publications such as *Harper's Bazaar* as 'perhaps the most unique dressmaker in the world.'¹⁶⁰

By the mid to late 1890s Nettleship had clearly built a reputation for herself in London as a woman capable of producing both fashionable and theatrical attire.¹⁶¹ Terry's prominent place among Nettleship's clientele is emphasised in much of the press coverage with one reporter suggesting Nettleship that '[...] makes all Miss Terry's official gowns and many

¹⁵⁸ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 80. Mrs. Ada Nettleship was married to the artist Mr. J. T. Nettleship, particularly known for his paintings of animals. His work was exhibited at The Grosvenor Gallery in 1883, The New Gallery in 1891 and at the Winter Exhibition of the Watercolour Society in 1894. "Grosvenor Gallery Exhibition," *Illustrated London News* (London, 19 May 1883), 490; "The New Gallery," *Illustrated London News* (London, 9 May 1891), 607 and "Art Notes," *Illustrated London News* (London, 8 Dec. 1894), n.p.

¹⁵⁹ *The Queenslander*, Saturday 3 April 1897: 747.

¹⁶⁰ *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 16 1897: 16.

¹⁶¹ Terry was not the only actress who commissioned costumes from the dressmaker, whose theatrical clients included Marie Tempest, Winifred Emery and Sarah Bernhardt. *New Zealand Herald*, 25th November 1900: 2. Pamela Maude, the daughter of Winifred Emery, recalled frequent visits made by her mother to Mrs. Nettleship's workrooms in her autobiography, Pamela Maude, *Worlds Away: Recollections of a Victorian Childhood* (London: John Baker, 1964) 80. Similarly, in 1898 Nettleship was commissioned to create Mrs. Patrick Campbell's costumes for *Macbeth*, "Theatrical Gossip," *The Era*, Saturday, September 24, 1898, Issue 3131.

of those which are unofficial.’¹⁶²This claim is substantiated by surviving correspondence between Terry and Nettleship in the V&A Collections, in which the actress commissions Nettleship to make garments for her personal wardrobe as well as her stage attire.¹⁶³ The success of their collaboration is evident in the praise lavished upon the creations ‘which have now become the most beautiful and artistic dresses in the world – for what they are – picturesque stage representations.’¹⁶⁴

The sums invested in these ‘beautiful and artistic dresses’ also attracted attention. In an article for the *New Zealand Herald*, published in 1900, Nettleship revealed that ‘many of Miss Terry’s dresses have cost £100.’ Nettleship went on to admit that over £150 was spent on one dress, ‘twilled by [her] girls entirely of gold thread’ for the actress to wear as Guinevere in *King Arthur* (1895), with the same amount charged for the dress and amber necklace made for Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline* (1896).¹⁶⁵ In comparison the £47 and £49 that Nettleship claims were paid by Miss Marie Tempest (1864-1942) for costumes worn in *The Greek Slave* seem very modest. As the dressmaker notes however, Miss Emery (1861-1924) paid £300 for the costumes created for her role in *A Marriage of Convenience* and Miss Brown Potter (1857-1936) who has ‘all her clothes made in Paris’ is widely accepted as the ‘most extravagant stage dresser.’¹⁶⁶

An insight into the extremely high level of investment in stage costume during this period can be gathered from a comparison with the sums wealthy shoppers were willing to invest in couture and high quality garments. For instance, the diaries and accounts of Marion

¹⁶² *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 16 1897: 16.

¹⁶³ Examples include THM/14/20/TERRY/5, Letter from Terry to Nettleship, 12th January 1895 and July 1895 and also THM/14/20/TERRY/7, Letter from Terry to Nettleship, July 15th 1898 (date added in hand by pencil, June 16th 1900). Both are part of the Autographed Letter Series and held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

¹⁶⁴ *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 16 1897: 16.

¹⁶⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, 25 November 1900: 2.

¹⁶⁶ *New Zealand Herald*, 25 November 1900: 2.

Sambourne (1851-1914), a member of the ‘rising middle class,’ who had an annual dress allowance of about £80, record that in 1897 she invested £38 in a ‘blue evening dress’ from her favoured designer ‘Madame Bouquet.’¹⁶⁷ Similarly an analysis of the wardrobe of Heather Firbank (1888-1954), a member of fashionable London society, revealed that whilst in 1909 she spent £1,063 on clothes, she paid £25, 4s for the ‘pink satin evening gown’ she purchased from John Redfern & Sons (a specialist tailor and supplier of couture clothing).¹⁶⁸ Equally, in 1910, an ‘evening dress trimmed with jet and “white diamonds”’ and created by the leading Paris courtier Worth cost 950 francs (approximately £37 10s).¹⁶⁹ As these examples illustrate, even the ‘legendary prices’ charged for a couture dress from Worth in 1910 are less than half those paid by Terry for a single dress in 1895.

Examining the costumes themselves provides a further insight Nettleship’s contribution to Terry’s stage wardrobe. As with Harris, it is possible to identify specific costumes which Nettleship worked on and several garments contain maker’s labels, marked Mrs. Nettleship, 58 Wigmore Street [FIGURE 4.81]. Several such labels in items worn by Irving in the title role of the 1892 production of *King Lear*, reveal that, in this instance, Nettleship made costumes for both Irving and Terry.¹⁷⁰ [FIGURE 4.82] Terry played Lear’s youngest daughter, Cordelia. Unfortunately only the cloak associated with this role has survived and conservation treatment carried out in 1988, in which the lining was

¹⁶⁷ Amy de la Haye, Lou Taylor and Eleanor Thompson. *A Family of Fashion, The Messels: Six Generations of Dress* (London: Philip Wilson Publishers, 2005) 37. As the authors note, a more detailed insight into life at Sambourne Terrace can be gained from the transcriptions of Sambourne’s diaries and related documents in Shirley Nicholson, *A Victorian Household* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988).

¹⁶⁸ As the authors note, Firbank generally received an annual clothing allowance of £525. They also record that although initially specialising in tailoring Redfern had by this point expanded into all fashionable clothing including court dress. Cassie Davies-Strodder, Jenny Lister, and Lou Taylor, *London Society Fashion 1905-1925: The Wardrobe of Heather Firbank* (London: V & A Publishing, 2015) 39, 111, 142.

¹⁶⁹ This sum is quoted in a letter from a private collection and is cited in Davies-Strodder, Lister, and Taylor, *London Society Fashion 1905-1925*, 114.

¹⁷⁰ This costume survives in the collection at Smallhythe Place, See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Cordelia, *King Lear*, SMA.TC.104, 1118829

completely replaced, has masked much of the internal construction [FIGURE 4.83].¹⁷¹ Even so, being able to compare this cloak with Irving's surviving costumes brings to light details regarding the colours, materials and decorative effects employed for the costumes which it would not have been possible to trace in surviving black and white images. Terry's cloak can be seen clearly in a contemporary photograph and the similarities between the costumes worn by the two performers is also evident in a print from the period [FIGURE 4.84, 4.85]. The extant garments reveal parallels in the colour palette (tones of yellow, cream and gold, as compared to the leaf greens and browns of Irving's ensemble) and also the fabrics, (both are made from wool based fabrics and decorated with appliqué, gold spangles and metallic braid). The presence of the maker's labels in the interior of both garments confirms that, as discussed, both garments were made by Nettleship.



Figure 4.81 - Detail of maker's label in the cloak worn by Ellen Terry as Cordelia in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Personal photograph by the author. 16 August 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.104 [1118829].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁷¹As notes from a conservation report for the garment, produced by Blicking Conservation Studios in 1998 record, the treatment carried out in 1988 was unfortunately not fully documented and was far more interventive than current practice would advocate.



Figure 4.82 - Detail of maker's label in the costume worn by Henry Irving in the title role of *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Personal Photograph by the author 14 April 2016. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.2740:1 to 5-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.83 - Cloak worn by Ellen Terry as Cordelia in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Personal photograph by the author. 16 August 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.104 [1118829].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.84 - Bernard Partridge. Ellen Terry as Cordelia and Henry Irving as King Lear in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Print on paper. 24.4 x 32.2cms. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.160-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.85 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Cordelia in *King Lear*, Lyceum Theatre, 1892. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax131317.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The importance of colour

As Terry's plans for the costumes she was to wear as Ophelia suggest, the actress was extremely conscious of the impact that colour could have on the stage, both for visual effect and as a signifier of mood and character. A letter from Terry to Nettleship regarding costumes for the 1892 production of *King Lear*, provides further evidence of the manner in which Terry used colour when devising designs for garments. Terry corresponded directly with Nettleship regarding not only her own costumes but also those required for other performers. In this instance she provides directions for the costumes required for Regan and Goneril. Her instructions are brief and written almost in note form, but the emphasis on colour as an expression of inner nature is clear. For each of the three acts in which the characters appear, she makes a suggestion regarding colour, requesting bright tones for Regan's first gown, perhaps 'Helio-parma – Violet Colour.' Goneril is to be dressed in a defiant red and this colour is to recur in her later costumes, which will be 'finer' to reflect her rising wealth and power. By the second act Regan is to appear in a 'blue snakey' gown, with 'tight sleeves, round and round' and a 'silver-green skirt,' whilst Goneril will be wearing an asymmetrical dress of 'Yellow and Purple' teamed with a 'green skirt' and elements of red.¹⁷² The colours of Goneril's ensemble are particularly striking, the red and yellow recalling long established associations with poison. Further signals of the shared corruption of the sisters are provided by the green which has been introduced into both costumes by the second act. The silver-green of Regan's skirt also recalling the snake-like characteristics Comyns-Carr sought to evoke in Terry's costume for Lady Macbeth.

¹⁷² Terry, letter to Nettleship, dated added by hand in pencil, 10th November 1892. Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/5.

A review of the production published in *The Colonies and India* in November of 1892, testifies to the successful realisation of Terry's plans, declaring 'Strong colouring goes with strong passions, and Goneril (Miss Dyas) is gorgeous in the third act in ruby and gold.'¹⁷³ The descriptions of Terry's costumes are equally illuminating, illustrating a development in colour palette similar to that which Terry had intended for Ophelia in 1878. In this instance Terry's costumes for Cordelia begin with 'a Greek-seeming arrangement of sea-green China crepe, trimmed with silver balls and pearls, a gold and silver circlet set on her flowing hair.' Garments worn by a princess secure in her position at court, and confident of her father's love. Cordelia's new status as an innocent exile is marked by the exchange of the first gown for one of '[...] of white crepe, cut square at the throat and embroidered in gold' worn with a 'cloak of pale yellow silk, worked with a quaint old pattern in gold' (Figure 4.84). By the tragic conclusion of the play, however, the impending death of Cordelia is signaled by garments which, as the description implies, foreshadow the mourning that is to come. The actress appeared 'shrouded in grey draperies, and her head half hidden in a picturesque veil.'¹⁷⁴

Terry's interventions regarding colour on the stage did not, however, only relate to mood. Practical considerations also shaped her choices and lighting was a factor that needed to be taken into account. As the actress recalled, 'One has heart breaking disappointments in colours, such as I had with my hyacinth-coloured dress in "Becket" which the lights turned an uninteresting drab grey.'¹⁷⁵ Lighting effects could also be exploited however and this is apparent in the annotation Terry made on an 1888 prompt copy for *The Amber*

¹⁷³ "King Lear," *The Colonies and India*, 19 November 1892: 28.

¹⁷⁴ "King Lear," *The Colonies and India*, 19 November 1892: 28.

¹⁷⁵ Ellen Terry, "Some Ideas on Stage Decoration," 294.

Heart, in which she noted ‘change light slowly to blue (keeping white floats on – shock them).’¹⁷⁶

The actress was also aware of the importance of visual harmony on the ‘pictorial stage’ for which Lyceum Company production had become renowned.¹⁷⁷ An instance of such an intervention can be seen in a letter to Nettleship in 1895. Writing at ‘one o’clock in the morning,’ Terry asks her ‘Sweet Little Nettle’ to ‘run up a new dress for ‘Miss Gibson’ for tonight’s wear in *The Corsican Brothers*.’ Terry enclosed a sample of the required material within her letter (now lost) to illustrate her point, and explained that the current dress was much ‘too funereal’ and that there was ‘already white satin dress on the stage so that won’t do.’¹⁷⁸ Both the timing of the note and informality of the greeting, indicate that Terry had implicit trust in Nettleship’s ability to fulfil the commission and that this was not the first such last minute demand the dressmaker had received.

Terry’s descriptions of her costumes also make apparent the degree to which colour influenced her approach to performance. When, in 1902, Terry was asked by a costume designer ‘to play Mrs. Page, in “The Merry Wives of Windsor” in black panne velvet!,’ the actress protested that ‘Rollicking, farcical comedy would be impossible in such a dress’ and turned to her daughter, Edith Craig, for assistance.¹⁷⁹ Craig had already proven her ability as a costumier, producing several garments for Lyceum productions, and, with

¹⁷⁶ This annotation has been added to a prompt copy printed in 1888. This is not Terry’s original prompt copy, as pencil annotation in her own hand records that the play was “acted for the first time, at a morning performance, 7 June 87, at the Lyceum Theatre, London.” Further annotation on the following pages includes further notes about lighting changes. Prompt copy of Alfred C. Calmour, Alfred C. *The Amber Heart: A Poetic Fancy in Three Acts* (London: W.S. Johnson, 1888). 36-7. Garrick Collection, London.

¹⁷⁷ This aspect of Lyceum productions was referred to in Chapters 3 and will be discussed further in Chapter 6. Martin Meisel has made a particular study of Irving’s ‘pictorial approach’ to stage design, published in Martin Meisel, ‘Irving and the Artists,’ *Realisations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) 402-432.

¹⁷⁸ Terry, Letter to Nettleship, ca.1895. Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/5.

¹⁷⁹ Terry was still working at the Lyceum Company at this point, and had obtained Irving’s permission to appear in the production at His Majesty’s Theatre. She discusses this arrangement in her autobiography. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 323.

Terry's help, had established her own premises at Number 13, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden in circa 1900.¹⁸⁰ Craig designed both garments and accessories for Terry to wear in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and, as Terry stated, 'I know better than anyone how much the flame coloured dress I eventually wore helped me in Mrs. Page. Reds and yellows for comedy!'¹⁸¹ At least one dress and three caps survive and provide a sense of the bold colours which are absent from the black and white photographs of Terry in the role [FIGURE 4.86, 4.87, 4.88 and 4.89].¹⁸² The success of Craig's efforts can be seen in Terry's subsequent observation that 'Edy has real genius for dresses for the stage.' As the actress explained, 'My dress for Mrs. Page was such a *real* thing—it helped me enormously—and I was never more grateful for my daughter's gift than when I played Mrs. Page.'¹⁸³

Terry's experienced comparable problems with the costumes suggested for the 1906 production of *A Winter's Tale* at His Majesty's Theatre, complaining that,

For the trial scene in "A Winter's Tale" the artist designed a dress of heavy purple cloth for Hermione, which, whatever it may have been as a dress, was quite unexpressive of the situation [...] How play the scene in a matronly, respectable, prosperous, amethyst coloured dress? Finally I wore draperies of white tableau-net, which I think well conveyed on the

¹⁸⁰ Terry records several instances upon which Craig assisted with costumes in Lyceum productions. This include a scarf Craig created for Irving to add to his costume as Shylock. Terry, *The Story of my Life*, 187-188. The turning point in Craig's career as a costumier appears to have been the 1899 production of *Robespierre*, for which she was asked by Irving to make a large number of the costumes. Craig's involvement in the production was recorded in the press. "Robespierre," *The Era*, Saturday, April 22, 1899, Issue 3161. Katharine Cockin has also written extensively about Craig and her work with the theatre, see particularly Katharine Cockin, *Edith Craig (1869-1947): Dramatic Lives* (London: Cassell, 1998) 40-2.

¹⁸¹ Ellen Terry, "Stage Decoration," *The Windsor Magazine* (S.S.McClure Company, United State of America, 1911) 89.

¹⁸² One of the three surviving caps is in the Museum of London collection, Museum Number 53.94/1 and 2. The dress and the other two caps are in the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, *Mistress Page, Merry Wives of Windsor*, SMA.TC.113a-c, 1118838.1-3 and SMA.TC.233, 1118958.

¹⁸³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 323.

one side Hermione's physical weakness, on the other her stainless purity.¹⁸⁴

The 'draperies of white tableau net' were again designed by Terry's daughter, and survive in the collection at Smallhythe. The dress, which had wide hanging sleeves, with weights at the cuffs, is formed from over lapping layers of net [FIGURE 4.90].¹⁸⁵ Surviving photographs of a fifty-nine-year-old Terry in the costume show that these layers of net fell in flattering soft folds across the body, running in wide bands from the shoulder to hem, where the dress extends into a point at the rear [FIGURE 4.91]. Terry had 'a very firm belief' in Craig's talents and her daughter's status as a woman who has '[...] shown again and again that she can design and make clothes for the stage that are both lovely and effective.' The actress employed her daughter to design many of the garments she wore after leaving the Lyceum and in her autobiography, Terry declared that,

In all my most successful stage dresses lately she has had a hand, and if I had anything to do with a national theatre, I should, without prejudice, put her in charge of the wardrobe at once!¹⁸⁶

As this section has demonstrated, Terry played a leading role in the design and creation of her costumes. She attached particular importance to colour and movement when developing designs for garments. The degree to which Terry valued, and was willing to acknowledge, the formative role that leading artists had played in shaping her approach to design has also become apparent. Equally, Terry clearly had respect for, and recognised, the key contribution specialists in costume design and making, such as Comyns-Carr and Nettleship, made to the process of creation. The core elements of

¹⁸⁴ Ellen Terry, "Some Ideas on Stage Decoration," 293.

¹⁸⁵ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Hermione, *Winters Tale*, SMA.COST.150b, 1118881.

¹⁸⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 84-85.

Terry's aesthetic and recurring styles introduced here, will be explored further in Chapter 6, which will explore the manner in which the actress's style evolved over the course of her career. First however, the focus will turn to how and why so many of Terry's costumes survived, and the shift which has occurred in the purpose and identity of these garments as a result of their transition from the Lyceum stage to the museum store.



Figure 4.86 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.9 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax131327.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.87 - Cap worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal photograph by the author. 3 June 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.233 [1118958].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.88 - Tunic, part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal photograph by the author. 26 July 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.113a [1118838.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.89 - Underdress, part of a costume worn by Ellen Terry as Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1903. Personal photograph by the author. 26 July 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.113b [1118838.2].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.90 - Costume worn by Ellen Terry as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906. Personal photograph by the author. 5 March 2013. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.156 [1118881].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 4.91 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.1 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:514-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Conclusion

This chapter has validated the use of the term 'costume' when referring to dress used specifically on the stage and has established theatre costume as a distinct category of dress. It has also demonstrated the valuable evidence that can be obtained through a close analysis of these unique garments. Using Terry's costumes as case studies, it has begun to address the challenges such garments, which are often damaged through wear, deliberate intervention, or modified for multiple wearers and productions, present for researchers.

As this chapter recognises and Terry's costumes reveal, the costumes which survive are not always those created for the 'original' run of a production, even if they are exact replicas of the 'original' garments. They may also have been worn by several different performers. This chapter has illustrated how a close analysis of surviving costumes can offer crucial evidence through which to address concerns about 'authenticity' that may result from these complex histories. Evidence of wear, though it cannot be taken as definitive evidence of a link to the 'original' production, can, for instance, provide an indication of the manner and extent to which a costume was used. Similarly, measurements taken from extant costumes, can also provide a route through which to suggest, or question, a link to specific performers.

As has been made apparent, theatrical costumes have the ability to accumulate multiple and complex 'identities,' and a layered, rather than single, history. The criteria upon which their 'authenticity' and 'historical significance' is assessed must therefore extend beyond conclusive evidence of their use in the 'original' production, to address the multiple narratives present within historic stage costume. With this aim in view, Chapter 5 will examine routes through which it becomes possible to interpret and articulate the complex 'biographies' of garments whose life cycle commonly includes re-use, re-fashioning, and re-definition, both on, and off, the stage.

**‘DRESSING THE PART:’ ELLEN
TERRY (1847-1928) – TOWARDS A
METHODOLOGY FOR ANALYSING
HISTORIC THEATRE COSTUME**

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CHAPTER 5 – COSTUME: A ‘CARRIER OF IDENTITY AND MEMORY’

Introduction

This chapter uses the collection of costumes worn by Terry to explore the complex ‘biographies’ which historic theatre costumes have the potential to accumulate, and the degree to which these ‘biographies’ can evolve over time. It analyses the significance and implications of their transition from their original context and purpose as dynamic stage costumes to their current status as static museum objects and considers the role that context plays in shaping the ‘meaning’ and ‘identities’ attributed to these garments.

This discussion takes Hodgdon’s suggestion that costumes have the ability to act as a material ‘connection’ between performers and performances, becoming a ‘carrier of memory’ for both audiences and performers as its starting point.¹ Building upon Hodgdon’s work, it will consider the influential part that the wearer(s) of these costumes play in shaping their ‘biographies’ and the degree to which this intimate connection between costume and wearer results, as Barbieri has suggested, in the garment becoming a ‘re-embodiment’ of the individual(s) who have worn it.²

Engaging with the theoretical and methodological approaches proposed by Barbieri, Hodgdon, Pearce and Roach, discussed in Chapter 2, this chapter also interrogates the role of costume as a ‘carrier of memory.’³ It draws upon their work to argue that historic theatre costumes can come to function as a ‘surrogate’ for lost performers and productions and considers the significance of this potential. It concludes by presenting a biographical

¹ Hodgdon, “Shopping in the Archives,” 160-1.

² Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 295.

³ It will draw specifically upon Roach’s discussions of ‘effigies’ in Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36 and *It*, 46-7 and Pearce’s explorations of ‘chains of meanings’ in Pearce, “Objects as meaning; or narrating the past,” 19-29.

based methodology, founded upon the work of Kopytoff and Pearce, through which to analyse and articulate the complex biographies which historic theatre costumes have the potential to accumulate and the ‘chains of meaning’ within which they become enmeshed.⁴

The foundations for this discussion will be laid by first considering the extent to which the practical and narrative function of costume as a signifier of character works in harmony with, and has the potential to be overshadowed by, the ‘character’ of the performer: not only during the original production, but also throughout the ‘afterlife’ of the costume.

5.1 Carrying and Communicating Identity

Costume as a signifier of character

In theatre productions costumes are generally required to establish the temporal, geographical and historical setting and mood of the production. The costumes of individual performers also frequently provide a visual signal of their character’s dramatic significance within the production. They may also express something of their wearer’s inner nature. Any analysis of the character, or indeed the dramatic significance, suggested by a specific stage costume must, however, take into account the personal off-stage identity of the original wearer (where known) and allow for the potential impact this has had, on the design of their on-stage garments. As case studies in Chapter 4 demonstrated, actors can have a significant influence over the creation of their theatrical costumes. Some performers, Terry included, play an active role in the design process, with the actor’s personal preferences informing decisions regarding the cut, colour and construction of

⁴ Kopytoff, “The cultural biography of things,” 64-91 and Pearce, “Objects as meaning; or narrating the past,” 19-29.

their costumes. Costumes can therefore play a dual role, expressing not only the character being performed on stage by the wearer, but also communicating elements of their 'private' off-stage persona.

In certain instances the connection between a costume and the original wearer is so powerful that, as Stallybrass and Jones and Hodgdon have suggested, theatrical costumes become imbued with both the physicality and personality of their original wearer. Such costumes thus become 'carriers of identity' with the potential to preserve and re-create a shared memory of both the original wearer and their performance.⁵ This chapter will consequently consider the significance of a theatrical costume's ability to function as a 'carrier of identity' and assess the central part this facility plays in shaping the 'biography' of specific theatrical costumes. The 'chains of meaning' within which theatrical costumes become enmeshed in the course of their 'life cycle' will also play a central part in this discussion, particularly with regard to perceptions surrounding the historical significance of these garments.⁶

Costume, character or performer?

Views expressed by Terry in her personal writing, and in interviews, clarify the degree to which the actress felt costume could, and should, express the character being portrayed.

In 1892, Henry How recorded that,

⁵ Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 177.

⁶ Susan Pearce, "Objects as meaning; or narrating the past," *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994) 19-29.

Miss Terry thinks - and rightly too - that a dress should do much to indicate the character of the woman who is wearing it, as witness the dress she wears as *Lady Macbeth*, which looks like a coiling snake.⁷

Two years later Ethel Mackenzie McKenna also remarked upon Terry's '[...] strong theories on the subject of wherewithal she shall be clothed.' As McKenna explained, Terry felt that '[...]the character should find expression in the costume' and therefore '[...] bestow[ed] endless thought upon the introduction of apparent trifles, notes in harmony with the individuality of the woman she portray[ed]...'.⁸ When playing Margerite in *Faust* (1885) for instance, Terry learned to spin and although, as she confessed '[Her] thread always broke, and at last [she] had to "fake" [her] spinning to a certain extent,' she was confident that she 'worked [her] wheel right, and gave an impression that [she] could spin [her] pound of thread a day with the best.'⁹

Terry also took pains to encourage designers to consider the physical body of the performer when creating their designs. Declaring,

It is no use putting the right dress on the wrong actor or actress. The physical appearance of the person who is going to wear the dress must be borne in mind; so must the dramatic situation in which it is to be worn. Besides realising the character of the period to which they belong, the

⁷ Henry How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, *The Strand Magazine* (London: George Newnes Ltd, November 1892), 501. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box THM/117-8, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

⁸ Ethel Mackenzie McKenna, "Ellen Terry," *McClure's Magazine* (New York: S.S. McClure, Limited, 1894), 459.

⁹ Terry describes this training in her autobiography, noting that her instructor was 'Mr. Albert Fleming, who, at the suggestion of Ruskin, had recently revived hand-spinning and hand-weaving in the North of England.' Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 243.

dresses must be appropriate to the emotions of the play, and must have a beauty relative *to each other* as well as an individual excellence.¹⁰

Writing on the same theme in 1891, Wilde observed that even in most ‘archaeologically correct costume,’ the body of the performer had the potential to mar the intended effect. On these grounds he advised:

[...] there should be far more dress rehearsals than there are now. Actors such as Mr. Forbes-Robertson, Mr. Conway, Mr. George Alexander, and others, not to mention older artists, can move with ease and elegance in the attire of any century; but there are not a few who seem dreadfully embarrassed about their hands if they have no side pockets, and who always wear their dresses as if they were costumes. Costumes, of course, they are to the designer; but dresses they should be to those that wear them.¹¹

Terry’s description of Charles Kean’s 1856 production of *The Winter’s Tale*, in which she made her stage debut, provides an instance of this incongruity. Playbills for the production emphasise the extensive research undertaken by the designers. Kean published his own ‘book of the play’ with ‘historical and explanatory notes.’¹² The production was set partly in ‘Sicilia [and] sometimes in Bithynia (Bohemia)’ and, as Terry recalled, the

¹⁰ Ellen Terry, “Stage Decoration,” *The Windsor Magazine* (Copyright by S.S. McClure Company in the United State of America, 1911)75.

¹¹ Oscar Wilde, *Intentions: The Decay of Lying. Pen, Pencil, and Poison, The Critic As Artist, The Truth of Masks*, (London: Osgood, 1891) Web. n.p.

¹² On playbills promoting the production, for instance, it notes that in Act 2, Scene 3 (a room in the palace) ‘The designs of the tapestries [...] are taken from some of the richest compositions on cases discovered in the South of Italy.’ Playbill, Monday 2nd June 1856, Production Box, Princess Theatre, 1856, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Charles Kean reaffirmed the historical authenticity of the production by publishing his own ‘book of the play’ accompanied by detailed historical notes. Charles Kean, and William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare’s Play of The Winter’s Tale, Arranged for Representation at the Princess’s Theatre, with Historical and Explanatory Notes* (London: John K. Chapman and Co, 1856).

‘designs of the dresses were purely classic.’¹³ In spite of this careful research however, Terry notes that ‘[...] then, as now, actors and actresses seemed unable to keep their own period and their own individuality out of the clothes directly they got them on their backs. In some cases the original design was quite swamped.’¹⁴



Figure 5.1 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup*, Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.2 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:320-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

In 1881 Terry played the role of Camma in *The Cup*, a play inspired by Lord Alfred Tennyson’s (1809-1892) poem, *The Cup: A Tragedy*. The production sought to recreate the imagined classical Greek setting of the original verse [FIGURE 5.1]. Reviews of Terry’s performance reveal her swift adaptation to these classical costumes, with one

¹³ Playbill, Monday 2nd June 1856, Production Box, Princess Theatre, 1856, Victoria and Albert Museum, London and Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14.

¹⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14.

critic declaring that Terry '[wore] the Greek costume as naturally as though she had been born to it.'¹⁵ Terry's ability to appear at ease in her costume can be attributed in part to her self-proclaimed preference for garments cut in this style.¹⁶ As Chapter 3 showed however, Terry had been taught to adapt her movements to the costumes and the mood of the play, and the 'natural' and 'graceful' movement for which the actress was so frequently praised were the result of this professional training.¹⁷ Terry, though not the only actress appearing in classical robes during this period, was one of the pioneers of this form of stage costume. Godwin, who had designed Terry's costumes for *The Cup*, also played an important part in promoting 'archaeologically correct' dress on the stage, not least through the 'Pastoral Plays' which he produced in collaboration with Lady Archibald Campbell (1847-1923).¹⁸ Further evidence that classical dress was becoming established as the preferred costume for certain Shakespearean productions can be found in Lillie Langtry's decision to make her 1882 stage debut as Rosalind in *As You Like It* wearing garments in this style [FIGURE 5.2]. Langtry's classically inspired costume also capitalised on her status within the Aesthetic movement as an embodiment of the ideal 'Grecian' beauty.¹⁹ The American actress, Mary Anderson (1859-1940) was, like Terry,

¹⁵ "Our Biographies: Being brief sketches of the lives of Managers, Authors, Actors and Actresses' No. XV. Ellen Terry,' Press cutting, ca.1881, Ruth Canton Album: 'Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883', Garrick Club, London, n.p.

¹⁶ Terry's personal dress and remarks in interviews are testaments to her preference for dress in the 'Japanese' and 'Greek' style. See, for instance, Ellen Terry, "Stage Decoration," 88.

¹⁷ As Chapter 3 discussed Terry received training in movement from figures such as the dancing master Oscar Bryn (fl.1856) from an early age. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 20-21.

¹⁸ Godwin took chief responsibility for designing and directing these open air performances. Designs for the costumes were founded upon painstaking research and key members of the Aesthetic movement appeared in, and watched the productions. For a full, illustrated discussion of Godwin's involvement in these productions and in designing for the theatre, see Fanny Baldwin 'Godwin and Design for the Theatre,' *E.W. Godwin: Aesthetic Movement Architect and Designer*, eds. E W. Godwin, Susan W. Soros, and Catherine Arbuthnott (New Haven: Yale University Press published for the Bard Graduate Center Studies in the Decorative Arts, New York, 1999) 313-353.

¹⁹ Oscar Wilde played an important role in establishing Langtry's status as a Greek Beauty, presenting her as the muse who inspired poems such as his work, *The New Helen*, in 1879 and describing of Langtry as like a 'Greek Bronze' and See, for instance, the commentary on 'The New Helen' in Oscar Wilde et al. *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 272 and also interviews with Wilde quoted in Oscar Wilde, Matthew Hofer, and Gary Scharnhorst, *Oscar Wilde in America: The Interviews* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 93.

determined to abandon ‘[...] the velvet gowns, heels, wigs and stays commonly worn in classical roles.’ She therefore made her London debut as Parthenia in *Ingomar*, in 1883, wearing ‘simple flowing draperies,’ the empire line cut and cross over style bodice of her costume deliberately referencing ‘classical dress.’²⁰ [FIGURE 5.3] Similarly, when returning to London in 1887, to perform in a production of *The Winter’s Tale* four years later, in 1887, Anderson again chose to wear ‘authentic’ classical robes.²¹ [FIGURE 5.4]



Figure 5.2 - Henry Frederick Van Der Wedye. Mary Anderson as Panthenia in *Ingomar*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1883, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 9.6 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.140:33-2007.

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²⁰ Mary Anderson De Navarro, *A Few Memories* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1896) 117-9. Lucy Oakley discusses Anderson’s career in more detail in her article Lucy Oakley, ‘The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais’ Portia,’ *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 16, (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1982), 189-191.

²¹ Anderson appeared as both Hermione and Perdita in production of *The Winters Tale* in 1887. She sought advice from ‘F.D.Millet, Alma Tadema, both painters of classicising subjects’ and also E.A.Abbey ‘who collected period clothes and books on costume history’ regarding the ‘classical’ costumes. Mary Anderson De Navarro, *A Few Memories* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1896) 148.



Figure 5.3 - W&D Downey. Lillie Langtry as Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Imperial Theatre, 1886, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.3 x 10cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.143:309-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.4 - Henry Frederick Van Der Wedye. Mary Anderson as Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.9 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.140:130-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

As Chapter 6 will discuss, the 1881 production of *The Cup* was staged at the peak of the Aesthetic movement and the fact that classical garments were promoted as the form of dress most ideally suited to display the beauty of the natural form, may have contributed to the success of the costumes.²² Whilst the short term impact of the production did owe much to the rise of the Aesthetic movement, the play's impact extended beyond 1881. Specific evidence of the long term significance of the Lyceum production can be found in George Du Maurier's 1894 novel *Trilby* in which he makes a direct comparison between his heroine's costume and general appearance, and Terry's earlier performance as 'the priestess of Artemis in the late laureate's play, *The Cup*.²³ Du Maurier's confidence that his reference to a play staged 13 years before his book was published, would be understood by his readers, indicates the enduring presence of this production within public consciousness.

Though clearly attaching great importance to effective and appropriate costume, Terry was also willing to acknowledge that the quality of the performance could, occasionally, overcome even the most absurd garments. To support her argument, Terry presented the example of Mrs. Charles Kean [née Ellen Tree], an actress who, as Chapter 3 showed, had a formative influence on her career. Ellen Kean was, Terry declared, a performer who '[...] possessed the personality and force to chain the attention and indelibly imprint her rendering of a part on the imagination.'²⁴ Commenting specifically on the costume Ellen Kean wore as Hermione in the 1856 production of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, Terry explained:

²² See, for example, E.W.Godwin, *Dress, and Its Relation to Health and Climate* (London: W. Clowes, 1884) 75 and "Letters from Artists on Ladies Dress," *The Strand Magazine*, ed. George Newnes (London: George Newnes, 1891): 162-173.

²³ George Du Maurier, *Trilby* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 209.

²⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14.

No matter what the character that Mrs. Kean was assuming, she always used to wear her hair drawn flat over her forehead and twisted tight round her ears in a kind of circular sweep—such as the old writing-masters used to make when they attempted an extra grand flourish. And then the amount of petticoats she wore! Even as Hermione she was always bunched out by layer upon layer of petticoats, in defiance of the fact that classical parts should not be dressed in a superfluity of raiment.²⁵

Fortunately Ellen Kean's talent was able to overcome the incongruity of her costumes and even '[...] if the petticoats were full of starch, the voice was full of pathos—and the dignity, simplicity, and womanliness of Mrs. Charles Kean's Hermione could not have been marred by a far more grotesque costume.'²⁶ [FIGURE 5.5]



Figure 5.5 - Photographer Unknown. Ellen Kean (née Tree) as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, Princess Theatre, ca. 1856, Sepia photograph on paper. 18.8 x 12.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.139:47-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14.

²⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 14.

Unlike Ellen Kean, Terry sought to achieve a balance between her individual taste in dress and the aesthetic demands of the stage, even, on occasion, sacrificing personal comfort for visual and dramatic effect. Her partnership with her designer, Comyns-Carr, frequently allowed Terry to appear in the ‘sinuous, flowing garments’ she preferred but, as Cumming stresses, the actress ensured that such costumes were, ‘a natural extension of her art, not a superimposition upon it.’²⁷ Indeed, as Terry affirmed, even though ‘[her] preference [was] for a loose, diaphanous dress’ which she always felt ‘happy in,’ when in 1892 she played Queen Katherine in *Henry VIII*, she paid her ‘[...] tribute to archaeology in those awful stays, and added thick brocade dresses with fur sleeves of tremendous weight.’²⁸

Personality vs. Performance

With Terry’s growing success, however, came the constant threat that Terry’s ‘celebrity’ and past stage roles would overshadow her current performance. As Melville observed ‘The parts Ellen played were very much identified with her.’²⁹ Her statement echoes a review of Terry’s performance as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart* by Sir Alfred Calmour which declared ‘Ellaline is Miss Ellen Terry, and Miss Ellen Terry is Ellaline.’³⁰ Similarly, McKenna praised the manner in which ‘Every part [Terry] plays, she imbues with her own irresistible personality.’³¹ Though clearly intended as a compliment,

²⁷ Cumming, ‘Ellen Terry: An Aesthetic Actress and her Costumes,’ 73.

²⁸ Ellen Terry, “Stage Decoration,” 88.

²⁹ Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 130.

³⁰ This production was described as ‘a poetical fantasy in three acts’ and was set in a mythical ‘medieval’ period. Jeffrey Richards provides a brief outline of the production in *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, 53.54. The review appears in an album with the Garrick Club Collection, see Press cutting, dated by hand 29 December 1888, Ruth Canton Album: ‘Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1884-1892’, Garrick Club, London, n.p.

³¹ McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” 457-465.

McKenna's remark highlights the extent to which the audience came to see 'Terry' as 'celebrity' rather than the role being performed or indeed the costume in which the actress appeared. Many reviews of Lyceum productions provide instances of this phenomena. The confusion and potential contradiction between 'celebrity identity' and 'stage character' were a particular problem on opening nights when Terry's nerves often impacted on her performance.³² The impact of the interconnection between the 'on' and 'off-stage' elements of her identity on perceptions of Terry, is apparent in a review of response to *Faust* from December of 1885. The writer argues that

Two things mitigated against its [*Faust's*] success. First the natural and inevitable nervousness of the actress; second, the equally natural and inevitable reception of Miss Ellen Terry. She looked better now, and to the end, than any Margaret who has ever appeared on the English stage. She well and truly realised Mephisto's subsequent description [...] But the actress was unnerved - she was bound to be Miss Terry to an enthusiastic house. She could not recover Margaret in two short lines. All ideas of church, confession, surprise, innocence, and simplicity vanished. It was Ellen Terry received with enthusiasm at the expense of the play.³³

Chapter 3 addressed the manner in which Terry's celebrity identity, in particular her reputation for 'charm' and 'grace' placed limitations on the roles deemed suitable for, and suited to, the actress. The controversy provoked by Terry's efforts to transgress such

³² Terry openly admitted her dread of opening nights in her autobiography confessing that '[...] even now, after fifty years of stage-life, I never play a new part without being overcome by a terrible nervousness and a torturing dread of forgetting my lines. Every nerve in my body seems to be dancing an independent jig on its own account.' Terry, *Story of My Life*, 40. W.G. Robertson also remarked upon Terry's nerves, and recalled Terry's premonition, subsequently proved correct, that she would 'dry up-dead' on the opening night of *Henry VIII*. W.G. Robertson, *Time Was*, 152.

³³ Press cutting, 19 December 1885, Ruth Canton Album: 'Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1884-1892', Garrick Club, London, n.p.

boundaries can be seen in reviews of Terry's performance as the murderous Lady Macbeth in 1888, with critics declaring that,

Despite the great charm of Miss Terry's manner, or perhaps in consequence of it, we must confess that there is something almost shocking in suggestions of cold-blooded murder from such lips as hers, and even in her display of blind affection for her sinister looking lord and this impression is deepened in the murder scene, where, snatching the dagger from Macbeth's faltering hand, she goes to complete his ghastly work.³⁴

Terry's decision, in her fifties, to cast herself as Hjordis, the ruthless and passionate protagonist of Henrik Ibsen's play *The Vikings at Helgeland* in 1903, proved equally contentious. Indeed, one reviewer proclaimed:

She looks every inch a Viking's bride, but we do not think she is at her best as a virago. Her womanly wiles, her rippling laughter, her sense of fun have no proper chance of employment. Nor is she yet by any means perfect in her words.³⁵

Chapter 3 touched upon the significant part which Terry's costume played in expressing and reinforcing the identity adopted by the actress in this production, the first staged under her own management at the Imperial Theatre. Chapter 6 will build upon these discussions to examine the motivations behind Terry's resolution to mark her break from the Lyceum and to establish her position as an independent actor/manager by staging such a controversial, and confrontational play.

³⁴ Press cutting, ca. December 1888, Ruth Canton Album: 'Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1884-1892', Garrick Club, London, n.p.

³⁵ "A review of *The Viking at Helgeland*," *The Times*, London, 16 April 1903.

Carriers of Identity and Memory

Chapter 4 showed how examining a theatrical costume at first hand makes a researcher increasingly aware of the body which once inhabited the garments. The real people who inhabited theatrical costumes often develop a celebrated association with the surviving garments and in such cases the original wearer shapes not only the physical form of the costume, but also its historical identity. Extant theatrical costumes have often outlived their original purpose and as they are passed from one production, or wearer, to another, they acquire an altered appearance, a new meaning and a different owner, accruing, as they do so, their own complex ‘identities’ or, as Kopytoff argued, ‘biographies.’ Any analysis of theatrical costume must therefore take into account not only the provenance and physical form of the surviving garment but also the personality, and persona, of the original wearer and subsequent wearers, where this information is known. As Chapter 4 illustrated, information about the original wearer(s) can illuminate elements of the construction and design, which might otherwise remain obscure. It can also, as this chapter will discuss, provide an insight into why certain costumes are preserved, whilst others are re-used, re-cycled and, ultimately, discarded.

Hodgdon’s work on this theme offers further insights into the qualities which single out the costumes which are selected for preservation. She has focussed on the part that certain theatrical costumes can play in creating connections between performers and performance. In its most basic form, this link might be achieved through the self-conscious referencing of a past costume.³⁶ As she shows however, where an ‘original’

³⁶ Hodgdon cites the clear parallels which exist between the dress worn by Terry as Lady Macbeth and the costume Vivien Leigh (1913-1967) wore in the 1955 Royal Shakespeare Company production. As she notes ‘Vivien Leigh’s costume tangibly echoes Terry’s’ with clear parallels evident in the colour, silhouette, and even accessories, which form part of the two costumes. Preparatory designs and photographs of Leigh in the role survive in the Royal Shakespeare Company Collections, together with the costumes themselves. Images of this source material can be found online. See: “Dress and cloak worn by Vivien Leigh as Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth*, 1955,” *What’s in the Collection?* Royal Shakespeare Company [n.d.] and “Vivien

costume survives, it has the potential to function as an actual material connection between performers. Evidence that Terry shared this view, can be found in her desire to assemble a private collection of theatrical ephemera which both documented her own professional career and established a connection between her performances and those of her illustrious predecessors. She also drew inspiration from costumes connected with respected performers during her performances and, when playing Lady Macbeth, kept a pair of the shoes, reputedly worn by Sarah Siddons in the same role, in her dressing room at the Lyceum Theatre.

Terry emphasises the fact that the shoes, given to her by ‘an actress’ who she does not name, were sent ‘not to wear, but to keep with [her].’³⁷ As Hodgdon shows however, surviving costumes do not simply offer an important psychological link with past productions and actors. When worn again they can provide a direct material connection between past and present. Hodgdon selects a ‘[...] rat coloured cardigan with pockets, an everyday sort of garment, an index of practicality – less a costume than *clothes*,’ as a case study through which to explore this function.³⁸ Translated from clothing to theatrical costume by the act of performance, the significance of this specific cardigan lies in the fact that it was originally worn by Peggy Ashcroft (1907-1991) when playing the Countess of Rossillion in the 1982 Royal Shakespeare Company production of *All’s Well that Ends Well* (her last Shakespearean role). By 1999, the cardigan had been given a

Leigh as Lady Macbeth 1955,” *Do the Clothes make the (Wo)man?*, Royal Shakespeare Company [n.d]. Leigh was not the only actress whose Lady Macbeth dress echoed the design of Terry’s ‘Beetlewing Dress.’ Surviving illustrations and photographs indicate that the costumes worn by Terry in the role also clearly informed the designs selected for the dresses worn by Mrs Patrick Campbell when performing the part in 1898. This can be seen in illustrations featured in *The Sketch*, September 28 1898, 438.

³⁷ This remark was made by Terry in a letter sent to the critic Clement Scott in 1888. Clement Scott, quoted in Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in our Time*, 259. Proof that Terry did actually keep the shoes in her dressing room can be found in the title of an interview conducted with Terry at the time of the original production. As noted in Chapter 4, a copy of this interview, entitled ‘How I sketched Mrs. Siddon’s Shoes, A visit to Miss Ellen Terry’s Dressing Room’ is bound within Terry’s copy of *Macbeth*, National Trust Inventory Number 3119105. Slocombe, *Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum*, 10.

³⁸ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 160.

name 'The Peggy' and become part of 'material memory system' in which, as Hodgdon explains, performers, resurrected and wore the garment, simultaneously referencing the previous wearers and productions, and adding to its history.³⁹

Hodgdon suggests that when a costume '[...]' moves through successive performances it figures in a system of give and take that resembles gift giving.' As a consequence of this process the original 'gift' (costume) is transformed, and 'carries new meanings, a new dynamic.'⁴⁰

Stallybrass and Jones touched upon comparable ideas during their research into the range of 'clothing' and 'costumes' used for performance during the Renaissance. Looking specifically at Medieval Guild Theatre, for instance, they examined accounts which documented payments made for the repair and hire of these costumes between 1563-4. Within this material they discovered that the costumes were regularly referred to using the name of the character they represented, with payments recorded for 'Ihesus sleues' or 'a Coate for god.' Such terminology, they argued, suggested '[...]' the ability of the clothes to absorb the very identity of the actors.'⁴¹

As they discuss, clothes, and by extension costumes, represented 'an enormous investment.' Indeed, the value of these garments was such that many theatrical companies were '[...]' dependent upon the accumulation and dispersal of costume.'⁴² The theatre therefore played an important role in the clothing trade, buying and selling both new, and second hand, garments. Within theatrical companies therefore, performers frequently

³⁹ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 160-1. Though, as Hodgdon notes, the cardigan may have had 'an interim resurrection' she found definite evidence that it was worn by Estelle Kohler as Paulina in the 1999 production of *The Winter's Tale* and again by Alexandra Gilbreath (who played Hermione in the 1999 *Winter's Tale*) as Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew* in 2003.

⁴⁰ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 164.

⁴¹ Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 178-9.

⁴² Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 177.

revived old costumes or ‘took existing [second hand] clothing and “translated” them’ into a new role.⁴³ Although, as Jones and Stallybrass stress, it is clear that ‘new costumes’ were continually mixed with the ‘existing stock of clothes’ theatrical inventories repeatedly designate certain garments as ‘Tamberlaine’s coat with copper lace; Vortigern’s robes of rich taffeta’ or ‘Henry V’s velvet gown and his satin doublet embroidered with gold lace.’⁴⁴

Their analysis resonates with Amanda Vickery’s subsequent consideration of the ‘sentimental associations’ and ‘talismanic properties of material things’ in *The Gentleman’s Daughter* (2003).⁴⁵ As Stallybrass and Jones’ research demonstrates, it is not simply the financial value, but also the ‘talismanic properties’ with which certain costumes are perceived to be endowed, that establishes their enduring importance and ensures their preservation. Significantly for this thesis, Stallybrass and Jones suggest that it is precisely ‘because the costume can endure after a performance is ended that it can take a curious precedence over the actor, as if through the donning of a costume the actor puts on Christ, or Satan, or a Roman soldier, or whomever.’⁴⁶

In the case of ‘The Peggy’ the costume is clearly felt to be channelling the original wearer, participating in, to use Hodgdon’s words, ‘[...] a form of surrogation’ in which the costume is called upon to recapture and represent the power of the previous performance.⁴⁷ As Chapter 2 discussed, Hodgdon’s descriptions of this process of ‘surrogation’ resonate with Barbieri’s examination of a costume’s ability to function as a ‘substitute’ for the body of the performer.⁴⁸ Reading Hodgdon and Barbieri in conjunction

⁴³ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 183.

⁴⁴ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 182-3.

⁴⁵ Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2003), 23, 39.

⁴⁶ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 177.

⁴⁷ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 159.

⁴⁸ Barbieri, “Performativity and the historical body,” 297.

with Roach's theories surrounding 'effigies' and their connection with performance, offers a framework through which to analyse the status and power of 'resurrected' theatre costumes. Such garments, whether used in performance or mounted for display, take on the role of the 'effigy,' perpetuating 'memory' of the lost production, and literally, 'remembering,' the absent performer.⁴⁹ Through their participation in this act of 'surrogation' costumes become carriers of 'memory' and 'identity' with the ability to conjure up the 'ghosts,' not only of an interlinked cycle of performances, but also of specific performers.

This framework can be applied to analyse and explain the actress Sybil Thorndike's (1882-1976) description of the 'power' attributed to Terry's costumes. As Thorndike related in 1960:

Ellen's stage clothes became such a part of her that some magic seemed to belong to them. I know her daughter Edith Craig never liked them being cleaned, she said it spoilt them and the magic went out of them.⁵⁰

After her death, and during her lifetime, many of Terry's costumes were worn by other performers, including Thorndike, in 1921. Learning that Thorndike was to play Lady Macbeth at an important celebration in Paris, Edith Craig insisted that she borrow Terry's costumes for the role declaring, 'Oh, you must wear mother's dresses, beetle wing, the great cloak, sleepwalking blankets the lot. They'll play the part for you.'⁵¹ Thorndike, who eagerly agreed to the loan, was certain that the beetlewing dress, in particular, played a transformative role in her performance. Recalling the incident in 1960 she explained:

⁴⁹ Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36.

⁵⁰ Sybil Thorndike, Transcript of Audio Recording, Smallhythe Place, 1960. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

⁵¹ Edith Craig, quoted in Thorndike, Audio Recording.

[...] on those grand formal occasions I'm always terribly nervous, paralytic in fact. The moment I put on Ellen's dress, something happened, not a tremor, not a quake, I waltzed through the play on air. When it came to the banquet scene the fine American star lost himself, his nerve went. But the beetlewing dress came to the rescue. I wasn't a very hefty girl in those days but something pushed me from behind and I took hold of that huge man and I hurled him across the stage, whispering his words in his ear. And all was well again, afterwards he said to me 'Oh thank you my dear, I was lost, you saved me.' I said don't thank me that was Ellen Terry's dress, she pushed me on. That's what Ellen did to her dresses.⁵²

5.2 'Translating' costumes and transforming 'meaning'

The 'Significance' of 'Context'

Pearce, whose own theories are founded upon her distillation of Ferdinand de Saussure's work on the '*langue*' and Roland Barthes' discussions of semiotics, offers an additional framework through which to explore the multiple histories accumulated by many theatrical costumes. Using a military jacket as a case study, Pearce demonstrates that an object has the potential to be 'polysemantic,' acting 'as a signifier for much signification, with each one of which the meaning of *signe* [the object] changes.'⁵³ The jacket or '*signe*' is therefore viewed differently as perceptions of the event or period (in this instance the battle of Waterloo) in which it was originally used alter. As her analysis shows a *signe* will therefore also carry differing levels of both and emotional and historical significance for every viewer, each of whom will be interpret the garment slightly differently.

⁵² Thorndike, Audio Recording.

⁵³ Pearce, 'Objects as meaning; or narrating the past', 25.

By unpicking the complex histories and associations embodied by the jacket, Pearce is also able to shed light on what she terms ‘the power of “the actual object.”’ It lies, Pearce suggests, in the fact that unlike the researcher, curator, or independent viewer, ‘who must die,’ the object is able to ‘carry meaning’ because it bears ‘an “eternal” relationship to the receding past.’⁵⁴ In the case of a theatrical costume, the power of the garment can therefore be traced to its role as an intrinsic part of an unrecorded, ephemeral performance, which, whilst remembered, is eternally lost.

For Pearce the ‘meaning’ of any museum object is never fixed because all such items are part of an eternally growing and mutable ‘chain of meaning.’⁵⁵ As Hodgdon showed, historic theatrical costumes have the potential to become part of an evolving ‘chain of meaning’ in which they carry the identity and memories of a succession of performances and performers. The transfer of theatre costumes from their original performance context to a museum collection however, has a significant impact on the ‘meaning’ and ‘status’ of these garments. These privileged garments are deliberately removed from an established and continuous system of re-use and re-cycling and become static objects, representing the end of an established and frozen ‘chain of meaning.’ Such was the case with a pair of leather trousers worn by the actor David Tennant (b.1971) in 2000 when playing Romeo in the Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Romeo and Juliet* in 2000. Transferred to the Hire Wardrobe after the close of the production, they were reclaimed when Tennant rose to fame in the title role of BBC Television series, *Doctor Who*.⁵⁶ The trousers therefore form part of a ‘chain of meaning’ in which their identity

⁵⁴ Pearce, ‘Objects as meaning; or narrating the past’, 25.

⁵⁵ Pearce, ‘Objects as meaning; or narrating the past’, 28.

⁵⁶ As the Curator of the collection David Howells explained in 2008, the majority of costumes from productions are either re-used or transferred to the Hire Wardrobe, with only a small selection being retained for the Company’s archive collection. There is however potential for this process of ‘reclamation’ to occur when, as Howell’s phrased it, ‘an actor’s career develops unexpectedly.’ David Howells, Curator of the *Royal Shakespeare Company Collection*, Personal Interview, 20 March 2008. This process was discussed further in Veronica Isaac, ‘From Ellen Terry’s ‘Beetlewing Dress’ to David Tennant’s Leather Trousers:

shifted from a dynamic theatrical costume created for a specific role and wearer, to a generic garment available for public hire, to their current and potentially final iconic celebrity status as ‘David Tennant’s Leather trousers’ and, as such, a museum object with the potential to carry the identity of, and act as a surrogate for, their original wearer.

As the fate of Tennant’s costume shows, and Pearce’s work highlights, the context within which an item is used plays an important role in determining perceptions of its ‘meaning.’ Stallybrass and Jones have also investigated the manner in which context, in particular changing contexts, shape and re-shape the ‘character’ of a costume. Examining Henslowe’s 1598 inventories of the Admiral’s Men, they discovered that actors intermingled ‘[...] their own fabrications with the cast-off paraphernalia of courtiers and citizens.’ Performers therefore often acquired second hand, high quality aristocratic robes ‘faced with ermine’ or made from cloth of gold, but then intermixed these magnificent garments with other ‘costumes,’ faced and embroidered with the cheaper ‘copper lace’ that became specifically associated with the theatre during this period.⁵⁷ As Stallybrass and Jones observe, the previous ‘identity’ of these luxurious pieces of ‘clothing,’ which had formally been associated with and restricted to, royalty and members of the court, was ‘displaced’ through this ‘transmission’ into a theatrical space and they became ‘costumes,’ ‘dishonoured’ and ‘soiled’ by their circulation among ‘the meanest sort of men [sic].’⁵⁸ This process of ‘dislocation’ was not limited to secular clothes, and after the Reformation, Protestant churches rented out or sold the ornate Catholic vestments which they no longer required to actors and theatrical companies. Whilst, as Stallybrass and Jones note, church vestments had previously been used in the miracle plays, ‘[...] the

An Investigation of the Preservation and Presentation of Theatrical Costume in British Theatres and Museums” (University of Southampton, Unpublished MA Dissertation, 2008).

⁵⁷ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 190-1.

⁵⁸ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 190-1.

restaging of actual ecclesiastical garments upon the secular stage' had more significant implications, not least, the potential that a 'sacred garment from the theatre of God' might come to 'represent a "heathen" religion on the secular stage.'⁵⁹

Nance Oldfield: Professional, Political and Personal

The manner in which the 'identity' of a garment can be 'displaced' when 'translated' into a new theatrical context is exemplified by the shifting 'meaning' of the costumes worn by Terry when playing the title role of *Nance Oldfield*. This was a play inspired by the career of the seventeenth century actress Anne 'Nance' Oldfield (1683-1730) and Terry first performed the role at the Lyceum in 1891.⁶⁰ As she related in her autobiography, the production marked her 'first speculation in play-buying.' Having seen it acted, she 'thought [she] could do something with it' and when Irving refused to buy it, she purchased it instead. To Terry's evident satisfaction, the play was 'a great success' and she went on to play the role 'hundreds of times.'⁶¹ The significance of this role lies not however in the original Lyceum productions, but in the manner in which Terry's performance of, and association with, the character and costume of Nance Oldfield was exploited and re-interpreted after the actress left the Lyceum Company in 1902.

In 1909, seven years after leaving the Lyceum Company, Terry reappeared in the character of Nance Oldfield in a production of *A Pageant of Great Women* at the Scala Theatre, London.⁶² Written by Cicely Hamilton, the play was staged to raised awareness

⁵⁹ Stallybrass and Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 193.

⁶⁰ Oldfield was an extremely successful actress in both comic and tragic roles. She is amongst the actresses featured in Helen Brooks, *Actresses, Gender, and the Eighteenth-Century Stage: Playing Women*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

⁶¹ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 311.

⁶² Many leading actresses and theatrical figures, including Terry's sister Marion Terry, and her daughter Edith Craig, appeared in the first production, but during the tour local women were deliberately recruited to appear in the Pageant. Katharine Cockin discusses the significance of this production, and *The Pioneer Players* in Katharine Cockin, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

of, and funding for, women's enfranchisement. It had a significant impact not only in London, but also across the United Kingdom during the tour which followed.

Over fifty local women's suffrage activists performed the great women of the past appearing in groups: the saintly women, the rulers, the learned women, the artists, the heroic women and finally, the warriors. They gathered on stage, silently building up a powerful, visual body of evidence in the debate on women's enfranchisement between Woman and Prejudice, presided over by Justice.⁶³

As Chapter 2 noted, Terry's interaction with the suffrage movement has been explored by Cockin.⁶⁴ A key connection the actress had with the movement was through her involvement with *The Pioneer Players*. This theatrical company, formed from members of the Actresses' Franchise League, was established in 1911, and Terry's daughter Edith Craig was appointed as Honorary Managing Director. Whilst Terry did not remain actively involved with the society throughout its existence, she was appointed Honorary President of the Pioneer Players upon its inception in 1911 and retained her position until the company's dissolution in 1920. She also formed part of the advisory committee and played a leading part in some of the company's early productions.⁶⁵

Many of the figures who would later form part of *The Pioneer Players* were involved in the first production of a *Pageant of Great Women* in 1909. The figures who appeared in this original production at the Scala Theatre, London, included several famous actresses,

⁶³ Katharine Cockin, "Cicely Hamilton's warriors: dramatic reinventions of militancy in the British women's suffrage movement," *Women's History Review*, 14, Issue 304, (2005) 527.

⁶⁴ See, for instance, Katharine Cockin, *Women and Theatre in the Age of Suffrage* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000) and "Ellen Terry and Women's Suffrage Agitation", *Gender and Politics in the Age of Letter-writing 1750-2000*. Caroline Bland and Máire Cross eds. (London: Ashgate, 2004).

⁶⁵ Terry's roles included Nell Gywn in *The First Actress* (1911) Kniertje in Christopher St-John's translation of *The Good Hope* by Hermann Heijerman in 1912. She also gave several lectures on behalf of the society.

Terry amongst them.⁶⁶ Whilst all the women who appeared on the stage (whether famous or not) spoke couplets which established their character's historical significance, the lines given to Terry's were particularly significant, explicitly positioning not only Nance Oldfield, but also Terry herself, amongst the ranks of the 'Great Women' who filled the stage:

By your leave,

Nance Oldfield does her talking for herself!

If you, Sir Prejudice, had had your way,

There would be never an actress on the boards.

Some lanky, squeaky boy would play my parts:

And, though I say it, there'd have been a loss!

The Stage would be as dull as now 'tis merry-

No Oldfield, Woffington, or – Ellen Terry!⁶⁷

An image of Terry wearing the costume in which she appeared in this characterisation of Oldfield, featured in an illustrated copy of *A Pageant of Great Women* published by The Suffrage Shop in 1910 [FIGURE 5.6]. This image, taken by Miss Lena Connell, was distinct from the publicity photographs produced by Window and Grove when Terry first performed the role at the Lyceum [See FIGURE 5.7, 5.8, 5.9]. It shows Terry alone, with

⁶⁶ Amongst the well-known actresses in the cast were also Terry's younger sister Marion Terry (1853-1930) and Terry's friend Pauline Chase (1885-1962). Leading figures from the arts, education and society were also seen in many of the performances of the play outside London. Many of those who performed, including Winifred Mayo (1870-1967) and Adeline Bourne (1873-1965), were part of the Actresses' Franchise League and active supporters of women's suffrage.

⁶⁷ Cicely M. Hamilton, *A Pageant of Great Women* (London: The Suffrage Shop, 1910), 31

her back to the viewer and, significantly, wearing a different costume to that seen in the earlier photographs.⁶⁸ It therefore marked what may have been an intentional departure from the context of Terry's previous characterisation of Nance Oldfield in Charles Reade's light hearted comedy.⁶⁹

A review in the *Birmingham Daily Post* captures the mood of this original 1891 production, reporting that Terry's 'irresistible charm' was such that 'before the play was over the majority of the audience were in the same plight as poor young Alexander Oldworthy [the protagonist] – hopelessly in love with the bewitching actress.'⁷⁰ Terry's re-appearance as the same character within the very different context of a politically charged suffrage drama significantly altered the 'meaning' conveyed by both Terry's performance and costumes. In the *Pageant of Great Women* men and romance were entirely absent from the stage, and Terry was presented as a leading figure within a group of women, explicitly challenging the contemporary attitude to female suffrage. This second performance transformed Oldfield, and Terry; challenging their previous

⁶⁸ This attribution is acknowledged in the preface to the book. Lena Connell (fl.1910) was a member and photographer of the Suffragette Movement, and also ran a successful photographic studio in London. See index to Elizabeth Crawford. *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide, 1866-1928*. London: University College London Press, 1999. 548.

⁶⁹ As Richards explains 'The play dramatises a fictional episode in the career of the real-life eighteenth century actress Anne Oldfield (1683-1730).' It centres upon a love story in which 'a young poet and dramatist Alexander Oldworthy' (played in the original production by Terry's son, Edward Gordon Craig) falls in love with Oldfield to the dismay of his father. Although the father seeks to oppose the match and to persuade Oldfield to destroy his son's love for her, the couple are eventually reconciled and the play ends happily. See Richards, *Sir Henry Irving a Victorian Actor and His World*, 53.

⁷⁰ The review was published on 29 September 1891 and is quoted in Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: a Victorian Actor and His World*, 53.

characterisations as ‘charming’ and ‘comic’ figures and presenting them as inspirational female role models.



Photograph by Miss Lena Connell, 50, Grove End Road, N.W. Copyright.

Ellen Terry as Nance Oldfield.

Figure 5.6 - Lena Connell, photograph of Terry as appeared in the role of Nance Oldfield in *A Pageant of Great Women*, 1910. Published in Cicely M. Hamilton, *A Pageant of Great Women* (London: The Suffrage Shop, 1910), 31.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.7 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.4 cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:474-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.8 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax131315.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.9 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Platinum print. 13.6 x 9.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax160593.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Relatively few images survive of Terry in the Lyceum productions of *Nance Oldfield*, possibly because it was a one act piece in which Irving had no role. The surviving photographs, all taken by Window & Grove, depict Terry wearing three contrasting and distinctive garments. The first set of images show the actress dressed in a costume influenced by the fashions of the mid to late eighteenth century (rather than those of circa 1700, which marked the peak of Oldfield's career) (See Figures 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9). The neckline of the stiff and close fitting bodice is low and straight and Terry wears a translucent 1780s style fichu draped around her shoulders. The open gown, and matching petticoat, appear to be formed from a lightweight cotton fabric woven with a pattern of small dots and vertical scalloped lines. The edges of the gown's front opening are trimmed with a vertical band of pleated fabric and the elbow length sleeves have, what appear to be, cotton lawn cuffs edged with lace. Terry's hair is covered with a soft lace edged cap.



Figure 5.10 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891. Albumen Cabinet Card. 14.5 x 10.5 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG Ax16978.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.11 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:472-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.12 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.1 cm. Guy Little Collection, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:473-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The second set of Window and Grove images show Terry wearing a garment which is formed from a heavy cotton velvet and with a heavy jewelled collar, and is worn with a roughly shaped pointed crown, an ensemble which was intended to look deliberately ‘theatrical,’ replicating a ‘stage costume’ rather than a late eighteenth century style dress.

[See FIGURE 5.10, 5.11, 5.12] This ‘costume’ is loosely cut, with a soft, round, pleated, neckline and long hanging sleeves.

The final costume of the three recorded in photographs is harder to interpret from the surviving images. The focal point of the scene is the figures, and their garments are therefore slightly out of focus. The pose Terry has adopted (she is sitting on the top part of a sofa, her body turned away from the viewer, and towards the figure beside her) also

renders the construction of her garments indistinct [FIGURE 5.13].⁷¹ By comparing Figure 5.13 with a further image at Smallhythe Place however [FIGURE 5.14], it is possible to deduce that Terry is wearing a loosely cut gown, possibly cut in the draped, informal style of sack-back robe from which the more formal, closer fitting gown robe à l'anglaise worn by circa 1750 evolved.⁷² The trimmings and details of the fabric are not clear, but a floral pattern, which resembles that on the costume surviving at Smallhythe is just visible [FIGURE 5.15]. In Figures 5.13 and 5.14 Terry is wearing the same pointed crown seen in Figures 5.10-5.12. An image, painted by Pamela Coleman Smith (1878-1951) appears to show Terry wearing a gown which may be the costume worn in Figures 5.13 and 5.14, and which, like these photographs, indicates that it was worn as a 'dressing gown' and in an informal state of 'undress.'⁷³ [FIGURE 5.16]

What is apparent from all three sets of images however, is that the costume Terry was photographed wearing when playing Nance Oldfield in *A Pageant of Great Women* in 1909, does not match any of the costumes depicted in the photographs taken of her when she originally performed the role at the Lyceum in 1891. There are several potential reasons for this discrepancy, among them the fact that Terry will have had, a number of costume changes during *Nance Oldfield*, and not all of the costumes which she wore will have been photographed. Furthermore, given the popularity of the play, it is likely that the costume may have been re-made, or altered at a later date.⁷⁴

⁷¹ A copy of this photograph is held by both the Victoria & Albert Museum, S.133:550-2007 and at Smallhythe Place, NT/SMA/PH/2136.

⁷² As noted, this second image is held in the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe, National Trust Inventory Number, 1122390.

⁷³ Pamela Coleman Smith (1878-1951) was an artist and illustrator who became closely involved with the Lyceum Theatre Company, and Terry in particular, from the late 1890s. She was best known for her work as an illustrator but she also worked in the field of stage design and exhibited her paintings. Coleman-Smith also created a second image of Terry in the role in which the actress wears a similar, open robe, in this instance decorated with alternating pale blue and flower patterned vertical stripes. This image is held by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum number S.907-2012.

⁷⁴ This was the case with the costumes worn by Terry in *Madame Sans Gene*. Originally staged in 1897, the popularity of the piece was such that by June 1901 Terry had commissioned her daughter Edith Craig



Figure 5.13 - Window & Grove. Edward Gordon Craig as Alexander Oldworthy and Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:550-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.14 - Window & Grove. Edward Gordon Craig as Alexander Oldworthy and Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, 1891, Photographic paper on card mount. Measurements not recorded. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [1122390].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Of the two extant costumes, one is held by Smallhythe. This costume, a sackback style dress inspired by the fashions of the mid to late eighteenth century, is made from dull gold silk brocade woven with flowers. [See FIGURES 5.15, 5.17 and 5.18] There are no maker's labels. This is not the garment in which Terry appeared in the 1909 Pageant but it does strongly resemble a painting the artist James Ferrier Pryde (1866-1941) made of the actress in 1894 [FIGURE 5.19].⁷⁵

to create some new costumes for the role. Terry relates this fact in a letter to her costumier Ada Nettleship. Terry, letter to Nettleship, June 3rd 1901, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, ALS, THM/14/20/TERRY/7.

⁷⁵ Terry refers to this 'admirable portrait' in her autobiography. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 348.



Figure 5.15- Outer gown which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109a [1118834.1].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.16- Pamela Coleman Smith. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1900, Hand tinted print on paper. 31.3 x 26 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.908-2012.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.17- Inner dress which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109b [1118834.2].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.18- Detail of the inner dress which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109b [1118834.2].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.19- James Ferrier Pyrde. Ellen Terry in the title role of *Nance Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca. 1891. Oil and varnish on card. 56 x 35.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG 6568.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

A further costume associated with the role of Nance Oldfield survives at the Museum of London. Whilst this costume differs from those worn by Terry in the photographs associated with the 1891 Lyceum production, it does match the photograph showing Terry as she appeared in the 1909 Pageant. The full history of this second costume is not known as, but it was donated to the Museum of London in 1947.⁷⁶ This garment, again modelled on the fashions of the mid to late eighteenth century, is in two parts, a cream ribbed silk open robe woven pale pink, lilac and yellow roses and a separate, sleeveless, underdress. [FIGURE 5.20 and 5.21] The robe has an integral bodice, stiffened with boning, to the base of which a ‘half apron’ formed from a cream, openwork, lace has been

⁷⁶ This version of Terry’s Nance Oldfield costume, museum number 47.1, was donated to the museum in 1947 by the actress and singer Jean Sterling Mackinlay (1882-1958). Mackinlay, who gave a range of her garments to the Museum of London, was known to both Terry and her daughter both as a professional colleague and, subsequently, a friend.

stitched. The interior is lined with a vivid pink silk and the same fabric has been used to make the integral bodice and also the bodice of the underdress. This bodice is also boned and the base of the dress is formed from layers of the same cream lace used for the ‘apron’ attached to the open robe.



Figure 5.20- Costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1891. Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2011. Museum Number 47.11.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.21- Detail of costume worn by Terry as in the title role of *Nancy Oldfield*, Lyceum Theatre, ca.1891, Courtesy of the Museum of London. Personal photograph by the author. 28 October 2011. Museum Number 47.11.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.22- Photographer Unknown, Ellen Terry with her granddaughter Nellie, 1919. Terry is wearing the costume she wore as Nance Oldfield, possibly in the *Pageant of Great Women* in 1909. Photographic postcard. Measurements not recorded. National Trust, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number, NT 1120250.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

As a photograph of Terry in the collection at Smallhythe Place records, this second costume, originally associated with a confrontational, political, production and a leading role, was ‘translated’ to an entirely different, domestic, environment ten years later. Taken in the garden at Smallhythe in 1919, the image shows Terry wearing this costume whilst her granddaughter, Nellie, (who is not wearing a theatrical costume), holds the train of the dress.⁷⁷ [FIGURE 5.22] The ‘function’ of these garments has not changed. They remain ‘costumes’ and are still being used for a ‘performance’, albeit a private one. They are also still being worn by and carry the identity of their original wearer, Terry. What has altered significantly, however, is the ‘context’ within which the costume is being used. In 1909 the costume was part of a public performance with an overtly political message and purpose. The costume provided a visual link between Terry and her

⁷⁷ As noted, this image is held in the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe. The National Trust Inventory Number is NT 1120250.

celebrated predecessor, Anne Oldfield, enabling Terry to 'perform' and to re-assert her identity as a leading actress of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In its second incarnation however, whilst the costume retained its function as a tool for performance and as a reminder to Terry's professional identity and status, it was no longer politically charged. The atmosphere in this 'private', domestic space is intimate and the costume is transformed by this new 'off-stage' context, functioning now as a theatrical property in Terry's performance of a domestic and maternal role.

As this photograph illustrates, the context within which a costume is used plays a significant part in shaping the 'meaning' of these garments. The costumes connected with Terry's original performances as Nance Oldfield in 1891 recall the comedy and charm that contributed to the success of the original production, and which were also an integral part of Terry's professional identity when the leading lady of the Lyceum Company. The ensemble worn by Terry when she revived this role in the *Pageant of Great Women* in 1909 however, conveyed a deeply political and confrontational meaning to the audience. It also signalled a shift in Terry's status, and her adoption of a new role as an independent professional who had earned her status as an inspirational role model for women, both on and off the stage. When this second costume was used again in 1919, its meaning had shifted again however. Whilst it continued to carry the 'ghost' of Terry's professional identity, it no longer carried a 'political' meaning, and now communicated her 'personal' identity as a grandmother, and domestic figure.

Masquerading as Portia

Another costume which exemplifies both the development of a role across the career of one performer and the manner in which costumes can be 'given a new identity' through

their participation in a ‘new performance,’ are the robes worn by Terry in the role of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*.⁷⁸

Terry played this part in a number of different theatres in both England, and America. Her first appearance as Portia was in 1875 in a production at the Prince of Wales Theatre for which the costumes and set were designed by Godwin.⁷⁹ She revived the role four years later, performing opposite Henry Irving as Shylock. As she noted in her autobiography

The Lyceum production of “The Merchant of Venice” was not so strictly archaeological as the Bancrofts’ had been, but it was very gravely beautiful and effective. If less attention was paid to details of costumes and scenery, the play itself was arranged and acted very attractively and always went with a swing. To the end of my partnership with Henry Irving it was a safe “draw” both in England and America. By this time I must have played Portia over a thousand times.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Hodgdon, *Shopping in the Archive*, 159.

⁷⁹ As discussed, Godwin had an established reputation as a designer for the stage. He cemented his status as an expert on the history of dress when he became a founder member of the Costume Society in 1882, a society which sought to establish a systematic study of the dress of the past. Godwin, Soros and Arbuthnott, *E.W. Godwin: Aesthetic Movement Architect and Designer*, 58-62. Although Godwin clearly worked on designs for this production (sketches survive in the Godwin Archive at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, THM/3) the extent of his contribution has since been disputed. Indeed a notice published in *The Times* in April 1875, included a note to the effect that ‘Mr Godwin thinks it right, in justice to the person who designed the costumes, and in fairness to himself, to say that he is in no way responsible for the dresses, as his opinion was neither asked nor given on this subject.’ Press cutting, *The Times*, April 23 1875, dated in ink by Godwin. Press Cutting, Godwin Archive, THM/3, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Richard Foulkes has addressed this debate in “‘A truer peep at *Old Venice*’: *The Merchant of Venice* on the Victorian Stage,’ *Ruskin, the Theatre and Victorian Visual Culture*, ed. Anselm Heinrich, Katherine Newey and Jeffrey Richards (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 179.

⁸⁰ Terry’s use of the term ‘archaeology’ to designate the ‘history’ of dress, is consistent with the use of this term in texts from the mid to late nineteenth century. The term ‘archaeology’ is, for instance, used by Planché in *History of British Costume, from the Earliest Period to the Close of the 18th Century* (1834); Godwin in *Dress and its Relation to Health* (1884) and Wilde in *The Truth of Masks* (1891). It was used here by Terry in 1908, in *The Story of My Life*, 183. Terry’s praise for the archaeological correctness of the 1875 production also acknowledges the detailed research Godwin undertook when designed the production the results of which he published as an article printed in *The Architect* in 1875 and entitled ‘The Architecture and Costumes of *The Merchant of Venice*.’ Godwin’s and Terry’s son, Craig subsequently reprinted this article, and others written by Godwin on a similar theme in his own periodical, *The Mask* in 1908. See, for

The popularity of Terry's performance as Portia, in particular 'The Quality of Mercy' speech, was such that she continued to enact scenes from the play long after leaving the Lyceum Company.⁸¹ The resulting range of surviving visual and written evidence, together with the extant costume in the collection at Smallhythe, make it possible to identify and analyse the changes which occurred in the design of the costumes worn by Terry during the forty year period over which she performed the role. The impact and significance of these changes is particularly apparent in the evolution of the 'legal robes' worn by Terry for Portia's 'disguise' in Act IV, Scene 2.

Sadly no costumes survive from the productions of 1875 and 1879 in which Terry first performed the role of Portia. Whilst surviving, sepia toned, photographs provide a sense of the style and fit of these costumes, it is only through contemporary descriptions of the costumes that it is possible to get a sense of their original colour. Reviews of both the short running 1875, and more commercially successful, 1879 production, indicate that Terry wore black robes in Act IV, Scene 2. Comyns-Carr was amongst those who witnessed Terry's first appearance in the role and recalled how

[...] as the curtain rose upon Nell's [Ellen's] tall and slender figure in a china blue and white brocaded dress, with one crimson rose at her breast, the whole house bust forth in rapturous applause. But her greatest effect was when she walked into the court in her black robes of justice [...]⁸²

instance, E.W.Godwin, "The Architecture and Costumes of The Merchant of Venice," *The Mask*, 1.5 (July 1908): 91-95.

⁸¹ The 'Quality of Mercy' speech actually formed the conclusion of one of Terry's four lectures on '*The Triumphant Women*.' As Chapter 6 will discuss, these lectures survive in both note, and published form, having originally been part of a lecture tour undertaken by the actress between circa 1911 and 1921. Ellen Terry and Christopher St. John, eds, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare* (London: Martin Hopkinson Ltd, 1932), 122. Both Melville and St John record how, engaged to perform the speech at the Coliseum in 1918, Terry, unlike her fellow performers, was unmoved by the air raid which interrupted the performance. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 222-5.

⁸² Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 31.

The sonnet Wilde wrote in praise of Terry's performance in 1879 also captures details of Terry's garments. Wilde reserved particular praise for the actress's 'gorgeous dress of beaten gold, Which is more golden than the golden sun,' but also remarked upon also the effect of her 'sober-suited lawyer's gown.'⁸³

Interestingly, the costumes Terry wore as Portia throughout the forty year period she spent performing this role included the same constituent parts: an open gown, with wide, or open sleeves, worn over a fitted underdress with a high collar and matched with high crowned cap with a high brim. Comparing photographs of Terry as she appeared in the 1875 and 1879 productions however, exposes the subtle differences between the robes designed by Godwin and those worn by Terry in the 1879 Lyceum production. [FIGURE 5.23 and 5.24]



Figure 5.23- Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.4 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:230-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.24 - Window & Grove. Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Lyceum Theatre, 1879. Albumen Cabinet Card. 14.1 x 10.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x16988.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁸³ Terry includes the sonnet in her autobiography, Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 182.

Looking at Figure 5.23, which shows Terry's 1875 costume, there is a clear sheen to the actress's silk velvet cap, as opposed to the matt fabrics used subsequently. The cap also has higher crown than the examples worn later in her career. The underdress has the high collar which remained part of the costume and is decorated at the centre with the pair of acorns, which were also retained. Also present is the additional slim white scalloped collar detailing at the top edge of the neckline. The open gown is formed from a heavy watered silk damask fabric, the pattern of which is difficult to distinguish. The sleeves of the gown are full length and open out into a wide cuff at the wrist. A vertical fold running down the centre front indicates a masked fastening at this point. The robes were gathered at the waist with a softly pleated belt in the same fabric. The actress is also pictured with the gloves which evidently formed part of the ensemble.

Figure 5.24 depicts the robes worn by Terry three years later in 1879, this time designed by Harris. They closely resemble those from the production at the Princess of Wales Theatre but there is no front pleat and the belt has been replaced with soft horizontal pleats which run from the waist to the bustline. The open gown has shorter, open sleeves which finish at the elbow, but is still made from a heavy silk damask, possibly, as discussed in Chapter 4, purchased from Watts & Co. The underdress has a slightly lower neckline, but the acorns are present at the centre front, and the narrow white scalloped inner collar is also present. The seams of the panels from which this underdress was made are clearly visible in several of the photographs.

The reasons for the similarities and differences between the two costumes was not remarked upon by Terry in her autobiography, but it is likely that the costumes she wore in 1875 were retained by the Bancroft's who funded and managed the costly production. Replacement garments would therefore have been required for the Lyceum production in 1879. As Richards notes, whilst Irving's production had a reputation for 'archaeological

accuracy' and this was part of the actor/manager's 'gospel of the stage as a vehicle for education,' Irving was willing to sacrifice accuracy for theatrical effect.⁸⁴ It is therefore likely that Irving, although appreciating the 'authenticity' of Godwin's designs and willing to draw inspiration from this original costume, also recognised and insisted upon the need to adapt and alter elements of these to suit his own vision for the play.



Figure 5.25- Museum Record Photograph. Detail of the darned repairs visible on the cuff of a robe worn by Irving as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1879, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number S.2796:1-8-2010.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The production, which had 'an unbroken run of two hundred and fifty nights,' remained in the Lyceum Company's repertoire for over twenty years and was also revived on tours to America and across the United Kingdom.⁸⁵ Despite the fact that Irving's Shylock costume was, accordingly to the actress, 'never replaced, and only once cleaned by Henry's dresser and valet, Walter Collinson,' it is clear that Terry's costumes, and those

⁸⁴ As Richards records Irving's pragmatism is apparent in the actor/manager's own observation that although 'Correctness of costume is admirable and necessary to a certain point,' when 'it ceases to be "as wholesome as sweet" it should be sacrificed.' Richards, *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World*, 221.

⁸⁵ Although, as Bram Stoker records, the decision to add *The Merchant of Venice* to the 1879 season came unexpectedly and with little over three weeks to paint the scenery and prepare costumes, it remained in the Lyceum Company repertoire for some twenty-six years. Bram Stoker, *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (London: W. Heinemann, 1907) 53-55.

of other performers, would have had to be repaired and, in many instances, replaced.⁸⁶ The level of wear and extensive darned repairs visible on Irving's surviving costume would support this claim. [FIGURE 5.25]

Although there are clear similarities between the robes worn by Terry in 1875 and 1879, neither match the robes which survive in the collection at Smallhythe, nor an 1883 painting showing her in the role. These surviving robes, like those depicted in the painting, are a dark rust red in colour and formed from a heavy ribbed silk.⁸⁷ Lucy Oakley has traced the change in the colour of Terry's robes to circa 1883. She cites a review of Terry's performance during the Lyceum Company's 1883 American tour which described Terry's entry in Act IV, Scene I wearing,

an undergarment of pomegranate –colored [sic] silk, made like a dressing-robe, and girdled above the waist with a broad band of the same; her dainty cap [...] of the same hue and texture; and an over-dress, made like a doublet, of rich crimson plush, with deep sleeves lined with the lighter color [sic].⁸⁸

Examining the surviving costume has revealed that it follows a similar silhouette and design as the earlier versions. The underdress, made from a ribbed silk, has the same high, upright collar, fitting closely at the neck, and was lined with an additional small curved white collar at the top edge. [FIGURE 5.26] The acorns present at the centre front collar of the surviving red version, are silver. As was the case in 1879, the sleeves of

⁸⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 182.

⁸⁷ One complete set of robes associated with Terry's performance as Portia survive in the collection at Smallhythe. See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Portia, *Merchant of Venice*, SMA.COST.112, a, b & c [1118837.1,2,3]. In addition to this complete costume, the collection also includes off-cuts of material matching the robes in SMA.COST.112 and, interestingly, the remains of another robe, collar and sash which strongly resemble the surviving costume. This second robe is in poor condition and may well have been an earlier or duplicate version of SMA.COST.112.

⁸⁸ Article published in the *Boston Herald*, 13 December 1883. The article is, as Lucy Oakley notes, quoted in Alan Hughes, "Henry Irving's Tragedy of Shylock," *Educational Theatre Journal* 24 (1972): 248-264, 261. Hughes does not record a page reference. Lucy Oakley, "The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 16, (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1982): 181-194, 183.

underdress fit closely to the arm, and are edged with a band of white at the cuffs. It is highly probable that these light cuffs and collars (which appear in many of Terry's costumes) may have been added to draw attention to the expression and movements of Terry's face and hands. Surviving costumes worn by Irving, also frequently feature white bands at the edge of the sleeve cuffs, and, when examining these garments, Martin Holmes suggested,

His [Irving's] sleeves, too, were habitually cut a little shorter than might have been expected, to give free play to his thin, expressive hands. A movement of the hand - or indeed an absence of movement, a tense and significant stillness - is much more impressive when the whole line of the hand is visible, from fingertip to wrist, than when the cuff cuts it short just at the starting-point of the tension.⁸⁹



Figure 5.26 - Costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁸⁹ M.R. Holmes, *Stage Costumes and Accessories in the London Museum* (London: HMSO, 1968), 15.



Figure 5.27 - Detail of the costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.28- Cap, part of the costume worn by Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, ca. 1883, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 17 April 2011. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.112a-c [1118837.1,2,3].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

In Terry's surviving costume long, hanging, outer sleeves, in a plain, rust red crepe, (not a feature of the earlier costumes), are present at each shoulder. A band of the same fabric, shaped with horizontal ruched pleats, and secured with a vertical row of hooks and eyes, runs across the centre front of the bodice. [FIGURE 5.27] The open gown has been retained. It is now sleeveless but has the same raised and stiffened collar and is formed from a plain red silk, which contrasts with the ornate silk damask previously used. Weights have been used in both the underdress and open robe to control the fall of the fabric. The matching round cap has low crown, it is formed from a soft red silk crepe de chine, which has been pleated to shape around the brim. [FIGURE 5.28]

As this new design was introduced in 1883, it is possible that Comyns-Carr, now working in collaboration with Harris, may have encouraged a simplification of the previous design, or, indeed, that the changes occurred as the result of practical considerations. The pliable crepe and robust ribbed silk would seem to be more suited to the rigours of an American tour, than the heavy and rigid silk damask of Terry's previous costume, which by then was already four years old. The decision to change to red could also have been motivated by a desire for dramatic effect and additionally, as Oakley discovered, this new colour matches the gowns then worn by Doctors of Civil Laws at Oxford and Cambridge.⁹⁰

These, later, crimson robes are also documented in three paintings. However, whilst they all depict a version of 'Portia' presented in this striking costume, Terry only features as the sitter in one out of the three. Though Terry herself is absent from the two other paintings, her distinctive costume provides a direct link to the Lyceum production. This costume therefore not only carries the 'memories' of the Lyceum Company performances

⁹⁰ Oakley, "The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia," 185.

in which it was originally used, it also acts as a surrogate for a specific character (Portia) and a celebrated actress (Terry).



Figure 5.29- G.W.Baldry, *Ellen Terry as Portia*, ca.1883. Garrick Club London. Image Courtesy of The Garrick Club, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The portrait of Terry wearing these robes was painted in 1883 by G.W. Baldry. [FIGURE 5.29]. Whilst it has proved difficult to discover more about the composition of this portrait, it is potentially significant that this date coincides with, and potentially commemorates, the introduction of this new red costume.⁹¹ Three years later, in 1886, Terry's costume featured in another portrait of 'Portia,' this time by Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896) [FIGURE 5.30]. Oakley's investigations into the history of this portrait, in particular the long standing misidentification of the subject as Terry,

⁹¹ The G.W Baldry portrait now forms part of the Garrick Club Collections. Louise Jopling also painted a portrait of Terry in the role, which was exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery. A review of the exhibition, published in 1883, notes that Terry was depicted in crimson robes in which, they declare, 'she [Terry] never played the part.' "Art in London, The Grosvenor Gallery and its pictures," *New-York Tribune*, 27 May 1883: 3.

confirmed that whilst the crimson robes depicted were identifiable as those worn by Terry when painted by Baldry in 1883, Terry was not the sitter in this Millais' painting.⁹² Yet, whilst Oakley has proved that Terry herself is missing from the painting, she has also suggested that even in her absence, Terry's costumes 'not only served as an appropriate period costume for Portia' but also '[...] evoked a connection in the nineteenth century viewer's mind between Millais' picture and the popular actress in one of her best known roles.'⁹³



Figure 5.30 -John Everett Millias, Portia, ca.1885-6, Oil on canvas. 125.1 x 83.8 cm. MET Museum, New York. Accession Number 06.1328.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁹² The mistaken identification of Terry as the sitter persisted, as Oakley notes, until circa 1944. Whilst Oakley is not able to make a concrete identification of the model, she presents a strong case for her suggestion that it shows a blend of sitters. The original image was, she argues, the American actress Mary Anderson (1859-1940), with Kate Dolan acting as stand in for later sittings and Terry's performance inspiring the original portrait. Oakley, "The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia," 183-4, 188, 189, 191.

⁹³ Oakley is able to confirm the loan of the costumes to Millais, through a letter sent by Terry to the painter agreeing to the loan and apologising that '[...] the dress was away in Scotland being clear for storing or I should have sent it to you before.' Letter from Terry to Millais sent on the 30th of March 1886, quoted in Oakley, 'The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia,' 185. This letter is held as part of the Millais papers in the Pierpont Morgan Library, reference MA 1475 K713. Oakley, "The Evolution of Sir John Everett Millais' Portia," 185.



Figure 5.31 - Clare Atwood. *Vita Sackville-West as Portia*, ca.1910. Oil on canvas. 34.1 x 24.1 cm National Trust, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number [1118225].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry's willingness to both 'sit' for a portrait in her costume, and loan her robes to another model for the same purpose, also offers valuable information regarding the manner in which she used, and presented this costume 'off-stage.' The sitter in Millais' portrait was not the only model to borrow Terry's crimson robes. A portrait of Vita Sackville West (1892-1962), not dated, but potentially painted in the 1930s by Clare Atwood (1866-1962), shows the writer dressed in Terry's Portia costume [FIGURE 5.31]. The event which inspired the portrait was very probably the occasion when Terry lent Sackville-West the robes to wear at a Shakespeare Masque staged at Knole on the 3rd of July 1910.⁹⁴ The masque was staged in the park of Knole house in aid of the Shakespeare Memorial

⁹⁴ Vita Sackville West, though not a close friend of Terry was acquainted with the actress and in diary entry from circa 1910 described her as 'quite charming.' This diary entry is quoted in Vita Sackville-West and Mary A. Caws, *Selected Writings* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 26.

Theatre Fund and included a performance by Terry.⁹⁵ Whilst the history of the painting has not been documented it is known that Atwood was Edith Craig's lover and companion and that she, Craig, and the writer Christopher St-John (née Christabel Marshall 1871-1960), were long term residents at the Priest's House which adjoined Terry's home, Smallhythe Place. It was not until the 1930s, that all three women began to socialise with Sackville-West but, through her relationship with Craig, Atwood had already become a close friend of Terry, and remained so until Terry's death in 1928.⁹⁶ This friendship with both mother and daughter would have given Atwood access to the Portia costume which formed part of Terry's personal collection.⁹⁷ It is likely that the portrait was painted in the 1930s and after Terry's death. As this portrait demonstrates, however, in spite of Terry's absence, the costume continued to carry the 'identity' of Portia and the 'memories' of past performances. These surviving robes were therefore able to facilitate this additional 'performance,' transforming' Sackville-West into 'Portia,' and enabling Atwood to commemorate and re-create Sackville-West's previous performance, some twenty years before.

This was not the only, or first, time that Terry's robes had been 'translated' to a different context. Comyns-Carr describes how, when attending a *bal masqué* in the house of the artist Alma Tadema on Regents Canal, she 'borrowed Ellen Terry's doctor's robes and masqueraded as Portia.'⁹⁸ Comyns-Carr does not record the date of the ball, but it was

⁹⁵ Lady Sackville West includes a description of the ball, or masque, which, as she notes, was disrupted by a heavy rain storm in which both the costume, and its temporary wearer became very wet. Lady Sackville West, diary entry for 30th June and 2nd July 1910. Unpublished transcription, 2011, Sissinghurst, National Trust.

⁹⁶ Sackville-West's meetings with Atwood, St-John and Craig are discussed in Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 253-4.

⁹⁷ Many of the paintings created by Atwood whilst living with Terry and her daughter show Terry and Craig at Smallhythe. Similarly a grey woollen checked cycling suit, consisting of long trousers, and matching fitted bodice or jacket with small upright collar, previously worn by Atwood is actually now part of the dress collection. As Chapter 6 will discuss, this item is likely to have been collected by Craig, rather than Terry. See Appendix 1, Atwood, *Cycling Suit*, SMA.TC.238.

⁹⁸ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 31.

certainly after the refurbishment of Townsend House, Titchfield Terrace, Regent's Park in 1874 and before the artist moved to 17 Grove End Road, St John's Wood, in 1885.⁹⁹ It is therefore not certain whether Comyns-Carr wore the black robes associated with Terry's first performances between 1879 and 1882, or the red robes created for Terry in 1883. Whichever of the robes were worn by Comyns-Carr, what is evident is Terry's willingness to loan her 'costumes' to others whether this was to be used for a painting (as was the case with Millais); for a public performance (to be worn by Sackville West), or for a fancy dress ball (which prompted the loan to Comyns-Carr). The fact that Terry was so ready to agree to allow her costume to serve so many different figures and purposes, indicates that for her these 'theatrical costumes' were garments which had been designed for a practical purpose and should therefore be used rather than carefully preserved and protected. In her 1911 article on 'Stage Decoration,' for instance, the actress recalls wearing one of her Lady Macbeth costumes for an impromptu performance of the sleep walking scene in the 'village town hall' near her home in Kent.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, as a sketch of Terry's appearance at the Actor's Benevolent Fund 'Shakespeare Ball' in 1905 reveals, the actress herself also wore her costumes 'off-stage,' on this occasion putting on her lawyer's robes and, like Comyns-Carr, 'masquerading as Portia' for an evening [FIGURE 5.32 and 5.33].

The 'translation' of Terry's robes to these new contexts adds an important element to their history. Whether worn by an artist's model, by a friend at a ball, or by Terry herself, the robes continued to re-enact their original function as a 'stage costume.' Even though their presence within the Millais portrait arguably elevates them, by association at least, to the status of an artwork, an important further quality or specific theatrical context seems to

⁹⁹ Gere, *Artistic Circles*, 195.

¹⁰⁰ Terry, 'Some Ideas on Stage Decoration,' *McClures Magazine* (January, 1911): 293.

have been required to recapture the power of the original performance, and, significantly, the qualities of their celebrated wearer. Indeed, as Comyns-Carr's recollections of her experience at the *bal masqué* indicate, appearing in the costume did not automatically bestow grace and status upon the wearer. She recalled how her

[...] disguise was speedily discovered by Edmund Yates, the dreaded and famous editor of that malicious society journal, *The World*, and as he whispered in Italian, "Mrs. Comyns-Carr should cover her little hand if she wishes to remain incognita," I wondered if the easy compliment did not carry with in an implied rebuke because so diminutive and insignificant a person as myself had attempted so stately a role.¹⁰¹

Building upon these ideas, the next case study will consider another model through which to examine and record these additional 'wearers' and 'performances' and the further layer they add to the already complex biography of these garments.

Figure 5.32 - Sketch of Terry as she appeared as the 'Shakespeare Ball in aid of the Actor's Benevolent Fund', 13th May 1905, unidentified publication. Personal photograph by the author, 14 April 2016. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Ellen Terry Collection, Press cuttings of Ellen Terry relating to her role in *The Merchant of Venice*, THM/384/32/17.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



¹⁰¹ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 31.



Figure 5.33 - H.M.Brook 'Sketches of the Shakespeare Ball in aid of the Actor's Benevolent Fund', 13th May 1905. Pen and ink drawing on paper. 34.2 x 44.5 cm. Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection. Digital Image File Name 37555.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

5.3 – Multiple Identities

A biographical approach

As discussed in Chapter 1, the biographical approach to analysis proposed by Kopytoff offers another framework through which to interrogate and document the complex 'biography' of theatrical costumes.¹⁰² Although the research focused upon the anthropological implications of 'cultural redefinition', his biographical method of

¹⁰² Kopytoff, "The cultural biography of things," 67.

analysis is equally applicable to theatrical costume. In the case of the costumes that now survive in museum collections, for instance, the formal acquisition of these costume by a museum has transformed them from ‘ephemeral garments’ into ‘museum objects’ deemed worthy of long term preservation, expert care and conservation. Constructing the ‘biography’ of a theatre costume offers a means through which to explore the numerous ‘associations’ and ‘identities’ it can accumulate during a life cycle which, as has been discussed, often includes not only damage, repair and alteration, but potentially ‘translation’ to different performers and productions. Most significantly, as Eastop has demonstrated, this mode of analysis ‘allows the different values attributed to these “life stages” to be brought into sharper focus.’¹⁰³

A ‘Typical’ Biography

An insight into the typical biography of a stage costume at the turn of the twentieth century can be gleaned from a newspaper article published in the *Wellington Evening Post* in 1903. Entitled ‘Discarded Stage Costume,’ the author spoke to a range of costumiers, including ‘the famous’ M. Alias, to investigate the fate of garments worn on the stage.¹⁰⁴ As the author discovered ‘modern stage costumes,’ (presumably those which replicated ‘fashionable dress’), are easy to dispose of and ‘Secondhand costumiers do a regular trade in soiled costumes, not only among middle class actresses, but also among the great middle-class public in private life’ for whom they offer a means to ‘dress fashionably and economically.’¹⁰⁵ The life cycle of ‘Pantomime dress, and character dress

¹⁰³ Eastop, “The biography of objects: a tool for analysing an object’s significance”, 107.

¹⁰⁴ Charles Alias owned a successful costume business based in Soho Square. His firm produced costumes for the ballet, pantomime and theatre. The name ‘Mons. Alias’ is frequently listed in amongst the costume makers in programme for the Lyceum Company productions. A case in point being the programme for the production of *Othello* staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1881. His company remained in business into the late twentieth century but by 2000 had been taken over by Morris Angel and his company, Morris Angel & Sons Ltd.

¹⁰⁵ “Discarded Stage Costumes,” *Evening Post*, Volume LXVI, Issue 64 (12 September 1903), 10. The Papers Past. [n.d].

and the costumes of ball performers' is however, as they record, far more complex. Most of these costumes have been gradually and in some instances completely, 'renewed' during the run of a production. If, thanks to this 'constant renovation,' costumes survive in good condition by the close of a production there is strong probability that, after first being sent to 'the cleaner,' they will then be packed away. Barring a revival, they are retained to be sold, often as part of a complete 'set' to use in a production elsewhere. Many theatrical costumes are, the author suggests, of such quality that there are 'regular sales of second-hand and disused music-hall and pantomime costumes in London.' These sales are comparatively profitable and prices are high with a dress originally worth £70 fetching '£40' if sold in a condition which is 'as good as new.'¹⁰⁶ In some instances however, generous theatrical managers and performers 'make the dresses a free gift to poorer performers.' Whether by gift, sale or purchase, a theatre costume was often passed 'down the social scale of artistes' until 'it brings merely a few shillings to brighten up the "turn" at some small town variety saloon or rural "fit up."'¹⁰⁷

As this account makes apparent, very few stage costumes survive intact or with a clear link to a single and identifiable original wearer and production. Furthermore, as T.C. Davis discovered, 'by the early 1870s the costumiers [offering costumes for hire] had become so successful that few London theatres constructed their own garments.'¹⁰⁸ The Lyceum Company was therefore one of the few theatres which still retained a 'wardrobe store' and continued to make and retain costumes created specifically for their lavish productions. A collection of costumes as complete as that preserved at Smallhythe is

¹⁰⁶ As Chapter 4 showed, these prices are as much, if not more, than might be charged for couture garments in the early twentieth century.

¹⁰⁷ "Discarded Stage Costumes," 10.

¹⁰⁸ T.C. Davis examined trade directories and contracts between the independent costumiers and theatres and discovered that from circa 1856 onwards it became increasingly common, and much more economical, for theatres to hire costumes, rather than construct these costly garments, whose value 'depreciated to between one-fifth and two thirds of their cost after a single season.' T.C. Davis, *Economics of the British Stage*, 317-319.

therefore exceptionally rare and the costumes it contains have an equally unusual ‘biography’ which has diverted from the typical ‘life cycle’ of theatrical costumes.

When introducing the concept of an ‘object biography’ Kopytoff suggests,

In doing the biography of a thing, one would ask questions similar to those one asks about people: What, sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its “status” and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realised? Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things? What are the recognised “ages” or periods in the thing’s “life,” and what are the cultural markers for them?¹⁰⁹

Drawing upon the information which is known about the typical fate of stage costume at the height of Terry’s career, it is possible to employ the model and approach presented by Kopytoff to chart the ‘typical biography’ of a stage costume in the late nineteenth century. This ‘typical biography’ breaks down an intentionally simplified outline of a costume’s ‘life cycle’ into Kopytoff’s model of ‘recognised “ages” or periods’ which, in this instance, are delineated as the six ‘periods’ outlined below:

‘Typical Biography’ of a stage costume:

Period 1: ‘Design and creation’

Period 2: First Performance

¹⁰⁹ An initial example of this ‘Typical Biography’ and subsequent work with Kopytoff appeared in Isaac, “From Ellen Terry’s ‘Beetlewing Dress’ to David Tennant’s Leather Trousers” 6-13.

Period 3: Return to Wardrobe

Period 4: ‘Repair’ or ‘Adaptation’ for the same, or a new, wearer (repair and adaptation might also occur during the run of the original production)

Period 5: Second Performance (in the same, or an alternative production)

Period 6: ‘Disposal’ through sale, gift or destruction

At every stage in this life cycle the costume is shaped by, and subject to, current taste and fashions represented by what Kopytoff terms, ‘cultural markers.’ These factors will influence the visual appearance and fit of the garment and also, potentially, its long term fate. As the *Evening Post* article showed, a costume inspired by current fashions or appealing to popular taste is more likely to feature in revivals, or to survive in a new role as a piece of fashionable dress.¹¹⁰

Although founded upon the financial and practical factors governing patterns in alteration, retention and disposal of theatrical costume in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the model also holds true for contemporary stage costume. The only adaptation required is the addition of a further ‘life cycle period’ which takes into account the current possibility that, as discussed previously, the costume might be transferred to a ‘Hire Wardrobe’, as is the case in institutions such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, Cosprop and Angels.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ “Discarded Stage Costumes,” 10.

¹¹¹ The ‘Hire Wardrobe’ of Cosprop, Angels, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre all contain costumes which were previously used on the stage (and in the case of Cosprop and Angels in film and television). They are available for hire by theatre companies, film, television, and for school and university productions as well as amateur dramatic societies. In the case of the National Theatre they are also available for fancy dress or parties. This is an important source of income for both the theatrical companies and costumiers and is advertised online. See, for instance, “Costume and Prop Hire,” National Theatre [n.d]. and “Costume Hire,” *RSC Costume Hire*. Royal Shakespeare Company [n.d].



Figure 5.34 - Zenzie Tinker. Image of the first of two surviving bodices associated with the 'Beetlewing Dress.' On this bodice the silk at the hem matches that present in the remainder of the costume. Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.35- Zenzie Tinker. Second of the two surviving bodices associated with the 'Beetlewing Dress.' On this bodice remains of the originally attached crochet skirt are visible at the hips. Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.36 - Zenzie Tinker. A detail of the bodice (National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.114a [1118839.1]), as mounted, and without the separate sleeves, Record photograph by Zenzie Tinker. 17 May 2009. Image courtesy of Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studios Ltd.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

An ‘Actual’ Biography

Whilst the life cycle model created for a ‘typical biography’ offers a useful starting point for research, the varied histories of Terry’s surviving garments show that certain costumes have the potential to accumulate much more complex biographies. It is in such instances, however, that the biographical approach to analysis becomes increasingly useful, as the following example of an ‘Actual Biography’ will show.

Terry’s most famous costume, the green crocheted ‘Beetlewing Dress’ she wore in Act 1 of the 1888 production of *Macbeth* has accumulated a particularly complex history. Recent conservation treatment on the costume which survives in the collection at Smallhythe has revealed that this surviving dress is actually one of a number of different incarnations of the original costume.¹¹² Two separate bodices survive, the sleeves, which were discovered to be separate from these bodices (with no evidence regarding how they were originally attached, if at all), had been altered, as had the length of the skirt [FIGURE 5.34 and 5.35]. The complex process of conservation carried out by conservator Zenzie Tinker and her colleagues therefore entailed a carefully researched, recreation, and reassembly, of the ‘original costume.’¹¹³ [FIGURE 5.36].

The figures involved in the design and creation of the costume were discussed in Chapter 4. As this discussion made apparent, this was a garment which was strongly influenced by the values and tastes of Aestheticism. Terry’s preference for garments which did not

¹¹² See Appendix 1, Lady Macbeth, *Macbeth*, NT/SMA/TC/114a, 1118839.1.

¹¹³ As Tinker noted, the decisions made during the conservation process were based upon evidence from original photographs and the details that could be gathered from the surviving garments. A further challenge faced by Tinker was the fact that previous, interventive conservation treatment carried out on the costume had not been fully documented. The work carried out by Tinker and her staff was carefully documented, and rendered in a manner that made apparent the distinction between the ‘conserved’ and ‘surviving’ elements of the costume. Personal interview with Zenzie Tinker, 8 March 2011 and Zenzie Tinker, “Interim report on the conservation of the Lady Macbeth beetle wing dress,” Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studio Ltd, July 2009. Unpublished, private report.

constrict her movement on stage influenced the external design and also the internal construction. Furthermore, the fabric and decorative effects selected for the costume were shaped by the fact that gas-light, rather than electricity, was used to illuminate the stage at the Lyceum. As Terry noted, ‘The thick softness of gaslight, with the lovely specks and motes in it, so like *natural* light, gave illusion to many a scene which is now revealed in all its naked trashiness by electricity.’¹¹⁴

Macbeth remained in the repertoire of the Lyceum Company long after the first production in 1888. It was performed in London, on tour, and Terry also wore many of her costumes when called upon to re-enact scenes from the play in a variety of contexts through until the early 1920s.¹¹⁵ After Terry had ceased to use the costume herself, evidence survives which shows that it was loaned performers such as Thorndike, and, reportedly, in some of the costume pageants organised by Terry’s daughter, Edith Craig.¹¹⁶

An additional element was added to the biography of Terry’s costumes when they were loaned for exhibition in public display, outside Smallhythe Place. Photographs and clippings within the collection at Smallhythe record their presence as part of the display created for the British Theatrical Loan Exhibition, Dudley House, Park Lane, 1933 [FIGURE 5.37]. The examples of Terry’s costumes on display include a pale yellow dress the actress wore in *Faust* (1885) and the red robes created for *The Merchant of Venice* discussed previously. They were displayed on 1930s style mannequins and, in the case of

¹¹⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 173.

¹¹⁵ Terry, ‘Stage Decoration,’ 89.

¹¹⁶ Documentary evidence relating to these Costume Pageants is held within the section of the Ellen Terry Collection which is on long term loan to the British Library. These records include some photographs of such events, though regrettably none showing the ‘Beetlewing Dress.’ Some costumes made by Craig specifically for these Pageants do survive in the collection however. They include a replica of the costume Terry wore in the role of Mamillius in *The Winter’s Tale*, 1856. See Appendix 1, Theatre Costumes for other performers, Wearer Unknown, Mamillius, *Winter’s Tale*, SMA.TC.234, 1118959.

the costume from *Faust*, with inaccurate, replicated, accessories [FIGURE 5.38].¹¹⁷ Whilst the ‘Beetlewing Dress’ did not feature in this 1933 exhibition, the fact that other costumes from the collection did, raises the possibility that the ‘Beetlewing Dress’ may also have been on display outside Smallhythe Place.



Figure 5.37- An image of the British Theatrical Loan Exhibition, Dudley House, Park Lane, 1933. This image appears to have been a cutting clipped from a newspaper and has been pasted into the exhibition catalogue. Personal photograph by the author. 3 November 2014. National Trust, Smallhythe Place. This exhibition catalogue is part of the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

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Figure 5.38- Detail of the 1933 exhibition showing Edith Craig adjusting the dress worn by Terry as Marguerite in *Faust*, (National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.170). The dress is displayed with an apron not used during the original production, or retained within the collection. The image features in the exhibition catalogue. Personal photograph by the author. 3 November 2014. This exhibition catalogue is part of the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹¹⁷ The dress from *Faust* See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Marguerite, *Faust*, SMA.TC.170 is shown with an apron which does not match any photographs from the original production and which has not been retained in the collection.

When the National Trust acquired the property and the collection in 1939, the costume became part of the Ellen Terry Collection.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately no photographs have survived to record the manner in which the costumes were displayed before the 1980s. Anecdotal evidence suggests that they may have been draped around the house and stored on rails and Melville credits Craig (who remained custodian of the property until 1947) with ‘arranging the Costume Room.’¹¹⁹ By the 1980s a ‘Costume Room’ had certainly been created and the ‘Beetlewing Dress’ formed a central part in the display presented within this space. This dress, and the other costumes in the ‘Costume Room’ were left on display for an extended period [FIGURE 5.39].



Figure 5.39- Detail of the Beetlewing as displayed in the ‘Costume Room’ before it was re-designed in 2011. Personal Photograph by the author, 17 September 2008.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹¹⁸ As Melville discusses Craig remained custodian of the collection until 1947, and did create a range of displays during her time at the property. The handwritten labels (still used in the property have been created to replicate the original style of Craig’s displays). Joy Melville, *Ellen Terry and Smallhythe Place* (Kent: The National Trust, 2006) 18-19.

¹¹⁹ Sally Gibbons (1934-2015). Personal interview with the author, 5 February 2015. Gibbons visited Smallhythe as a child and met Craig. She recalled ‘running in and out of the costumes’ which were on rails, and ‘visiting Terry’s bedroom which had been preserved exactly as it had been on the day the actress died.’ Susannah Mayor, the current House Steward at Smallhythe Place, noted the lack of documentation recording past display practices but suggested that interior photographs indicated they that may ‘just have been draped around the house.’ Susannah Mayor. Personal communication with the author. 9 February 2016. See also Melville, *Ellen Terry and Smallhythe Place*, 18.

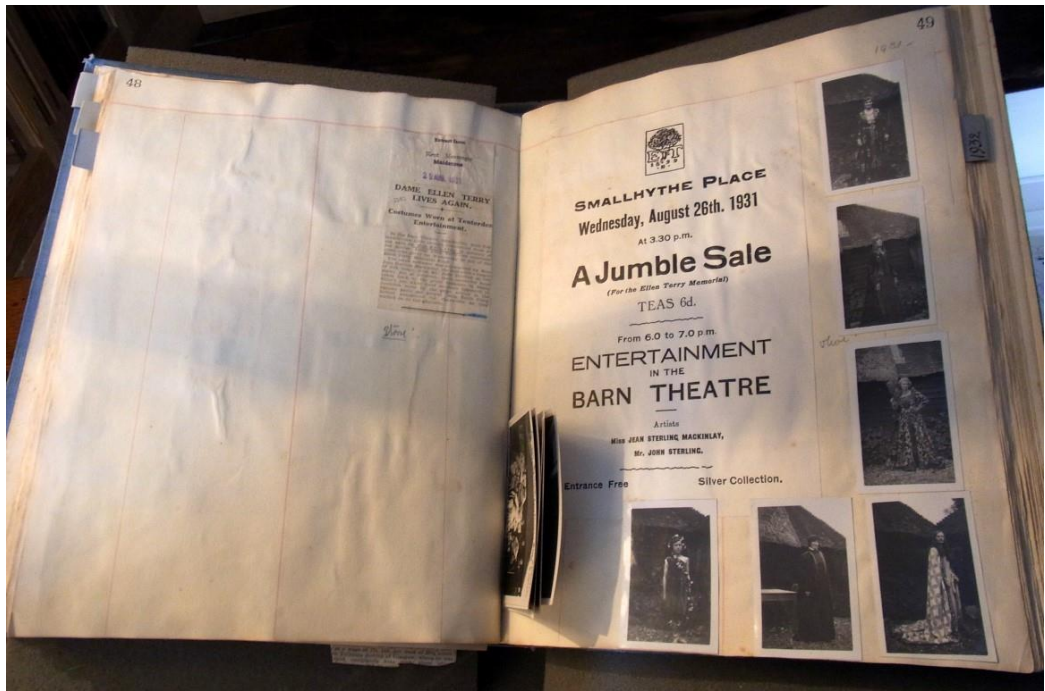


Figure 5.40 - A page from the first of two scrapbooks created by Edith Craig between 1929 and 1947. This page features photographs and a flyer associated with a Jumble Sale to raise funds for the Ellen Terry Memorial in August 1931. Personal photograph by the author. 4 April 2016. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 5.41 - A detail of the photograph of Olive Chaplin (née Terry) wearing the Beetlewing Dress at a Jumble Sale to raise funds for the Ellen Terry Memorial in August 1931. Photograph mounted in first of two scrapbooks created by Edith Craig between 1929 and 1947. Personal photograph by the author. 4 April 2016. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

There were also occasions when the dress returned to its original function as a costume, including the time when Olive Chaplin (née Terry) (1885-1969), who served as Curator of the Ellen Terry Museum from 1949, was photographed for publicity purposes wearing the dress at a jumble sale organised to raise funds for the collection in 1931 [*FIGURE 5.40 and 5.41*].¹²⁰

During 2009 and 2010 extensive conservation work was undertaken on the ‘Beetlewing Dress,’ and the exhibition design company Easy Tiger Creative were then engaged to re-design the ‘Costume Room’ in which the dress had previously been displayed.¹²¹ The conserved dress is now on semi-permanent display in this space. Significantly for the biography of this costume, the dress has been mounted on a mannequin which re-creates the pose depicted in the Singer-Sargent portrait (*See Figure 4.70 and 4.78*). As such the display references the part that this painting has played in securing the enduring power and fame of this costume. It also reproduces a pose and imagined scene which were never part of the original performance.

As will have become apparent therefore, there are many additional periods within the life cycle of this costume which diverge beyond the biographical model created for a ‘typical’ stage costume. With this in mind a new model, adapted to document the ‘Actual Biography’ of the ‘Beetlewing Dress’ is outlined below.

An Actual Biography for the ‘Beetlewing Dress’

Period 1: ‘Creation’ (circa 1887-8) – The dress designed by Comyns-Carr in collaboration with Terry and made by Nettleship and, possibly with assistance from her

¹²⁰ Olive Chaplin was the daughter of Terry’s sister Florence (1855-1896).

¹²¹ As noted, this conservation treatment was carried out by Zenzie Tinker and her colleagues. Tinker and her team carried out extensive research and analysis of the surviving costume components and related images to establish sleeve length, to create sections of replica crochet and to re-create missing parts on the belt which had been damaged. Zenzie Tinker. Personal interview with the author. 14 July 2010.

staff. The original cost of the costume is unknown, but given the price Terry paid for comparable garments in the 1892 production of *King Arthur* it is likely to have been between £100 and £150.¹²²

Period 2: First Performance (1888-9) –The production opened on the 29th of December of 1888 and ran for one hundred and fifty nights.¹²³ Terry’s performance inspired the portrait by Singer Sargent (1889).¹²⁴

Period 3: Return to Wardrobe/ Stock Costume (1889-1902) – The production remained in the Lyceum repertoire and the costume remained in use until Terry left the company in 1902. *Macbeth* was revived both on tour and in London and, as the two surviving bodices indicate, at least one ‘copy’ of the costume was made.

Period 4: Personal ‘Costume’ and Private ‘Performance’ (1902-1928) – After 1902 the costume was removed from the Lyceum wardrobe and became part of Terry’s private collection. It is likely that Terry wore this costume, as she did other costumes from the production, for other informal performances outside the context of the Lyceum Theatre.

Period 5: Public ‘Costume’ (1928-1939) – After Terry’s death in 1928 her daughter inherited the house and collection. Whilst in Craig’s ownership, and to an extent during Terry’s lifetime, the costumes, including the ‘Beetlewing Dress,’ were lent to a number of actresses for stage performances and worn in a variety of other contexts. In some

¹²² As Nettleship’s success grew she would employ a large body of staff at her premises in Wigmore Street, but Comyns-Carr’s *Reminiscences* imply that the commission to create the ‘Beetlewing Dress’ occurred relatively early in Nettleship’s career and at which point the dressmaker ‘was anxious to find some means of adding to a slender income.’ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 80. These prices were quoted in an article in the *New Zealand Herald*, 25 November 1900: 2.

¹²³ Manvell, *Ellen Terry*, 196-7.

¹²⁴ This portrait was exhibited in the summer exhibition at the New Gallery in 1889 and subsequently at the Société Nationale des Neaux-Artes, Paris in 1890. It was also displayed in Chicago in 1893 as part of the *World’s Columbian Exhibition*. For a full history of public display up to 1964 See Chamot, Mary, Dennis Farr, and Martin Butlin, *The Modern British Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture* (London: Oldbourne Press, 1964) 589.

instances, they were modified and adapted.¹²⁵ At this stage in its life cycle the commercial value of the costume had greatly diminished, though it remained one of Terry's most famous costumes.¹²⁶

Period 6: 'Museum Artefact' (1939-Present)– As Chapter 6 will discuss in more detail, Terry's existing collection, was not subject to disposal or sale but instead expanded and re-presented by Craig who established a Memorial Museum at Smallhythe Place. Pieces from the collection were lent for public display, and when the property passed to the National Trust in 1939 the costumes were officially established as part of a museum collection. Since the 1980s the 'Beetlewing Dress' has been altered and adapted for display, but not for wear.¹²⁷ Following the £110,000 conservation treatment completed in 2011, the costume has been 'conserved' and is now presented in a manner which is as close to its original appearance as was possible to achieve.¹²⁸

Conclusion

This example of an 'Actual Biography' demonstrates that the model created for a 'Typical Biography' can be successfully adapted to reflect the life cycle of an individual costume. Comparing the 'Actual' and 'Typical' biography brings to light significant diversions

¹²⁵Amongst these 'off-stage' contexts, it is very possible that the 'Beetlewing Dress' was amongst the costumes from Terry's collection used by Craig in the Costume Pageants which she used to direct and for which she often created additional costumes. An additional length of crocheted fabric matching that used for the 'Beetlewing Dress' and previously thought to have been trimmed from the hem (though since discovered not to match the hem of the surviving costume) provides one instance of such modifications. Zenie Tinker, Personal Communication with the author, 14 July 2010.

¹²⁶ As discussed the value of costumes, even if sold when in a condition which was 'as good as new' was reduced by almost half. "Discarded Stage Costumes," 10.

¹²⁷ Olive Chaplin retired as Curator of Smallhythe in 1969 and was replaced by Molly Thomas, as this point there was a significant change in Museum Practice and a consequent alteration in the attitude towards Terry's costumes. A conservator called Judith Doré carried out conservation work and modifications to the Beetlewing Dress during the 1980s but as Tinker noted, this treatment was not formally recorded or documented. Zenie Tinker, Personal Communication with the author, 14 July 2010.

¹²⁸ This figure was widely quoted in the press, which also publicised the fact that over 700 hours were spent conserving the costume. Maev Kennedy, "Ellen Terry's beetlewing dress back in the limelight after £110,000 restoration," *Guardian*, 11 March 2011.

from the normal pattern and enables the researcher to identify the factors or ‘cultural markers’ which resulted in the adaptation, loss, destruction or preservation of a garment.

The biographical mode of analysis also provides a means through which to establish which ‘periods’ and ‘individuals’ have played an important role in shaping the biography of a surviving costume and why. This method is therefore of particular value for researchers endeavouring to explore and document what Pearce termed the ‘chains of meaning’ within which such garments are enmeshed. The biographical model offered here also draws attention to another issue of significance: ‘Context.’ As this chapter has shown, the identities of costumes are shaped not only by ‘context’ within which they were originally created, but also evolve in response to the ‘contexts’ in which they are subsequently used. In the case of the ‘Beetlewing Dress,’ its current ‘context,’ as the dominant feature within a specially constructed display case reaffirms and signals the costume’s shift from an ephemeral garment, subject to re-use and disposal, to its present status as an important museum object, worthy of preservation. This display also acts as a testament not simply to the historical significance of this specific costume, but also to that of its original wearer, Terry, for whom it continues to act as a ‘surrogate.’

This status confirms Stallybrass and Jones theories surrounding the emotional function that certain costumes perform as ‘carriers of identity.’ As Hodgdon has discussed, and the case studies of Terry’s theatre costumes have shown, this function can have a significant impact on perceptions surrounding the historical status of a costume. An association with a famous performer or performance, also has the potential to imbue a surviving costume with an emotional resonance which has an identifiable impact on any interaction with their physical remains.

Another element of the costume's identity exposed through this biographical approach to analysis, is its fluctuating financial value. As Chapter 4 discussed, when first created elaborate costumes such as the beetlewing dress could cost as much as £150, a price which exceeded that charged for couture garments of the same period. When a production ended or a performer retired however, their value was greatly diminished, particularly if, as was the case with many of Terry's costumes, they were damaged through use over an extended period. As the biography of the beetlewing dress demonstrates however, translation to a museum context, transforms this evidence of wear into a characteristic which is often valued as evidence of the 'authenticity' and 'significance' of the costume. The money and time invested in conserving this specific costume provides an indication of the value now attached to the costume and its status as an iconic symbol of Terry's original 1888 performance.¹²⁹

Both this chapter and Chapter 4 have also demonstrated the central part that evidence gathered through a close material examination of these 'physical remains' can play in research. The case studies discussed have illustrated the range of details including, fabric weight, colour, construction and modifications which can be discovered through a close engagement with surviving costumes. Chapter 2 touched upon what Roach described as the 'kinesthetic imagination' a 'faculty of memory' which, he suggests, provides 'a way of thinking about movements - at once remembered and reinvented - the otherwise unthinkable.'¹³⁰ The analysis of Terry's surviving costumes has demonstrated the degree to which evidence of wear, damage, and even the construction of surviving theatre

¹²⁹ When assessing the 'value' of items in the collections within Britain, many institutions employ the 'Waverley Criteria'. These consider the status of an object in relation to three criteria: first 'History - Is it closely connected with our history and national life?'; second 'Aesthetics - Is it of outstanding aesthetic importance?', and third, 'Scholarship - Is it of outstanding significance for study of some particular branch of art, learning or history.' As this thesis has shown, the beetlewing dress scores highly against all three criteria. Arts Council England, *UK export Licensing for Cultural Goods - Procedures and guidance for exports of works of art and other cultural goods*, Issue 3 (Arts Council England, 2015) 12-13.

¹³⁰ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 16-17

costumes, can reveal information regarding the physical body and movement patterns of their original wearers, which is rarely recorded in written and visual sources. As such these garments represent an important research source, which can be used alongside and in addition to the textual and visual evidence employed by Roach, to engage with, and activate, this 'kinesthetic imagination.'

Whilst the range of surviving costumes directly connected with Terry, and the level of supporting material is exceptional the methodology proposed here is not dependent on a comparable quantity of data. Scope therefore exists for applying this biographical mode of analysis to other performers and also to those costumes which survive only in photographs, film or text and not in actuality.

Thus, although this thesis emphasises the important role that extant garments should play in research, it does not reject an analysis of a stage costume in the absence of a surviving garment. Indeed, as the 'Typical Biography' demonstrates, the garments worn in production are rarely preserved or available for study. With this challenge in mind, Chapter 6 will present a methodology which illustrates the manner in which supporting evidence, in the form of images, correspondence and contemporary descriptions, can be used to investigate costumes which have not survived in a physical form. Focussing particularly on the extant visual record of Terry and her career, this next chapter will also consider the extent to which Terry actively 'fashioned' her 'celebrity' and 'private' persona, and the role which her dress, both on and off the stage, played in this process of self-fashioning.

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CHAPTER 6 - ELLEN TERRY (1847-1928): 'FASHIONING' AN IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

The historical and theatrical context within which Terry was living and working have now been established. Chapter 4 and 5 have also demonstrated the important evidence that Terry's extant theatre costume can contribute to an examination of her life and career. They also revealed the part that these garments played in reinforcing Terry's off-stage identity, whilst still communicating her on-stage character. Building upon these foundations, this chapter now considers the part that Terry's dress (both on and off the stage) played in a wider process of self-fashioning through which she sought to control her public and private 'identities,' not only during her lifetime, but also after her death.

Engaging with the concept that, as Stephen Greenblatt argues, 'human identity' can be 'fashioned' as part of a 'manipulable, artful process,' this chapter will consider the extent to which Terry's conscious efforts at self-fashioning contributed to her professional and social success.¹ Following Greenblatt's lead, it will consider the cultural and social forces which shaped the 'selves' Terry presented to her 'audience,' and will analyse the manner in which Terry constructed 'a distinctive personality' to win public affection and respect.² Particular attention will be paid to the artistic context within which Terry operated, specifically her engagement with the Aesthetic movement.

Surviving photographs, illustrations and paintings of Terry, will be central to a discussion which will examine both the 'public' and 'private' 'identities' Terry formed for herself. Of equal importance is the evidence preserved in her correspondence and the annotation

¹ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, 2-3.

² Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, 2-3.

with which she filled her books. The significant role dress played in Terry's efforts to 'fashion' her identity has been largely overlooked by Terry scholars. As this chapter will reveal, Terry employed her garments to construct, and reinforce the 'identities' she adopted both on and off the stage.

Whilst this chapter focuses upon the 'public' and 'private' identity Terry fashioned during the peak of her fame, it will also confirm that she attached equal importance to the image which would survive after her death. It will therefore conclude by examining the means through which Terry sought to secure her status among the 'theatrical aristocracy' and will discuss the individuals who assisted in securing her 'legacy.'

6.1 'PUBLIC' IDENTITY

Chapter 3 established the theatrical context within which Terry was trained and the figures who influenced her approach to performance and stage design. It also touched upon the constraints Terry faced regarding the roles she was 'permitted' to perform both as a woman and a professional actress. This chapter will build upon this discussion, to consider the extent and nature of Terry's agency over her 'professional' and 'private, 'self.' It will also examine the 'identities' she adopted, willingly or otherwise, to sustain her popular appeal.

The focus will be upon the years in Terry's career after her return to the stage in 1874 and before her mental and physical decline in the 1920s. During this period Terry was financially independent and therefore no longer reliant upon the support or guidance of the family and professionals who had shaped her early career. This was also arguably when she had the greatest potential opportunity and ability to exercise control over her professional and private life.

Actress and mother

When financial necessity compelled Terry to return to London and the stage in 1874, she did so as a ‘fallen woman’ and a mother of two illegitimate children. By 1875 Terry’s relationship with Godwin had collapsed and her earnings were the sole source of income for her household. It was therefore essential for Terry to achieve stable employment and ideally, professional success. To achieve this, however, she needed to earn the support not only of the theatrical profession but also the public as a whole.

As someone who was already challenging social morals by undertaking a professional career, Terry also have been conscious of the additional controversy attracted by her personal life. Yet, unlike many of her contemporaries, including Langtry, she never sought to conceal the origins or existence of her two children.³ Like Bernhardt, Terry publicly acknowledged her children, and even appeared alongside them on the stage.⁴ Indeed, whilst her professional commitments often necessitated her absence, and they were both sent away to school, Terry remained closely involved with both her children throughout her life.⁵

³ In her biography of the actress Laura Beatty describes the measures taken to conceal Langtry’s pregnancy and the extent to which her daughter, Jeanne Marie (1881-1964) was kept in ignorance of her true relationship with her ‘Tante.’ Beatty, *Lillie Langtry Manners, Masks and Morals*, 176-184, 272-3, 303-4.

⁴ They first appeared on stage in 1878, ‘walking on’ in the Royal Court production of *Olivia* in which Terry played the title role. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 10. Bernhardt’s son, Maurice Bernhardt, was born 1864. His father was rumoured to have been the Belgian Prince Charles Joseph Henri de Ligne (1837-1914). Though she rarely refers to him in her autobiography, Bernhardt never hid Maurice’s existence and both the contemporary press, and Bernhardt’s biographers, stress the actress’s devotion to her son. She continued to support her son throughout his life, and appointed him to manage two of her theatres. Further discussion of their relationship can be found in Ruth Braddon, *Being Devine, A Biography of Sarah Bernhardt* (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1991), 89-90, 305-8, 327 and Robert Gottlieb, *Sarah: The Life of Sarah Bernhardt* (London: Yale University Press, 2010) 38-89, 149-152.

⁵ As surviving letters demonstrate, and biographies of Terry discuss, the actress remained closely involved in the lives of both her children, providing financial support for both at various stages in their professional careers. See for instance, Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 56-60, 164-167, 184-186, and Michael Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History, The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving and their Remarkable Families* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2008) 202-211, 303-317.

Challenging ‘The idea of Terry [...] as fallen woman and outcast exile, securing tolerance and sympathy from artistic and theatre folk,’ Cockin proposes that this characterisation, ‘needs to be qualified,’ contending that ‘the visibility of such “fallen women” on the stage [...] receiving the admiration of the public, to some extent undermined the category “fallen woman.”’⁶ The extent of Terry’s popular appeal lends weight to Cockin’s assertion, but it is essential not to disregard the dominance of a moral code which, as Vinicus identifies, prescribed ‘fierce condemnation’ of such women, and promoted the dominant ideal of ‘the perfect lady’: submissive, innocent and maternal.⁷

Marriage to a theatrical spouse combined with a professional partnership, offered one route for actresses such as Marie Bancroft (1839-1921), Madge Kendal (1848-1935) and Maud Tree (1863-1937) to achieve respectability and success.⁸ Terry also married a fellow actor, Charles Wardell (1839-1885) in 1878, shortly before her engagement at the Lyceum Theatre. This relationship, though short lived, provided both Terry and her children with legitimacy at a crucial point in Terry’s career.⁹ As Chapter 3 suggested, Terry’s professional partnership with Irving offered her a ‘stage husband’ and

⁶ Katharine Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the Relics and Creating the Brand,” *Ellen Terry Spheres of Influence*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), 144.

⁷ Martha Vicinus addresses this issue in her introduction to *Suffer and be Still, Women in the Victorian Age*, x-xv.

⁸ All three actresses initially worked independently, but spent much of their career working alongside and in partnership with, their husbands, Marie Bancroft and Squire Bancroft achieving joint success at the Prince of Wales Theatre; Madge Kendal managing the St James’s Theatre with her husband, and Maud Tree with Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree at the Haymarket and His Majesty’s Theatre. Similarly, Jacky Bratton discussing the period between 1830-1870, argues that ‘The most obviously hidden influence on the development of the West End is that of Ellen Tree (1805-80), a successful actress whose fame was - quite deliberately - entirely subsumed into her choice of role and title of Mrs. Kean’. Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage: Marriage, Management and the Mapping of Gender in London, 1830-1870*, 159.

⁹ As noted in Chapter 3, Terry met Wardell whilst working for Charles Reade at the Court Theatre. Charles Clavering Wardell (1839-1885) acted under the name Kelly. Terry’s first husband, G.F. Watts filed for divorce in 1877 and Terry’s marriage to Wardell took place later the same year. They separated in 1881; significantly, the same year in which the Married Women’s Property Act was passed. Roger Manvell notes that it was not until the actress’ second marriage that Terry was reconciled with her parents and siblings. Manvell, *Ellen Terry*, 100. Auerbach has challenged Manvell’s description of the union as a ‘concession to respectability,’ however, suggesting that sexual attraction may also have motivated the marriage. Manvell, *Ellen Terry*, 137-8; Auerbach, *Ellen Terry, Player in Her Time*, 183-5 and Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 80-86.

professional stability, nevertheless her personal life remained vulnerable to scandal.¹⁰ Terry therefore sought an alternative route through which achieve public acceptance, foregrounding her role as a ‘mother’ in her efforts to re-establish her ‘private’ respectability.

Addressing this struggle for ‘respectability’ T.C. Davis suggests that ‘[...] to counteract negative judgements about their public existence’ many actresses ‘endeavoured to make the propriety of their private lives visible and accepted.’¹¹ Terry was not the first, or only, actress to purposely highlight her ‘maternal identity’ in an effort to ‘counteract’ condemnation of her career and ‘private’ life.¹² As Jan MacDonald has argued Sarah Siddons ‘deliberately exploited [her family] to further her theatrical career.’¹³ This approach enabled Siddons to distance herself from ‘the common perception of the actress as whore,’ by

[...] presenting herself, on stage as well as off, as a good caring mother who in happier circumstances would have shunned public life and relished domesticity, but whom financial constraints had forced into employment in the theatre in order to support the offspring she adored.¹⁴

Mrs Patrick Campbell (1865-1940) adopted a similar attitude and, as Eltis records,

¹⁰ In her memoirs, Duff Gordon, recalled that ‘It seems incredible that in those days there were many people who looked askance at Ellen Terry, and I was often warned that I should damage my own reputation by being seen so often in her company.’ Duff Gordon, *Discretions and Indiscretions*, 34.

¹¹ T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women*, 69.

¹² It is important to note that, as T.C. Davis records, not all actresses portray marriage and motherhood in a positive light, and the impact on their professional careers was a serious dilemma for many. T.C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Woman*, 55-57.

¹³ MacDonald describes how, when leaving Bath to perform in London for instance, Siddons presented her three children on stage in a tableau which illustrated the ‘Three Reasons’ which compelled her to abandon the city. Jan MacDonald, “Sarah Siddons Performs Maternity,” *Extraordinary Actors: Essays on Popular Performers: Studies in Honour of Peter Thomson*, eds. Jane Milling and Martin Banham (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004), 62-3.

¹⁴ Jan MacDonald, “Sarah Siddons Performs Maternity,” 58, 62-3.

Her children regularly joined her on tour. Similarly, when both Campbell's children chose acting careers, they frequently became part of her supporting cast on as well as off stage, reminding Campbell's audiences that in addition to being a successful actress, she was also a wife and mother.¹⁵



Figure 6.1 - Window & Grove, Edward Gordon Craig as Joey, the gardening boy, in *Eugene Aram* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1885, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.6cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:548-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

In 1885, Terry introduced American audiences to her son, Edward Gordon Craig. Having joined her on the tour, Craig (then 13) performed the role of Joey, the Gardener's boy, in the Chicago production of *Eugene Aram*. Whether consciously or not, Gordon Craig's public appearance, which coincided with Christmas celebrations, provided a cleverly judged advertisement of Terry's 'private' role as mother and, importantly, demonstrated

¹⁵ Sos Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 177.

her maternal affection.¹⁶ Gordon Craig's theatrical performance was commemorated in commercial photographs and by Terry in her autobiography.¹⁷ [FIGURE 6.1]



Figure 6.2 - Frederick Hollyer, Ellen Terry with her children Edith Ailsa Craig and Edward Gordon Craig, Platinum Print from *Portraits of Many Persons of Note*, (Volume 3) 1886. 15.4 x 10.3cm. Museum Number 7862.1938.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.3 - Frederick Hollyer, Ellen Terry with her children Edith Ailsa Craig and Edward Gordon Craig, Platinum Print from *Portraits of Many Persons of Note*, (Volume 3) 1886. 15.4 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Museum Number 7865.1938.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁶ Melville notes that Terry missing her children, but knowing that she could not look after both, had '[...] cabled some friends who were about to leave for New York, to "bring one of the children" thereby avoiding favouritism'. Meville, *Ellen and Edy*, 115.

¹⁷ Terry describes her pride in her son's performance in her autobiography *The Story of My Life*, 178-9.

Two photographs, from 1886, confirm the success with which Terry presented herself in this maternal role. Terry's celebrity on both sides of the Atlantic was sufficient to merit her inclusion in Frederick Hollyer's series of photograph albums *Portraits of Many Persons of Note*, alongside leading artists, writers and actors of the period.¹⁸ Two of Hollyer's photographs show Terry alongside her children.¹⁹ In both these portraits the three figures are positioned close to one another, connected either by a direct embrace or the touch of a hand [FIGURE 6.2 and 6.3]. Both Richard Brilliant and Graham Clarke have commented on the degree to which the '[...] pressure to conform to social norms' shapes the composition of a portrait.²⁰ Indeed, as Clarke notes, 'The photographic image contains a "photographic message" and forms part of a "practice of signification" which reflects the codes, values and beliefs of the culture as a whole.'²¹ Interestingly, the body language and positioning depicted in these images does not make any allusions to Terry's professional career. Instead these portraits portray her in a role and setting which conforms to 'codes and values' of the society within which they were produced: presenting her as a caring mother and emphasising her 'private identity' as the head and centre of a close and affectionate family.²² Although the lack of documentation surrounding their composition makes it impossible to determine who played the leading

¹⁸ As John Hannavay records Hollyer's subjects included the artists William Morris, Edward Burne Jones, Ford Madox Brown, William Holman Hunt, G.F. Watts, Lawrence Alma Tadema, Aubrey Beardsley and Walter Crane; leading writers amongst whom were H.G.Wells, George Bernard Shaw and W.B. Yeats and actors such as Mrs. Patrick Campbell. John Hannavay, *Encyclopaedia of Nineteenth Century Photography* (London: Routledge, 2013) 710-11.

¹⁹ Frederick Hollyer's *Portraits of Many Persons of Note* fills three volumes with nearly 200 portraits in total. Hollyer took at least five images of Terry for these volumes, two of the five show Terry with her children, two show Terry alone, another shows Terry with an, as yet, unidentified young woman in the shirt, necktie and tailored jacket which would come to characterise the dress of the 'New Woman.' Copies of all five images are held by the Prints and Drawings department of the V&A, Reference numbers 7861-1938, 7862-1938, 7863-1938, 7864-1938 and 7865-1938.

²⁰ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 11.

²¹ Clarke, *The Photograph*, 28.

²² Bernhardt also featured in images showing her in a comparable maternal, and affectionate role. Two such images, both showing Bernhardt alongside, and in the first instance actually embracing, her son, feature as Figure 9 and 10 in Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, *The Divine Sarah: A Life of Sarah Bernhardt* (London: HarperCollins, 1992).

part in their composition, the ‘photographic message’ conveyed by their content is significant and demonstrates the willingness of Terry’s audience to accept her ‘public performance’ of this ‘private’ maternal identity.

As interviews and images attest, Terry’s children remained part of her ‘public’ and ‘private’ life throughout her career.²³ [FIGURE 6.4 and 6.5] By not merely acknowledging and instead highlighting the existence of her children, Terry was able to create a narrative that reaffirmed her identity as a caring mother who possessed the ‘feminine’ virtues associated with this ‘domestic’ and ‘womanly’ role. The public presentation of her children on the stage, and in commercial photographs, established their role as part of, and the motivation for, her professional career. This allowed Terry to present her entry into the ‘male,’ ‘public,’ sphere as an unavoidable sacrifice made through necessity rather than any personal ambition.



Figure 6.4 - Photographer Unknown, Ellen Terry and Edith Craig on the Lyceum Company tour to America, 1895-6, Sepia photograph on paper. 13.7 x 9.6 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:511-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²³ Both children feature frequently in her autobiography, and, as Chapter 3 and 5 discussed, Terry also worked with Edy when creating her costumes and with Gordon Craig during her brief period as an Actor/Manager in 1903. When, as adults, both children spent some time as part of the Lyceum Company, Terry appeared alongside both in a number of productions.



Figure 6.5- Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Catherine Duval and Edward Gordon Craig Arthur de St Valery in *The Dead Heart* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1889, Sepia photograph on paper. 8.6 x 5.8 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:397-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

6.2 CELEBRITY

Personality or Art?

Terry's international fame also owed much to her partnership with Irving, but it was also founded upon the affection Terry inspired in the public. Central to her appeal was her 'charm,' the potency of which, as Chapter 3 discussed, was repeatedly remarked upon by critics.²⁴ The magnetism of Terry's stage 'identity' was such that one critic suggested that 'Her genius is that of personality as opposed to acquired knowledge in her art.'²⁵ Not all critics attributed Terry's success solely to her 'charm' however, with one arguing that

²⁴ Christopher St John observed Terry's charm was not affected by age, because the 'eloquent magnetism' of her personality 'owed little to the sexual allure to which time is merciless.' Terry, Craig and St John, *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, 286.

²⁵ "Miss Ellen Terry – A pictorial record of fifty years on the stage. With portraits of the family of players to which she belongs," *The Sphere*, April 28th 1906: iv. Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 57, SC2-G22, British Library, London.

[...] It would be, [...] foolish to assert that personal charm and grace alone account for Miss Terry's success [...] Ellen Terry is a highly competent and conscientious stage artist who has worked hard all her life, and who, in my judgement, has been quite as much hindered, as helped, by her personality [...] I put her success down, therefore, to a triumph over her personality, rather than an easy ascension because of it.²⁶

The restrictions Terry's reputation for 'charm' and 'femininity' threatened to place on the stage 'identities' she was deemed capable of undertaking were made apparent in Chapter 3. As this chapter showed, Terry's performance as Lady Macbeth in 1888 provoked particular controversy and led one critic to declare that:

[...] the effect is of a woman trying to assume a character against which Nature protests. [...] She is playing at being a bad woman; she cannot be one. The Ellen Terry personality is unconquerable and asserts itself at every turn.²⁷

There were other instances, however, when Terry's 'personality' worked to her advantage, encouraging audiences to forgive errors and to accept Terry's interpretation of a role. An assessment of Terry's performance as Imogen in *Cymbeline* (1896), for example, declared '[...] Is this the Imogen of Shakespeare? Who cares? What matters it to the audience? It is the Imogen of Ellen Terry [...].'²⁸

²⁶ "Description of Terry's career and personality, in a revival of *Much Ado About Nothing*," ca. 1899, Press Cutting, Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883*, Garrick Club, London.

²⁷ *Unidentified Periodical*, ca.1888, Press cutting, Production file Lyceum Theatre, Macbeth, 1888. Victoria and Albert Museum.

²⁸ *Unidentified Periodical*, ca.1896, Press cutting, Production file, Lyceum Theatre, *Cymbeline*, 1896, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Eltis suggests that Terry's 'celebrity' persona '[...]' became an entity in itself, not her 'veridical' self but a persona that usefully complemented her on stage repertoire.²⁹ The extent to which Terry's performances became dominated by this 'celebrity persona' is apparent in one critic's declaration that '[...] Ellen Terry was something more than an exceedingly competent actress. She was a glowing personality.' Indeed, they contend that '[...] divine fire of her personality and poetic intuition' was such that, for her audiences, Terry became 'ageless' and was therefore able, even in later life, to appear, 'as young as the jaunty *Portia* [...] or the blithe charmer that was *Nance Oldfield*.'³⁰

This characterisation of Terry's performances exemplifies Carlson's description of the 'halo effect,' explored in Chapter 3, in which 'fond memories' of these 'previous performances' enable actors to overcome the physical effects of age. In Terry's case however, the repeated emphasis on her 'personality' indicates that the powerful 'halo' which surrounded her performances, though heightened by memories of her past success, was also founded upon the affection which her 'public persona' continued to inspire in her audiences.

Rejecting 'ambition'

Terry frequently downplayed the part ambition played in her success, though she did emphasise the amount of hard, gruelling work required to progress in her profession. In her autobiography she declared

[...] I have been happiest in my work when I was working for some one else. I admire those impersonal people who care for nothing outside their own ambition, yet I detest them at the same time, and I have the simplest

²⁹ Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 179.

³⁰ "Letters and Art: Ellen Terry" *The Literary Digest*, New York City: Funk & Wagnalls., August 11th 1928), 20-21. Ellen Terry Collection (125/8), Box 14, EC Photos 1, British Library, London.

faith that absolute devotion to another human being means the greatest *happiness*.³¹

She also deliberately crossed out a description of her ‘ambition’ in her copy of *Charles Hiatt’s Ellen Terry and her Impersonations* (1898) adding ‘[...] not at all. I was a paid servant and had at least to try to do it’ and signing this annotation ‘E.T.’³² As a result, whilst at one point ‘perhaps the best paid woman in England,’ Terry was still perceived as an unambitious woman who would never ‘[...] have worked alone [or] worked selfishly for her own aggrandisement, and her own financial benefit in a manner of the properly constituted “star” actress’ and would always ‘[...] have served someone.’³³ This assessment of her status, written in 1907, contrasts starkly with contemporary perceptions of the equally successful Bernhardt, who Henry James maintained was ‘[...] not, to my sense, a celebrity because she is an artist. She is a celebrity because, apparently, she desires with an intensity that has rarely been equalled to be one [...].’³⁴ It also illustrates Terry’s ability to present a ‘professional identity’ which conformed to the ‘feminine,’ ‘womanly,’ ideal advocated by society. Yet, as this chapter will go on to discuss, this ‘feminine identity’ was contradicted by the ‘independent’ career Terry pursued after leaving the Lyceum, in particular her period in management (1903) and the lecture tours she would undertake between 1910 and 1915. Furthermore, as this chapter will show, both Terry’s published writings and ‘private’ annotations within her library, document

³¹ It is important to note however, that this statement is made in part to justify and explain her decision to abandon the stage, and society, to live with Godwin. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 77-8.

³² Charles Hiatt, *Ellen Terry and her Impersonations* (George Bell and Sons, 1898), 265. This book forms part of the library at Smallhythe, reference E.V.4.10.

³³ As discussed in Chapter 3, Powell notes that Terry earned up to £200 a week at the peak of her career. Kerry Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 7. An untitled review of Christopher St. John’s Biography, published in *The Daily Graphic*, 10th May 1907, Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 78, SCB5-G28, British Library, London. Similarly, in 1894, Ethel Mackenzie McKenna felt that ‘Miss Terry is not one of those actresses who can find nothing to admire in the other great ones of her profession. She is above the pretty jealousies that so often mark actresses.’ Ethel Mackenzie McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” (*McClures Magazine*, 1894), 458.

³⁴ Henry James, ‘The Comédie-Francaise in London,’ *The Scenic Art: Notes on Acting & the Drama: 1872-1901*. Ed. Henry James and Allan Wade (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1948), 128.

her willingness to challenge Irving and to voice strong opinions regarding the direction and design of the productions in which she performed.



Figure 6.6 - Window & Grove, Ellen Terry, ca. 1890s. Matte hand coloured bromide postcard print. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x 160594.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Public image

Terry's ability to sustain a 'public image' which, Cockin argues, 'exploited her beauty' and conformed to 'conventional gender roles,' stems from her understanding of the communicative power and importance of the visual image.³⁵ Many paintings of Terry were publicly displayed and have made a significant contribution to shaping her legacy, not least the enduring fame of the 'Beetlewing dress.' It was Terry's photographic image,

³⁵ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 45, 48, 150; Although Terry's autobiography describes her experience as a model for artists such as Watts and Singer-Sargent, it makes no reference to the many hours she also spent posing in photographer's studios Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 53, 305-7.

however, that was circulated amongst the majority of her original audience, as, from the 1860s onwards, the ‘[...] acquisition, collecting and hoarding of *cartes de visites* [...] became an international obsession.’³⁶

An object ‘valued for its own sake,’ Chapter 1 addressed the extent to which the photograph’s function as a physical object, is, ‘central to its function as a socially salient object.’³⁷ Whilst Mayer situates these images at ‘the core of an intricate commercial transaction’ between sitters, photographer, seller and consumer,³⁸ Gardner considers how consumers engaged with photographs, ‘individualising’ their images with hand tinting, ‘jewelling’ and ‘tinselling.’³⁸ [FIGURE 6.6] This tactile engagement with these images resonates with the emphasis Elizabeth Edwards placed on the important part physical engagement plays in the creation and consumption of photographs.³⁹ Whether by placing them in albums, or through physically altering the colours and adding detailing, every consumer was ‘individualising’ the images in their collections. This was a process in which, as Edward’s has shown, photographs could be used by collectors, including Terry

³⁶ Terry’s career is documented in thousands of surviving *cartes de visites* and cabinet card photographs and picture postcards, and as David Mayer notes, the nine year old Terry was amongst the first actresses to appear in photographic print. As Mayer also writes, as the century progressed technological innovations in photographic practices and printing processes made it possible to increase production and reduce prices, widening the circulation further. Mayer, “The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film,” 78-80. Viv Gardner provides a useful analysis of the various types of picture postcard being created by the early twentieth century. Gardner, ‘Gertie Millar and the “Rules for Actresses and Vicars’ Wives,”’ 102-106; as does Gail Marshall in “Cultural formations: the nineteenth-century touring actress and her international audiences.”

³⁷ Elizabeth Edwards. “Photographs as Objects of Memory,” *Material Memories: Design and Evocation*, ed. M.Kwint, C.Breward, J.Aynsley (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 221-222.

³⁸ Mayer, “The actress as photographic icon: from early photography to early film,” 83 and Gardner, ‘Gertie Millar and the “Rules for Actresses and Vicars’ Wives,”’ 104-5.

³⁹ Edwards, “Photographs as Objects of Memory”, 227-8.

herself, to construct a new narrative and ‘meaning’ over which the subjects of the images had no control.⁴⁰

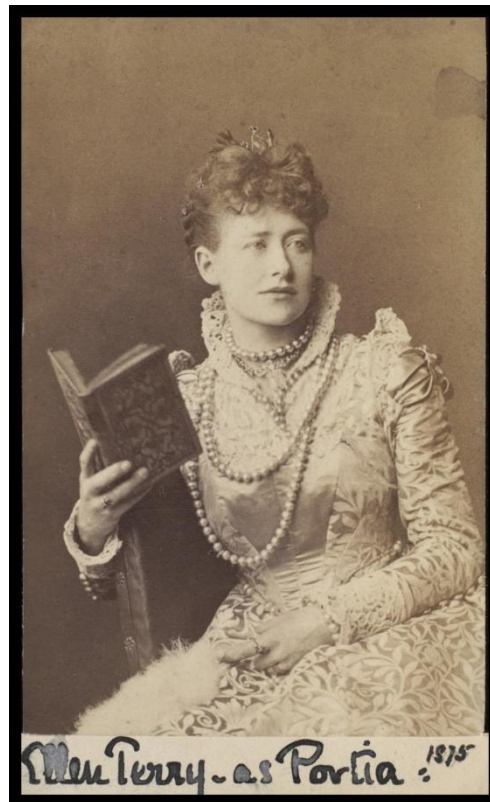


Figure 6.7 - Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:218-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

As has been established, Terry was conscious of the importance of conveying an appropriate ‘message’ through her ‘photographic self,’ and demonstrated an ability to use such images to express very ‘specific’ identities. Though sitters exercised relatively limited control over the composition of the photograph, these collectable images became an increasingly vital tool for actors, providing their subject with a means through which

⁴⁰ Edwards cites Bourdieu’s, *Photography: A Middle Brow Art*, trans. S. Whiteside (Cambridge, 1990) and *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1986 [1979]). Edwards. “Photographs as Objects of Memory”, 224-5. The potential implications of this process of ‘re-construction’ are made apparent in Gardner’s examination of the expanding production of picture postcards in the early twentieth century and the part they played in ‘the commodification of the actress.’ Gardner ‘Gertie Millar and the “Rules for Actresses and Vicars’ Wives,” 98-101. Similarly, Penny Farfan and Veronica Kelly have made important contributions to research on this theme. See, for instance, Penny Farfan, ““The Picture Postcard is a sign of the times”: Theatre Postcards and Modernism.” *Theatre History Studies*, 32.1 (2012): 93-119 and Kelly, Veronica. “Beauty and the market: Actress postcards and their senders in early twentieth-century Australia.” *New Theatre Quarterly* 20.78 (May 2004): 99-116. Web. 14 March 2016.

to generate publicity, seek work, and, most importantly, to establish a relationship with the public.⁴¹ Terry's participation in this self-promotion can be identified in the large number of extant photograph of the actress, many of them signed directly or even with a facsimile of Terry's signature.⁴² [FIGURE 6.7] As Cockin has shown, Terry's willingness to embrace the financial benefits of celebrity for both public and private gain, extended beyond the creation of commercial photographs. In 1893, for instance, Terry chose to sell her autograph to raise funds for the Queen's Jubilee Hospital. Significantly however, by 1903, her decision to promote her 'photographic self' was compelled by personal financial need, rather than a public, charitable, initiative.⁴³ As Cockin notes 'The Ellen Terry brand became allied to various products.'⁴⁴ [FIGURE 6.8] Aware of the negative taint that could arise from such mercenary activities however, Terry offset her commercial actions by using her international profile to raise further funds for charitable causes,

⁴¹ The restrictions that technology and the approach favoured by the photographer placed over the control the sitter exercised on the content of an image must also be considered. Particularly given that until the 1890s the settings in which performers were photographed, though replicating those seen on the stage were generally often provided by the photographer, and many elements of the image, including the poses adopted, were dictated by the sophistication, or otherwise, of the photographic equipment used. Mayer, for example, identifies a number of tropes in the poses and size of the photographs produced of actresses which evolved in response to developments in photographic technology. Mayer. "The actress as photographic icon," *Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, 80-3.

⁴² Dedications on some of the images in the collection at Smallhythe and the V&A, reveal that the actress also distributed these images among her friends. See, for example, NT/SMA/PH/1d and S.47-2008. Further evidence can also be found in passing references Terry makes in autobiography. A letter sent to Terry by the playwright and critic Tom Taylor in circa 1879, which Terry quotes in her autobiography, for instance, expresses "A thousand thanks for the photographs. I like the profile best. It is most Paolo Veronesish and gives the right notion of your Portia, although the colour hardly suggests the golden gorgeousness of your dress and the blonde glory of the hair and complexion..." Letter from Tom Taylor to Ellen Terry, ca.1879, quoted by Terry in *The Story of My Life*, 115.

⁴³ As letters and documents within the papers on loan from Smallhythe to the British Library show (Reference Ellen Terry Collection [125]) the money lost through the productions at the Imperial Theatre were only partially recouped through subsequent tours, and even the funds raised at Terry's 1906 Jubilee celebrations proved insufficient to sustain the actress and her dependents in Terry's later years. See also Cockin, "Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand," 134, 139 and Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History*, 303-317, 492-495.

⁴⁴ These included Hindes Ellen Terry hairpins, Odol's toothpaste and Symington's soups. Cockin, "Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand," 186. Terry was not the only celebrity whose image was used for marketing purposes, both Bernhardt and Langtry were amongst who endorsed toiletries and other products. Catherine Hindson examines this aspect of celebrity in "'Mrs. Langtry seems to be on the way to a fortune': The Jersey Lily and Models of Late Nineteenth Century Fame," *In the Limelight and Under the Microscope: Forms and Functions of Female Celebrity*. Ed. Holmes, Su, and Diane Negra (New York: Continuum, 2011).

focusing her attention on the ‘Servers of the Blind League’ and ‘mothers’, both causes which were compatible with her identity as a feminine and caring figure.⁴⁵



Figure 6.8 - Artist unknown. Advertisement for Hinde's (Patent) "Ellen Terry" Hair pins. Published in *The Illustrated London News*, 23 May 1885. Engraving on paper. Record photograph courtesy of Uthra Rajgopal. 5 February 2012.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Private record

As the photographs preserved at Smallhythe reveal, Terry also employed her ‘public’ image for ‘personal’ purposes. Many of the photographs in the collection have been annotated by Terry offering an insight not only into her opinions on the success of individual photographs, but also the degree to which she employed these images to create a record of her life and career. The numerous images of Terry’s houses within the collection, not only those produced as public ‘picture postcards’ but also other ‘private’ images, illustrate Terry’s efforts to document her life. One image showing the exterior of

⁴⁵ Cockin explains that Terry worked for the ‘[...] Servers of the Blind League and the League of Service for Motherhood’ and became ‘[...] the public face of the St Pancras School for Mothers.’ Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,” 139.

the pub Terry rented in Uxbridge, for instance, has been covered with annotation by the actress. On the front Terry has written her name, and added details about the rooms and surrounding area, whilst on the rear she records ‘Uxbridge – 21 Feb’, ‘My 1st Cottage.’ Recalling the ‘3 old ladies on ground floor’ and the ‘jug of beer or lemon on the counter only.’⁴⁶ [FIGURE 6.9] Terry made comparable notes on many images of her past homes and a photograph of The Red House, Gustard Wood (where Terry lived with Godwin) is labelled ‘No.II, Where Edy was born in 1869.’ As this annotation suggests, Terry has recorded when she lived at the house depicted and at what stage in her life.⁴⁷ [FIGURE 6.10]

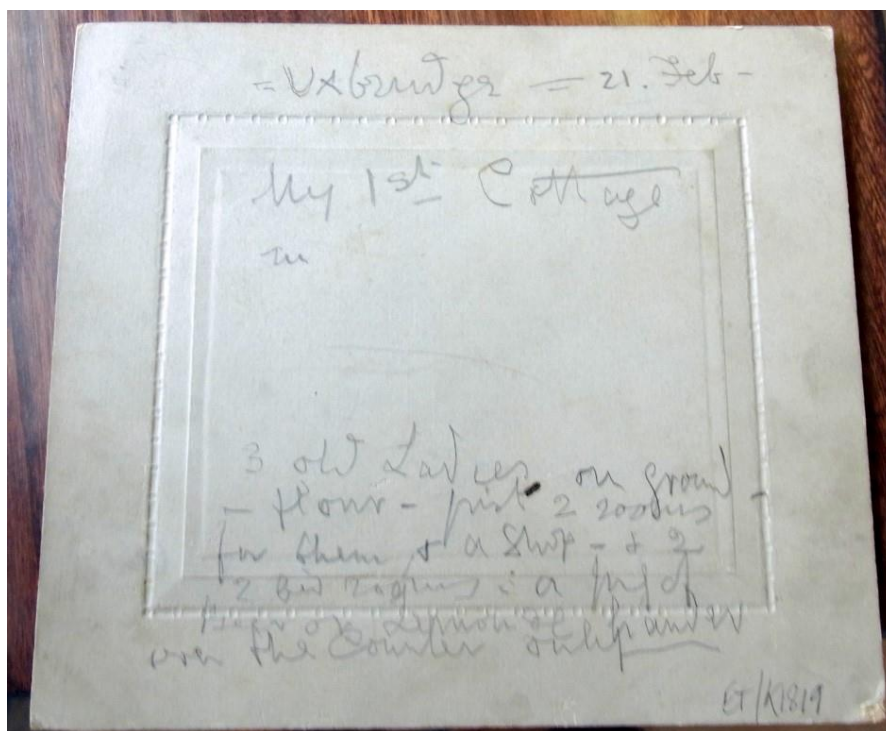


Figure 6.9 - Detail of the rear of a photograph of the Aubrey Arms, Uxbridge. A cottage rented by Terry in ca.1889. Personal photograph by the author, 1 September 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/250.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁴⁶ Handwritten annotation in pen and ink on photograph in the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place, Image Reference NT/SMA/PH/250.

⁴⁷ Handwritten annotation in pencil and ink on photograph in the Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place, Image Reference NT/SMA/PH/264.

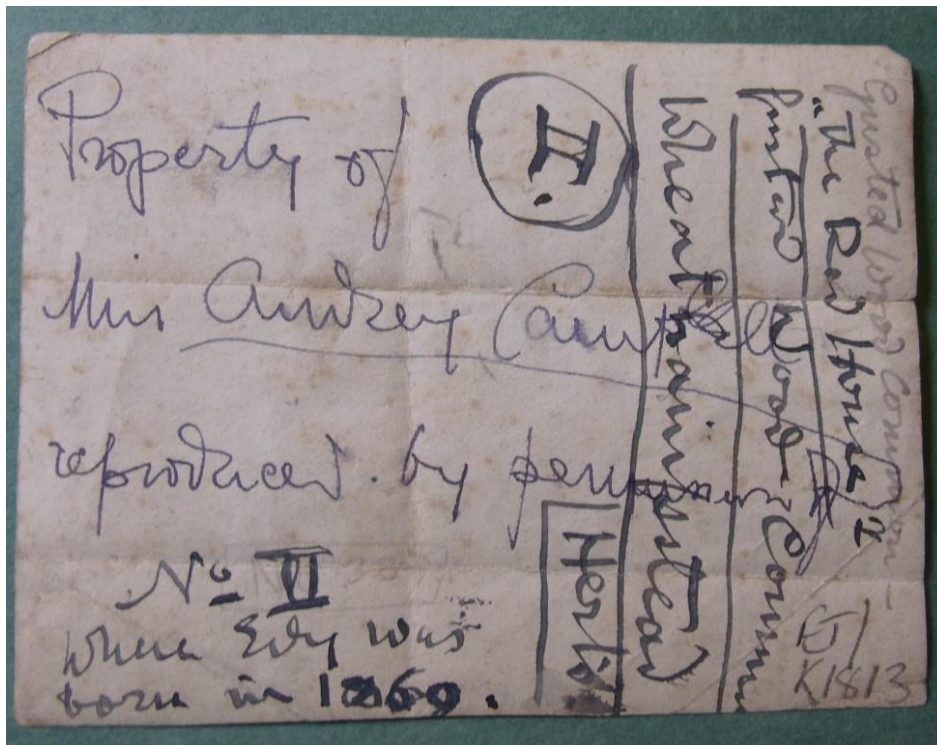


Figure 6.10 - Detail of the rear of a photograph of the Red House, Gustard Common. A house Terry shared with Godwin in 1869. Personal photograph by the author, 1 September 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/264.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Terry also used copies of photographs to illustrate records of her performances. As Chapter 4 explained, Terry marked up the copy of her script for *Macbeth* with contact sheet sized photographs and documenting her costume changes by inserting the relevant images alongside the text. [FIGURE 6.11]. The original contact sheet for this production also shows Terry's engagement with her image, with three images out of a sheet of thirty thumbnails marked 'yes' by the actress, one of these with an additional cross.⁴⁸ [FIGURE 6.12] Further evidence of the actress's close scrutiny of her public image can be identified in annotation she added to a photograph of herself as Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*, taken in 1906.⁴⁹ The full length image features Terry in the simple, elegant costume

⁴⁸ Emma Slocombe, 'Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum' *Apollo Magazine*, (London: National Trust Historic Houses and Collections Annual in association with Apollo, 2011) 4-12.

⁴⁹ The photograph is currently roughly mounted on dark paper between an image showing Terry as Mamillius in 1856 and Portia in 1879 and appears either to have been, or originally intended as, a gift it is signed 'Yours Truly, Ellen Terry.' The annotation added below this text however, together with the supplementary, informal and abbreviated signature, suggests that Terry knew the recipient. It is possible

which Craig designed for her. Its significance lies arguably in the fact that it does not attempt to capture the ‘ageless’ and ‘charming’ identity within which Terry was frequently confined. Instead it depicts a serene woman, possessed of a gracefulness which is not dependent on either youth or beauty. It is not surprising therefore that Terry was moved to write “I consider this an excellent photograph = E.T.’, nor that, after her death, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) reaffirmed her judgement, adding ‘So do I.’⁵⁰

[FIGURE 6.13]

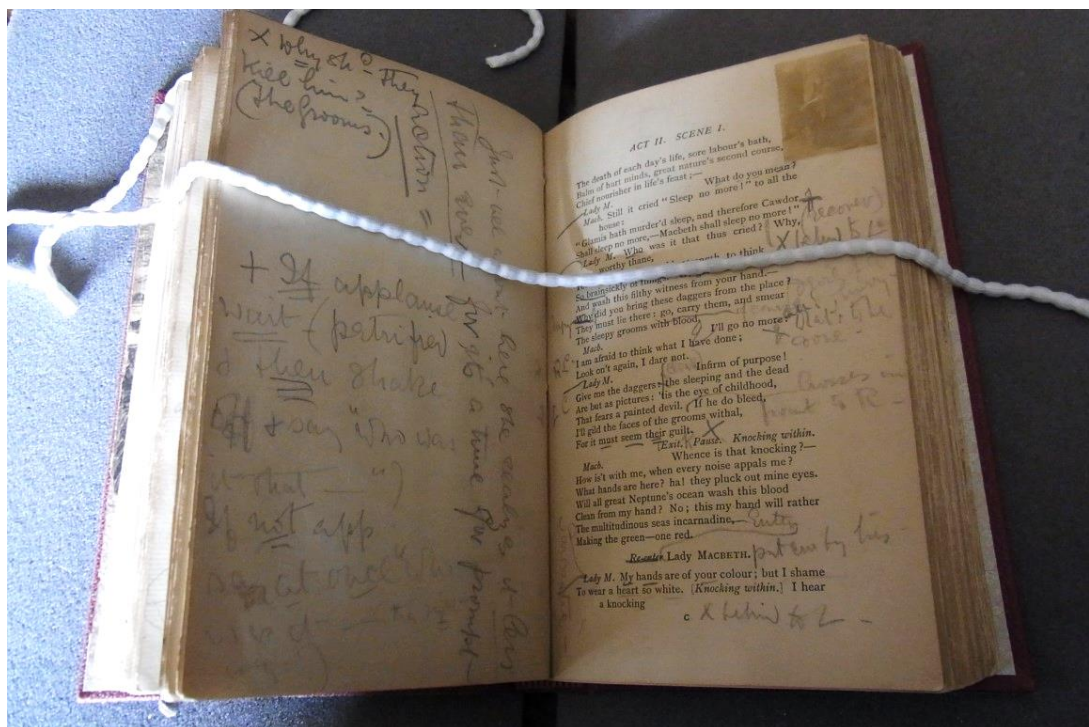


Figure 6.11 - Contact sheet photograph inserted in Terry’s copy of J.Comyns-Carr, *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: An Essay* London: Bickers & Son, Leicester Square, 1889.) Personal photograph by the author, 13 April 2015. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number E.V.2.18.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

that the photograph, now part of the collection at Smallhythe Place, may have been returned in response to Edith Craig’s appeal for donations in the years which followed Terry’s death in 1928. Photograph, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe, Image reference NT/SMA/PH/2003.

⁵⁰ Shaw’s annotation is initially and dated 1935 (four years after the publication of Ellen Terry, *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence*, Ed. Christopher St. John (London: Constable and Co, 1931. See Photograph, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe, Image reference NT/SMA/PH/2003.



Figure 6.12 - Detail from a contact sheet of photographs by Window and Grove documenting Terry's appearance as Lady Macbeth at the Lyceum Theatre, 1888. Personal photograph by the author, 4 December 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/2001.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.13 - Composite sheet of images showing Terry as she appeared as Mamillius in *The Winters Tale* (1856), Hermione in *The Winters Tale* (1906) and Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* (1879). Personal photograph by the author, 4 December 2014. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT/SMA/PH/2003.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The frequency with which Terry signs her annotations, whether on her image or in texts, supports their designation by Cockin as ‘interventionist marginalia.’⁵¹ Regardless of whether Terry intended this writing to be subject to public scrutiny or not, it is clear that she wanted to retain some degree of control over the ‘message’ communicated through these records. Further evidence of Terry’s intervention in the narrative preserved for posterity can be seen at the base of a sheet of composite images entitled ‘Ellen Terry at the Lyceum.’ Here Terry has added the signed observation that, ‘And one man in his time plays many part (and so does a woman).’ (See Figure 6.13). Terry also employed this aphorism for her Jubilee programme in 1906.⁵² Her appropriation of Shakespeare’s words to foreground the status of women within the theatre astutely references both her reputation as a ‘Shakespearean Actress’ and her status as a leading member of the ‘theatrical aristocracy.’⁵³ This was a position which, as Terry’s remarks imply, did not receive official recognition until 1925, thirty years after her stage partner, Henry Irving, had been awarded his knighthood.

6.3 ‘PRIVATE IDENTITY’

‘A woman’

Terry’s celebrity brought her financial and commercial success but, as Chapter 3 showed, in order to preserve her ‘public reputation,’ she was conscious that her ‘private life’ had

⁵¹ Cockin, ‘Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,’ 135.

⁵² Auerbach, *Player in her time*, 17. Terry also liked to employ quotes associated with her most famous roles, often signed images, as the case with a head and shoulders profile photograph of Terry as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* (within the collection at Smallhythe), with Beatrice’s famous declaration, “a star danced & under/that I was born =.” Photograph, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place, Image Reference NT/SMA/PH/2078.

⁵³ Bratton, *The Making of the West End Stage: Marriage, Management and the Mapping of Gender in London, 1830-1870*, 148 and Gardner, “The Three Nobodies,” 33.

to be carefully managed. As a result she was constantly ‘performing,’ even in ‘private,’ and her surroundings and dress were carefully selected to sustain her on stage identity.

One manner in which she sustained her reputation as a ‘charming’, ‘womanly woman’ was by creating a clear distinction between the professional and public life which she led in London and the private and domestic existence she enjoyed in her country ‘cottages.’⁵⁴ Terry owned several ‘cottages’ during her career. She spent the longest period living at Tower Cottage, Winchelsea (1896-1906), and in Smallhythe, Kent (1906-1928).⁵⁵ Terry purchased Smallhythe just before 1900, annotating the auction sale notice “I bought this in 1899.”⁵⁶ The property was known as “The Farm” and Terry continued to use this name.⁵⁷ Both Tower Cottage and ‘The Farm’ provided Terry with a vital and stable retreat from the increasing pressure and pace of life in London.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ As Chapter 3 showed, reviews repeatedly dwell on the womanly charm, grace and fragility of Terry. The emphasis placed on Terry’s feminine qualities is particularly apparent in the discussion of her performance as Lady Macbeth in 1888. See, for instance, “The Real Macbeth,” *Unidentified Periodical*, ca. December 1888, Press Cutting, Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume V: 311, Garrick Collection, London and “Macbeth at the Lyceum,” *The Standard*, December 1888, Press Cutting, Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Volume V: 333, Garrick Collection, London. One of several articles discussing Terry’s cottages was published in the *Daily Graphic* on 10th May 1907. Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125/60) Box 78, SCB5-G28, British Library, London.

⁵⁵ Terry first visited Winchelsea in 1884, when she stayed in a cottage next door to Tower Cottage (then owned by Comyns-Carr). She subsequently returned to Winchelsea on a regular basis and in 1896 bought Tower Cottage from the Comyns-Carrs. She continued to spend part of her time there until her permanent move to Smallhythe in 1906. Terry did actually not sell Tower Cottage until 1914. “Smallhythe Place – History 1514 – 1939.” National Trust. n.d.

⁵⁶ Terry also rented, and later purchased, the land and nearby buildings including a pair of Elizabethan cottages. These were combined into single house which became known as The Priest’s House and given to Edith Craig who lived there until her death in 1947. Terry’s gradual accumulation of land and property can be traced in auction leaflets preserved within the collection at Smallhythe, many of which Terry annotated to record the purchases. For instance, Terry annotated the 1899 sale notice for *The Priest’s House*, with the text, - “First rented one, afterwards bought one, for Edy and then gave her both.” “Smallhythe Place – History 1514 – 1939.” National Trust. See also, Joy Melville, *Ellen Terry and Smallhythe Place*, (London: National Trust, 2006).

⁵⁷ This is the name which Terry uses in many of her surviving letters when referring to Smallhythe Place, and also the name marked in an example of Terry’s personal clothing in the collection of the Museum of London. This interior of this cream cotton collarless, double breasted jacket (Museum of London Reference 64.154) has been marked in black ink with the phrase ‘E.T., The Farm, 1912.’

⁵⁸ Comyns-Carr describes how ‘[...] Ellen Terry passed happy, unmolested holidays’ in Winchelsea and also Terry’s fondness for the countryside in general. Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 110-113. Cockin found repeated evidence in Terry’s letters of the actress’s ill health and exhaustion, and her resultant need, and desire for rest. Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,’ 139, and Cockin, ‘Introduction,’ *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry: Volume 3*’ (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), xiii-xvii.

Although there were obvious and important connections between Terry’s public and private selves, she succeeded in creating a division between the two.⁵⁹ This dichotomy between Terry’s urban and rural identities is repeatedly conveyed in her interviews.⁶⁰ Profiling Terry in 1892, Harry How declared ‘If Ellen Terry impresses one on the stage as an actress, how much more does she do so when sitting surrounded by one of the fairest of nature’s scenes, as a woman!’⁶¹ This portrayal of Terry is reinforced by the sketches used to illustrate the article, many depicting the actress in her garden or framed by flowers. [FIGURE 6.14]

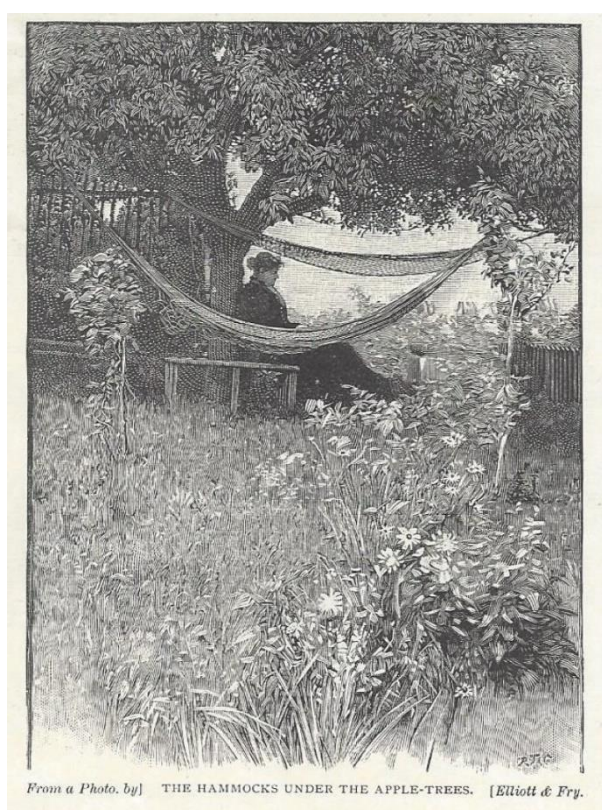


Figure 6.14 - Unknown artist. ‘The Hammocks Under the Apple Tree.’ Line drawn image from an original photograph by Elliott and Fry, featured in Henry How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 1892, 492. Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁵⁹ Eltis characterises Terry as ‘[...] an amalgam of contradictions [...] Who ‘[...] thus confounded attempts at constructing a straightforward public/private divide in her life, especially for those clinging to conventional notions of femininity.’ Eltis, “Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress,” 183.

⁶⁰ Another interview praises the private, off-stage, personality of the actress, noting that ‘[...] if Miss Ellen Terry is delightful on the stage, she is ten times more charming off. For Society-in its wider sense-she cares not at all; but among those whom she loves and counts as friends all the sweetness and joyousness of her essentially youthful nature are displayed.’ *St Pauls*, January 9 1897, Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 62, SC9-G12, British Library, London.

⁶¹ How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII, 492.



Figure 6.15 - Photographer unknown, Tower Cottage, Winchelsea, Photographic postcard. (Publisher unknown, early twentieth century). Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box, THM 117-118. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.16 - Photographer unknown, Smallhythe Place, Photographic postcard. (Everett and Ashdown publishers, early twentieth century). Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box, THM 117-118. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

As How reveals, even Terry's flat in London was covered with flowers of 'the simplest and homeliest kind, the tiny blue bell, marguerite and the cottage nasturtium.'⁶² In 1894, Ethel Mackenzie McKenna offered a similar description of Terry's London home, describing how 'The front is always bright with flowers, for flowers are one of the chief joys of the great actress's life.'⁶³ This characterisation of Terry as a simple and modest figure, in sympathy with nature, reappears in many description of the actress.⁶⁴

Terry's own remarks reinforced this distinction between her rural life, and her professional career. Declaring of Winchelsea that, 'To my mind there is no more restful or romantic spot anywhere than this. You can't even remember there exists such a thing as theatre here!'⁶⁵ Her autobiography cemented this narrative in the public consciousness and portrays the years she spent with Godwin in the guise of a Rural Idyll, during which she '[...] was very happy, leading a quiet, domestic life in the heart of the country' and hardly '[...] thought of the stage' as her children 'absorbed all [her] time, all [her] interest, all [her] love.'⁶⁶

Photographs and picture postcards of her 'country cottages' offered Terry an additional means through which to illustrate the distinction between her 'public,' urban, celebrity, and her 'private' rural existence. These glimpses of her domestic environment focus upon the buildings, interiors and gardens, and Terry herself generally appears only as a secondary figure, if at all. [FIGURE 6.15 and 6.16] By departing from the dominant

⁶² How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII, 489.

⁶³ Mackenzie McKenna, "Ellen Terry," 457.

⁶⁴ Another reporter described how "In the country [Terry] [...] gains far more repose of manner. She is quick to feel in sympathy with her surroundings; not overwhelmed with engagements. In town her callers begin about 8.30am and continue until about 11.30pm; a heavy strain on even her remarkable vitality." "Miss Ellen Terry – A pictorial record of fifty years on the stage. With portraits of the family of players to which she belongs," iv. Similarly Ethel Mackenzie McKenna informed her readers that Terry was '[...] an ardent lover of rural life, and has hardly ever been without her cottage in the country, whither she could fly for a breath of fresh air.' Mackenzie McKenna, "Ellen Terry," 462.

⁶⁵ How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 1892, 495

⁶⁶ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 75.

position she occupied in the photographs which record her stage roles and ‘public’ identity, and remaining at the rear of the ‘stage,’ Terry highlighted the division between her urban and rural identity. Within this ‘private’ domestic world she presented herself as an unambitious figure in the midst of her family and nature, content to perform the feminine role which accorded with Victorian traditions. The success with which Terry sustained this domestic identity can be seen in McKenna’s summary of Terry’s rural existence. Following an interview with Terry in 1894 she informed her readers that ‘Miss Terry’s life is always a quiet one [...] she is an admirable housekeeper and takes genuine pleasure in all the little trifles connected with this important business [...].’⁶⁷

These images and interviews formed an integral part of the careful process through which Terry constructed a ‘private identity’ as a woman compelled to sacrifice peace and privacy in order to support her children, and satisfy the public. This enabled Terry to maintain a clear division between her ‘professional identity’ as ‘The Urban Star,’ and her, ‘private identity’ as a domestic, ‘womanly woman,’ who was as ‘natural’ as the gardens which encircled her ‘country cottages.’⁶⁸

‘Public intimacy’

Roach has demonstrated the significant part ‘It’ plays in generating, and sustaining the appeal of celebrities, and Terry’s ‘charm’ was certainly another key factor in her success.⁶⁹ The actress’ ability to endear herself to ‘on’ and ‘off-stage’ audiences becomes clear in one writer’s assertion:

⁶⁷ McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” 464.

⁶⁸ McKenna describing Terry’s cottage in Winchelsea declared that the garden was ‘[...]as natural as its owner’ McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” 462.

⁶⁹ Joseph Roach, *It* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2007) 3-4.

[...] if Miss Ellen Terry is delightful on the stage, she is ten times more charming off. For Society - in its wider sense - she cares not at all; but among those whom she loves and counts as friends all the sweetness and joyousness of her essentially youthful nature are displayed.⁷⁰

The descriptions of Terry provided by friends of the actress lay equal stress on the affection Terry inspired in others. Nettleship, reported that '[...] of all her customers, [Terry was] the sweetest tempered, the gayest, and the most easily pleased: in fact, what she seems on the stage, she is in private life – adorable.'⁷¹ Similarly, Duff Gordon, declared:

I never knew any woman who possessed in such a degree the art of inspiring affection in her own sex. She was not a young woman then, but she was the friend and confidante of dozens of girls, who adored her and loved to serve her in all sorts of little ways.⁷²

It was not only young women who sought Terry's company: Comyns-Carr also described how in Winchelsea "Nellen Terry": 'was a tremendous favourite with all young people, and in Winchelsea the pony-trap which she drove about the country-side was always full to overflowing with children and dogs.'⁷³

Like Roach, Luckhurst and Moody attach great importance to the part that the illusion of 'public intimacy' plays in mediating 'the relationship between stars and their

⁷⁰ *St Pauls*, January 9 1897, Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 62, SC9-G12, British Library, London.

⁷¹ "Ellen Terry's Gowns and the Woman who makes them," *The Queenslander*, Saturday 3 April 1897: 747.

⁷² Lady Duff Gordon. *Discretions and Indiscretions* (Jarolds, London, 1932), 32-3

⁷³ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 112. How also remarked upon Terry's popularity in Winchelsea explained how 'For half an hour-while Miss Terry rested a little-...I walked and talked with the village children. And I found out that Miss Terry's loving kindness to the little ones is known in Winchelsea, as everywhere else' How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII, 496-7. McKenna also noted Terry's central role within the community at Winchelsea McKenna, "Ellen Terry," 462-3.

audiences.⁷⁴ As Roach demonstrates, this ‘illusion’ of ‘public intimacy’ plays an important role in sustaining ‘the charisma of a celebrated performer’ or, what he terms, the allure and power of ‘it.’⁷⁵ The success with which Terry cultivated this ‘illusion of public intimacy’ both on and off the stage is conveyed in reviews of her performances and personal interviews with the actress. It is particularly apparent in a special feature, published to mark 1906 Terry’s stage jubilee, which included ‘A personal impression of Ellen Terry at Home.’ Drawing a clear distinction between her professional and private self, they refer to Terry as ‘Our Ellen’ throughout the description of her life ‘at home.’ As they stress, this possessive pronoun is employed to highlight the fact they are speaking here not of ‘Ellen Terry the actress’ but of “*our Ellen*”, the woman.’ It also exemplifies the ‘personal,’ ‘intimate’ relationship felt to exist between Terry and her audience.⁷⁶

6.4 AN ICON OF AESTHETICISM

Art for Art’s Sake

During the decades which mark the peak of Terry’s career ‘The Aesthetic movement’ was a dominant force within British Art and Design.⁷⁷ As Chapter 2 established, Aestheticism and its impact on art and design has been thoroughly researched over the past sixty years.⁷⁸ Many of the existing texts refer to Terry and her connections with the movement,

⁷⁴ Luckhurst and Moody, *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) 5.

⁷⁵ Luckhurst and Moody, *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain, 1660-2000*, 5 and Roach, *It*, 3,

⁷⁶ “Miss Ellen Terry – A pictorial record of fifty years on the stage. With portraits of the family of players to which she belongs,” iv.

⁷⁷ Though most would argue that Aestheticism as concept and design Aesthetic evolved over the course of several years rather than ‘arriving’ on a specific date, there is a clear sense that it became established as movement by the late 1860s and early 1870s. This is the period suggested by early writers on the theme such as William Gaunt in *The Aesthetic Adventure* (London: Sphere Books Ltd, 1945), the same date period is suggested in more recent texts including Stephen Calloway, Lynn F. Orr, and Esmé Whittaker. *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic movement, 1860-1900* (London: V&A Publishing, 2011) and Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Art for Art’s Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

⁷⁸ It was also the focus of the 2011 exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum, *The Cult of Beauty* curated by Stephen Calloway of the V&A and Dr Lynn Federle Orr at The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Early writers on the theme include Gaunt, *The Aesthetic Adventure* (1945). Amongst more recent

none however have fully explored her personal significance as a leading exponent of Aestheticism, not only in the eyes of the public, but most specifically within her home, on the stage, and through her dress.

As Stephen Calloway explains, figures united within this ‘Cult of Beauty’ promoted an ‘art’ which was ‘self-consciously absorbed in itself, aware of the past but created for the present age, and existing only in order to be beautiful.’⁷⁹ This new ‘enthusiasm for anything beautiful’ was to play a key part in Terry’s initial success. It inspired the Bancroft’s lavish production of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1875 (discussed in Chapter 4) which, though a commercial disaster, was declared an artistic triumph. Terry, who appeared as Portia, received particular critical acclaim and public attention.⁸⁰ [FIGURE 6.17]

Terry’s marriage to Watts in 1864, provided the sixteen-year-old actress with her first introduction to Aestheticism and, significantly, a domestic environment which, as Caroline Dakers shows, ‘presented an Aesthetic “wholeness”, in which pictures, furniture, colours and textures blended together, Nothing jarred.’⁸¹ [FIGURE 6.18] In the early 1860s, Aestheticism was only just becoming established as a cultural force within art and society. Terry’s subsequent relationship with Godwin (between circa 1867-1874),

explorations of the movement Elizabeth Prettejohn and Charlotte Gere have published work which is particular relevant to the themes under discussion in this thesis. Prettejohn, *Art for Art’s Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting* (2007) and Charlotte Gere, *Aesthetic Circles, Design & Decoration in the Aesthetic movement* (London: V&A Publishing, 2010).

⁷⁹ Stephen Calloway, ‘The Search for a new beauty’, *The Cult of Beauty*, 11.

⁸⁰ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 104-108.

⁸¹ Whilst at Holland Park, Terry socialised with figures who played a leading part in the art world during the 1850s and 1860s. They included the pioneering female photographer, Julia Margaret Cameron (1815-1879) who took several photographs of Terry and Watts. Dakers has explored the significance of the circles brought together in the ‘salons’ at Holland Park and includes contemporary descriptions of the house from Georgiana Burne Jones (1840-1920) and the granddaughter of Sara Prinsep, Laura Troubridge (1888-1929). Caroline Dakers, *The Holland Park Circle: Artists and Victorian Society* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1999), 27. Terry also lists some of the figures she met in her autobiography. These included the poet Sir Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892). She also notes how little she, as the ‘girl wife of a famous painter’ was able to appreciate or take advantage of, this opportunity. Terry, *The Story of My life*, 52-4.

cemented Terry's taste, and brought her into close association with key figures within the burgeoning 'Aesthetic movement.' As will be discussed, Godwin had a lasting impact on Terry's views on art, design and dress both for the stage and within her private life.

Calloway has described Aestheticism as movement whose 'adherents [...] aspired above all to live 'artistically' and, through the worship of beauty, to create new kinds of art set free from stale patterns of thought, outworn establishment ideas and confining Victorian rules of propriety and bourgeois morality.'⁸² Similarly, Wilson, discussing 'Bohemian' social circles, has suggested that 'Bohemia,' as represented in this instance by Aestheticism, 'attracted its self-chosen citizens for many different reasons. It was a refuge, a way station, a stage.'⁸³ Both interpretations make apparent the attraction which the Aesthetic movement held for Terry. By adopting an allegiance to Aestheticism, Terry was provided with both a 'refuge,' and a 'stage,' as she immersed herself in a section of society within which 'Art', including the art of the stage, was paramount and her personal conduct would not be condemned.⁸⁴

⁸² Calloway, 'The Search for a new beauty,' *The Cult of Beauty*, 11.

⁸³ Commencing from the stance that 'Bohemia is the name for the attempt by nineteenth and twentieth century artists, writers, intellectual and radicals to create an alternative world within Western society (and possibly elsewhere).' Wilson offers a nuanced analysis of the evolution of the groups and ideas encompassed by this evolving 'term' in her publication Elizabeth Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts* (London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2000), 73.

⁸⁴ As Elizabeth Wilson observes, 'From its earliest days Bohemia had appeared to offer women freedom from the social restrictions of respectable society, and recognition as autonomous individuals in their own right. Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 85.



Figure 6.17 - Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:218-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.18 - Thomas Matthews Rooke, *The Studio, Little Holland House*, London, 1904. Watercolour on paper, Measurements not recorded. Watts Gallery, Surrey. Copyright © Trustees of Watts Gallery, Surrey. Source Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number TWG114700.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Aesthetic circles

As Wilson observes, ‘Friendship and personal relationships played an important role in Bohemia.’⁸⁵ Terry’s increasing importance within the Aesthetic movement reinforced and expanded the social and artistic connections originally made during her relationships with Watts and Godwin and by the mid-1870s she had established an independent position as part of an exclusive circle of ‘artists and designers.’⁸⁶

The growing influence and importance of the Aesthetic movement was made apparent to the wider public through the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery in Bond Street, London in 1877.⁸⁷ This gallery represented a direct challenge to the traditions established by The Royal Academy, both in terms of the approach to display, and the nature of the paintings which were exhibited.⁸⁸ It also ‘[...] provided the setting for a new and reverent attitude to the arts’ and, as Christopher Newall writes, ‘[...] became a temple for those who sought edification through Aesthetic delight.’⁸⁹ Increasing public awareness of, and enthusiasm for, the ‘philosophy of art for art’s sake,’ is also evident in the long running series of satirical cartoons ridiculing the movement which George Du Maurier (1834-1896) published in *Punch* magazine, the first of which appeared in 1877.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 25.

⁸⁶ Alison Adburgham, ‘The Early Years,’ *The House of Liberty Masters of Style and Decoration*, ed. Stephen Calloway (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) 34.

⁸⁷ A number of texts have explored the gallery’s impact and history, these include Christopher Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions: Change and Continuity in the Victorian Art World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and Susan P. Casteras and Colleen Denney, *The Grosvenor Gallery: A Palace of Art in Victorian England* (London: Yale University Press, 1996).

⁸⁸ It was described by Walford Graham Robertson (1866-1948) as ‘a genuine offering at the shrine of Beauty, a gallant blow struck in the cause of Art.’ Robertson was himself an artist, and part of a circle of people associated with the Aesthetic movement. He was an avid fan of Terry and was also painted by John Singer Sargent (1856-1924) in 1894. Robertson, *Time Was*, 46.

⁸⁹ Few illustration of the gallery have survived but Newall provides a vivid account of the interior of the gallery, which was decorated with ‘antique furniture’, ‘exotic flowers’, the walls lined with ‘crimson silk damask’, ‘dados’ and ‘green silk velvet.’ Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery*, 3, 10-13.

⁹⁰ Du Maurier’s satirical cartoons offer a key visual record of early examples of ‘Aesthetic Dress.’ The first ‘Aesthetic’ cartoon was published in the magazine in March 1877, and Du Maurier continued to produce illustrations commenting on the icons, tastes, costume, language and behaviour of the ‘Aesthetes’ for the next four years, publishing his final such image on the 21st of May 1881. Du Maurier was also a writer,



Figure 6.19 - Edward Linley Sambourne, Design for an Aesthetic Theatrical Poster, captioned “*Let us live up to it*” and featuring Terry at its centre. Reproduced in *Punch* 7th May 1881, 215. Reproduced from Anne Anderson, “Fearful Consequences . . . of Living up to One’s Teapot’: Men, Women, and ‘Cultchah’ in the English Aesthetic Movement ca. 1870–1900.” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37.1 (2009): 219-54. Print.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Whether attracting criticism or admiration, the Aesthetic movement was certainly receiving public recognition. Sites such as the Grosvenor Gallery and the New Gallery (which followed in 1888) provided prominent meeting points for those within and on the fringes of the Aestheticism.⁹¹ These were environments in which, as Newall shows,

and, as Chapter 5 discussed, his book *Trilby*, first published in 1894 and adapted for the stage in 1895, was partially inspired by the Aesthetic movement. It includes several references to both Terry and the Lyceum Theatre. George Du Maurier, *Trilby* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 91, 209.

⁹¹The Gallery brought together many of the figures who would go on to play a leading role in productions at the Lyceum Theatre. Significantly for Terry, alongside Sir Coutts Lindesay (1847-1913), the founder members included Joseph Comyns-Carr (1849-1916), husband to Alice Comyns-Carr who, from 1887, would have primary responsibility for designing Terry’s stage costumes. Amongst the first artists to exhibit their work were Burne Jones, James McNeil Whistler (1834-1903), Walter Crane (1845-1915), Albert Moore (1841-1893) and George Frederick Watts. Watts and Whistler were already known to Terry, her children had been brought up with Crane’s picture books as ‘their classic’, and the actress would go on to collaborate with Burne Jones in the Lyceum Company production of *King Arthur* in 1895. Terry, *The Story of my Life*, 80. The New Gallery, which opened in 1888 at 121 Regent Street W., London, was founded by Joseph Comyns-Carr and Charles Edward Hallé. Carr and Hallé had been co-directors of Sir Coutts Lindsay’s Grosvenor Gallery, but resigned from the increasingly troubled gallery in 1887. Alice Comyns-

‘Bohemia and high fashion mingled.’⁹² Comyns-Carr observed that the gallery founders, Sir Coutts and Lady Lindsay, ‘took a certain pride in being the first members of Society to bring the people of their own set into friendly contact with the distinguished folk of art and literature’ and ‘[...]gathered together the *elite* of the great world as well as all the brilliance of a select Bohemia.’⁹³

An icon of Aestheticism

By 1879, Terry’s prominence within the Aesthetic movement provoked Henry James (1843-1916) to declare that ‘Miss Ellen Terry is ‘aesthetic’; not only her garments but her features themselves bear the stamp of the new enthusiasm.’⁹⁴ Similarly Walter Hamilton’s survey of the movement (published in 1882) identified both Terry and Irving as actors whose ‘intensity’ earns them admiration from even ‘the strict Aesthete’, noting also that ‘it is indeed at the Lyceum Theatre that Aestheticism in all its beauty can be seen.’⁹⁵

Terry’s status as an ‘Icon of Aestheticism’ is also manifest in the satirical cartoons which ridiculed followers of the movement. One such image, entitled ‘Let us live Up to It’, created by Linley Sambourne (1844-1910) and published in *Punch* in 1881, features Terry at its centre. [FIGURE 6.19] Produced in the manner of a theatrical poster Terry is shown carrying a ‘blue and white’ teapot on a laurel wreath and is presenting this celebrated

Carr discusses this period in her husband’s career in her *Reminiscences*, 157-166. It was here that John Singer Sargent’s portrait of Terry as Lady Macbeth was first exhibited in 1889 becoming a ‘cause célèbre’ as a result. Loretta Clayton, “Oscar Wilde, Aesthetic Dress and the Modern Woman: Or Why Sargent’s Portrait of Ellen Terry Appeared in *The Woman’s World*” *Wilde Discoveries: Traditions, Histories, Archives*, Ed. Joseph Bristow (Toronto : Published by the University of Toronto Press in association with the UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies and the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 2013), 146.

⁹²Christopher Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions: Change and Continuity in the Victorian Art World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3.

⁹³ Comyns-Carr does however add the significant detail that, whilst Lady Lindesay ‘liked knowing artists and musicians and herself dabbled in both these arts[...], we [Comyns-Carr and her husband] of the Bohemian world were never deceived into thinking that she *really* included us in the “inner circle” of her own friends.’ Comyns Carr, *Reminiscences*, 54.

⁹⁴ Henry James, *Nation*, 13th June 1878 (J.H.Richards: New York).

⁹⁵ Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic movement in England* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1882), 31-32.

‘Aesthetic accessory’ to the Polish Actress Helena Modjeska (1840-1909).⁹⁶ Swathed in loosely gathered bands of fabric resembling a ‘classical’ style tunic. Her hair is also confined in a historically appropriate laurel wreath. These garments are clearly referencing the ‘Greek chitons’ frequently recommended as a form of Aesthetic attire and perhaps also Terry’s costumes from her recent performance as Camma in *The Cup* that same year.⁹⁷ Another caricature, by Alfred Bryan and printed in *Moonshine* in circa 1882 leaves no doubt regarding Terry’s enthusiasm for Aestheticism. [FIGURE 6.20] The lily Terry raises to her face, the Japanese fan clasped in her right hand, and ‘blue and white’ vase which surmounts the column on which the actress is leaning, were all typical accessories of the Aesthete [FIGURE 6.21]. Terry’s dress, with its full sleeves and a raised waistline, also typifies the Aesthetic interest in reviving past fashions, (in this instance those of the early nineteenth century). Her connection with the caricature is evident not only from the features, but also in the raised, pleated collar at the neckline, a style Terry favoured and which, as will be discussed, reappears frequently in photographs and sketches of the actress. [FIGURE 6.22] Such caricatures make apparent Terry’s significant role as a figurehead for the movement and present her as a woman, who, like

⁹⁶ This caricature has been discussed by Anne Anderson in her chapter, “Fearful Consequences...of Living up to One’s Teapot’: Men, Women and ‘Cultchah’ in the Aesthetic movement,” *Rethinking the Interior*, Ed. Jason Edwards and Imogen Hart (London: Ashgate, 2010) 112. Helena Modjeska (*Modrzejewska*) dominated Polish Theatre in the late 1860s and early 1870s. After emigrating to America in 1876, she began to make a career on the America stage, making a tour to Europe between 1879 and 1882. Despite her comparatively limited command of English the actress achieved great success and popularity on the European and America stage

⁹⁷ A debate entitled “Letters from Artists on Ladies’ Dress” published in *The Strand Magazine* in 1891, produced the general consensus that ‘classical Greek Dress should be our guide in all costume’ as such garments ‘never contradict nature’s simple lines...[and] by their shape express the figure underneath.’ Madame Starr Canziane. “Letters from Artists on Ladies Dress” *The Strand Magazine*, London, 1891, 172. Godwin also addressed this issue, drawing attention to the practical difficulties of adopting classical dress in a climate so different from the Greek and Roman environment in which it originally flourished. E.W.Godwin, *Dress, and Its Relation to Health and Climate* (London: W. Clowes, 1884) 75.

the teapot she carries in the second image, acts as an icon of Aestheticism and embodies 'the Aesthetic woman.'⁹⁸



Figure 6.20 - Alfred Byran, Line drawn caricature of Terry, 'Moonshines Gallery of Professional Beauty, 7 and 8 (Alternated with Illustrated Natural History),' 1882. Press cutting pasted in the Percy Fitzgerald Album, Vol. 5, 295. Garrick Club London. Personal photograph by the author. 6 August 2013.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

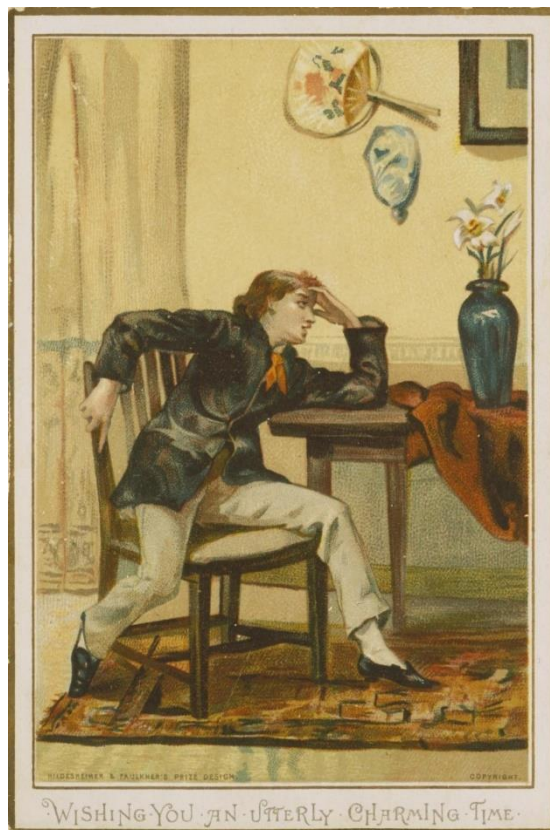


Figure 6.21 - Albert Ludovici, II, One of a series of greetings cards satirising the Aesthetic Movement, 1882. Colour lithograph on card. 12.5 x 8.5 cm. Printed and published by Hildesheimer & Faulkner, London. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.2413-1953.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

⁹⁸ The longevity of this status can be seen in the fact that Terry was cited by Margaret D. Stetz as an example of the 'Aesthetic' Woman in her chapter, of the same name, published in: Calloway and Orr Ed., *The Cult of Beauty*, 178-183.



Figure 6.22 - Sir Johnstone Forbes Robertson, Ellen Terry, 1876. Oil on canvas 60.8 x 50.6cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG 3789.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

‘Aesthetic’ costumes

The Lyceum production of *The Cup* in 1881, confirmed Terry’s standing within the movement. The elaborate staging and the classically inspired costumes combined to create a production which was hailed as a ‘banquet of sensuous delicacies.’⁹⁹ As Chapter 4 discussed, great care was taken to create the ‘right’ material for the costumes and Godwin, who provided advice for these costumes, also sent Terry’s notes regarding the ‘archaeological’ accuracy of the attitudes she assumed during the performance.¹⁰⁰ Terry, ‘her picturesque figure robed in stuff that seems spun out of the wings of a dragon fly,’

⁹⁹ *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 January, 1881. Press cutting, Percy Fitzgerald Album, Volume I: 141-143, Garrick Collection, London.

¹⁰⁰ E. W. Godwin, Susan W. Soros, and Catherine Arbuthnott et al. *E.W. Godwin: Aesthetic movement Architect and Designer*. (New Haven: Yale University Press published for the Bard Graduate Center Studies in the Decorative Arts, New York, 1999) 35.

dominated the performances and the Lyceum Theatre was established as a venue in which ‘Aestheticism in all its beauty [could] be seen.’¹⁰¹ [FIGURE 6.23]

There are also clear visual links between the style of the staging and the costumes and the recreations of the classical world depicted in the work of artists such as Frederick Leighton (1830-1896) and Lawrence Alma Tadema (1836-1912), particularly the paintings they created between circa 1860 and 1885. Indeed, one reviewer actually declared that the production captured ‘[...] the concentrated essence of such a fascinating art as that of Sir Frederick Leighton and Mr. Alma Tadema in a breathing and tangible form [...]’¹⁰²



Figure 6.23 - Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 10.2cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:317-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁰¹ Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic movement in England* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1882) 31-32. See also “The Cup,” *Truth*, Jan 13th 1881, 47. Press Cutting, Percy Fitzgerald Album, Vol IV: 175-6. Garrick Club, London.

¹⁰² “The Cup,” *Daily Mail*, Jan 4th 1881, n.p. Press Cutting, Percy Fitzgerald album, Vol IV: 143. Garrick Club, London.



Figure 6.24 - W & D Downey Photographers, May Fortescue as Lady Ella in *Patience* at the Opera Comique, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 9.3 x 5.7cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.146:48-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Parallels can also be traced between Terry's costumes and the costumes created for a production staged the same year, at the Opera Comique in W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan's satire on the movement, the comic opera *Patience or Bunthorne's Bride*.¹⁰³ The similarities between the theatrical costumes are particularly apparent in the garments worn by May Fortescue (1862-1950) as Lady Ella.¹⁰⁴ [FIGURE 6.24] Again, the connection with Aesthetic paintings is apparent as the sleeves on the costumes worn by both Terry and Fortescue are gathered at the upper arm, in the same way as in garments depicted in

¹⁰³ The programs and publicity connected with *Patience* highlighted its status as "A new Aesthetic Opera." This emphasis on the novelty of the piece did not pass unnoticed among the critics, who were quick to point out that this was not the first dramatic production to take up the new craze for Aestheticism as its subject matter. A production that many reviewers identified as a direct rival to *Patience* was Sir Francis Cowley Burnard's (1836-1917) play *The Colonel*, which had been produced at the Prince of Wales Theatre some two months before *Patience* opened at the Opera Comique on the 24th of April 1881. Whether or not *Patience* is deemed to have followed, or led a trend, the success of the production was such that it transferred to the newly built *Savoy Theatre* in October 1881, and subsequently toured America.

¹⁰⁴ A detailed analysis of the costumes in this production can be found in Veronica Isaac, "Costume," *The Oxford Handbook of Opera* ed. Helen Greenwald (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Tadema's *The Midday Slumbers*, 1881 and Leighton's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, 1864-5.¹⁰⁵

[FIGURE 6.25, 6.26] Furthermore, the bracelets worn by both Terry and Fortescue strongly resemble a serpent style armlet owned by Tadema's second wife, Laura Theresa Alma Tadema (1852-1909) which featured in many of his paintings, including *The Sculpture Gallery*, (first exhibited at the Royal Academy, London in 1875).¹⁰⁶ [FIGURE 6.27, 6.28, 6.29] As this comparison Terry and Fortescue's costumes illustrates, whether satirising Aestheticism (*Patience*), or celebrating the values of the movement (*The Cup*), the garments and accessories worn by both performers closely referenced Aesthetic paintings and functioned as a visual embodiment of the ideals of the movement: their dress became 'art.'



Figure 6.25 - Sir Frederick Leighton, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, 1864-5. Oil on canvas. Measurements not recorded. Leighton House Museum, London. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number LGH224376.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁰⁵ Jane W. Stedman has recorded how Gilbert devised stage pictures in the styles of contemporary Aesthetic painters, including Leighton's *Daphnephoria* (1878), and Burne Jones's *Design from Romance of the Rose* (1881). Jane W. Stedman, *W.S. Gilbert: A Classic Victorian and His Theatre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 183.

¹⁰⁶ This bracelet now in a Private Collection was displayed in the V&A's '*Cult of Beauty*' exhibition. Images and further information can be found in the accompanying book. Clare Phillips, "Jewellery", *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic movement, 1860-1900*, Stephen Calloway, Lynn F. Orr, and Esmé Whittaker (London: V&A Publishing, 2011) 208-9. Amongst the paintings in which the armlet features are Tadema's *The Sculpture Gallery*, 1874 (first exhibited in London in 1875). "Lawrence Alma Tadema, *The Sculpture Garden*, 1874." *Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth*. [n.d.] The bracelet also appears in *The Roses of Heliogabalus*, 1888 and *The Fridgadariam*, 1890. For further information about the bracelet see also Jeffrey A Cadby, "Gold Snake Armlet, designed by Lawrence Alma Tadema for his wife Laura," Jeff Cadby's Facets of Knowledge, Wordpress, 28 November 2014.



Figure 6.26 - Lawrence Alma Tadema, *The Midday Slumbers*, 1881. Watercolour on paper. 65 x 25cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Number HTL91863.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.27 - Unknown photographer, May Fortescue as Lady Ella in *Patience* at the Opera Comique, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 9.5cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.146:83-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.28- Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Camma in *The Cup* at the Lyceum Theatre, 1881, Sepia photograph on paper. 14 x 10.2 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:318-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.29 - Maxim Garcha. Colour photograph of a gold snake armlet, set with diamonds, turquoise, rubies and sapphires. The armlet was designed by Lawrence Alma-Tadema for his second wife Laura Theresa Alma Tadema and engraved with her name in Greek script. Tadema commissioned the jewellers and goldsmiths JS & AB Wyon to create the armlet in circa 1870-3. Private Collection of Jeffrey A. Cadby.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

‘Fashioned’ or ‘fashioning’?

Terry was not simply following, or being ‘fashioned’ by the movement however. The 1887 production of *The Amber Heart*, in which Terry, appearing without Irving, played the lead, illustrates how the actress actively exploited and embraced her prominent position within the Aesthetic movement to ‘form [a very specific] self.’¹⁰⁷

Terry’s deliberate identification with Aestheticism is evident in the promotional photographs and, as in the Bryan caricature, she appears alongside a lily, a flower which, like the sunflower, had been adopted as an icon of the Aesthetic movement.¹⁰⁸ [FIGURE 6.30] Securely established within the Lyceum Company, Terry also chose this moment

¹⁰⁷ Greenblatt, *Renaissance self-fashioning*, 2-3.

¹⁰⁸ Oscar Wilde was amongst the figures credited with establishing the lily and sunflower as symbols of the movement. Charlotte Gere, and Lesley Hoskins *The House Beautiful: Oscar Wilde and the Aesthetic Interior* (London: Lund Humphries, 2000) 12,13,26.

to dismiss her previous costume designer, Harris, in order to collaborate with Comyns-Carr, also a supporter of Aestheticism. Comyns-Carr had an innovative approach to design which allowed the pair to create costumes which started, rather than followed, fashions.¹⁰⁹ As the analysis of the costume in Chapter 4 showed, the costume Comyns-Carr created for Terry advertises her preference for Aesthetic Dress. The dress exemplifies the Aesthetic preference for garments which, as will be discussed, defied fashion, and drew inspiration from the past to create styles which celebrated ‘the natural form’ and suited the individual. The wide hanging sleeves reference depictions of medieval dress whilst the loose, flowing swathes of pale fabric echo classical robes, and are softly shaped using pleats and weights, rather than corsetry. The design also allowed Terry the freedom of movement that was considered so important within Aestheticism, and, as Chapter 3 demonstrated, by Terry herself. As Chapter 4 revealed, the success of this costume was such that Comyns-Carr revived the design when creating a dress for Terry’s performance as Fair Rosamund in *Becket* in 1893, six years later. [FIGURE 6.31]

Chapter 5 established that Terry was not the only actress to wear stage costumes influenced by the Aestheticism. Langtry, who first rose to prominence when painted and idolised by leading figures within Aestheticism, began her stage career wearing costumes which deliberately referenced her status within the movement.¹¹⁰ Langtry soon

¹⁰⁹ Comments in Comyns-Carr’s *Reminiscences*, and the surviving costumes, indicate that Patience Harris had a much more conservative and traditional approach to stage costuming. Comyns-Carr was willing to adopt a more unorthodox and experimental approach, and more significantly she was also ‘an archpriestess of the Aesthetic dress movement’ (Cumming, *Macbeth at the Lyceum*, Costume, 12, 1978, 56). Similarly Loretta Clayton, referring to Comyns-Carr’s own remarks on the subject in her *Reminiscences* suggests that Terry’s new costume designer might have provided ‘the real life model for George Du Maurier’s character Mrs. Cimabue Brown.’ Loretta Clayton, ‘Oscar Wilde, Aesthetic Dress and the Modern Woman: Or Why Sargent’s Portrait of Ellen Terry Appeared in *The Woman’s World*.’ 148. Clayton references Comyns-Carr’s *Reminiscences*, 84-5.

¹¹⁰ Langtry discusses her rise to prominence in her autobiography Lillie Langtry, *The Days I Knew*, (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1925), 53-55 and 86-97. Laura Beatty also touches upon Langtry’s connection with Aestheticism in her biography of Langtry, *Lillie Langtry: Manners, Masks and Morals* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1999) 58-65. Citing John Stokes, Michael R. Booth, and Susan Bassnett, *Bernhardt, Terry, Duse: The Actress in Her Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 9, Clayton suggests that ‘Critics have argued that virtually all of the great actresses of the fin de

abandoned ‘classical draperies’ however, in favour of costly couture gowns and established a profitable partnership with the couturiers Charles Frederick Worth (1825-1895) and his son Jean-Philippe (1856-1926).¹¹¹ Terry, in contrast, continued to work with Comyns-Carr, and returned to Aesthetic styles throughout her career.¹¹²

Irving employed leading artists within the Aesthetic movement to design some of his most spectacular productions.¹¹³ Terry was particularly impressed by the costume Alma-Tadema designed for her role as Imogen in the 1896 production of *Cymbeline*, describing it as ‘[...] one of the loveliest dresses that [she] ever wore.’¹¹⁴ [FIGURE 6.32] Terry’s praise for this costume reflects the skill with which Tadema’s design drew upon the myriad of styles associated with Aesthetic Dress to create a costume suited to this specific actress. Whilst carefully referencing the draped and silhouette of classical robes, it has also been adapted to suit Terry’s, by then, fuller figure.¹¹⁵ An examination of the costume,

siècle were related to aestheticism not only because of the company they kept, but also because of the ways they styled themselves. These actresses avoided makeup, or at least claimed such; made progressive choices in costume, including the avoidance of corsets; and led nontraditional private lives.’ Loretta Clayton, ‘Oscar Wilde, Aesthetic Dress and the Modern Woman: Or Why Sargent’s Portrait of Ellen Terry Appeared in *The Woman’s World*.’ 151.

¹¹¹ Laura Beatty has discussed the profitable partnership Langtry established with the couturier Charles Worth, ‘[...] with whom she cleverly negotiated acknowledgement in her programme as part payment’ for her costumes. Laura Beatty, *Lillie Langtry: Manners, Masks and Morals* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1999) 294. Similarly, in her discussion of the ‘House of Worth’ Elizabeth Ann Coleman notes that Langtry ‘Acquired much of both her personal and her professional wardrobe (from at least 1885 on) from Worth.’ and, citing Pierre Sichel, *The Jersey Lily: The Story of the Fabulous Mrs. Langtry*. (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1958) notes that ‘[Langtry] reputedly tried to negotiate her bill promising a North American tour with advertisements in every program’. Elizabeth Ann Coleman, *The Opulent Era: Fashions of Worth, Doucet and Pingat*, (New York: Thames and Hudson and The Brooklyn Museum, 1989) 106. A vibrant pink costume in the Ellen Terry Collection, and reputedly owned by Langtry, also has a label woven with ‘Worth, Paris’ stitched to the dressband in the bodice. See Appendix 1, Lillie Langtry, SMA.COST.190, 1118915.

¹¹² Images of Langtry’s costumes in subsequent productions within the Victoria and Albert Museum document the actress’s transition towards mainstream fashion and couture dress. Notable examples include the series of photographs which painter and photographer Henry Van de Weyde (1838-1924) took of Langtry in 1885 in which Langtry is shown tightly corseted and wearing elaborate evening dress. Similarly images of Langtry from 1899 show her wearing costumes which Jean-Phillipe at the House of Worth created for the production of *The Degenerates* at the Haymarket Theatre.

¹¹³ Amongst these were the 1895 production of *King Arthur*, examined in Chapter 4, for which Burne-Jones designed the set and costumes, and also the 1896 production of *Cymbeline*, designed by Alma-Tadema.

¹¹⁴ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 350.

¹¹⁵ Terry was 49 in the year *Cymbeline* was staged and as Comyns-Carr reveals in her *Reminiscences* there was some debate between Tadema and Terry about how to achieve a costume which would be ‘becoming to her figure.’ Comyns-Carr, *Reminiscences*, 254.

which survives at Smallhythe, revealed that the long sleeved bodice is shaped with soft pleating and, Terry's waist would have been defined with loosely gathered triangular bands of twill silk (rather than a corset).¹¹⁶ [FIGURE 6.33] The colours have also been chosen with care. All fit within the colour palette of natural, muted, tones favoured within Aestheticism.¹¹⁷ The subtle cream and sea green silk gauze used for the bodice flatter and highlight Terry's face and hands. Conscious of the theatrical space for which the costume was intended however, Tadema selected bolder tones for the skirt of the costume which is constructed from panels of purple, orange, russet and gold twill silk. [FIGURE 6.34] The success of the costume, both as a work of art and a garment tailored to Terry as an individual, is apparent in surviving images of the actress. [FIGURE 6.35]

Although Terry's decision to continue her allegiance to Aestheticism can be partially attributed to the style of production favoured by Irving and the Lyceum, there were also clear personal advantages for the actress. By presenting herself as an icon of a movement which venerated 'art', and 'the artist,' Terry was able to establish herself as an 'artist' rather than simply an 'actress.' As this chapter will show however, this was not simply a marketing ploy and Terry remained deeply committed to Aesthetic design, and to a rejection of the 'fashionable,' within her dress and private houses throughout her life.

¹¹⁶ See Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Imogen, *Cymbeline*, 1896, SMA.TC.105 [1118830].

¹¹⁷ Rejecting the vivid tones which could be achieved with chemical (aniline) dyes, Aestheticism attached great importance to choosing flattering, natural colours for dress. Numerous articles and handbooks on Aesthetic Dress address this theme. They include Mrs. H.R. Haweis who touches upon this issue in *The Art of Dress* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1879), 98 and devotes an entire chapter of *The Art of Beauty* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878) to 'Colour', 175-204. Louise Higgin also addressed colour in her publication, *Art As Applied to Dress: With Special Reference to Harmonious Colouring* (London: J.S. Virtue, 1885).



Figure 6.30 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart*, Lyceum Theatre, 1887, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number, S.133:407-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.31 - Window & Grove, Ellen Terry as Fair Rosamund in *Becket*, Lyceum Theatre, 1893. Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.4cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:482-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.32 - Photographer unknown. Ellen Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896. Photographic paper on card mount. 30 x 25 cm. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1122467.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.33 - Detail of the bodice which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 6 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.105 [1118830].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.34 - Detail of the skirt which forms part of the costume worn by Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, Lyceum Theatre, 1896, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 6 May 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.105 [1118830].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.35 - Photographer unknown. Hand tinted photograph of Terry as Imogen in *Cymbeline*, 1896, Lyceum Theatre. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1119387.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

A suitable 'stage set'

Terry's self-fashioning successfully maintained her popularity and, importantly, helped her to negotiate 'traditional ideas of female virtue.'¹¹⁸ Her success in this endeavour stemmed in part from the fact that, as Eltis emphasises, Terry was constantly performing 'as naturally and mutably in private correspondence as on the public stage.'¹¹⁹ Terry's performances were not confined to paper however, and her domestic space also functioned as additional stage set, over which she maintained tight control.

The impact Terry's relationships with Watts and Godwin had upon her taste has already been established. Whilst Watts introduced Terry to the concept of a harmonious domestic environment, it was through Godwin that Terry learnt how to create such spaces for herself. The first home Terry and Godwin shared was the 'The Red House', near Gustard Common, Hertfordshire, but it was the house Godwin designed for the couple in circa 1869, Pigeonwick, at Fallows Green, which had the most significant and lasting impact on Terry's taste.¹²⁰ [FIGURE 6.36]

Though Terry revealed relatively little about this phase in her career, details about the houses the couple shared, and the decorative styles they favoured, can be gleaned from letters sent by Godwin to Terry, which remain in the collection at Smallhythe.¹²¹ Their

¹¹⁸ Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 171.

¹¹⁹ Eltis, "Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress," 183.

¹²⁰ Many of Godwin's designs for the property survive in the archive of the Royal Institute of British Architects. One such design (dating from circa 1869) includes a profile image of a female figure dressed in pale green. The figure with its blonde hair and draped Aesthetic style gown, with long sleeves and a slight train, is very likely to have been intended as a representation of Terry. RIBA Archive, V&A, Library Reference RIBA12579 PB526/5 (10) (RAN 7/L/5 (10)).

¹²¹ These letters are grouped together with further papers at Smallhythe Place, where they are filed under the reference number SMA/MS/39-50. In 1877, Godwin was also designing a house for the artist J.M. Whistler. His designs for this property, and related drawings, provide a further indication of the style favoured by Godwin and which he and Terry are likely to have adopted within their own home. See for instance Design for House & Studio for J.A.M. Whistler Esq, Chelsea, c.1877-78 (pen & ink on paper), Private Collection and Outline of Interior Decoration, 1881 (ink on tracing paper) 30.5x45.7cm, Private Collection. Both images accessible via Bridgeman Art Library.

contents show that Terry was actively consulted regarding the furnishing of their home. A letter addressed to their daughter Edy, (though clearly intended for Terry to read as it repeatedly refers to ‘Mama’). Godwin explains that he has been ‘obliged to paper over the Second and 3rd floors’ and that the stairs are to be left unpainted ‘if mama don’t mind the look of old stone.’ He apologises that the paper used for the nurseries is cheap and does not have the blue birds Edy wished for, but, suggests that it can be ‘covered with pictures and old fans.’¹²² A second letter, written directly to Terry, explains that he has chosen the ‘Japan paper curtains’ for the drawing room as ‘Mule cloth wouldn’t do.’ He also reassures her, ‘you can make what changes you like’ when the room is free of workmen. Similarly, Godwin has taken responsibility for ensuring the bedroom they share on the second floor is ‘fit for habitation’ and wall papered, (though they will have to make do with shutters and blinds until the curtains are ready), but has left the decoration of the ‘Lady’s Snuggery’ for her to do ‘what [she] likes with.’¹²³

When financial difficulties compelled them to return to London in 1874, the pair rented a house in Taviton Street.¹²⁴ A sense of the aesthetic ‘harmony’ cultivated by Godwin can be gleaned from a description Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson (1853-1937) provides of this house.¹²⁵ Forbes-Robertson (an actor and painter) was a friend and sometime

¹²² This letter is currently in the collection at Smallhythe and not part of the wider correspondence currently held on long term loan at the British Library. The date has been added by Terry in an inscription which also notes that it was presented to her by Edy in 1887.

¹²³ Descriptions within the letter indicate that it was sent in the summer of 1875. This would fit with Terry’s performance pattern during this period. It suggests that the children were living with Terry at this point, with their nanny ‘Boo’ Rumball to take care of them. This letter is currently in the collection at Smallhythe and not part of the wider correspondence currently held on long term loan at the British Library.

¹²⁴ The property on Taviton Street was close to the current location of Kings Cross St Pancras, Euston and Russell Square.

¹²⁵ Godwin also provided several descriptions of this house (where Terry and he lived together from circa 1874-5) in an article he produced for *The Architect* in 1876. As Lionel Lambourne discusses, Godwin’s descriptions reveal that the woodwork below the dado was painted ‘a rather dark toned yellow of which yellow ochre is the base, but combined with white, sprinkled with gamboges, Prussian blue and vermillion.’ On the walls above this level was a frieze ‘painted in a pale grey green (that green sometimes seen at the stem end of a pineapple leaf when the other end has faded) indeed, as Godwin acknowledged, ‘most of the colours in the room [were] gathered from the pineapple’ E.W. Godwin, ‘My House ‘in’ London’, *The Architect*, 1876. Quoted in Lionel Lambourne. *The Aesthetic Movement*, London: Phaidon.1996, 161.

colleague of Terry and visited this house in 1874. He recalled being shown into a drawing room where the '[...] floor was covered with straw coloured matting' and the white walls, divided by a dado 'of the same material,' were decorated with hangings of 'cretonne, with a fine Japanese pattern in delicate grey-blue.' A dominant feature within this space was the 'full sized cast of the Venus of Milo' and in front of this stood a pedestal and censer 'from which rose, curling round the Venus, ribbons of blue smoke.' Forbes-Robertson also describes Terry's 'floating' entrance into the room, presenting her as a 'vision of loveliness' whose 'blue kimono' and 'wonderful golden hair' was so perfectly suited to the setting that '[...] she seemed to melt into the surroundings and appeared almost intangible.'¹²⁶

Terry's relationships with Watts and Godwin initiated her enduring sense of the importance of adapting her dress to match her setting both on and the stage.¹²⁷ This attitude to dress and décor was also central to the Aesthetic movement. Indeed, in an essay entitled '*The Two D's or; Decoration and Dress*,' a prominent commentator on Aesthetic attire, Mrs Haweis (1848-1898), warned her readers 'not [to] buy dresses which in fashion or colour are unsuitable to your room' or to have 'rooms which disagree with your dress.'¹²⁸

¹²⁶Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, *A Player Under Three Reigns* (London: T.Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1925) 66-67.

¹²⁷ As Auerbach notes, the critic William Archer, remarked upon Terry's ability to 'harmonise' with stage 'pictures' and Chapter 4 demonstrated the importance Terry attached to an awareness of lighting and colour on the stage when designing her costumes. Auerbach, *Ellen Terry, Player in Her Time*, 171.

¹²⁸ Mary Haweis, "The Two D's; or Decoration and Dress", *Temple Bar*, 67, 1883, 124. Mrs Mary Eliza Haweis (1848-1898) was amongst the earliest writers on Aesthetic Dress, publishing her first articles discussing dress and art in *Saint Paul's Magazine* in 1873. The wife of a clergyman, and a dress historian, Haweis' best known publications are *The Art of Beauty* (1878) and *The Art of Dress* (1879). She was also commissioned to write a series of articles on this theme for *The Queen* and other art and fashion journals. Haweis has been discussed in detail by both Stella Mary Newton, *Health, Art and Reason: Dress Reformers of the 19th Century*, (John Murray, 1974), 52-3 and Patricia A. Cunningham, *Reforming women's fashion, 1850-1920: politics, health and art* (Kent State University Press. 2006) 104-121.

Forbes-Robertson's description of Terry conveys the success with which she had adapted her dress and movement to her surroundings. It makes apparent her recognition that, by adopting Aesthetic 'costume,' and ensuring that her houses provided an appropriate backdrop for her garments, she could make a clear, and determined statement of her pioneering role in a movement which, as Haweis would write four years later, celebrated 'Dress as Art' and an 'art form.'¹²⁹

Terry's description of a visit the actress Mrs. Marie Bancroft (1839-1921) paid to this house in Taviton Street in 1875, exposes the contrast between Terry's Aesthetic lifestyle, and the dress and domestic life of her contemporaries. As Terry records, Bancroft 'petite - dressed in black - elegant Parisian black' arrived to find a room 'which had been almost completely stripped of furniture. The floor was covered with Japanese matting, and at one end was a cast of the Venus of Milo, almost the same colossal size as the original.'

Appropriately attired to match the Aesthetic environment Terry was wearing a dress

[...] of some deep yellow woollen [sic] material which my little daughter used to call the "frog dress," because it was speckled with brown like a frog's skin. It was cut like a Viollet-le-Duc tabard, and had not a trace of the fashion of the time.¹³⁰

Contemporary descriptions and images indicate that Terry continued to decorate her houses in a manner influenced by Aestheticism, even after the collapse of her relationship with Godwin. Indeed, she retained several items of furniture designed by Godwin

¹²⁹ Mary Haweis, *The Art of Dress* (London: Chatto&Windus, 1879) 10-15, 19 and 32-3.

¹³⁰ Terry, *Story of My Life*, 93. Terry's reference to 'Viollet-le-Duc' relates to the work of Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), which was also discussed in Chapter 4. A French architect and theorist, Le Duc was particularly famous for his 'restorations' of 'medieval' buildings. He also had a significant impact on contemporary knowledge of dress history and fashion through his book *Histoire de l'habitation humaine, depuis les temps préhistoriques jusqu'à nos jours* (1875) (published in English in 1876 as *Habitations of Man in All Ages*). The illustrations which accompanied this history of the domestic architecture provided a source of inspiration for many stage and Aesthetic designers.

throughout her life including a tea table he made for her, which remains amongst the furniture at Smallhythe.¹³¹ [FIGURE 6.37] Evidence of Terry's continuing enthusiasm for Aesthetic Décor, can be found in description of her London residence in Barkston Gardens, Earl's Court in 1892. As the author observes, she has retained the sculpture of the Venus de Milo set back in a recess on 'quaint oaken sideboard' and 'Aesthetic accessories' such as the 'amber silk curtains' in the drawing room, together with dado rails and tiles are visible in various rooms.¹³² The most striking part of the house however is what they term 'The Alcove.' [FIGURE 6.38] They describes this space as 'the most delightful arrangement in miniature rooms conceivable' remarking that,

[...] As a specimen of artistic furnishing [...] this little alcove may be opened out as a perfect model [...] How cosy are the cushions under the canopy of the window-how quaint the oaken table and chairs, which are an exact model of those used by Shakespeare himself.¹³³

This space which is also '[...] in every sense of the word a study' has clearly been designed with care, and communicates key messages to its audience. The dual identity of this area, which is simultaneously artistic and academic, deliberately intertwines Terry's 'public' and 'private' identities. Subtle allusions to Shakespeare within the furniture reference Terry's Aesthetic sensibilities: specifically her ability to draw inspiration from past elegance to create contemporary beauty. The same furnishings also recall Terry's theatrical career, in particular her status as 'Shakespearean actress.' This effect is heightened by the numerous books and pictures also contained within the alcove. These

¹³¹ In addition to this tea table (National Trust Inventory Number 1117440) Terry also retained a sideboard which she used in her London home. A duplicate of this sideboard survives in the V&A, Museum Reference Number CIRC.38:1 to 5-1953.

¹³² How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 490.

¹³³ How, *Illustrated Interview*, No. XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 491.

advertise the intense research which, as Terry's surviving library evidences, informed her professional work.¹³⁴

Wilson suggests that 'For maximum effect upon their urban stage bohemians needed a *mise en scene*, theatrical sets and costumes for the performance of revolt and identity.'¹³⁵

Followers of Aestheticism, Terry included, certainly conform to this characterisation and descriptions and photographs of Terry's houses illustrate her continued adherence to a 'Bohemian' style of décor which '[...] expressed both an avant-garde Aesthetic and individual personality.'¹³⁶



Figure 6.36 - Edward Godwin. Design for Pigeonwick, Fallows Green, Harpenden, ca. 1869. Ink, watercolour and pencil on paper. Measurements not recorded. RIBA Archive, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Reference number RIBA 12579.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹³⁴ How, *Illustrated Interview*. No, XVII, 490. Gail Marshall has discussed Terry's library and begun to explore the significance of the extensive annotations Terry made on her texts. Gail Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 157-160 and Gail Marshall, "Ellen Terry: Shakespearean Actress and Critic," *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 11.3 (2004):355-364.

¹³⁵ Elizabeth Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts* (London: I.B.Tauris Publishers, 2000) 159.

¹³⁶ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 161.



Figure 6.37 - Mahogany tea table, designed for Terry by Godwin in circa 1870-1875. Museum Record Photograph. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number 1117440.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.38 - Unknown artist. 'The Alcove.' Line drawn image from an original photograph by Elliot and Fry, featured in Henry How, *Illustrated Interview*, No, XVII – Miss Ellen Terry, 1892, 494. Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Box 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

6.5 AT THE FOREFRONT OF AESTHETICISM

Dress as ‘art’

‘Bohemian dress’ was also, as Wilson shows, ‘fraught with meaning’ which ‘might be symbolic, might be theatrical, or deeply authentic.’¹³⁷ In Terry’s case the ‘meaning’ of her dress shifted according to the context in which she appeared. Whether on the ‘public’ or ‘private’ stage, Terry adapted her dress to suit the ‘role’ being performed, and to express the ‘meaning’ appropriate to the setting.

Although Terry wrote about and preserved examples of her theatrical costumes, she made comparatively little effort to document her personal dress. Some references appear in letters, articles and her autobiography, but Terry never discusses her personal dress in the same level of detail as her stage costume, and very limited information survives regarding where she purchased, and who made, her off stage dress.¹³⁸ Thus a far greater reliance must be placed here upon the evidence drawn from contemporary descriptions, photographs, illustrations and paintings. The wealth of information contained within this source material facilitates an exploration of the manner in which Terry’s personal style evolved over the course of her life and career and, also, the social, artistic and historic factors, which shaped her taste.

As was the case with Terry’s approach to interior décor, there is a noticeable alteration in her dress following her marriage to Watts in 1864, after which her personal dress begins to diverge from the fashionable silhouette. Her move away from fashionable dress towards Aesthetic garments was confirmed during her relationship with Godwin in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Though strongly influenced by the styles and views of

¹³⁷ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 161.

¹³⁸ One key exception is, as Chapter 4 discussed, are surviving letters Terry which sent to her costume maker Nettleship. These reveal that Terry requested her to make personal garments on several occasions.

Aestheticism, Terry also drew inspiration from developments in fashionable dress, and wider movements within art and society. Her personal style also evolved in response to the changing shape of her body and also, towards the end of her life, her declining health.

As the analysis which follows will show, though the garments worn by Terry represent a fusion of diverse styles and influences, it is possible to trace three key phases in the development of her personal style. The first stage coincided with, and arguably resulted from, Terry's close relationship with Godwin and his appreciation for the art of Japan. During this period Terry, then young and slim, was one of the first women in England to adopt garments which reflected both an enthusiasm for Japonisme and the first signs of the development of 'Aesthetic' dress.

By 1880, however, a second stage in Terry's personal style becomes apparent. Established as an independent artist and performer Terry had begun to develop her taste and move beyond from Godwin's initial influence. Terry's dress in the late 1880s and 1890s reflects this self-determination and her kimonos are replaced by floor length dresses, which draw their inspiration from the fashions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

The third period in the development of Terry's personal style is characterised by a shift towards tunic style garments and the incorporation of Chinese robes. By 1900 Terry's figure was much fuller and no longer suited the belted kimonos or floor length 'Watteau back' dresses she had previously worn. The 'Chinese' and 'Greek' robes Terry now adopted flattered her altered body shape and, in her final years, proved both comfortable and practical.



Figure 6.39 - Magenta silk dress with bodice, jacket, skirt, peplum and bow, Madame Vignon, Paris, 1869-1870. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.118 to D-1979.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.40 - Green silk dress with matching peplum and belt. Maker unknown, England, ca. 1872. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.101-B.1972.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.41 - Detail of internal boning, in a pale blue figured silk bodice. Liberty & Co. Ltd, London, 1898. Museum of London. Personal photograph by author, 29 October 2010. Museum Number 81.242.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.42 - Detail of internal bustle pad, in jewel green silk velvet plush dress. Hewell [?] and James Ltd., London, ca.1888-9. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Personal photograph by author, 22 February 2011. Museum Number T.407-2001.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.43 - Sir William Blake, *Portrait of Mrs Luke Ionides*, 1882. Oil on canvas. 102.2 x 115.2cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.1062:1, 2-2003.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.44 - William Powell Frith, *Private View at the Royal Academy*, 1881. Oil on canvas. 102 x 193cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Reference CRJ1959.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.45 - Detail from William Powell Frith, *Private View at the Royal Academy*, 1881. Oil on canvas. 102 x 193cm. Private Collection. Bridgeman Art Education, Image Reference CRJ377198.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Style 1: 'Aesthetic' dress and Japonisme (ca.1869-1880)

The emergence of Aesthetic dress as a distinctive form of attire was evident by the mid-1870s, with a number of books and articles commentating specifically on such garments. As existing research into Aesthetic dress has shown, contemporary publications and illustrations, together with the surviving clothing, reveal the diversity of the styles encompassed within the term 'Aesthetic dress.'¹³⁹ Fashion favoured heavily corseted

¹³⁹ This theme was ably addressed by Stella Mary Newton in the 1970s and few subsequent texts have surpassed the quality of her comprehensive discussion of this theme. More recent publications include, Diana Crane. 'Clothing behaviour as non-verbal resistance: Marginal women and alternative dress in the nineteenth century', *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives* (London: Routledge. 1999) 335-364; Patricia A. Cunningham, *Reforming women's fashion, 1850-1920: politics, health and art* (Kent State University Press. 2006); Edwina Ehrman, 'Frith and Fashion', *William Powell Frith: Painting the Victorian Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006) 111-129; Stella Mary Newton, *Health Art and*

figures and close fitting garments which were supported on bustles, embellished with complex trimmings, and created in the vivid colours made possible by the chemical (aniline) dyes discovered in the 1850s. [FIGURE 6.39 and 6.40] Aestheticism, in contrast, promoted subtle, natural shades, such as ochre and indigo.¹⁴⁰ Surviving examples of Aesthetic dress reveal that whilst many followers of the movement rejected the constricting underwear and garments required to achieve the fashionable silhouette, channels of steel and internal bustles were often used to provide support and structure within Aesthetic clothing.¹⁴¹ [FIGURE 6.41 and 6.42] The exterior of Aesthetic garments would generally be designed to conceal this internal support and, in contrast to the close fit associated with fashionable dress, they conveyed, often artificially, an impression of softness, employing drapery, loose pleats, tucks, and smocking, to shape the garment loosely to the wearer.¹⁴² [FIGURE 6.43]

Reason” *Dress Reformers of the 19th century* (London: Murray, 1974) and, most recently, Kimberly Wahl, *Dressed As in a Painting: Women and British Aestheticism in an Age of Reform* (Durham New Hampshire: University of New Hampshire Press, 2013).

¹⁴⁰ Texts such as Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) and Lucy Johnston with Marion Kite and Helen Persson, *Nineteenth-century Fashion in Detail* (London: V&A Publishing, 2005) which cover key elements of fashion during this period, are amongst those that have addressed the development of synthetic and aniline dyes. More recently, Charlotte Nicklas has made a notable contribution to specialised research on this subject area in her Doctoral thesis *Splendid hues: colour, dyes, everyday science and women's fashion, 1840-1875*. Doctoral thesis, University of Brighton, 2009 and articles such as Charlotte Nicklas, “Light, colour and language in mid-nineteenth century women’s fashion,” *Surface tensions: surface, finish and the meaning of objects*, Ed. Victoria Kelley and Glenn Adamson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

¹⁴¹ These include a pale blue figured silk bodice made by Liberty & Co. Ltd, London in 1898 in which the internal boning is concealed, and belied, by the gentle pleats used to shape the exterior, Museum of London, 81.242. Similarly, there is an Aesthetic dress held by the V&A, which whilst it has no internal boning and fits relatively loosely to the figure, does have a dress band, and a crescent shaped pad, added at the interior centre back of the bodice, where it joins the skirt, to create a subtle ‘bustle effect’ at this point. Victoria and Albert Museum, Museum Number T.407-2001.

¹⁴² These developments in seasonal fashion have already been widely documented elsewhere and these publications, together with the large number of surviving garments record that the silhouette fashionable in the mid 1870s and early 1880s relied upon a tightly laced corset to achieve a narrow waist and uplifted bust. Key publications include: Nancy Bradfield, *Costume in Detail: Women's Dress, 1730-1930* (Kent: Eric Dobby Publishing Ltd, New ed. 1995); Anne Buck, *Victorian Costume and Accessories* (New York: Costume and Fashion Press, revised edition, 1997); Sarah Levitt, *Fashion in Photographs, 1880-1900* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1991), Sarah Levitt, *Victorian's Unbuttoned: Registered Designs for clothing their wearers and makers, 1839-1900* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986); Philippe Perrot, *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie: A History of Clothing in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); Clare Rose, *Clothing and Society in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011); Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Norah Waugh, *The Cut of Women's Clothes 1600-1930s* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994).

William Powell Frith's (1819-1909), *A Private View at the Royal Academy* (1881) features an array of Aesthetic garments and illustrates the contrast between Aesthetic and Seasonal fashion. [FIGURE 6.44] The 'Aesthetes' depicted include a woman wearing a vivid salmon pink frock with a box pleated train known as a 'Watteau back', a style then very popular amongst women within the Aesthetic movement, Terry included.¹⁴³ Indeed, Terry is herself featured in the painting. [FIGURE 6.45] She is wearing a small black hat with soft crown and narrow brim, and the pleated sleeve of her dull gold/bronze dress is just visible behind the figure of Oscar Wilde, who dominates the scene.¹⁴⁴

As Ehrman has discussed, a visit to an art gallery, or, as Haweis suggested, 'an old Cathedral still decked by early bas-reliefs,' could provide inspiration for women wishing to dress artistically.¹⁴⁵ 'Old pictures' and books about period costume were regarded as a source of 'attractive sleeve details and decorative combinations of colours and fabrics' and led to a trend within Aestheticism for reviving styles fashionable in 'past ages.'¹⁴⁶ In her examination of the Aesthetic garments worn by the poets Katherine Bradley (1846-1914) and Edith Cooper (1862-1913), Sarah Parker, discovered direct evidence that they

¹⁴³ This double box pleat at the centre back of the dress took its name from the paintings of the artist Jean Antione Watteau (1684-1721) and was developed from the mid the late eighteenth Robe à la Française or 'Sack back' styles in which his female subjects were generally dressed.

¹⁴⁴ As his position suggests, Wilde established himself as a prominent figure with the Aesthetic Movement. Both his clothing (in this instance a salmon pink tie, lily and brown velvet coat with wide lapels, and lily in his buttonhole) and the décor within his house on Tite Street, where he moved in 1884, (designed by Godwin and Whistler) were chosen to express his Aesthetic sensibilities. He was amongst the enthusiasts for Aestheticism satirised in the 1881 Gilbert and Sullivan opera *Patience* and his prominence was such that Richard D'Oyly Carte (1844-1901) (seeking to promote the American tour of *Patience*) agreed to finance Wilde's lecture tour. In return Wilde scheduled his arrival in American cities so that it would with the opening of the opera, acting, as Max Beerbohm suggested, as a "sandwich board for *Patience*." Ian Bradley, *Complete Annotated Gilbert and Sullivan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 269 and Alison Adburgham, *Liberty's: A biography of a shop* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1975) 30-31.

¹⁴⁵ Edwina Ehrman, 'Women's Dress'. In: *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1869-1900*. London: V&A Publishing, 2011, 207.

¹⁴⁶ Haweis, *Art of Dress*, 76. Not all women were in favour of this tendency to bow to 'the authority of the artist in matters of taste,' which as the author, and commentator Margaret Oliphant (1828-1897) warned, threatened to transform women into 'as series of costumed models for his pictures.' Mrs. Margaret Oliphant, *Dress* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1878) 5.

were drawing their inspiration from ‘the old masters’ viewed in the galleries of Europe.¹⁴⁷ Indeed a sketch of the Madonna by Cooper following a trip to Dresden in 1891 was actually captioned ‘Hints for a dress.’ As Parker showed, the two women ‘viewed their dresses as art-objects: ones that were to be carefully planned, constructed and displayed to the public gaze.’¹⁴⁸



Figure 6.46 - Southwell Brothers. Ellen Terry, circa 1863. Sepia Photograph on paper. 8.8 x 5.8 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:155-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁴⁷The two poets published under the joint name Michael Field and had both a professional and personal partnership.

¹⁴⁸ Parker discovered this evidence in their diaries and correspondence. These included the sketch Parkers discusses, which was accompanied by a description of ‘the pallid hellitrope’ colour of garment with its ‘rim about the neck and sleeves of old gold that harmonises the robe with the severe blue cloak.’ Sarah Parker, ‘Fashioning Michael Field: Michael Field and Late-Victorian Dress Culture,’ *Journal of Victorian Culture* (2013): 1-22 (12-13)



Figure 6.47 - Boned corset of silk trimmed with machine-made lace, worn with cage crinoline. Possibly made in France or Great Britain, 1864. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.169-1961.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.48 - G.F.Watts. *Choosing*. 1864. Oil on strawboard mounted on Gatorfoam. Measurements not recorded. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum number NGP 5048.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.49 - Henry Rigge. Ellen Terry, ca.1865-7. Sepia Photograph on paper. 9 x 5.8 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:153-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.50 - Dress of embroidered cotton muslin. Possibly made in England or France, ca. 1818, Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.79-1972.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.51 - Herbert Watkins. Ellen Terry, ca.1872, Sepia Photograph on paper. 9 x 6 cm.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:188-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

At the forefront of Aestheticism

Though seldom conforming to current trends, Terry's personal style did not completely reject fashionable dress. Photographs taken of her in the early 1860s reveal that as young woman she generally adhered to contemporary fashions. In *[FIGURE 6.46]*, (taken in circa 1863), for instance, Terry's full skirt is clearly supported by a crinoline and the structure of her corset is visible through the close fitting bodice of her dress.¹⁴⁹ As *[FIGURE 6.47]* demonstrates a crinoline or a stiff, padded, petticoat, and a corset were

¹⁴⁹ The photograph is not dated, but a series of photographs of Terry as Desdemona (held within the V&A collections, Museum numbers S.133:170, 172, 176 and 178 -2007) were taken at the Southwell Brother's Studio in Baker Street in 1863 and Terry's hair and features are consistent with this image of Terry in her personal dress, Museum number S.133:155-2007.

required to achieve this silhouette. Terry's marriage to Watts in 1864 however, heralded a shift in her attitude to dress and a visible alteration in her garments.

This change was signalled by the dark brown silk dress in which Terry appeared during the wedding ceremony. Designed by Pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt, Terry wears the same dress in the portrait Watts painted of her the same year. [FIGURE 6.48] Only the bodice of the dress is visible, but the departure from the bright aniline colours fashionable at the time, is apparent in the dark tones of the brown silk ground. Some lighter colours have been introduced at the wide neckline, which is edged with a white frill gathered in loose pleats, and decorated with a pale blue ribbon but their use is restricted to subtle highlights. The fit of the bodice is also much softer than current fashion demanded and the sleeves are set unfashionably lower on the shoulder, allowing Terry to move much more freely.

As photographs from circa 1865 onwards show, Terry sustained this alteration in style after her separation from Watts. The waistline of her dresses was raised to the 'natural' level and the fit of her bodices remained softer than was fashionable. [FIGURE 6.49] reveals that Terry's skirt though fashionably full, falls in gentle folds, rather in than the characteristic bell shape provided by the crinoline. The decoration of her plain garments is focused on the sleeves, which in Figure 49 are gathered in graduated 'puffs' resembling the 'mamaluke' or 'marie' sleeves popular between circa 1810 and 1820 [FIGURE 6.50]. The sleeves in [FIGURE 6.51] are simpler, but still fit much more loosely than was common for the period. Terry is also wearing the simple strands of large beads which became an established part of her pared down approach to dress and accessories.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Such Amber beads became a popular Aesthetic accessory for women by the 1880s and Terry's beads are very similar to those held by Elfrida Ionides (1848-1929), an influential follower of the movement, in a portrait which William Richmond Blake (1842-1921) painted of her in 1882. This painting is now held by the V&A, Museum Reference E.1062:1, 2-2003. A similar necklace is also amongst possessions owned



Figure 6.52 - Unknown photographer, Ellen Terry, ca.1875-1880. Sepia photograph on paper. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:358-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Indian and Chinese shawls

Large shawls which enveloped her shoulders and upper body in their voluminous folds formed part of Terry's wardrobe throughout her life. [FIGURE 6.52] As Michelle Maskiell has observed, the popularity of Kashmir shawls, which peaked in the 1860s, had declined by 1870s.¹⁵¹ Images of Terry however, reveal that she continued to wear unfashionably large shawls throughout her life, and several examples survive within the collection at Smallhythe.¹⁵² Maskiell suggests that 'Asian commodities like Kashmiri shawls became key objects for late-nineteenth century Aesthetic [...] "taste

by Terry within the collection at Smallhythe Place, National Trust Inventory number 1117765. According to the catalogue record these beads were worn almost continuously by Terry until her last illness.

¹⁵¹ Michelle Maskiell, "Consuming Kashmir: Shawls and Empires, 1500-2000," *Journal of World History*, 13.1 (Spring 2002): 35-36, 49, 42.

¹⁵² Refer to Appendix 1, Full catalogue of garments held at Smallhythe, Ellen Terry, Personal Dress and Accessories.

professionals” who sought out ‘hand crafted textiles.’¹⁵³ These costly shawls certainly continued to form part of the ‘antique embroideries’ stocked by Liberty’s of London. Such shawls therefore identified the wearer as a ‘taste professional.’

Significantly however, not all Terry’s shawls conform to this ‘exclusive’ Aesthetic. In an image from the mid to late 1880s, she wears a shawl which is printed with flowers and motifs of European inspiration. [FIGURE 6.53] This fusion of styles and motifs was typical of Terry’s approach to dress.



Figure 6.53 - Window and Grove. Ellen Terry, ca.1880-1890. Sepia photograph on paper.
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:421-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Japonisme and Greek dress

¹⁵³ Maskiell, “Consuming Kashmir: Shawls and Empires, 1500-2000,” 42-3. Maskiell draws upon the work that Leora Auslander, *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) and Paul Greenhalgh, “The History of Craft,” *The Culture of Craft: Status and Future*, ed. Peter Dormer. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997) has carried out relating to this issue.

Terry's relationship with Godwin had a significant influence on the evolution of her personal style. Godwin had strong opinions on dress, and, as Chapters 4 and 5 discussed, designed some of the costumes Terry wore on stage.¹⁵⁴ He also had a noticeable impact on her personal dress and that of their children. It was Godwin who introduced Terry to Japanese art and dress and she shared his admiration for its 'unobtrusive beauty' and 'lightness.'¹⁵⁵ Terry's enthusiasm for classically inspired dress also dates from the time she spent with Godwin, who, though recognising that 'in the climates of transpontine Europe the old classic dress cannot be revived,' often praised the 'beauty of form and cut' associated with 'Greek dress.'¹⁵⁶

Godwin also brought Terry to the notice of the painter of James McNeil Whistler (1834-1903) whose fascination with Japan, which began in the 1860s, is evident in the subjects of paintings.¹⁵⁷ In addition to presenting the pair with 'a blue and white Nankin dinner set' and some 'Venetian glass,' Whistler sent Craig 'a tiny Japanese kimono when Liberty

¹⁵⁴ By the time Godwin began a relationship with Terry he had already established a reputation as both an architect and an informed advocate of Aesthetic Dress. When the department store, Liberty's, opened a 'Costume Department' in 1884, Godwin was appointed as its Head. As Lambourne has discussed, Godwin also designed costumes for a wide variety of theatre productions over the course of his career. Lionel Lambourne, "'Pyrrhic success': E.W. Godwin and the Theatre," *Country Life* (2 October 1986): 1024-5. Godwin's lectures and publications on the theme of dress include E. W. Godwin "A Lecture on Dress", delivered in 1868 and re-published in Radu Stern, *Against Fashion: Clothing As Art, 1850-1930* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2004: 83-93) and E. W. Godwin, *Dress, and Its Relation to Health and Climate* (London: W. Clowes, 1884).

¹⁵⁵ Frances Collard explored Godwin's engagement with Japan in an unpublished presentation entitled "E.W. Godwin and Anglo-Japanese Design." This took place at the Study Day, *Imagining Japan: Anglo-Japanese Influences on 19th Century British Art and Design*, organised by Victoria & Albert Museum on 25 June 2011. As Lionel Lambourne found, Godwin also collected Japanese prints, and these were displayed in both the house he shared with his first wife, Sarah Yonge (who died in 1864), and those he would subsequently live in with Terry. Lionel Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement*, (London: Phaidon, 1996) 155-6.

¹⁵⁶ E.W. Godwin, *Dress and its relation to Health*, 77. Lambourne has examined the significance of Godwin's knowledge of classical dress, in particular its impact on the 1881 Lyceum production of *The Cup*. Lambourne, *The Aesthetic Movement*, 162-3.

¹⁵⁷ Ribeiro's references to Whistler's 'frequent' visits to the house that Terry shared with Godwin and to kimonos sent by the artist to Terry's daughter 'Edy' also illuminate elements of Terry's interaction with members of the Aesthetic Movement. Ribeiro writing in Macdonald, Galassi and Ribeiro. *Whistler, Women and Fashion*, 49-50. *La Princesse du pays de la porcelain*, (1863-5), Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. is an early example of paintings which exemplify Whistler's interest in Japan.

was hardly a name.’¹⁵⁸ Two kimonos, worn by Craig in circa 1874 (then aged about 5 or 6), survive within the collection at Smallhythe.¹⁵⁹ Neither are as lavish as the elaborate and colourful kimonos featured in Whistler’s paintings, and both are comparatively roughly made, bearing a closer resemblance to the wadded sleeping coverlet known as a ‘yogi.’ These were cut in the same shape as a kimono, but tended to be larger and the sleeves were fully sewn to the body.¹⁶⁰ One has been made up in peach silk crepe, stencilled with a design of roses in red and orange using the ‘katagami’ process. It is not lined.¹⁶¹ [FIGURE 6.54] The other has a silk/wool blend ground fabric which has been stencilled with a burnt orange geometric pattern. [FIGURE 6.55] It is interlined with fleece, and lined with pale orange silk. Further padding is present at the hem and at the base of the hanging sleeves. A photograph taken of Craig in circa 1874, shows her wearing this second kimono.¹⁶² [FIGURE 6.56] As this image demonstrates, Terry’s children offered her a further means through which to express her Aesthetic identity. She and Godwin ensured that both children received an ‘Aesthetic education,’ dressing them in Aesthetic garments and decorating their nursery with ‘Japanese prints and fans.’¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Terry, *The Story of my Life*, 124 and Adburgham, “The Early Years,” 27. Anne Anderson has established the significant part which ‘art objects’, such as this china and Godwin’s Japanese fans and prints played in establishing and expressing an Aesthetic identity. Anderson, “Fearful Consequences...of Living up to One’s Teapot’: Men, Women and ‘Cultchah’ in the Aesthetic Movement,” 111-130.

¹⁵⁹ See Appendix 1, Edith Craig, Kimono 1, SMA.COST.97, 1118822 and Kimono 2, SMA.TC.98, 1118823.

¹⁶⁰ Examples of such garments can be found in the V&A, Museum Number FE. 155-1983 and the Metropolitan Museum, New York, Museum Number 1983.566 and 66.239.3.

¹⁶¹ This stencilling technique, in which paper stencils, (many of which are extremely sophisticated and intricate), are used for dyeing textiles is specifically associated with Japan, and Japanese textiles. Such textiles were also highly valued by ‘Western consumers’ of Japanese textiles in the late nineteenth century. Julie Warchol, “Japanese Stencils.” *Smith College Museum of Art, Massachusetts*. 22 January 2013 and “Logical Rain, Rediscovered after 125 years in Dresden: the world’s richest resource of Japanese stencils for dyeing samurai kimonos Proposition II.” *Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden* [n.d.]

¹⁶² In her compilation of Edith Craig memoirs Ann Rachlin suggests this photograph was taken whilst Terry living at 221 Camden Road. Ann Rachlin, *Edy was a Lady*, (Leicester: Matador, 2011) 13.

¹⁶³ Terry describes this upbringing in her autobiography, Terry, *The Story of my life*, 80. When interviewed in 1910, Craig recalled spending much of childhood ‘barefoot’ and in ‘Japanese clothes.’ Craig was quoted in Margaret Kilroy, “Helpers at the Scottish Exhibition,” *Votes for Women*, April 5 1910, 455.



Figure 6.54 - Katagami stencilled silk kimono unlined, worn by Edith Craig (1869-1947), Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 20 July 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.COST.97, [1118822].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.55 - Katagami stencilled silk kimono with fleece interlining, worn by Edith Craig (1869-1947), Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 20 July 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.98, [1118823].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.56 - Herbert Watkins, Edith Craig wearing SMA.TC.98, ca.1874. Sepia photograph on paper. 10.3 x 6.5cm. Ellen Terry Collections, Smallhythe Place. National Trust Inventory Number NT1122635.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.57 - Samuel A. Walker, Ellen Terry, ca.1874, Sepia Photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.4cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:418-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

‘Oriental Robes’– a route to ‘artistic and sartorial freedom?’¹⁶⁴

Though no examples of the Japanese kimonos worn by Terry have survived, written and visual records testify to her preference for this form of attire, and her position at the forefront of the introduction of Japonisme into fashion in Britain by the mid-1870s. Christine M.E. Guth has described how the ‘flood of imports from Japan’ in the 1860s generated this vogue for ‘Japonisme’ which, together with a ‘heightened appreciation of materials, techniques, forms and colours,’ endured for the next two decades.¹⁶⁵ In the 1870s, Terry was a pioneer in her adoption of Japanese kimonos which, by the 1880s, were becoming an increasingly popular form of informal attire among followers of Aestheticism.¹⁶⁶ As Anna Marie Kirk suggests, Japanese dress, like classical dress, offered a ‘radical’ contrast to the ‘elaborately constructed garments of mainstream fashion’ as the ‘looser, lower waists, the abandonment of the corset and the larger armholes gave the wearer more physical freedom.’¹⁶⁷ As already discussed, Terry’s dresses were already following these lines in the mid-1860s. Yet, as Kirk also stresses, because a kimono represented the ‘extremes’ of Japanese style, it was not adopted ‘wholeheartedly as an alternative to mainstream dress.’ Instead the kimono was worn only ‘indoors’ and subsequently as a ‘dressing and tea gown,’ from the 1880s up to circa 1914.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Anna Marie Kirk, ‘Japonisme and Femininity: A Study of Japanese Dress in British and French Art and Society, c.1860-c.1899.’ *Costume*, 42, (2008), 111-129. 120.

¹⁶⁵ Christine M.E. Guth in “Japonisme,” *The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900* (London: V&A Publishing, 2011) 110-113, 111. James Joseph Tissot (1836-1902) captured this enthusiasm in his two paintings *Young Lady Looking at Japanese Objects* and *Young Women Looking at Japanese Objects*, both painted in 1869, both oil on canvas and in Private Collections.

¹⁶⁶ For further discussion on this topic see Elizabeth Kramer, “‘Not so Japan-Easy’: The British Reception of Japanese Dress in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Textile History*, 44 (1) (May 2013): 3-24 and Anna Marie Kirk, ‘Japonisme and Femininity,’ 111-129.

¹⁶⁷ Kirk, ‘Japonisme and Femininity,’ 111-2, 120.

¹⁶⁸ Kirk, ‘Japonisme and Femininity,’ 111-2.

What distinguished Terry's interaction with these garments, from that of most other women, was the 'public' context within which Terry wore her kimonos. A key instance of this was her decision, in 1875, to wear a kimono when posing for a photograph intended for public circulation and sale. [FIGURE 6.57] Although the mount in which the image was sold was labelled 'Ellen Terry as a Japanese Lady,' in fact it shows Terry wearing her 'personal' clothing, and not a 'theatrical' costume.¹⁶⁹ In portraits of Terry associated with her theatrical roles, her posture and hairstyle, and in some instances, setting, are all chosen to convey the precise role being 'performed.'¹⁷⁰ Terry's relationships with Godwin and Whistler would have familiarised her with the poses and backdrops depicted within Japanese Woodblock prints and yet she has made no attempt to re-create these scenes.¹⁷¹ [FIGURE 6.58] In Figure 6.57, Terry's hair is unfashionably softly, and informally gathered up, her gaze is fixed directly at the viewer and her hands are resting on her hips. In this photograph she is deliberately presenting her 'self' as a wearer of this Japanese garment, not only within the 'domestic', but also the 'public' sphere.

The manner in which Terry is wearing her kimono is also significant. Kirk describes how by the mid nineteenth century the term 'kimono,' meaning in Japanese 'thing worn,' encompassed an ensemble of layers robes and accessories, topped by the *kosode*, an 'unfitted wrap around robe with short sleeves.' This is the 'kimono' that features most

¹⁶⁹ Not all the versions of this photograph of Terry have remained in this mount, but even though the copy of this photograph held within the Guy Little Collection at the V&A has been removed from its mount, pencil annotation on the rear matches the caption of those copies which remain within their original mount.

¹⁷⁰ This aspect of Terry's stage photographs was discussed in relation to images of Terry as Ophelia in *Hamlet* (1878) and as Ellaline in *The Amber Heart* (1887). Another very obvious instance are the series of images of Terry as Viola in *Twelfth Night* (1884) in which she appears shipwrecked, gazing out over the shore, S.133:386-2007 and in her male disguise. In both these images both Terry's posture, setting, and expression reflect the narrative of the play, and the character she is portraying.

¹⁷¹ This image of Terry contrasts with a photograph of her daughter, Edith Craig, taken in 1888, which has been constructed to convey Craig's adoption of a Japanese identity. Aged 19, and again wearing a kimono, Craig is shown positioned in front of an elaborate Japanese screen, and with a hairstyle and makeup chosen to suit her Japanese 'costume.' Melville includes this image of Edith Craig in her biography *Ellen and Edy*, but does not include any information about the source of the image or, the circumstances in which it was taken. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 65.

frequently in European and American artworks from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century.¹⁷² [FIGURE 6.59] The *'kosode'* was fastened with a stiffened *obi*, or wide sash. In a very elaborate or formal ensemble a further open kimono, an *Uchikake* might also be worn on top of the *kosode*.¹⁷³ In this photograph of Terry her use of a soft sash to define her waist and 'the possible suggestions of an under-robe at the neck' reference the traditional Japanese style of kimono. Yet the garment has clearly been adapted to suit her preference for loose fitting, unrestrictive garments, especially through Terry's use of a softly folded sash, rather than a stiffened 'obi.'¹⁷⁴ Similarly, this gentle confinement at the waist distinguishes Terry's approach to wearing the kimono from what in the 1880s became the 'ideal Aesthetic/artistic manner of wearing robes.' This was, Kirk suggests, that 'they should flow "open and sprawl back."¹⁷⁵ Therefore Terry's 1875 kimono, whilst clearly influenced by both Japanese traditions, and the Aesthetic enthusiasm for such garments, was pioneering, and did not fully conform to either style. Instead she chose to wear this garment in a manner which both suited, and expressed, her individuality.

Although popular within Aesthetic circles, such unconventional attire, worn without a corset, provoked controversy among the wider public. This was due in part to louche behaviour then often identified with such clothing.¹⁷⁶ As a result, very few women would

¹⁷² Kirk, 'Japonisme and Femininity,' 117.

¹⁷³ Kirk, 'Japonisme and Femininity,' 117.

¹⁷⁴ Kirk does not discuss the photograph in detail but does observe key details such as the *obi* and under robe and notes that 'no *obi-age* (cords which kept the *obi* in place) is worn, and there is no attempt to replicate the hairstyle or make-up of a Japanese Lady.' Kirk, 'Japonisme and Femininity, 111-129. 121.

¹⁷⁵ Kirk reaches this conclusion from her analysis of contemporary paintings and a description of such garments in de Goncourt's novel *Manette Solomon* (originally published in 1867). Kirk, 'Japonisme and Femininity, 111-129. 121.

¹⁷⁶ In the first volume of his series of seven novels *À la recherche du temps perdu*, 'Swann's Way,' Marcel Proust (1871-1922) describes the bedroom of Odette de Crecy, a former courtesan, 'hung with Oriental draperies, strings of Turkish beads, and a huge Japanese lantern suspended by a silken cord [with] enormous palms growing out of pots of Chinese porcelain...[and]...great cushions of Japanese silk'. Odette receives Swann in this intimate chamber attired in 'a pink silk dressing gown, which left her neck and arms bare.' The allure exerted by both these exotic objects and is vividly rendered in these pages, as is the association between the fluid, opulence of the kimonos and robes which Odette's dressing gown closely resembles,

have had sufficient courage in their artistic resolutions to defy convention by being photographed wearing such garments. For this reason, Langtry's decision to be photographed wearing a kimono in 1884 was plausibly a conscious reference her earlier role in the Aesthetic movement. It is equally possible, given her direct gaze and languorous pose, however, that Langtry was deliberately exploiting the garment's less respectable associations, in a manner never evident in Terry's use of the kimono.¹⁷⁷

[FIGURE 6.60]

By the 1880s kimonos were well established as part of informal, Aesthetic dress, and by 1890s were being sold by major London department stores, but this trend was in its infancy in 1875, when Terry was first adopting such garments as part of her personal wardrobe.¹⁷⁸ Though painters such as Claude Monet (1840-1926), Pierre Auguste Renoir (1841-1921), James Joseph Tissot (1836-1902) and, particularly, Whistler, collected kimonos and the 'exotic garments' featured in their paintings during the 1860s-1880s, only Whistler was regularly painting scenes which included kimonos in the late 1860s and early 1870s.¹⁷⁹ Whistler's gift of two small kimonos for their daughter, to Terry and Godwin, as early as 1874 is thus of much historical importance. It was not until 1876 that Monet presented *La Japonaise (Camille Monet in Japanese Dress)* (Figure 6.59), to the public and Renoir's portrait of *Madame Hériot* (1882) was completed six years later.

[FIGURE 6.61] The 1875 photograph of Terry predates these paintings and evokes the

with the loose morals and conduct believed to be adopted by their wearers. Marcel Proust, translated by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, revised by D.J. Enright, *Swann's Way*. London: Vintage Books (2005), 264-265.

¹⁷⁷ Langtry had numerous affairs with prominent public figures and, as Carlson suggests, the sexual scandals of Langtry's private life meant that her previous commercial success in roles such as the 'chaste Rosalind' owed less to the quality of her acting, than to the desire of the audience members to see 'Miss Langtry in tights.' Carlson, Marvin. *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. 2003, 86-7.

¹⁷⁸ Elizabeth Kramer, "'Not so Japan-Easy': The British Reception of Japanese Dress in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Textile History*, 44 (1) (May 2013): 3-24. 14.

¹⁷⁹ Akiko Fukai, "Japonism in Fashion," *Kyoto Costume Institute*. [n.d.], 3.

sophisticated restraint associated with earlier works by Whistler, such as *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green - The Balcony*, (ca.1864-1870) and *La Princesse du pays de la porcelain*, (ca. 1863-65). [FIGURE 6.62 and 6.63] Considered within this context, this photograph of Terry represents a significant statement of self-confidence and determination to establish and identity herself as a figure at the forefront of new fashions within the Aesthetic movement.



Figure 6.58 - Eisen Keisai. 'The Koya Tama River', from the series 'Six Famous Rivers with the Name Tama', early 1820s, Japanese Woodblock print. 37.1 x 25.1cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.12980-1886.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

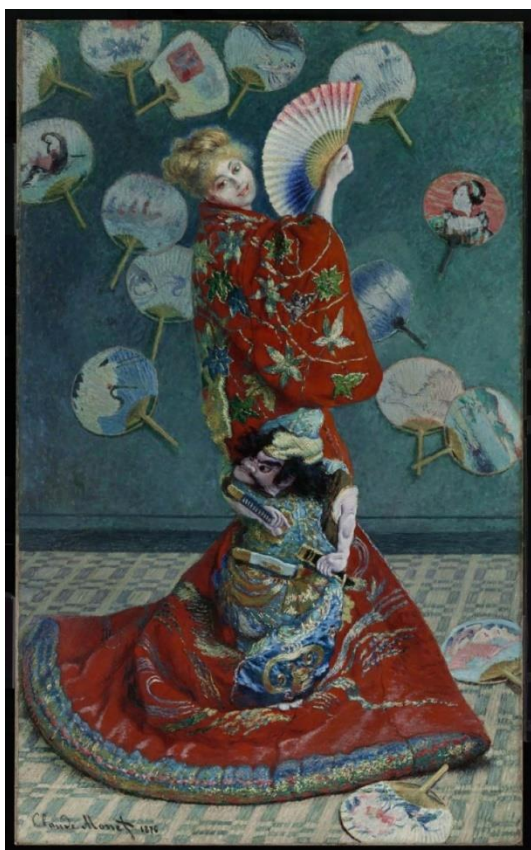


Figure 6.59 - Claude Monet. *La Japonaise* (Camille Monet in Japanese Dress) ca. 1876. Oil on canvas. 231.8 x 142.3cm, Museum of Fine Arts Boston. Museum Number 56.147.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.60 - Jose Maria Mora. *Lillie Langtry wearing a kimono*, 1884. Albumen cabinet card. 16.5 x 10.7cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x197342.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.61 - Pierre Auguste Renoir, *Madame Hériot*, 1882, 65x54cms, oil on canvas. Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

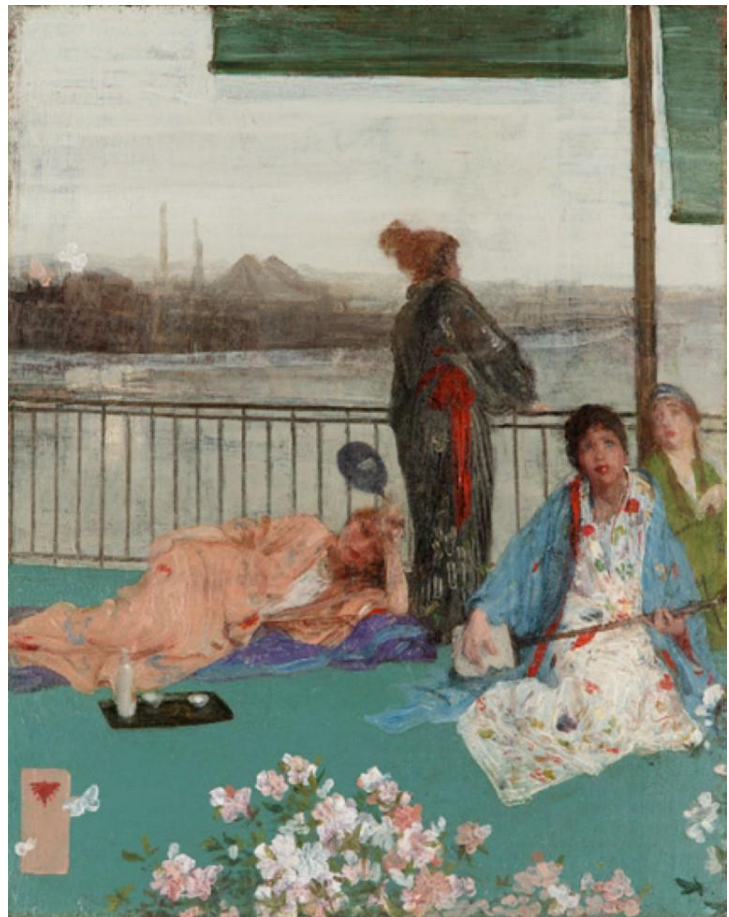


Figure 6.62 - James McNeil Whistler, *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green - The Balcony*, ca.1864-1870. Oil on wood panel, 61.4 x 48.8cm. Courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Museum Number F1892.23a-b.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

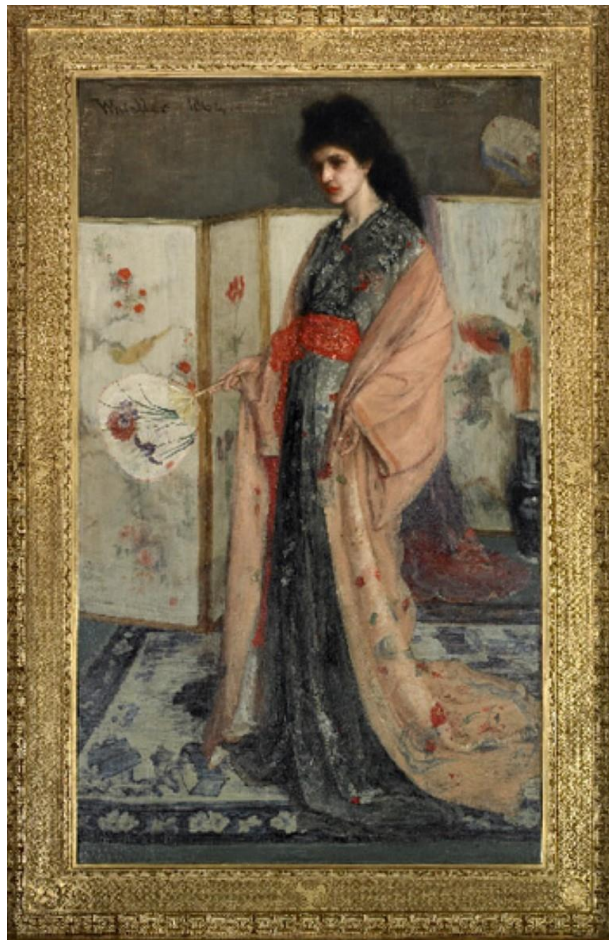


Figure 6.63 - James McNeil Whistler, *La Princesse du pays de la porcelain*, ca. 1863-65. Oil on canvas, 199.9x116.1cm. Courtesy of Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Museum Number F1903.91a-b.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Style 2: Historicism and Europe

By 1880, Terry's personal clothing exhibits a move away from the influence of Japan, towards garments inspired by a fusion of historic and contemporary European fashions. As Chapter 4 showed, Terry often sought inspiration from historic fashions when creating her stage costumes, and a similar approach can be identified in many of the garments she wore off stage.¹⁸⁰ In the 1880s, for instance, Terry frequently wore floor length dresses which loosely followed the line of the figure, but were only softly gathered at the waist

¹⁸⁰ A case in point being the research Terry carried out when developing her costume for *Macbeth* in 1888 (discussed in Chapter 5), and her earlier reference to the fact that she had studied the work of the Renaissance painter Cesare Vecellio (ca.1530-ca.1601) when offered the part of Portia in 1875. Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 93.

(if at all). [FIGURE 6.64] This style references the silhouette of the Robe à la Française or ‘Sack back’ dress fashionable in the early to mid-eighteenth century. [FIGURE 6.65] Several trends within mainstream fashionable dress were inspired by eighteenth century garments, as exemplified in the ‘Dolly Varden’ dresses fashionable in the early 1870s, which revived and adapted the ‘Polonoise’ style gowns of the 1780s. [FIGURE 6.66]. Terry’s personal preference for garments inspired by this period is evident in the number of her dresses (both on and off the stage) which featured a double ‘box pleat,’ or ‘Watteau back,’ at the rear.¹⁸¹ [FIGURE 6.67]



Figure 6.64 - Herbert Rose Barraud. Ellen Terry, late 1880s. Sepia photograph on paper. 13.2 x 9.7 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:488-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

¹⁸¹ Two key examples of Terry’s surviving costumes which feature this ‘Watteau back’ are a dress worn by Terry in the title role of Olivia (now in the Museum of London Collections, Museum Reference 51.93) and the dress Terry wore as Nance Oldfield which forms part of the collection at Smallhythe (National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.109 a+b).



Figure 6.65 - A woman's green and cream striped silk satin sack back, petticoat and stomacher. English, 1760-1770. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.471 to B-1980.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.66 - Front cover of music sheet for *The Dolly Varden Polka*, as performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, composed by W.C. Levey, late 19th century. Printed ink on paper. 33.6 x24cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.170-2012.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.67 - Unknown photographer. *Terry in dress with Watteau back* ca.1880s. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Image courtesy of Susannah Mayor, 5 May 2016.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

The 'Liberty' dress¹⁸²

One of the few surviving examples of Terry's personal dress features this 'Watteau Back.' [FIGURE 6.68] It is a floor length unbleached raw tussore silk dress. Both this fabric, and the beige cotton with which the skirt and bodice are lined, are light in weight and of fine quality. Although there is evidence of machine stitching on the seams, the hem and lining have been finished by hand. There is no inner boning and the trained dress softly follows the line of the body. It fastens down the centre front with one interior row of self-

¹⁸² Though it has not been possible to prove a link between the example of Terry's personal dress preserved at Smallhythe and the department store, the dress has been traditionally known as 'The Liberty Dress.' Although, as previously noted, the Costume Department did not open until 1884, it is possible that the fabric for the dress could have been purchased at Liberty & Co. Unfortunately no records survive at Smallhythe or in the archives of Liberty & Co to confirm or disprove this hypothesis.

covered buttons.¹⁸³ Though no date is recorded for the garment, the dress exhibits a modified version of the late 1870s/early 1880s bustle style silhouette, and probably dates from between 1877 and 1882.¹⁸⁴ [FIGURE 6.69 and 6.70] Areas of wear to the large, practical, front pockets and stretching at fastenings and the centre front do however indicate that Terry wore this dress over a long period of time.

The precise origins of the dress remain unclear, but Prown's three stage analysis of 'Description, Deduction and Speculation' makes it possible to establish certain key characteristics of the dress.¹⁸⁵ The ground fabric of the dress is plain, but a full length embroidered panel has been inserted into the centre front. Both this panel, the cuffs, collar, and upper edge of the pockets (stitched at hip level to the left and right of the skirt of the dress) have been decorated with hand worked tambour stitch embroidery. The patterns formed by this embroidery, though floral in inspiration, are primarily abstract, and are executed in pale tones of pink, brown, blue and cream. [FIGURE 6.71] The motifs contained within this embroidery conform to no specific style or date and do not form a precise repeat. Given the history and origins of tambour work they could be Indian in origin, as could the tussore silk ground fabric. [FIGURE 6.72] There are also elements of the decorative motifs, in particular the abstract coloured lines and loops of tambour work, which resemble patterns within Chinese embroidery. [FIGURE 6.73] An intermingling of styles was typical of Aesthetic dress embroidery however, and from the late eighteenth century such tambour work embroidery was also being carried out in England.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ For a full catalogue record see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Personal Dress, SMA.TC.201, 1118926.

¹⁸⁴ A comparable dress, dating from the early 1880s, and in the same muted tones, survives in the collection at the Gallery of Costume, museum number 1947.4066.

¹⁸⁵ Prown, "Mind in Matter", 7-9.

¹⁸⁶ Catherine A. Leslie *Needlework Through History: An Encyclopedia* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2007) 207.

Whilst this dress alludes to current fashions in its shape, it has been constructed to conform to the personal tastes of one specific wearer. The line of the dress alludes to the ‘bustle’ silhouette fashionable in the late 1870s. This fashion relied on the structural support provided by the pads of hoops of a bustle, the shaping in Terry’s dress however, required no special underpinnings. Instead it was created using the four box pleats at the centre back of the dress bodice, which extend down the rear of the dress to form the ‘Watteau back.’ [FIGURE 6.74] Similarly the unbleached tussore silk fabric, together with the embroidered decoration, depart completely from the colour palette and styles of current fashions. Created in a decade which favoured a tightly corseted hourglass figure, this dress fits very loosely to the figure, and no internal boning whatsoever is present. The small upstanding collar, trimmed with a pale blue ribbed silk frill, like the ‘Watteau back,’ is a feature which characterised Terry’s personal style from the mid-1870s and throughout the 1880s and which were particularly suited to her tall, slender figure.¹⁸⁷ [FIGURE 6.75 and 6.76] Thus, whilst the dress is neither Chinese nor Indian in origin, it reflects the influence not only of these cultures, but also of trends with mainstream fashion and Aesthetic dress, all intermingled to suit and realise, Terry’s own personal style.

¹⁸⁷ Thousands of images of the actress survive from this period, the most notable collections being held by the V&A, Smallhythe Place and the National Portrait Gallery. Terry’s preference for small, upright collars, often trimmed with a ruffle can be seen in images such as Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson’s portrait of the actress from 1876, held in the National Portrait Gallery, Image Reference NPG 3789 and images such as the photograph taken by Samuel Alex Walker, museum number S.133:353-2007 in the V&A Collections which shows the actress in dress where a panel of lace has been added at the neckline and extends into a short, soft collar, defined at the neck with a soft ribbon.



Figure 6.68 - Overview of dress worn by Terry, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery, Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 8 August 2012. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.69 - Overview of dress worn by Terry as mounted following conservation treatment to show bustle silhouette, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.70 - Leon Sault. "Young Ladies Journal Monthly Panorama of Fashion," July 1875. Hand coloured fashion plate on paper. Measurements not recorded. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number E.319-1955.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.71 - Detail of dress worn by Terry, showing unbleached tussore silk ground decorated with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.72 - Detail showing tambour work decoration on man's hunting coat of embroidered satin with silk, India, ca. 1620-1630, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number IS.18-1947.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.73 - Roundel, satin weave silk with silk embroidered design of He Xiangu, one of the Eight Daoist Immortals, China, Qing dynasty, 19th century. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number FE.123C-1983.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.74 - Rear view of dress as mounted following conservation treatment, showing 'Watteau back.' Tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.75 - Detail of collar of dress, tussore silk with tambour work embroidery. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 7 February 2014. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.201, [1118926].

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.76 - London Stereoscopic Company. Ellen Terry, ca.1875-1880. Sepia photograph on paper. 9.1 x 5.8 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:220-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Style 3: “Greek dress one moment, Chinese robes the next”

By circa 1900, Terry’s style had altered again. Terry returned to Asia for inspiration and loose fitting, softly draped, ‘Chinese Robes’ became a key garment within her personal wardrobe. Photographs of Terry suggest that she had begun wearing Chinese robes regularly by about 1910, and letters sent by Terry’s housekeeper and nurse Hilda Barnes (fl.1920-1950) to Edith Craig suggest that they remained part of Terry’s wardrobe until her death in 1928.¹⁸⁸ [FIGURE 6.77] Two examples of these ‘Chinese robes’ survive

¹⁸⁸ As these letters reveal, Terry owned several examples of these practical and comfortable garments, and in one Barnes asks Craig to ‘bring the kimono [more likely a Chinese robe] that was left at the flat & you said was being cleaned – this one being so dirty.’ Letter from Hilda Barnes to Edith Craig. Ellen Terry Collection (125/1) Z3.057 (a), British Library, London.

within the collection at Smallhythe. Neither match extant images showing her wearing similar robes but this indicates that she owned and wore a range of these garments.

These ‘exotic’ Chinese garments were not unfamiliar to late nineteenth British society and were becoming available to purchase in ‘The West.’¹⁸⁹ In 1891, the portrait painter G. A. Storey (1834-1909) had declared that a ‘Chinese or a Japanese loose gown’ was a mode of ‘Artistic dress’ which would make even ‘rotund’ women look ‘presentable.’¹⁹⁰ By 1900, as Verity Wilson notes, Chinese Robes were no longer rare commodities and were indeed regarded as a ‘[...] very common place [...] manifestation of ‘the exotic’ by middle and upper-class women.’¹⁹¹

What distinguishes Terry’s engagement with these garments however, is the fact that they represented part of her daily personal ‘dress’ rather than a form of ‘dressing up.’ The two surviving examples of Terry’s robes indicate that she made limited alterations to these garments when wearing them.¹⁹² Both are made from plain silk satin with stylised motifs of flowers, birds and insects embroidered on the exterior in satin stitch using floss silks.¹⁹³ They have an asymmetrical fastening at the right shoulder with vents set into the side seams, and are lined throughout with damask silk. One robe, SMA.TC.86, [FIGURE 6.78] has long, flaring, sleeves which could be worn turned back at the cuff to reveal the contrasting yellow lining. The other, SMA.TC.85, [FIGURE 6.79] has square sleeves which finish at the elbow. Both robes have additional detailing in the form of bands of

¹⁸⁹ Verity Wilson, “Studio and Soiree, Chinese Textiles in Europe and America 1850 to the Present,” *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, ed. Ruth B. Philips and Christopher B. Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press) 232-3.

¹⁹⁰ Mr. G. A. Storey, ‘Letters from Artists on Ladies Dress’ *The Strand Magazine*, 1891, 167.

¹⁹¹ Verity Wilson, “Western Modes and Asian Clothes: Reflections on Borrowing Other People’s Dress,” *Costume*, 36, (2002): 139-156 (147).

¹⁹² Catalogue records for comparable garments held by the V&A suggest that these may actually be ‘jackets’ designed to be worn with skirts, rather than robes. See the catalogue description for and image of FE.399-2007, ca.1850-1911, and T.53-1970, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. It is possible that Terry added a lining to both the jackets, but no significant alterations have been made to their structure.

¹⁹³ For full catalogue records see Appendix 1, Chinese Robes SMA.TC.85 and SMA.TC.86.

decorative braids and fabric at the cuffs, centre front opening and hem. [FIGURE 6.80 and 6.81] Whilst this detailing could have been added specifically for Terry, decorative sleevebands were commonly added to jackets during the Qing dynasty, so they may be original to the garments.¹⁹⁴ Even the collars, which, as stitch marks on SMA.TC.85 indicate, were ‘added’ to the jacket after construction, resemble collars present on surviving examples of ‘Chinese’ garments from this period.¹⁹⁵ Similarly, Figure 77 showing Terry in circa 1910 dressed in a comparable jacket, depicts her wearing the garment as it was traditionally worn, having made no modification to the fit or construction.¹⁹⁶

Photographs of Terry’s personal dress, between circa 1905 and 1928, reveal that Terry not only wore Chinese robes, but also incorporated features from these garments within her personal dress during this period. This becomes particularly evident in the design of Terry’s sleeves from circa 1910, which become wide at the cuff. The relaxed cut and fit of her garments, whilst in line with the less fitted silhouette introduced by the 1920s, also references the distinctive ‘T-shape’ of her Chinese robes. [FIGURE 6.82 and 6.83]

¹⁹⁴ Numerous examples of these sleevebands survive in the V&A collections, see for instance T.137&A-1948, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

¹⁹⁵ See, for instance, T.201-1934, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

¹⁹⁶ One Chinese robe within the collection at Smallhythe offers an exception to this pattern however, as it shows clear evidence of re-fashioning and modification. Further research is required to establish the precise provenance of this robe however as a direct connection between it and Terry has not been fully substantiated. Susannah Mayor, House Steward at Smallhythe ‘found the robe some years ago in the Barn Theatre’ and suggested ‘that it should be looked after.’ Susannah Mayor, Personal communication with the author. 4 May 2016. Email. As Wilson has noted it was not unusual practice to alter Chinese robes during this period and this re-styling could include alteration to ‘something more useful.’ Wilson includes a number of examples of the ways in which such garments might be ‘appropriated and altered’ in her exploration “Western Modes and Asian Clothes: Reflections on Borrowing Other People’s Dress,” *Costume*, 36, (2002): 139-156 (143-5). She also discusses this further in Verity Wilson, “Studio and Soiree, Chinese Textiles in Europe and America 1850 to the Present,” *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, ed. Ruth B, Philips and Christopher B. Steiner (Berkeley: University of California Press) 237, 239. For further images and the full catalogue record relating to this modified robe see Appendix 1, Ellen Terry, Chinese Robes.



Figure 6.77 - Photographer unknown. Ellen Terry wearing a Chinese Robe, *The Sketch*, ca. 1905-1915. Personal photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.78 - Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.86.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.79 - Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.85.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.80 - Detail from Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.86.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.81 - Detail from Chinese Jacket, worn by Terry, silk, with embroidered decoration. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal photograph by the author. 16 September 2015. National Trust Inventory Number SMA.TC.85.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.82 - Photographer unknown. Press cutting showing Ellen Terry ca.1905-1915. Personal Photograph by the author 4 February 2013. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.83 - Silk summer dress. Maker Unknown, England, 1920-1925. Museum Record Photograph. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.19-1960.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.84 - floral motifs. Maker Unknown, ca.1915-1925. Personal photograph by the author 14 April 2016. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.1415-1984.

[ORIGINAL IN
COLOUR]

Continuing to experiment

Of the few other extant examples of Terry's personal dress, one item stands out. Dating from circa 1910 to 1920 this is a full length silk dress with a pale pink/red ground which has been roughly batiked with a repeat pattern of pale yellow floral motifs with deep blue/black leaves. [FIGURE 6.84] The dress is formed from a long 'T' shaped piece of fine silk fabric, with sleeves which are wide at the top but narrow to fit the line of the arm at and the cuff. It is unlined, the only details are narrow bands of gold metallic braid at the cuffs and 'V' shaped neckline.¹⁹⁷

The style reflects Terry's willingness to embrace innovative modes of construction and design, in this instance, hand-worked Batik.¹⁹⁸ As with the Chinese robes also worn by Terry at this time, this dress fits loosely to the body, a cut suited to her tall, but thickening, figure and desire for graceful, free, movement. The colour palette though departing from the pastel tones fashionable during this period remains confined within the subtle, earthy tones which characterised Terry's dress during the 1870s and 1880s.¹⁹⁹

An 'individual' approach

The immense range of photographs, sketches and paintings of Terry make apparent the eclecticism which characterised her personal dress for much of her life. As Terry remarked in 1911:

¹⁹⁷ The dress was donated to the British Theatre Museum Association (whose collections were subsequently acquired by the V&A in 1974) by a friend and biographer of Terry, Marguerite Steen (1894-1975) in October 1973. See Appendix 3, Victoria and Albert Museum, Ellen Terry, Personal Dress, Museum Number S.1415-1984 for full catalogue record and further images.

¹⁹⁸ Rosemary Crill (Senior Curator, Asian Department, V&A) has confirmed that it is likely to have been produced in Europe rather than Asia, but research into its origins continues. Rosemary Crill, Personal communication with the author. 9 May 2014. Email.

¹⁹⁹ These tones are captured in a portrait of Terry by Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, from 1876, now in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery, Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, *Ellen Terry*, 1876, oil on canvas, 60.8cms x 50.6cms, Museum Reference NPG 3789.

After trying garments of every size and shape in private life, I have ended by adopting the Japanese style one day and the Greek the next. A cupboard full of unworn corsets bears witness to the number of presentations and representations I have received (and disregarded) from staymakers and stay recommenders, begging me to improve my figure.²⁰⁰

Terry was thus not wedded to a single aesthetic and consciously drew upon a wide variety of sources to create garments which reflected her ‘individuality.’ Aestheticism allowed, and actively encouraged its followers to adopt varied styles which were as diverse as history and art would allow. Their principal aim was to promote alternative garments which were not bound by the dictates of continental couture designers. Stressing the importance of simplicity and grace, Oliphant argued that, ‘Art’ should seek to awaken ‘some spirit of individualism and of personal interest’ in the design of clothing.²⁰¹ Haweis attached equal importance to individuality and freedom:t

Until individual opinion is admitted to be free, we can have no true or original art in England, in dress, nor anything: for the secret of all true art is freedom, to *think for ourselves*, and to *do as we like*.²⁰²

She set out three key design principles which would elevate clothing ‘into a fine art,’ namely:

1. That it shall not contradict the natural lines of the body.
2. That the proportions of the dress shall obey the proportions of the body

²⁰⁰ Ellen Terry, “Stage Decoration,” 88.

²⁰¹ Oliphant, *Dress*, 80.

²⁰² Haweis, *Art of Dress*, 22.

3. That the dress shall reasonably express the character of the wearer



Figure 6.85 - Elliot and Fry. Ellen Terry, ca.1880-1885. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.5 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:449-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.86 - Elliot and Fry. Ellen Terry. 1884. Chlorobromide print on cream card mount. 27.8 x 21.1 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum. Museum Number NPG x127489.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

All of these ideas had been adopted by Terry before they were published by Haweis in 1878 and the actress' personal style evolved over the course of her career, adapting to shifts in fashion, art, and her own physique. Throughout her adult life the neckline, sleeves, and skirts of her garments were particularly distinctive. During the 1870s and 1880s she favoured small, upright collars, often trimmed with narrow frills and many of her garments feature a soft bow, or comparable details at the neckline. [FIGURE 6.85] Further evidence of Terry's individualisation of contemporary styles can be found in a photograph from 1884. [FIGURE 6.86] It shows Terry wearing a dress cut in the Princess line silhouette, a style popular in the early 1880s, and which had been recommended as a flattering form of Aesthetic attire, but which was no longer fashionable by this date.²⁰³ Again Terry was continuing to wear a style which, though no longer fashionable, suited her tall, slim, figure. By adding an open gown over this Princess line dress Terry also individualised her interpretation of the style. Her elbow length sleeves with their lace cuffs recall the ornate fashions of the mid to late eighteenth century, and the loose cut of the gown adds softness to the comparatively close fitting dress beneath.

The sleeves of Terry's garments generally followed the line of the arm, finishing at the elbow in a turned back cuff, or if full length, fitted relatively closely at the wrist, ending with a cuff which might be plain, or decorative. By the 1890s, however, the fullness occasionally present in the upper section of the sleeves within Terry's earlier garments is exaggerated, reflecting the fashion for 'gigot' sleeves of circa 1894 and 1897. [FIGURE 6.87 and 6.88] Terry, who continued to wear very full sleeves after their popularity

²⁰³ Both Ada Ballin and Mrs Haweis recommend this form of attire. For Ballin the appeal of the garment lies in the fact that 'the weight...is equally distributed, as, being cut all in one, the weight of the skirt depends entirely from the bodice.' Haweis, perhaps as concerned with beauty, as utility, remarks upon the manner in which these close-fitting dresses, define 'the beautiful lines of the hips and falling in slightly at the knees, are strictly in accordance with the natural lines of the body.' Ada Ballin, *Science of Dress in Theory and Practice*, London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington. 1885. Chapter XI, 'A New System of Dress for Women', p. x and Mrs. H.R. Haweis. *Art of Dress*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1879). 66-7.

waned, arguably adopted this style because it suited her more mature figure, the wider shoulder line creating the impression of slimness at the waist. She also adapted ‘gigot’ sleeves, incorporating elements of the ‘puff’ sleeves fashionable during the first decades of the nineteenth century, to create a flattering fusion of the two styles.²⁰⁴ This fusion is exemplified in a photograph of Terry from circa 1900, in which the stiff full upper sleeves form part of a short sleeved, open fronted tunic, which she wears over a long sleeved gown which is loosely shaped to her figure.²⁰⁵ [FIGURE 6.89] As these images confirm, Terry’s continually adopted moderated and personalised versions of contemporary trends within her personal dress.



Figure 6.87 - Window and Grove, Ellen Terry, ca. mid 1894-7. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.1 x 10.5 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:513-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.88 - Dress consisting of a bodice and skirt of embroidered silk velvet. Possibly made in Paris, retailed by Stern Brothers, New York, 1894. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number T.272&A-1972.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²⁰⁴ This ‘puffed’ style can be seen in fashion plates from circa 1810 to 1820 and is realised in extant garments, such as MT.2024 and MT.2029, in the collection of Chertsey Museum.

²⁰⁵ Susan North and Avril Hart provide a detailed and illustrated analysis of the wide variety of sleeves and cuffs fashionable during the mid to late eighteenth century in Avril Hart and Susan North, *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Fashion in Detail* (London: V&A Publishing, 2009) 86-94.

The consistent features of Terry's personal dress were therefore: the soft, and often extremely loose, fit of her garments; the incorporation of features drawn from past and contemporary fashions; and, generally, a small upright collar, or some detail, perhaps in the form of a soft bow, at the neck. There were garments and accessories which departed completely from this European dominated aesthetic, and reflect the influence of Japan and India. In her later years Terry returned to Asia for inspiration and loose fitting, garments, often based upon, or actually, Chinese robes, were established as a staple part of her wardrobe.

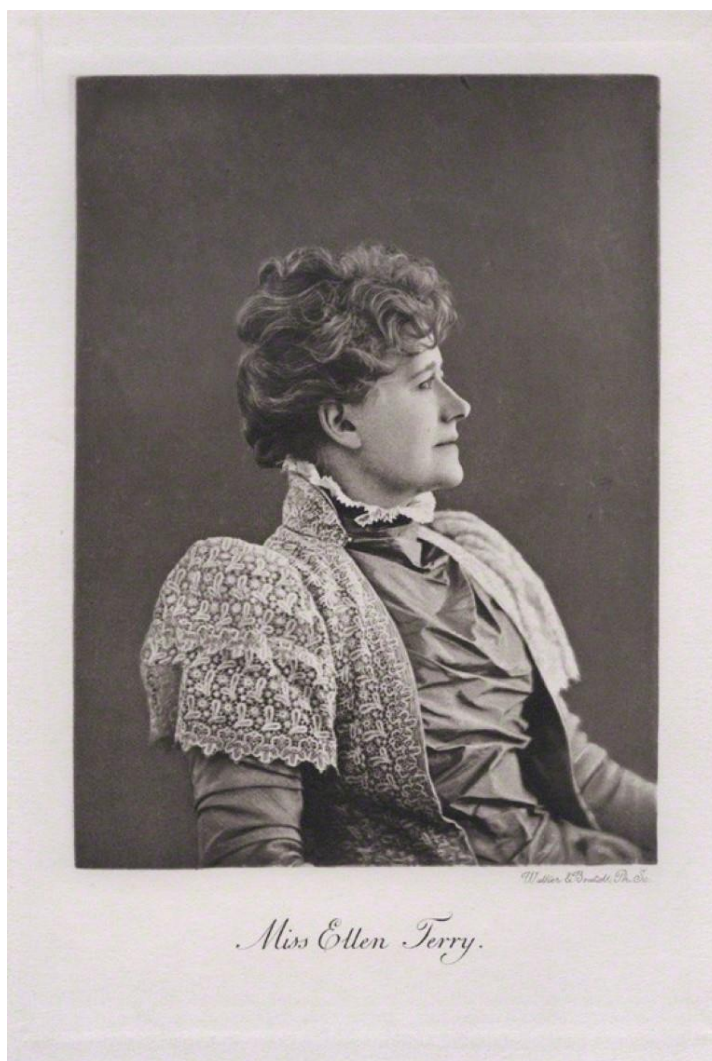


Figure 6.89 - Walker & Boutall, after Sir Emery Walker. Ellen Terry, early 1900s. Photogravure. 13.9 x 10.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London. Museum Number NPG x19637.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Asserting ‘individuality’ and ‘fashioning’ an identity

By 1888 Terry’s personal style was sufficiently recognisable for a feature in the journal *Woman’s World*, entitled ‘Shopping in London’ to include a drawing of the type of woman to found shopping in Liberty’s which, Newton suggests, was ‘based on the young Ellen Terry.’²⁰⁶ [FIGURE 6.90] Kimberley Wahl found similar evidence of Terry’s importance, noting how, in an 1880 edition of the *Queen*, a visual image of a ‘cream-coloured’ Aesthetic bridal gown, ‘bordered with plaitings and lace,’ the full skirt ‘caught up on one side’ is explained as being ‘like the dress worn by Ellen Terry [in the role of] Portia.’²⁰⁷ [FIGURE 6.91]

Although strongly committed to her personal style, Terry also remained conscious of the importance of adapting her dress to suit her surroundings, and audience. As surviving images and Terry’s few extant garments indicate, much of the clothing she wore within a domestic setting was relatively plain in design and subdued in colour. When living in Kent in the early 1900s, for instance, Terry adopted full ‘smocks’, previously practical wear for rural men, for her own dress.²⁰⁸ For Terry her smocks provided comfortable, informal dress, and were worn with ‘a blouse and skirt and flat sandals’ and she had them made locally, in ‘a variety of vivid colours’ and sent to her, at Smallhythe.²⁰⁹ [FIGURE 6.92]

²⁰⁶ Newton, *Health, Art and Reason*. 120.

²⁰⁷ Although published in 1880 and therefore after the Lyceum Company revived *The Merchant of Venice* in 1879, this description recalls Terry’s costumes from the earlier, 1875 production of the play, at the Prince of Wales Theatre. Wahl, *Dressed as in a Painting*, 110-1.

²⁰⁸ Smocks were falling out of use among Sussex and Kent agricultural labourers and shepherds by the 1870s but were still made and worn at this time. A range of research has been published on the history and decline of ‘The Smock’. See, for instance, Nicholas Thornton, “Enigmatic Variations: The Features of British Smocks,” *Textile History*, 28.2 (1997):176-184.

²⁰⁹ Terry’s daughter was more daring, establishing her smocks as part of her ‘everyday’ attire, and matching them with ‘baggy trousers’. As Jane Ashelford discovered the outfits of both Terry and her daughter, had a notable impression on their American friend Claire Avery, then working as an artist for Vogue. On her return to America Avery’s sketch of a group of three elegant gardeners in smocks featured in the 1914

This approach to dress provided an immediate contrast to the carefully designed costumes associated with her professional identity, and also implied that within this domestic space, it was her surroundings, rather than herself, which she presented foremost to her audience. When appearing in public however, Terry recognised the importance of performing for her audience. For instance, in 1883, when arriving in New York on the first ever Lyceum Company tour of North America, Terry wore a vivid red sash and ‘flame coloured scarf,’ accessories which both attracted attention, and signalled her prominent status within the company. As *The Tribune* reported,

[...] she showed herself possessed of a marked individuality. Her dress consisted of a dark greenish brown cloth wrap, lined inside with a peculiar shade of red; the inner dress, girt at the waist with a red, loosely folded sash, seemed a reminiscence of some eighteenth century portrait, while the delicate complexion caught a rosy reflection from the loose flamed coloured scarf tied in a bow at the neck [...].²¹⁰

Terry did not always perform the role of ‘leading lady.’ She was often required to appear as merely one actress amongst a group of distinguished performers and would adapt her dress accordingly. On one such occasion, a charity appearance at Grosvenor House, London, in 1889, Terry acknowledged her altered status by adopting a restrained and ‘[...] extremely elegant robe [...] of a soft, white clinging material, [worn] with a wrapper of pale grey caught up on one shoulder with a silver clasp.’²¹¹ The tones of this pale robe

edition of the magazine, accompanying an article ‘confirming the smock as an enduring fashion garment.’ Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress* (London: National Trust, 1996) 303.

²¹⁰ [One of a series of articles describing Terry’s arrival in America] published in *The Tribune*, October 1883. Press Cutting, Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883* Garrick Club, London.

²¹¹ Terry was one of a number of actresses who had gathered to raise funds for ‘The Lost and Starving Dogs.’ Mrs. Bancroft, the ‘only lady in a bonnet’, and dressed in ‘plain black silk’ with which ‘she wisely wore a somewhat formidable white wrap’ was also amongst those present. “Entertainment at Grosvenor

harmonised with the garments of her fellow performers (Miss Miller also wore white and Mrs. Bancroft carried a wrap in the same colour) but the silhouette and addition of the silver clasp allowed Terry to retain and subtly assert her individuality.²¹²

Wahl has argued that ‘Aesthetic dressing was a highly symbolic form of representation [...] with the potential to signify a range of cultural values, from the expression of individual identity to larger shifts in social ideology in relation to the body and clothing.’²¹³ Terry’s professional career had heightened her awareness of the power of dress to communicate character and ‘fashion’ an identity.²¹⁴ In her memoirs, Duff Gordon, recalled her disappointment that ‘[...] I could never persuade [Terry] to let me make her a dress,’ yet, as she acknowledged, ‘[...] although I used to drape pieces of material on her. It would have been impossible to picture [Terry] in fashionable clothes, they would not have suited her personality.’²¹⁵ Duff Gordon’s remarks confirm the degree to which Terry’s dress became a public extension of her personality. They also resonate with Wilson’s suggestions that ‘[...] bohemians by “making a statement” with their style of dress’ were able to ‘announce’ an ‘inner individual truth.’²¹⁶ As Cockin suggests, Terry was both creating and endowed with ‘proliferating provisional selves.’²¹⁷ This examination of Terry’s personal style has demonstrated that dress provided Terry with an

House,” dated by hand, June 1889. Press Cutting, Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883*, Garrick Club, London.

²¹² “Entertainment at Grosvenor House,” dated by hand, June 1889. Press Cutting, Ruth Canton Album, *Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre 1879-1883*, Garrick Club, London.

²¹³ Wahl, *Dressed as in a Painting*, xi. Writing on the same theme Wilson suggests that for Lady Ottoline Morrel (1873-1938) ‘[...] dress was an essential component in the creation of an original identity. Her clothes were truly theatrical, sometimes copies from her own sketches, sometimes from paintings, sometimes from actual theatre costumes, unlined and tacked together by her seamstress, Miss Brenton.’ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 171.

²¹⁴ McKenna, for instance, applauded Terry’s firm belief that ‘The character should find expression in the costumes’ and noted how often Terry introduced ‘apparent trifles’ which were ‘in harmony with the individuality of the woman she portray[ed].’ McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” 459.

²¹⁵ Duff Gordon, *Discretions and Indiscretions*, 33-4.

²¹⁶ Wilson, *Bohemians: The Glamorous Outcasts*, 161.

²¹⁷ Katharine Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,” *Ellen Terry Spheres of Influence*, ed. Katharine Cockin (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), 133.

additional and important, means through which to express and ‘costume’ her multiple ‘identities,’ and therefore played a crucial part in Terry’s self-fashioning.²¹⁸



Figure 6.90 - Unknown artist. Line drawing illustration accompanying an article in *Woman's World*, Vol.2, 1888. Personal photograph by the author 14 October 2015. National Art Library, Special Collections, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]



Figure 6.91 - Herbert Watkins, Ellen Terry as Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, Prince of Wales Theatre, 1875. Sepia Photograph on paper. 10.2 x 5.9 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:226-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²¹⁸ Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,” 133.



Figure 6.92 - Photographer unknown. Photograph showing Terry and another woman (Kitty[?]) both wearing smocks. ca. 1905-1915. Personal Photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

6.6 FASHIONING A LEGACY

‘Great actress’

In addition to ‘fashioning herself’, Terry was also conscious of the importance of ‘fashioning’ her ‘legacy.’²¹⁹ The celebrations staged to mark her fifty year stage jubilee in 1906, with crowds queuing for tickets from midnight, illustrate the extent of her popular appeal at this stage in her life.²²⁰ The event was a public testament to Terry’s

²¹⁹ Chapter 2 discussed the manner in which actresses’ manipulated and presented their public image has been examined by Christopher Breward in *Fashioning London*, 88-91. As Edith Craig and Christopher St John declare in the notes they have added to Chapter V of their edition of Terry’s autobiography, ‘[...] it came naturally to Ellen Terry to dramatise herself. So there are hundreds of Ellen Terries, all genuine in their way, for these was in this extraordinary rich and varied nature an abundance of material for their creation.’ Terry, Craig, and St. John, *Ellen Terry’s Memoirs*, 74.

²²⁰ Audience members queued overnight to obtain tickets for the celebrations and leading figures from across the arts participated in the celebratory performances staged at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. “Ellen Terry’s Jubilee, Fifty Years Ago Today she first acted,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, Apr 28, 1906 and “Ellen Terry Jubilee, Scenes at ‘Old Drury’, A 29 Hour Vigil,” *Unidentified periodical*, 1906. Press Cutting, pasted in Ruth Canton Album, *Henry Irving*, Garrick Club, London.

celebrity and leading figures from the theatrical profession, gathered to celebrate her career. Twenty-two members of Terry's family joined together to stage Act 1 of *Much Ado About Nothing*. In a re-enactment 'ghosted' by her celebrated Lyceum performances, Terry appeared as Beatrice for the final time. The performance fulfilled a dual function: reminding audiences of Terry's 'theatrical achievements,' and reaffirming the acting dynasty established by her family.²²¹ [FIGURE 6.93]

Although the matinee was organised by an all-male committee, Terry exerted a strong influence over the arrangements made for the production, both publically and in private. The press reported her successful plea that a number of seats in the pit and gallery should be reserved for the public.²²² Notes to the 1931 edition of Terry's autobiography also reveal that when presented with 'an actressless programme in honour of an actress!' Terry refused to appear, until 'women of talent' were invited to join the celebrations.²²³

Despite the splendour and success of her Jubilee celebrations however, it was not until 1925 that Terry received official royal recognition of her status within the 'theatrical aristocracy.' Three decades passed between Terry's receipt of this honour and the earlier award of Irving's knighthood. This, together with the fact that she was the second rather than the first actress to be made a Dame of the British Empire, shows that although in 1906 Terry's public were willing to celebrate her theatrical achievements, further efforts were required to earn royal approval.²²⁴ As she recognised, there were several means

²²¹ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 58, 92.

²²² "Ellen Terry Jubilee: Scenes at 'Old Drury', A 29 Hour Vigil", 1906.

²²³ Nina Auerbach remarks upon this confrontation in *Ellen Terry, A Player in Her Time*, 9. She quotes from Christopher St. John's additional biographical notes to Terry, Craig and St John, *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, 281.

²²⁴ The American born actress Geneviève Ward (1837-1922) who, in 1921, became the first actress to become a Dame. In contrast to Terry, Ward maintained a reputation for observing 'strict standards of propriety' throughout her career. T.C. Davis, *Actresses as working women*, 5.

through which to achieve the royal recognition required to cement her status within her profession, and establish a legacy which would endure beyond her death.



Figure 6.93 - Photographer unknown. "A Cast of Terry's at Ellen Terry's Benefit," *The Sketch*, 1906. Press cutting showing Ellen Terry's 1906 Jubilee. Personal Photograph by the author 20 April 2016. Ellen Terry, Biographical Boxes 117 and 118, © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Re-fashioning the narrative

Terry's efforts at re-fashioning the narrative of her career pre-date her 1906 Jubilee and can be traced to her decision, in 1902, to leave the Lyceum Company. Chapter 3 discussed how, by the late 1890s, Terry was conscious that Irving needed a leading lady who could provide the 'youthful' Shakespearean heroines the public associated with the 'Ellen

Terry' of 1870s and 1880s. As she recognised, even the 'illusion of youth,' and the flattering gloom of gaslight, could not conceal the fact that she was 'no longer young.'²²⁵

Terry therefore '[...]' set about inventing a new beauty to take the place of the old beauty of her youth.'²²⁶ Rejecting her characterisation as a 'Victorian actress [...]' belonging to the "old school,' in 1903 she marked her first and last venture into theatre management by staging a controversial play by Henrik Ibsen.²²⁷ She appointed her son as director and employed her daughter to create the costumes. [FIGURE 6.94] The production proved a critical and financial failure and Terry's extreme disappointment with her performance is revealed in a collection of loose pages from her diary for the period. This includes her declaration on Saturday 18th April 1903 that, 'I can not play it – 'for nuts' – think it is because I don't understand her – Can't look the part even – all the work, trouble, exp. [expense], in vain, I feel shame.'²²⁸ Though dissatisfied with her own performance, Terry remained defiant in her belief that the production '[...]' anticipated the scenic ideas of the future by a century, of which at any rate the orthodox theatre managers of the present age would not have dreamed.'²²⁹

Despite the commercial failure of *The Vikings*, Terry (now 56) continued her attempts to resist the eternally 'youthful' and 'charming' identity imposed upon her. The tour which followed her 1903 season at the Imperial helped Terry to recoup some of the money she had lost. It also provided an opportunity to perform *The Good Hope*. This play, by the

²²⁵ As Chapter 3 discussed Gail Marshall has examined this aspect of Terry's later career in detail. Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 155-7. As Chapter 3 discussed, both Terry's correspondence, and her writing reveals a growing consciousness of the consequences of aging. Terry, *The Story of my Life*, 313.

²²⁶ Craig and St John, *Ellen Terry's Memoirs*, 285.

²²⁷ Several of Terry's female contemporaries also took on the management of theatres for a time, but many, such as Marie Bancroft and Maud Tree, did so in partnership with their husbands whilst Langtry's three year lease of the Imperial Theatre (between 1900 and 1903) was achieved through significant financial support from Edgar Cohen. Ernest Dudley, *The Gilded lily; the life and loves of the fabulous Lillie Langtry* (London: Oldhams Press, 1958), 175-8.

²²⁸ Loose pages from Terry's Diary, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Reference 125/31/3, Z2.170/1, British Library, London.

²²⁹ Terry, *Story of My Life*, 312.

Dutch dramatist, Herman Heijermans (1864-1924) and translated into English by St John, was ‘[...] essentially modern in construction and development’ and without any ‘star’ parts. For Terry, content to relinquish her position as leading lady, it offered the opportunity to appear in the small, but important role of ‘a very homely old peasant woman.’ Terry’s efforts to escape her established ‘feminine identity’ extended to ‘stumbl[ing] about ‘heavily in large sabots.’ These efforts met with resistance from critics however, who declared that she ‘[...] walked like a fairy and was far too graceful for a Dutch fisherwoman!’ [FIGURE 6.95] Terry reveals the frustration she felt in her autobiography, in which she described the situation as ‘[...] a case of “Give a dog a bad name and hang him”—the bad name in my case being “a womanly woman”!’²³⁰

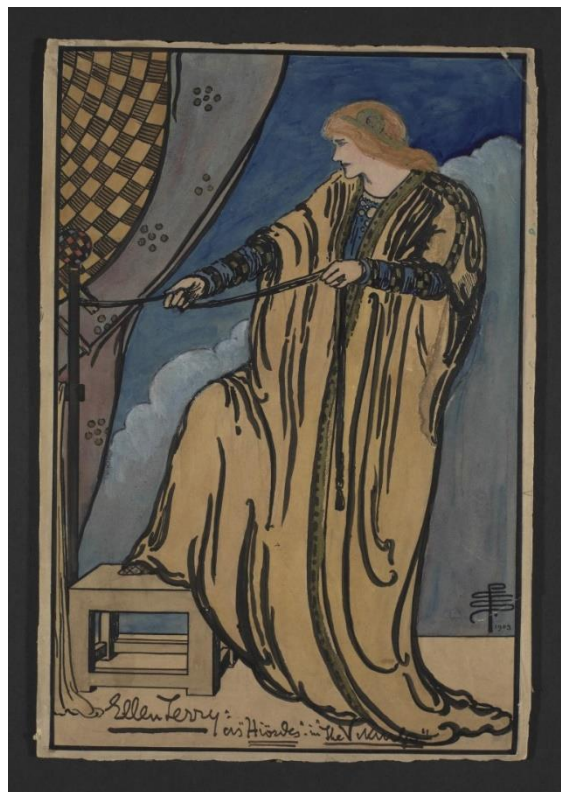


Figure 6.94 - Pamela Coleman Smith. Ellen Terry (1847-1928) as Hiördis in *The Vikings*, Imperial Theatre, 1903. Watercolour on paper. 28 x 19.3 cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.913-2012.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²³⁰ Terry, *Story of My Life*, 328-329.

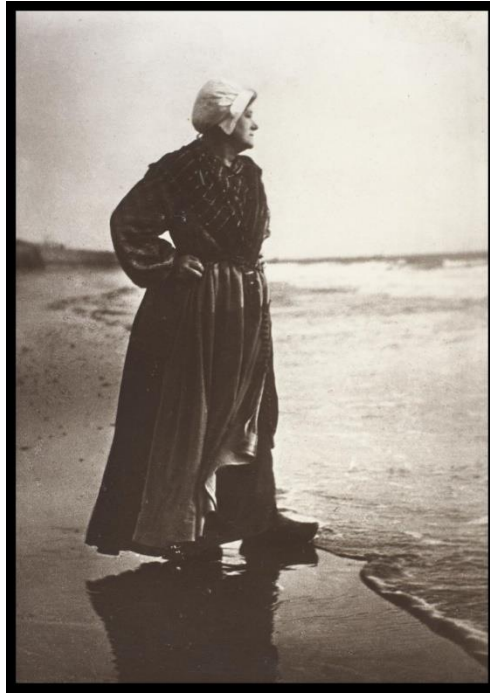


Figure 6.95 - Unknown photographer. Ellen Terry as Kniertje in *The Good Hope*, 1904. Sepia photograph on paper. 14.4 x 10.3cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:528-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Writer

The financial problems Terry faced following the failure of *The Vikings*, were heightened by the decline in the value of her investments. Cockin, who argues that ‘Terry’s career was significantly affected by the way in which she managed her finances,’ suggests that these financial pressures may have been a factor in Terry’s decision to publish her autobiography in 1908.²³¹ This publication provided Terry with an important source of income, and it also gave her a chance to reflect upon and re-present, key moments in her career.

²³¹ Cockin, “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand”, 144. Cockin cited both the publication of the autobiography and, in 1913, the publication of Terry’s book on the Russian Ballet (almost entirely written by Christopher St John and Pamela Coleman Smith) as evidence of the financial motivations behind Terry’s self-promotion. Cockin explored this theme further in a Paper she presented at the conference *The Actress as Author: Nell Gwynn to Ellen Terry* on 10 July, 2015. “‘Our Lady of the Lyceum’ Performs “Ellen Terry”: Letters, Stories and Plots.” (Hampshire: Chawton House Library, 2015).

Within the text Terry engages directly with her ‘audience,’ opening her account by begging them to excuse her lack of ‘skill in writing.’ The intimacy of the narrative she offers is heightened by presenting her autobiography not as ‘[...] human document for the benefit of future psychologists and historians’ but as a story she is sharing with ‘[...] the good, living public which has been considerate and faithful to me for so many years.’²³² Though this introduction seems to deny the long term purpose and historical significance of this account, Terry reveals her awareness of its potential future value when, later in the text, she reflects upon her lost diaries, noting that such ‘useful’ and ‘dull’ documents can become ‘[...] invaluable to the student, centuries afterwards.’²³³

Postlewait declared that by the late eighteenth century ‘the popular “memoir” (either an autobiography or a biography) had become, ‘a necessary adjunct to the role of theatre in society’ and Terry’s autobiography was certainly only one example of many theatrical memoirs published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.²³⁴ As Gale’s work on autobiographies has demonstrated, however, these accounts play a crucial part in the diverse ‘autobiographical strategies’ through which performers ‘constructed’ their identities and fashioned an enduring legacy.²³⁵

²³² Terry, *The Story of My Life*, ix-xi.

²³³ Terry, *The Story of My Life*, 366. In her personal copy of this autobiography, which survives at Smallhythe, Terry has underlined this passage.

²³⁴ Postlewait, “Autobiography and Theatre History,” 249. Autobiographies published by Terry’s contemporaries include Sarah Bernhardt, *My Double Life*, (London: W. Hernemann, 1907); Madge Kendal, *Dame Madge Kendal, by herself*, (London: John Murray, 1933); Marie and Squire Bancroft (who published a joint autobiography), *Recollections of sixty years* (London: John Murray, 1909) and Lillie Langtry *The Days I Knew* (London: Hutchinson, 1925).

²³⁵ Using the actress and manager Lena Ashwell (1872-1957) as a case study, Gale examines what she terms ‘Auto/biographical negotiations of the professional self.’ As Gale discovered, Ashwell can be seen to have ‘consciously created an archive of her work, providing biographical material which could easily be placed beside and interrelated with her later autobiographical writings by the theatre historian.’ Gale, “Lena Ashwell and Auto/Biographical Negotiations of the Professional self,” 99, 115, 121. Gale addressed this theme further in the Keynote Paper she presented at the conference *The Actress as Author: Nell Gwynn to Ellen Terry* on 10 July, 2015. Maggie B. Gale, “‘Believe me or not’:* female performer and autobiographical histories of professional practice” (Hampshire: Chawton House Library, 2015).

Another significant aspect of the autobiography and one which was not openly revealed was the fact that it was written in partnership with St John.²³⁶ As Cockin's examination of Terry's letters revealed '[...] while Terry was an uninhibited correspondent, she engaged a ghost-writer for published autobiographical writings and public lectures.'²³⁷ Rather than disempowering Terry or devaluing the account however, Cockin suggests this information offers a '[...] new perspective on Terry as performer, author and employer,' who '[...] projected herself, via Edith Craig, and Christopher St John, in particular calculated ways.'²³⁸ Commenting on the collaboration, St John presents her position as that of Terry's 'literary henchman' and an 'apprentice' to a 'master craftsman,' declaring that Terry was an active participant in the writing process for whom St John's 'services' were a 'convenience' rather than a 'necessity.'²³⁹ [FIGURE 6.96] The success of their business partnership can be seen in its longevity, as it endured beyond the creation of the autobiography to include the publication of a series of articles on Stage Design and Decoration (1910); a book on the *Russian Ballet* (1913) and, the creation, and posthumous publication, of Terry's *Four Lectures on Shakespeare* (1932).²⁴⁰ As this evidence and the quality and quantity of Terry's letters indicate, Terry's '[...] employment of a ghost-writer' need not 'necessarily be interpreted as a lack of confidence or a sign of her failure

²³⁶ As the Introduction explained, Christopher St John, (né Christabel Marshall) lived with Terry's daughter from about 1899, and worked closely with Terry on much of her published writing. As Cockin notes, there are three editions of Terry's biography. The first published in 1908, the other two published posthumously. The second, with extensive additional notes by her daughter Edith Craig, and Christopher St John, was published in 1933 and the last published in 1948 by Christopher St John, after the death of Craig. Katharine Cockin, "Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue: the Victorian actress, letters and life-writing," *Journal of European Studies*, xxxii (2002), 157.

²³⁷ Cockin, "Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue," 152.

²³⁸ Cockin, "Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue," 152, 158.

²³⁹ Ellen Terry, Christopher St. John, and William Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare* (London: Hopkinson, 1932), 8-9. Early drafts of the manuscript for the autobiography were retained by Terry and remain in the collection at Smallhythe. These are covered with Terry's notes and suggested amendments. Uncatalogued Papers, Documents connected with Christopher St. John and Terry's autobiography. Smallhythe Place, Kent.

²⁴⁰ Cockin emphasises the professional nature of the partnership as recorded in the formal terms set out and agreed to in the letters exchanged by Terry and St John. Cockin, "Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue," 158-9.

to write independently.’ On the contrary, as Cockin suggests ‘[...] the act of writing – even engaging another woman to write for her – appears to have been a means of self-performance for Terry.’²⁴¹

Another instance of Terry’s literary ‘performances’ lies preserved within the library at Smallhythe. The books within this collection are filled with Terry’s annotations which, as Marshall demonstrates, offer a ‘private’ testament to her critical ability and ‘[...] show an actress ever engaged in the process of interpretation, retrieval, intervention and disputation.’²⁴² Whether or not they were intended for public scrutiny, Cockin argues that these ‘[...] annotated working copies of plays testify to [Terry’s] scholarship as well as to her frustrated creativity.’²⁴³ The notes Terry makes on her play texts present Terry as an active, independent, figure, with the confidence to become ‘[...] actor as well as actress, manager/director, and a critic of both theatrical and literary material.’²⁴⁴

Much of the annotation on the texts takes the form of conversational remarks addressed to an unspecified audience, sometimes, as in the case of her autobiography, with Terry’s past self. This allows Terry to correct errors in biographical accounts, record past successes and failures and, in some instances, to recall and mourn past friends and colleagues.²⁴⁵ Through this marginalia, as Marshall reveals, Terry enters into ‘discursive

²⁴¹ As discussed in Chapter 1, Cockin’s arguments are founded upon her editorship of Terry’s ‘Collected Letters’ and she notes Terry’s ‘refusal to delegate authorial control of her letters’ even when in ill health. Cockin, “Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue,” 161.

²⁴² Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 160.

²⁴³ Cockin, “Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue,” 154.

²⁴⁴ Marshall, “Ellen Terry: Shakespearean Actress and Critic,” 361. As discussed Terry’s library includes working texts for many of her key productions, many annotated with stage directions and observations, some, as is the case with Terry’s copy of *Macbeth*, with photographs and mementos added to create a record of the production itself. J.Comyns-Carr, *Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: An Essay*. (London: Bickers & Son, Leicester Square, 1889.) Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place, Reference E.V.2.18.

²⁴⁵ Terry corrects numerous errors in T. Edgar Pemberton’s 1902 biography and challenges his interpretation of her performances on several occasions. T. Edgar Pemberton, *Ellen Terry and Her Sisters* (London: C.Arthur Pearson, Limited, 1902), Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Reference E.V.4.9. She has also annotated Charles Hiatt, *Ellen Terry and her Impersonations* (George Bell and Sons, 1898), in the same manner. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place, Reference E.V.4.10. Similarly, Terry has filled her autobiography and playtexts with observations on her performances. Within the same texts she has also added notes about some of the figures she worked with. In the case of Irving she has actually inserted a

relationships with playwrights, critics, her partner Henry Irving, and her younger selves.’²⁴⁶ In this manner Terry ‘fashioned’ a new identity as a ‘writer or annotator’ which enabled her to escape the constraints imposed on her when ‘performing’ her role as ‘an actress.’ In this new guise, Marshall proposes, Terry ‘[...] might legitimately hope to influence more effectively and strategically how these plays might be read, and her own role might be understood [...] Terry could instead begin to be at least partially, imaginatively, self-determining.’²⁴⁷

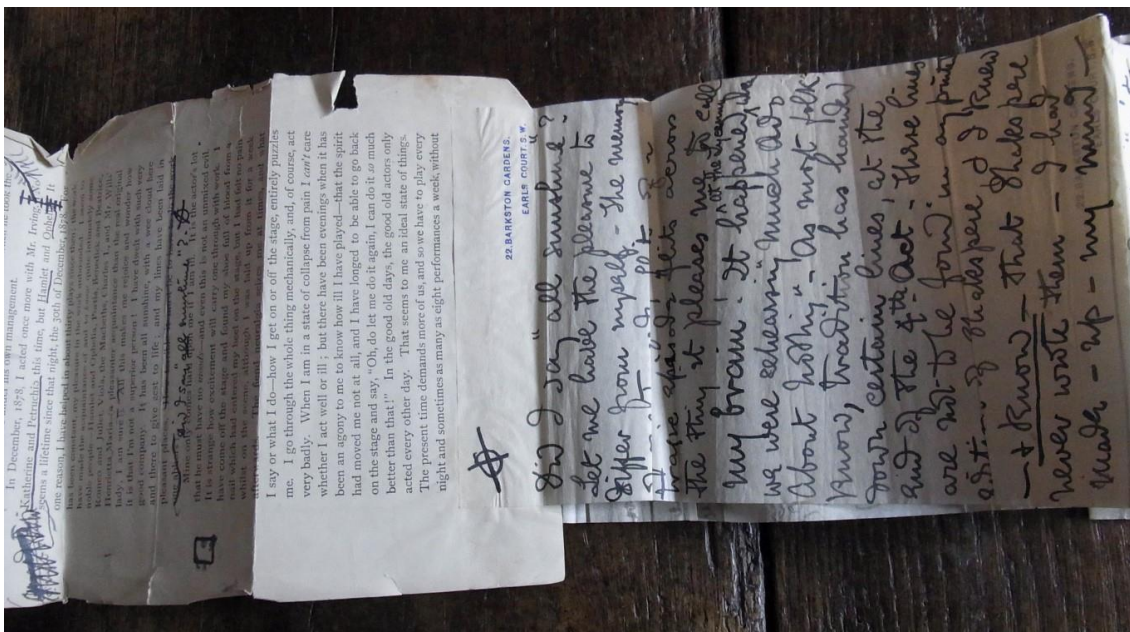


Figure 6.96 - Terry’s annotations on the draft of her autobiography. Personal photograph by the author 4 April 2016. Christopher St John, material relating to publications written for and about Ellen Terry. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

lock of his hair into her copy of Macbeth and in the passages of her autobiography which describes his death, Terry has underlined several phrases in pencil and added the phrase ‘My Dear-Dear=’ in pencil at the right hand margin.

²⁴⁶ Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 160 and Marshall, “Ellen Terry: Shakespearean Actress and Critic,” 357.

²⁴⁷ Marshall. *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 161.

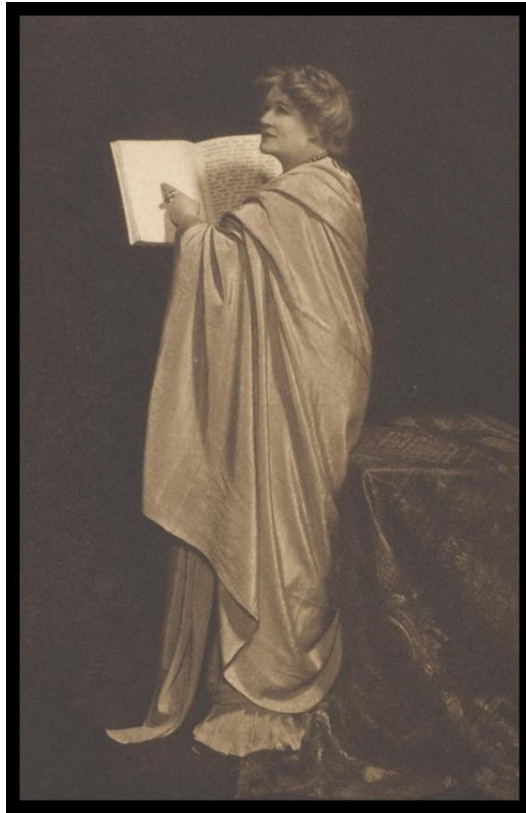


Figure 6.97 - Photographer Unknown. Terry in the robes created for her *Lectures on Shakespeare*, circa 1910. Print on paper. 12.3 x 8cm. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum Number S.133:533-2007.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

Lecturer

As has been demonstrated, there were limitations on the views and personas Terry was deemed able to express when performing her celebrity identity ‘as an actress.’ In 1910 however, Terry had another opportunity to refashion the public perception of her understanding of drama, design and performance: this time in the ‘role of lecturer.’²⁴⁸ Between 1910 and 1915 she delivered lectures across England, America and in Australia.²⁴⁹ Uniting critical commentary with ‘performance’ gave her the confidence she

²⁴⁸ The idea for the lecture tour came from the literary agents Curtis Brown who approached Terry with the idea of an American Tour. This tour lasted from November 1910 to spring of 1911. The tour continued in autumn of 1911 in England, but re-titled ‘A Shakespearean Discourse with Illustrative Acting’ as ‘lectures’ thought too intimidating for an English Audience. Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 217

²⁴⁹ Christopher St John suggests that ‘The idea of her lecturing originated as far back as the year 1903 when she was touring the provinces with her own company in a repertory of plays. She consented during her visit to Glasgow, to give a talk on Shakespeare in aid of the funds of the local branch of The Ladies Theatrical

lacked in print, and Katherine E. Kelly argues that the lectures also allowed Terry ‘the freedom to speak on behalf of a modern womanhood she could not, in her Lyceum roles, perform, nor in her life fully inhabit.’²⁵⁰ Drawing on her past theatrical experience Terry worked with her daughter to create a suitable scene and costume. Her co-author St John records how Terry appeared alongside a lectern (previously a desk used by Irving) wearing ‘flowing robes of crimson, or white or grey,’ the colour chosen to suit the mood of her discourse.²⁵¹ [FIGURE 6.97]

This international lecture series gave Terry a crucial opportunity to revise and relive her interpretation of famous roles, to perform parts denied to her during her professional career and to raise much needed income.²⁵² Though written in partnership with St John, the surviving lecture texts reveal that their content was continuously evolving and that the typed text is covered with Terry’s revisions, additions and stage directions.²⁵³ [FIGURE 6.98] As St John’s introduction to the published edition of the lectures acknowledges,

[...] Not only did she [Terry] make several different versions for different types of audiences; she gave each particular audience

Guild [and] [...] eventually choose the Letters in Shakespeare’s plays [...] She included it in her repertory when she went to the United States in 1910 to give a series of lectures [but] [...] the lectures on Shakespeare Heroines were the most popular. They gave Ellen Terry better opportunities for exercising her own art and in time became an epitome of her Shakespearean impersonations.’ Terry, St. John, and Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, 12.

²⁵⁰ Katherine E.Kelly, “The After Voice of Ellen Terry,” *Ellen Terry Spheres of Influence*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), 65.

²⁵¹ Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 217 and Terry, Craig and St John, *Ellen Terry’s Memoirs*, 287.

²⁵² Marshall, *Shakespeare and Victorian Women*, 154-160.

²⁵³ Several bound versions of Terry’s lectures survive and these are listed in F.T. Bowyer, *Catalogue of the Working Library of Ellen Terry at Smallhythe Place, Tenterden, Kent*, (n.p.: National Trust, 1977), 53-54. As St John recalled ‘When she first delivered the lecture, several copies of which she had printed in a type large and bold enough for her to read it without spectacles, she adhered more or less faithfully to the original version. By 1915 she had transformed it with cuts, transpositions, and the incorporation of many of her platform improvisations.’ Terry, St. John, and Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, 11.

improvisations inspired by its response. The text printed here is a blend of the four texts she used most frequently during her tours.²⁵⁴

The intelligent and educated criticism Terry was able to express both through these lectures, in related articles, provided her with another crucial tool through which to edit the narrative of her professional life and to cement her leading position within the theatrical aristocracy.²⁵⁵

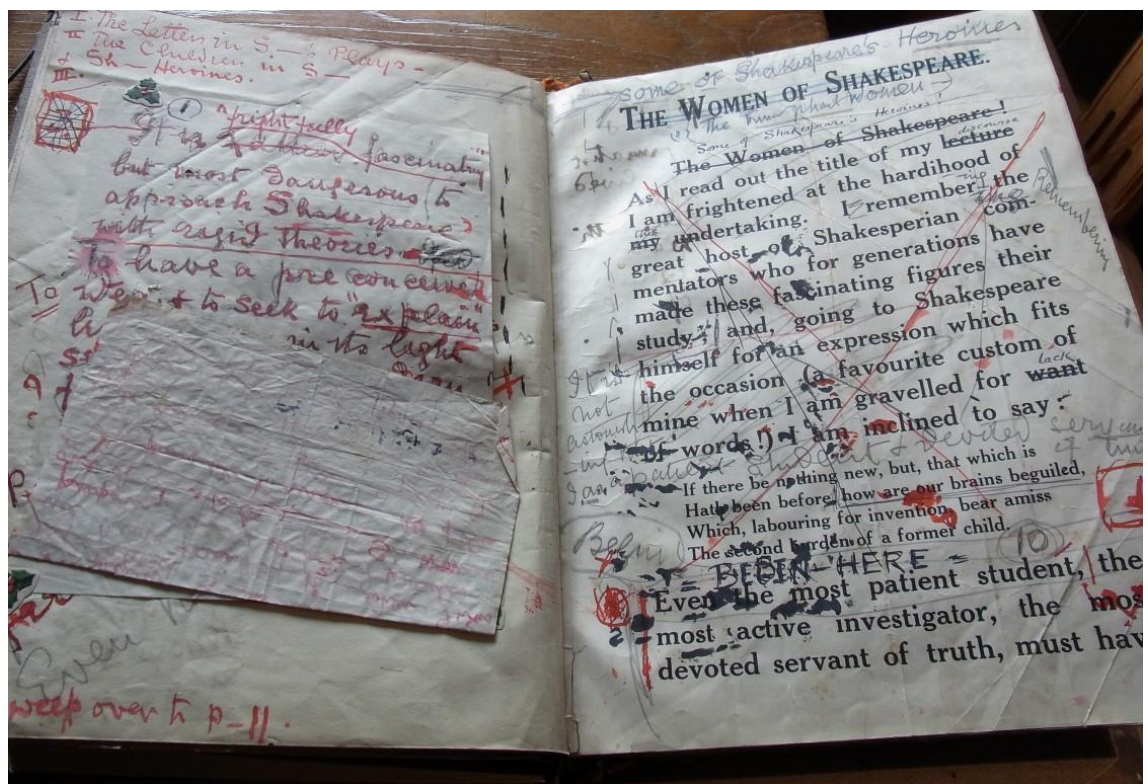


Figure 6.98 - Detail from the transcript of Terry's lecture *The Triumphant Women*. Ellen Terry Collection, Library, Smallhythe Place. Personal Photograph by the author. 23 March 2015. National Trust Inventory Number NT 3118744.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²⁵⁴ Terry, St. John, and Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, 11.

²⁵⁵ These included a series of three articles for McClures magazine published in 1910, but like her autobiography, written in partnership with Christopher St John. Cockin, "Ellen Terry, the ghost-writer and the laughing statue," 158.

Collector

Terry's published and private writing demonstrate that the actress was not only conscious of her 'theatrical afterlife' but also eager to take control of, and to preserve, this legacy.²⁵⁶

Although many of the items which now form part of the collection at Smallhythe were acquired and brought together by Craig after her mother's death, Terry herself assiduously and energetically assembled a range of objects documenting not only her own career, but also ephemera and objects connected with her 'theatrical ancestors' and 'theatrical contemporaries' during her lifetime.²⁵⁷ [FIGURE 6.99]

A profile of Terry, published in 1897 observed that 'Her London home in South Kensington is a veritable museum of beautiful and interesting things, her collection of stage relics and mementos and photographs is quite unrivalled.'²⁵⁸ Similarly, How, in his description of Terry's Earl's Court home in 1892 noted her 'case of curios,' which amongst other things contained

Mrs. Siddon's Bible, with a letter in her own handwriting; [...] and surely the daintiest and tiniest thing of lace handkerchief's-Sarah Bernhardt's.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ Terry's autobiography and her lecture series played a key part in this. Kelly, "The After Voice of Ellen Terry," 69.

²⁵⁷ Terry's collection is described as 'forming the nucleus' of the proposed memorial to the actress. *'Ellen Terry Memorial' – Smallhythe Place, Tenterden, Kent, The Home of Ellen Terry 1902-1928*, Unpublished Leaflet (ca.1928, not paginated). Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 57, SC3-C4, British Library, London. Terry's original collection was remarked upon by Alice Comyns-Carr in her *Reminiscences* (London: Hutchinson & Co, Ltd. 1926) 312. It is also described in interviews of Terry, such as How, Miss Ellen Terry, 490-1; Mc Kenna, "Ellen Terry", 458 and *The Sphere*, April 28 1906, Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 57, SC9-G22, British Library, London.

²⁵⁸ *St Pauls*, January 9 1897, Press Cutting, Ellen Terry Collection (125) Box 62, SC9-G12, British Library, London.

²⁵⁹ How, Miss Ellen Terry, 492-3.

In addition to documenting Terry’s own career, the collection assembled at Smallhythe also includes mementos which the actress collected from her contemporaries. Amongst them is a cloth inscribed with a message and signed by Bernhardt after Terry once loaned the actress her dressing room.²⁶⁰ Terry’s costume collection also contains several items worn by other performers, including the suit worn by her brother, Fred Terry (1863-1933) as *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and several costumes worn by Irving.²⁶¹



Figure 6.99 - Photograph showing a detail from a display case in Terry’s former home, Smallhythe Place. The items on display were collected by Terry and her daughter, Edith Craig. Ellen Terry Collection, Smallhythe Place. Personal Photograph by the author. 4 April 2016.

[ORIGINAL IN COLOUR]

²⁶⁰ Interviewing Terry in 1894 Mc Kenna described ‘The drawing room, an apartment with severely striped walls and handsome freize, is full of curios as well as flowers, interesting mementos of celebrities past and present. A striking portrait of Mr. Irving, the work of Bastien Lepage, hangs opposite to Miss Terry’s own particular seat, Countless as the trifles of interest, among them a Bible that belonged to Mrs. Siddons; a letter in the handwriting of that great actress [...] properties used by many a famous actor, and a cup that belonged to Sir Walter Scott. Another treasure valued by Miss Terry is a toilet cover whereon is inscribed in “grease paint” a pretty little message of affectionate thanks from Sarah Bernhardt [...]’ McKenna, “Ellen Terry,” 458.

²⁶¹ Terry actually commissioned Nettleship to transform remnants of the fabric used to Irving’s crimson ribbed silk robes for Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII* into a cushion declaring her willingness to ‘face the wrath of Mr. Irving.’ Letter from Terry to Nettleship, 1892, Victoria and Albert Museum, ALS, THM/14/TERRY.

‘An auction of memories’²⁶²

Correspondence from Terry’s solicitors and bank reveal that, despite income earned through lecture tours and publications, in the final years of her life Terry faced serious financial problems. These placed her homes and private collection under threat.²⁶³ Regardless of her dwindling income, Terry strove to maintain her generous payments to family members, and by 1921, her financial position was so precarious that she was compelled to sell her flat on the Kings Road, Chelsea and purchase a smaller flat in Burleigh Mansions, St Martin's Lane.

A public auction was held to sell items from her Chelsea home and newspaper reports of the sale provide an emotive account of the ‘heartless’ and ‘barbaric’ process through which ‘the exquisite china and other mementos of a great artist [were] whisked off by sharp bidders for ridiculously small sums.’²⁶⁴ As the press cuttings record however, representatives from Terry’s friends and family not only attended these sales but also purchased key items. Indeed, in her copy of the auction catalogue (which she retained) Craig painstakingly recorded the items purchased by each person and the amount they paid.²⁶⁵ Craig’s efforts to document the fate of Terry’s property, together with the fact that so many items were sold to figures who knew Terry personally, suggests that these

²⁶² Undated and unidentified Press Cutting entitled ‘Auction of Memories’, Ellen Terry Collection, 125/56/5, SC22-G2, British Library, London.

²⁶³ Katherine Cockin raised this issue in “Ellen Terry: Preserving the relics and creating the brand,” 139 and in the Introduction to Cockin, *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry*, xi-xviii. It is also clear from many of the letters sent to Terry warning her of her diminishing income and in 1923, the letter sent to Hilda Barnes notifying Terry of her imminent bankruptcy. See, for instance, Typed letter from A.C. Peach London, 7th Feb 1917, Letter, Ellen Terry Collection, (125) 125/56/2, SC22-B160 and Typed letter from Gilbert, Samuel & Co, 10th July 1928, Ellen Terry Collection, (125) 125/56/3, SC22-B193, British Library, London.

²⁶⁴ “The Ghosts of Ellen Terry,” *Unidentified periodical*, ca. 1921. Ellen Terry Collection, 125/56/5, SC22-G1, British Library, London.

²⁶⁵ These press cuttings also survive as part of the collection originally assembled at Smallhythe and, as with the auction catalogue, were therefore deliberately retained either by Terry, or her daughter. See Contents of the Residence of ET at King’s Road Chelsea in 31st May 1921 (Published by Messrs. John Barker & Co. Ltd, 1921). Ellen Terry Collection, 125/56/5, SC22-G3, British Library, London.

purchases were pre-meditated, and made with a view to the future recovery, and reunion of Terry's scattered possessions.

Although Terry began 're-fashioning' her 'identity' during her lifetime, she was conscious that a custodian would be required to safeguard her legacy. Both Sophie Duncan and Melville have highlighted the important role her appointed successor, Craig, played in preserving and fashioning Terry's legacy. Significantly, as Melville suggests that in addition to preserving Smallhythe, Craig '[...] was also anxious to dispel the impression of Ellen that often came through articles about her, that she was a charming scatterbrain.'²⁶⁶

This was not to prove an easy task for Craig who, having been left relatively little money to sustain the house, made a public appeal for funds.²⁶⁷ Craig's financial difficulties were heightened by the stock market crash of 1929 which stopped the flow of donations that had followed Terry's death.²⁶⁸ Desperate to save Terry's legacy, not only for theatrical history, but also 'for Ellen Terry's sake,' Craig sought the support of National Trust and on her death the property and the collection were formally transferred to the charity.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Melville, *Ellen and Edy*, 250.

²⁶⁷ Craig adopted a number of schemes through which to raise additional funds, including, in 1931, the publication of Terry's letters to Shaw. This project, though initially sanctioned by her brother, was soon publicly condemned by Gordon Craig, who responded by publishing his own account of Terry's life *Ellen Terry and her Secret Self [with an Annex "a Plea for G. B. S".]* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1931). As Chapter 2 discussed, this battle for Terry's legacy caused a bitter rift between the siblings, and led Edith Craig to respond by publishing a revised edition of Terry's memoirs, with additional notes and chapters in 1933.

²⁶⁸ Clare Atwood, Handwritten notes for a speech made when transferring Smallhythe Place to the ownership of the National Trust in 1949, Ellen Terry Collection (125) 125/39/2, SC4-E1, British Library, London.

²⁶⁹ Atwood, Notes for a speech in 1949, Ellen Terry Collection (125) 125/39/2, SC4-E1, British Library, London.

CONCLUSION

As this chapter has shown, Terry's eventual success, and long term legacy, owe much to the manner in which both her life and legacy were consciously, and carefully, managed. It has demonstrated that from circa 1874 to 1920, Terry was actively engaged in a deliberate process of 'self-fashioning' through which she was able to win, and sustain, public affection and respect. It has acknowledged that certain roles and qualities were imposed upon Terry, in particular her reputation for 'charm' and 'femininity,' which threatened to restrict her professional opportunities. Yet, it has also made apparent Terry's ability to resist and re-fashion these 'identities.'

This chapter has illustrated that Terry's self-fashioning was an integrated process in which all the elements of her 'public' and 'private' identities were carefully managed. Aware of the key part that written and visual records played in both expressing and preserving her various 'identities' she embraced both in her efforts to challenge her previous characterisation as a 'womanly woman,' whose success was due to 'charm' rather than just talent or hard work.

An important element of Terry's 'self-fashioning' was her determination to establish her status as a figure at the forefront of Aesthetic movement. As this chapter has made evident, whilst Terry owed her introduction to the movement to Watts and Godwin, she successfully maintained and strengthened her position as an icon of Aestheticism in her own right. The analysis of her houses and personal dress has revealed the extent to which she employed both mediums to advertise her commitment to the values promoted by the movement. Indeed, Terry's houses, be they 'country cottages' or city flats, provided important 'stage sets,' which enabled her to adopt both the 'feminine' and 'domestic'

roles traditionally associated with such environments, and also served as a testament to her Aesthetic sensibilities, and her commitment its values.

Most significantly, this chapter has provided the first full analysis of the crucial role which dress played Terry's 'self-fashioning' and has shown that Terry adapted her 'costumes' to suit the contexts within which she was 'performing' and her 'identity' was enacted. The analysis of Terry's personal dress has facilitated the identification of three clear stages in the development of her personal style. A style which, as has been illustrated, responded to and was influenced by movements within art and fashion, but was not bound by those dictates. Terry developed a personal style which evolved to suit her changing body, and asserted her individuality. Through this she was able to employ dress, both on and off the stage, to assert her status as a leading figure within the Aesthetic movement and an individual who understood the 'art' of dress.

When returning to the stage in 1874, Terry, as a self-supporting single mother recognised the need to conform to the identities suited to the tastes of the society in which she sought fame. By 1903 however, having achieved professional and financial success, she was eager, and at last able, to preserve a legacy which would endure beyond, and not confine her within, the Victorian Era.

She therefore sought to challenge and 'public' and 'private' identities within which she had been confined during her role as the leading lady of the Lyceum. Not all her efforts met with success, and many were actively resisted, but Terry remained firm in her determination to demonstrate that 'there [was] something more in [her] acting than *charm*.'²⁷⁰ Her 1908 autobiography therefore not only provided her with a vital income, but also offered her an opportunity to re-fashion the narrative of her life. Similarly,

²⁷⁰ Ellen Terry quoted in Terry, St. John, and Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, 13.

Terry's lecture series though initially undertaken for financial reasons, gave her the chance to perform roles never permitted to her at the Lyceum, and to finally take on the role of Director, as opposed to that of obedient cast member.²⁷¹ Through this more confrontational approach to 'self-fashioning' Terry was able to build upon her pre-existing status as a woman, and actress, who appreciated the 'art' of dress and costume, to establish a position as respected artist who understood the 'art' of theatre, and Shakespeare in particular. As her health failed, she took steps to appoint a reliable custodian to preserve this new 'identity,' and the memorial Craig established at Smallhythe, provided an enduring record of the importance and impact of Terry's life and career.

This chapter has established the vital contribution Terry's active 'self-fashioning' made to her social and professional success. As demonstrated, dress played a crucial part in communicating the 'public' and 'private' 'identities' Terry adopted to achieve win public affection. Her visual image was also important, as was her 'written self.' Terry's ability to overcome the social stigma attached to her private life and professional career, the position she gained as one of the leading actresses of her generation, and, above all, her 'legacy' as a significant and intelligent 'Artist,' and potent figure within theatre history, stand as a testament to her ability as a 'performer', both on, and off, the stage.

²⁷¹ As has been discussed the annotation with which Terry covered her Lyceum scripts, together with the manuscripts for, and final text of, her *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, reveal that whilst she respected Irving and their partnership, she did not always fully agree with his interpretation of certain productions. See, for instance, Terry, St. John, and Shakespeare, *Four Lectures on Shakespeare*, 88, 96.

CONCLUSION

It is no use putting the right dress on the wrong actor or actress. The physical appearance of the person who is going to wear the dress must be borne in mind; so must the dramatic situation in which it is to be worn. Besides realising the character of the period to which they belong, the dresses must be appropriate to the emotions of the play, and must have a beauty relative *to each other* as well as an individual excellence.¹

Ellen Terry, (1911)

Introduction

Ellen Terry's experience and understanding of the practical and artistic factors which shape the design and creation of theatrical costumes, is evident in the above observations. Her remarks also draw attention to the integral position costumes occupy within the multitude of dramatic effects, props, scenery, lighting, and 'bodies,' which are brought together to create a theatrical production.

It was an encounter with the actress's surviving costumes which drew my attention to their rich potential as source material for dress and theatre historians and first inspired the research on which the thesis is founded. The close interrogation of Terry's theatre costumes, alongside the rich body of supporting material preserved within the collection at Smallhythe Place, prompted a reconsideration of the 'afterlives' of theatrical costumes, and brought to light their significant role as carriers of 'meaning' and 'identity.'

As Chapter 2 made apparent, an additional stimulus for the research came from the limited attention paid to surviving theatre costumes within the small, albeit growing, body of existing literature on this theme within both dress and theatre history. Further motivation was provided by the fact that much of this research, whilst highlighting the significant

¹ Terry, "Stage Decoration," 87.

and enduring link between ‘costume’ and ‘fashionable dress,’ has failed to appreciate the potential these garments possess to illuminate wider themes.

The thesis therefore set out to encourage the expansion of existing debates relating to historic theatre costume, and to facilitate this through the establishment of a specific methodology for the analysis of theatre costume, founded upon the detailed analysis of surviving garments. It pursued this aim by adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to research, which united methodological and theoretical approaches from the disciplines of dress history, theatre history and material culture. The close analysis of the personal and theatrical wardrobe of nineteenth century actress, Ellen Terry, provided a case study through which to address the challenges, and explore the scope, of this new methodology. The detailed examination of Terry’s life and dress also shed fresh light on her life and career: offering an insight into the significance of her status as a financially independent woman and the strategies she employed to overcome a potentially scandalous off-stage life, to establish a position as a respected and popular actress who understood the ‘art’ of dress, both on and off the stage.

This conclusion will reflect upon the principal findings of this research. It will assess the success of the methodology created and adopted, and highlight the important contributions the thesis has made to new knowledge. It will clarify and refine the methodology proposed, reaffirming the important contribution that close assessment of surviving garments can make to the quality and success of such research, and demonstrating its potential to facilitate further investigations connected with historic theatre costume within the fields of both dress and theatre history.

Discovering which questions to ask

The research for the thesis commenced with two primary aims in mind. The first: to demonstrate the potential that historic theatre costume offered as an area for academic research, and establish a valid methodology for such investigations. The second: to show

that through a close analysis of Terry's personal and theatrical dress it was possible to re-evaluate existing narratives of the actress's life and career, challenging previous presentations of Terry as a submissive figure, content to sacrifice and curtail her own ambitions to facilitate the career of her on stage partner, Henry Irving.

The research questions asked when analysing Terry's surviving theatre costumes reflected these dual aims. The focus was upon both the information these garments provided regarding characteristics which distinguish costumes from off stage dress and, also, the insights they offered into the life of their original wearer. In the absence of a pre-existing methodology for the analysis and investigation of historic theatre costume it was necessary to commence by establishing a systematic strategy for documentation and analysis. The methodology adopted was strongly influenced by a personal background in object based research, but evolved primarily in response to the questions provoked by close engagement with the garments themselves.

Interrogating surviving garments

Access to a wide body of garments associated with a single individual, offered scope for a level of comparative analysis which is rarely possible when working with historic dress, particularly theatre costume. To take full advantage of this potential it was necessary to adopt a consistent approach when examining the source material. Charts were therefore developed which focussed on recording the aspects of each surviving garment (for both theatre costumes and personal dress) required for comparative analysis. They were also created with the desire to produce the first detailed catalogue of the collection at Smallhythe Place (together with lists of garments and costumes associated with Terry in other museum collections) in mind (See Appendix 1, 2 and 3). For this reason the fields recorded: The relevant museum 'Reference Number' (with any past reference numbers also noted); a 'General Description'; 'Key Measurements', and also 'Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment', (where known). An additional column was also

included to record any 'Additional Relevant Information' which did not fall within these fields. Employing these charts ensured that, where possible, the same data was gathered from each costume. As Chapter 4 showed, recording measurements from the garments associated with Terry provided a means to chart the changing figure of the actress. Read alongside supporting visual and written evidence, these measurements also facilitated reasoned judgements regarding the likelihood that costumes with no, or questionable, provenance had been worn by, or made for, the actress. Recording condition (areas of damage or wear) and also any evidence of past conservation treatment, was found to be particularly important for theatre costume. Chapter 5 touched upon the insights that areas of wear and damage can provide into the movement patterns and gestures of their original wearers. As the thesis also discussed, evidence of use can also document key stages in the complex 'biographies' of theatre costume and may assist in efforts to establish whether a costume dates from the original staging of a production, or is a later remake. These damaged areas are often masked by conservation treatment however, as they require the greatest support when prepared for display. It therefore proved essential to note where repairs had been made, and to consider whether these appeared to be contemporary with the garment, or the result of later intervention.

Establishing this systematic process of documentation provided a foundation from which to consider the importance of these garments within Terry's wardrobe: in particular the part they played in a wider process of 'self-fashioning.' The information uncovered also opened up unanticipated discussions relating to the status and significance of theatre costumes as objects both during, and after, their role as practical stage garments. Of specific interest to the thesis, were the discoveries regarding the complex biographies accumulated by many historic costumes, and their ability to function as carriers of 'identity' and 'meaning.'

Unanticipated questions

The research commenced from the standpoint that an understanding of the social, historic and artistic context within which Terry was operating, and the influence this may have had upon her clothing strategies, was integral to the analysis of her garments. Many of the wider debates addressed within the thesis were unforeseen however, and were prompted by the questions posed by the costumes and their wearer(s).

Carriers of ‘Identity’ and ‘Meaning’

Most theatre costumes are passed from one production, or wearer, to another, acquiring an altered appearance, a new meaning and a different owner and accruing, as they do so, their own complex ‘identities’ or, to use Kopytoff’s terminology, ‘biographies.’² Close analysis of specific costumes from within Terry’s wardrobe revealed the degree to which the different ‘contexts’ within which a costume is used and displayed, continues to shape the ‘meanings’ ascribed to such garments throughout their lifecycle: particularly if they are used by a new performer, or in a different performance. The importance of documenting the different ‘contexts’ within which a costume has been used, and allowing for the degree to which the ‘meaning’ of these garments can alter when ‘translated’ to a new ‘context,’ therefore became apparent.³

The biography of the wearer(s) was found to play an equally important role in shaping the ‘meaning’ ascribed to surviving costumes. Indeed, whilst for many examples of historic ‘fashionable dress’ the identity of the original wearer remains unknown, for historic theatre costume it is often the connection with a famous performer(s) which has secured their preservation.⁴ Consequently it became evident that any analysis of a historic

² Kopytoff, “The cultural biography of things,” 67.

³ The important role context plays in shaping meaning was explored by Stallybrass and Jones in *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 177-183.

⁴ Whilst many factors shape the acquisition policies adopted by institutions who collect theatre costume, including quality of design and the significance of the maker, the identity of the wearer remains a crucial and dominant factor in determining their long-term survival. For a more detailed discussion of the considerations which determine the preservation or otherwise of historic theatre costume see Veronica

theatre costume must consider the associations which develop between such garments and their wearer(s), and the degree to which such garments become imbued with the identity of the performer(s) who has worn them.

Chapters 4 and 5 explored the significance of this perceived ‘connection’ between the costume and its wearer(s) in greater detail. Focussing on the history of specific costumes revealed that such garments are often seen to be channelling their past wearer(s), participating in what Hodgdon, drawing upon Roach’s work on the same theme, described as ‘[...] a form of surrogation.’⁵ Considering the extant costume as a ‘surrogate’ for the absent body offered a framework through which to understand and analyse the emotional potency of ‘resurrected’ theatre costumes: specifically the manner in which such garments, whether used in performance or mounted for display, can take on the role of an ‘effigy,’ perpetuating ‘memory’ of the lost production, and literally, ‘re-membering,’ the absent performer.⁶

The complex histories of the garments under investigation required an approach to analysis which would facilitate a full exploration and recognition of the ‘meanings’ and ‘identities’ they carried. Pearce’s exploration of the ‘chains of meanings’ that can be present simultaneously within a single object, provided a route through which to address the fact that many theatre costumes come to embody a series of individuals or productions, rather than a single performer.⁷ At the same time, by drawing upon Kopytoff’s work on ‘object biographies,’ it proved possible to fashion a biographical model of analysis that clarified the distinctions between the ‘typical’ lifecycle of these garments, and the ‘actual’ lifecycle of the costumes selected for preservation. The status

Isaac, *From Ellen Terry’s ‘Beetlewing Dress’ to David Tennant’s Leather Trousers: An Investigation of the Preservation and Presentation of Theatrical Costume in British Theatres and Museums* (University of Southampton, Unpublished MA Dissertation, 2008).

⁵ Hodgdon, “Shopping in the Archives,” 159-161. She draws upon Roach’s discussion of ‘effigies’ and ‘surrogation’ in *Cities of the Dead* (1996).

⁶ Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36.

⁷ Susan Pearce, “Objects as meaning: or narrating the past,” *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. Susan Pearce (London: Routledge, 1994).

of historic theatre costumes as carriers of ‘memory’ and ‘identity,’ with the ability to conjure up the ‘ghosts,’ not only of an interlinked cycle of performances, but also of specific performers also needed to be recognised. It was found that uniting the approaches advocated by Kopytoff and Pearce, with the work Hodgdon, Roach and Carlson had carried out on ‘surrogation’ and ‘ghosting,’ provided the theoretical terminology required to develop a nuanced approach to analysis. The success of this methodological approach was demonstrated in Chapter 5, in which it was applied directly to Terry’s surviving garments.

The next section of the conclusion provides the opportunity to demonstrate the wider applicability of this methodology, and to reaffirm the factors which must be considered when analysing a historic theatre costume. It will present a biographical mode of analysis which enables researchers to explore the shifting and layered ‘meanings’ ascribed to historic theatre costumes, and to address the significance of their role as carriers of ‘identity.’

Fashioning a Methodology for Analysis: A Suggested ‘Toolkit’

A ‘recontextualisation from surviving remains’⁸

Any researcher contemplating the analysis of a theatrical costume, be it historic or contemporary, will first need to establish the range and amount of evidence available. There are some instances in which the origins or the original form of a garment can never be discovered and, as is the case with research in any field, the viability of the proposed investigation will need to be assessed at the outset.

In most instances, however, even when the available evidence seems limited, there are routes through which it may be possible to discover more. For example, where no

⁸ Hodgdon, “Shopping in the Archives,” 138-9. See also Barbara Hodgdon. ‘Photography, Theatre, Mnemonics; or, Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Still’. *Theorizing Practice: Redefining Theatre History*. Ed. William B. Worthen and Peter Holland. (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

provenance can be discovered relating to an extant costume, or when no visual or written description of a costume has survived, alternative routes can be pursued. If starting from an extant costume for which no provenance survives, for example, an insight into its original date and purpose could be gained by seeking out examples or images of comparable garments. Similarly, as Chapter 6 demonstrated, the absence of surviving costumes relating to a specific performer does not have to prove a barrier to analysis. A hypothesis regarding their likely appearance could, for instance, be established by identifying patterns and preferences regarding colours, silhouettes, levels of embellishment and closeness of fit, from surviving descriptions and images of costumes worn both by the performer themselves, and by their contemporaries.

Whatever the focus of the investigation (be it a specific performer, production, or costume type) it should embrace the full range of surviving source material, including extant garments (where these exist). A realistic and thorough approach is vital as, in many instances, success will require an approach which draws together strands from a myriad of sources to reconstruct the most complete history possible for the original costume.

Making full use of extant garments

Whilst, as Chapter 1 discussed, a wide body of existing research within dress history draws upon evidence gathered from extant garments, it is recognised that not all researchers investigating historic theatre costume will be familiar with the use of garments as source material. Furthermore, the comparative analysis of a wide body of historic theatre costumes carried out for the thesis, highlighted the importance of adopting a systematic approach to examination and documentation when drawing evidence from these items.

The methodological approach outlined below is founded upon the steps taken when gathering evidence for this research. It is offered as a starting point for future research,

and created with scope for adaptation to suit the questions being asked of the source material, and the level of information known about the original wearer(s), in mind.

In all instances, regardless of the original purpose or wearer(s) of the costume under investigation, documenting the following information was found to be vital to the process of comparative analysis:

1) Evidence of Alterations/Adaptations: As Chapters 4 and 5 discussed, it is essential that researchers remain conscious that the ‘typical biography’ for a theatre costume includes re-use by the same, or multiple, wearers. It is therefore advised that researchers begin their examination of surviving garments by looking for, and documenting, any evidence of adaptation. The most common and easy to identify adjustments are hems which have been lengthened or shortened, and waist and side seams which have been let out or taken in.

The factors motivating any changes identified should also be fully explored. Evidence that seams have been let out might indicate the presence of a ‘new’ body, but equally it could simply reflect the altering physique of the original wearer. The letting down, or taking up, of hems provides more reliable evidence that a taller or smaller performer has used the costume, but supporting evidence should still be obtained where possible (if only to establish that this change was not carried out for adaptation to an alternative role and production.)

Even where modifications are not immediately apparent within the garment, it is important to be aware that evidence of additional ‘bodies’ may emerge through examination of supporting literature or images. Such was the case with Terry’s costume for Lady Macbeth (1888), where evidence obtained from photographs and written records, rather than the surviving garment, revealed that both the actress Sybil Thorndike, and Terry’s niece, Olive Chaplin, had also worn the costume.

2) Measurements: Measurements offer a vital tool for researchers seeking to rediscover the body which once inhabited the garments. If traces of multiple wearers are identified in a costume then these measurements can still provide useful data, but will need to be treated with an appropriate level of circumspection. Regardless of whether the garment has been adapted or remains in its original form, it is important that measurements are consistent and are taken from the same areas of the garment and in the same units.

Measurements taken from the waist of Terry's garments proved particularly useful for this research as they facilitated discussions of Terry's changing figure during her career. Similarly, measurements from shoulder blade to waist can provide an insight into height, and width across the chest (both front and rear) offers a sense of their build. The distance from waist to front or rear hem is a less reliable guide to height unless the point at which the garment touched the floor can be established. (A raised hem, or trained skirt, threatens to distort, rather than illuminate, the image of the body which originally inhabited the garment.)

3) Materials and Construction: Whilst it is not always possible to make exact identifications of the fabrics used in the construction of a garment it is worth considering the significance of these materials, if only in relation to colour, finish, or pliability.

Discussions in Chapter 4 explored the extent to which the materials used for theatre costumes reflect the artistic context for which they are created, with the dual impact of lighting and distance shaping decisions regarding colours, fabrics and embellishment. Close examination of the materials, fastenings and decorative effects employed for a costume can provide meaningful insights into its role on the stage. Simple fastenings might signal a quick change was required, whilst large metal hooks at the rear or front shoulder-line might suggest the presence of a cloak, or similar garment, previously secured at this point. As importantly, areas formed from fabrics which are noticeably

plainer than those used for the main body of the garment often indicate that these sections of the costume were not visible to the audience, masked by outer garments, or properties. It is standard theatrical practice to re-use costumes, and their component parts. Separate parts such as cloaks, or accessories are therefore frequently transferred to other performers and productions, and parts of the costume, perhaps sleeves or skirt panels, may have been detached and re-used to form new garments. Such information is particularly important to document as in many instances only part of a costume may have survived. Indeed, a researcher must bear in mind the possibility that parts of a surviving ensemble may themselves have been recycled from a previous costume. Consequently, as is the case when documenting a piece of historic dress, it is essential that all the parts of costume (where identifiable) are documented and analysed, both as a complete ensemble, and as separate components.

4) Weight: Whilst it is often impossible to measure the precise weight of a costume, handling it can give researchers a sense of how heavy or light the garment would have been and, through this, an insight into its impact on the wearer's movement on stage. Such information is particularly relevant when working with dance costumes as it can help to determine the nature of the role (walking, or dynamic) for which a costume was originally intended. In Terry's case, the weight of surviving garments illuminated many of her own observations regarding the degree to which specific costumes facilitated or impeded her movements on the stage.

Attention should also be paid to areas of the garment where weight has intentionally been added (perhaps to influence the fall of a hem, or sleeve cuff). This information is especially significant if weight has been added in an area where it would not normally be present, or desirable. Metal weights were incorporated into many of the sleeves and hems of Terry's garments, ensuring that long trains flowed smoothly behind the body and that long, hanging sleeves draped gracefully on the ground. A weight added to the centre front

of the bodice of her Lady Macbeth costume offered an important insight into the flexibility of the knitted silk jersey structure used for this section: indicating the need for additional weight to help to control the hang of the bodice and to shape it closely to her torso.

5) Fit: The manner in which costumes are tailored to fit or re-shape the body beneath them can also reveal the impact they might have had upon movement and silhouette. A close-fitting bodice, stiffened with channels of ‘boning’ will, for example, compel the wearer to maintain an upright, straight backed posture, even when seated, and tight and stiff trousers will place similar limitations on movement.

Costumes can also be employed to deliberately distort the body of the wearer. This was the case with Irving’s costume for *Richard III* in 1877, which altered the actor’s shoulder line by incorporating a silken hump at one shoulder, and modified his gait by raising the heel of one of his shoes.⁹

6) Damage and Wear: Taking due account of the fact that, as Chapter 4 discussed, some costumes may have been subject to deliberate ‘distressing’ for theatrical effect, researchers should also pay attention to areas of damage and wear, particularly if this has occurred in unanticipated places. Whilst perspiration damage under the arms, and tears and hems and fastens are typical features of historic dress (whether used on or off the stage), wear in other unexpected areas can provide a significant insight into the movement patterns and gestures of the original wearer. Extensive wear at knees or elbows might, for instance, indicate that the wearer spent much of their time kneeling, or leaning forward, and the presence of extensive tears, rather than general wear and staining, would suggest that their movements were particularly violent or intense.

It is important that such analysis makes allowance for the durability of fabric used and, where possible, draws upon supporting information from contemporary written

⁹ This costume is held within the V&A Collections, Museum Reference S.2754:1 to 7-2010.

descriptions. Appropriately employed however, it has the potential to reveal patterns of movement and action which, as Chapter 2 and 5 discussed, cannot be captured in static photographs.

7) **Supporting Material:** As the thesis has stressed, surviving garments, where they exist, can provide crucial evidence for research into historic theatre costume. Wherever possible however, the physical evidence revealed through a close examination of a surviving costume must be combined with information drawn from related primary source material, be it visual material, written commentary or comparable extant garments. Only then, as Chapter 2 emphasised, does it become possible to reanimate what Monks termed, the ‘incomplete body.’¹⁰ The steps which follow therefore represent the factors which must be considered by anyone undertaking investigations into historic theatre costume, whether or not their source material includes extant garments.

The role of ‘context’ in shaping ‘meaning

The historical, social and artistic context within which a costume is originally created and used has a significant impact on its design and public reception. Researchers therefore need to fully explore the context within which a costume was created. This should address, but is not limited to, a consideration of the following issues:

- 1) The preconceptions and traditions surrounding the production for which the garment was created. For instance, the title character of *Hamlet* traditionally wears black, therefore any departure from this colour palette is particularly significant.
- 2) The impact of contemporary attitudes to costume design, and views upon the importance attached to ‘historical authenticity’, have shifted significantly over

¹⁰ Monks, *The Actor in Costume*, 140.

time, and remain continually in flux. During the time that Terry's costumes were created there was a movement towards what was perceived as 'historical authenticity' but, as Chapter 4 discussed, in the early to mid-eighteenth century limited importance was attached to this quality. Perceptions of what constitutes 'authentic' historical dress also vary, and range from referencing a silhouette, to making efforts to replicate the original construction techniques (as was the case for the 'Original Practice Productions' staged at The Globe Theatre, London, between 1997 and 2012).

- 3) The close links which exist between dress on and off the stage (as exemplified within the thesis) mean that it is necessary to establish a clear sense of fashions within dress, both at the date of first creation, and, where possible, at any subsequent point in a costume's history at which significant modifications were made to the structure or design. This allows the researcher to consider the extent to which the design deviates from, or reflects, contemporary trends, and to explore the factors motivating this approach.
- 4) The potential impact that the political or economic situation can have on design should also be considered. Chapter 4 touched upon the impact that a shortage of materials or funds (as was the case during and immediately after the Second World War), may have upon the design choices available to makers and wearers. Investigations also need to take into account the possibility that a production might have used costume to reference figures or political movements within society which, though familiar to audiences of the time, do not immediately resonate with subsequent viewers.
- 5) An understanding of the social context, specifically attitudes towards performers and preconceptions surrounding their role in society, should also shape any analysis. As Chapter 3 made apparent, Terry's approach to dress, both on and off

the stage, was often influenced by the historic preoccupation with the ‘body of the actress’ and, in consequence, the important role that costume and gesture played in communicating and establishing respectability.¹¹

- 6) The artistic context within which garments are created and worn can also have a significant impact on their public reception. For Terry, whose success coincided with the rising influence and importance of the Aesthetic movement, the artistic context within which she was operating had an identifiable impact on her approach to design. Indeed, her status as an ‘Icon of Aestheticism’ contributed to her initial success, and her garments, both on and off the stage, were frequently employed to express her allegiance to the artistic values of the movement.

Character: Wearer vs. Role

It is important not to overlook the practical and narrative function of costume as a signifier of character. Yet, as discussions in Chapter 4 and 5 highlighted, this ‘function’ works in harmony with, and has the potential to be overshadowed by, the ‘character’ of the performer: not only during the original production, but also throughout the ‘afterlife’ of the costume. Where possible, researchers must therefore allow space within their analysis to discover the following information: the role for which a costume was originally created; whether the costume was created for a leading or supporting role; the identity of the original wearer; the level of their celebrity, and the extent to which their fame was founded upon a specific ‘public identity.’ With these facts established, they will then be able to consider the extent to which the ‘public identity’ of the wearer has informed the design of a costume: either through a desire to support, or resist this ‘character.’

¹¹ As Chapter 2 and 3 acknowledge, this concern regarding ‘the body of the actress’ extends beyond the parameters of the nineteenth century. It is an issue which has been explored further by Eltis in “Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress” (2007), Bush-Bailey in *Treading the Bawds* (2006) and Engel in “The Muff Affair” (2009) and *Fashioning Celebrity: Eighteenth-century British Actresses and Strategies for Image Making* (2011), amongst many others.

Invisible Hands: Designer, Maker, Wearer

One of the principal challenges faced in any investigation of a historic theatre costume, is discovering which figures had primary influence over its design and making. Dialogues between designers, makers, wearers, and, indeed, directors (or their historical equivalents), are rarely documented, with the result that the careers and lives of costume makers represent a notable absence from existing research within theatre history.

The level of information surrounding the creation of Terry's costumes facilitated a discussion of the degree of control she was able to exercise over their design and creation. Few performers, either then, or today, exercise such a high level of agency over their theatre costumes. Even so, efforts can still be made to seek out evidence which might illuminate the process through which costumes were created and the extent to which performers influenced their design.

As was the case for this research, key moments in the making or design of a costume may be referred to in letters or autobiographical accounts, but these seldom provide a complete picture of all the steps and individuals involved in the creation of a single costume. All research into this aspect of a costume's history must therefore be undertaken in the knowledge that this is a collaborative process, in which numerous figures may have contributed to the creation of the final garment. They must also be mindful of the extent to which approaches to design and creation will vary according to the scale of the production and the established practice of a specific company or theatre.

Researchers seeking to establish who had primary control over the creation of a specific garment will need to proceed with caution, and their success will depend, to no small degree, on the level of surviving evidence available.

Authenticity

As Chapter 4 discussed, and Terry's costumes reveal, the costumes which survive in museum collections are not always those created for the 'original' run of a production,

even if they are exact replicas of the ‘original’ garments. They may also have been worn by several different performers in various productions. The existence of multiple versions of ‘a costume’ raises important questions regarding the perceived ‘authenticity’ of surviving garments. To respond to such questions, researchers will need to establish exactly what ‘authenticity’ signifies in relation to their personal investigations. The definition employed for this research, and which holds true for the wider study of historic stage costume, was taken from Vannini and Williams’ work (2009). In a definition which is particularly relevant to the shifting identities and value attached to historic theatre costume, they describe ‘authenticity’ as a malleable concept, rather than a ‘static characteristic’ which, as they note, will be continually re-shaped by the ‘[...] set of qualities that people in a particular time and place have come to agree represent an ideal or exemplar.’¹² Whilst researchers do not have to begin their work from the same standpoint, their investigations will need to engage with the complex histories of garments, for which modification, repair, re-use and replacement, are inherent stages in their traditional biography. Only through recognising and documenting these stages can they begin to fully address the issue of ‘authenticity’ and to assess the ‘historical significance’ of garments which, whilst known to have been used by performers for a specific role, may not have been worn in their ‘original’ performance of the part.

A Biographical Approach to Analysis

The physical and symbolic connections that costumes develop with their wearer(s), together with the fact that the ‘typical’ lifecycle of these garments often includes not only damage, repair and alteration, but potentially ‘translation’ to different performers and productions, has significant implications for researchers seeking to interpret historic theatre costume. The thesis has made apparent the capacity of theatre costumes to

¹² Phillip Vannini and J P. Williams, *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society* (Farnham: Ashgate Pub, 2009), 3, 12.

accumulate multiple and complex ‘identities,’ and a layered, rather than single, history. The criteria upon which their ‘authenticity’ and ‘historical significance’ is assessed, must therefore extend beyond conclusive evidence of their use in the ‘original’ production, to address the multiple narratives present within historic stage costume. The thesis has demonstrated that a biographical approach to analysis, founded upon Kopytoff’s concept of ‘object biographies,’ enables researchers to pinpoint the key stages in the evolving biography of a stage costume.

Researchers are first encouraged to establish the ‘typical biography’ for costumes in the period on which their investigation is focussing. The ‘typical biography’ outlined below offers a framework for developing such a biography, and breaks down an intentionally simplified outline of a costume’s ‘life cycle’ into Kopytoff’s model of ‘recognised “ages” or periods.’ This model has been adapted from the six stage model presented in Chapter 5, which represented the typical life cycle of a theatrical costume during the peak of Terry’s career. The addition of a further ‘life cycle period’ takes into account the new possibility that, as this chapter noted, the costume might be transferred to a ‘Hire Wardrobe’ (as is standard practice within many contemporary companies working with theatre costume). Allowing for this additional stage in their life cycle, the ‘typical biography’ of a theatre costume would encompass the following seven ‘periods’:

‘Typical Biography’ of a stage costume:

Period 1: ‘Design and creation’

Period 2: First Performance

Period 3: Return to Wardrobe

Period 4: ‘Repair’ or ‘Adaptation’ for the same, or a new, wearer (repair and adaptation might also occur during the run of the original production)

Period 5: Second Performance (in the same, or an alternative production)

Period 6: Transfer to 'Hire Wardrobe'

Period 7: 'Disposal' through sale, gift or destruction

Whilst the life cycle model created for a 'typical biography' offers a useful starting point for research, the varied histories of Terry's surviving garments show that costumes have the potential to accumulate much more complex biographies. Researchers are therefore advised to adapt this 'Typical Biography' to create an 'Actual Biography' for the garment(s) under investigation: paying particular attention to when, how, and why, its biography departs from the expected life cycle of theatre costumes during the period in which it was created.

'Identity' and 'Meaning'

Adopting a biographical approach to analysis will enable researchers to document and examine the multi-layered history of a costume. Attention must also be paid also to evolutions in the 'meaning' and 'identities' carried by the garment at different stages during this lifecycle, which are directly shaped by both the individuals who wear them, and the 'contexts' within they are used. For this reason, it is essential that investigations fully explore the 'contexts' (historical, physical and cultural) within which a theatre costume has been used. The same importance should be attached to discovering the past wearer(s) of the costume. Only then is it possible to record the multiple 'meanings' and 'identities' that can be simultaneously present within a single costume and, through this, to gain a full understanding of the impact these associations have upon the 'historical' and 'emotional' significance' attached to such garments. Pearce's theories surrounding 'chains of meaning' within which material culture objects become enmeshed, offers a strong foundation for such discussions. Uniting Pearce's theories with Hodgdon and

Roach's work surrounding 'surrogation,' provides a theoretical framework through which researchers can begin to address and articulate a costume's ability to function as a 'surrogate' not only for the body of the absent performer, but also the lost production.¹³

Scope for Further Research

This was a subject area which demanded an interdisciplinary approach to research. The resulting thesis has therefore been deliberately positioned on the borders of dress history and theatre history: two fields within which the value of material culture evidence is already firmly established. The aim was to encourage cross-fertilisations between the two disciplines and to highlight the important contribution the study of historic theatre costume can make to both fields. The methodology presented has therefore been created to offer both dress and theatre historians a route through which to unpick the information preserved within the fibres of these significant garments.

Expanding the Parameters of the Research

This investigation of Terry's stage costume has also made apparent the range of themes which historic theatre costume has the potential to illuminate, not simply in relation to Terry herself, but also within investigations of further time periods, individuals, theatre companies, and other types of performance. Indeed, the applicability of this methodology extends far beyond the parameters of this investigation, and the thesis has already indicated some fruitful areas for further development of the research. The methodology could, for instance, be employed to consider other types of theatrical performance beyond the scope of this study, in particular venues such as the Gaiety Theatre, within which specific conventions governed costume design and performance. Chapter 3, for instance, touched upon the stylised costumes associated with the Gaiety, particularly principal boy roles, which encased and shaped the wearer's torso in bodices which reflected the

¹³ Barbieri, "Performativity and the historical body," 297 and Roach, *Cities of The Dead*, 36.

fashionable silhouette, but deliberately exposed their legs, and important discussions remain to be had regarding the factors which motivated and sustained such conventions. Indeed, this is an area which would reward far more extensive research, and which offers a further perspective from which to re-examine the connections between theatrical costume and fashionable dress.

Another route through which to expand the discussions initiated by the thesis would be to examine the role of Terry's theatre costume and personal dress in her self-fashioning in relation to that of her contemporaries. Other actresses known for their interest in dress, such as Sarah Bernhardt, Eleanora Duse and Lillie Langtry, could provide particularly interesting points of comparison and extant theatre costumes connected with all three performers survive in museum collections within Europe.¹⁴ These surviving costumes offer an interesting starting point from which to commence an exploration of the connections and contrasts between the garments worn by these performers. This would, in turn, provide an opportunity to assess the differing impact that the historic, artistic and social context within which these actresses were operating had upon their dress. Interesting debates could also be raised by analysing and comparing the 'clothing strategies' these performers employed to establish, or resist their 'public' and 'private' identities.¹⁵

Similarly, the extent of Terry's success and celebrity in America, merits investigation into the manner in which her costumes were received by an American audience and was a research area beyond the scope of the thesis. Collections of material held by institutions

¹⁴ The costume collection at Smallhythe includes at least one costume associated with Lillie Langtry, and another reputedly worn by Sarah Bernhardt. See Appendix 1, Catalogue of the costume collection at Smallhythe Place: Lillie Langtry, *Role and Production Unknown*, SMA.COST.190, 1118915, and Sarah Bernhardt, *Lady Macbeth, Macbeth*, SMA.TC.11, 1118849. Similarly, the large collection of Duse's clothing and related archive material now held at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice, offers an extremely fruitful foundation for a comparable investigation into Duse's relationship with dress on, and off, the stage.

¹⁵ This is the term employed by Strasdin in "Fashioning Alexandra: A Royal Approach to Style 1863-1910) 181.

such as the New York Public Library, the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas and the Folger Shakespeare Library, offer a profitable routes through which to extend research and have the capacity to reveal key information about Terry's status and reception beyond the United Kingdom. Extending the analysis of Terry's costume to encompass her performances in America could provide important insights into adaptations the actress made to the 'identities' and 'costumes' she adopted within this new context and society.

The viability of the methodology presented is not confined to the analysis of costumes created within the nineteenth century. Indeed it was intentionally created with scope for application to earlier and later time periods in mind. Any such investigations would need to allow for the alterations which have occurred in the practice of costume design and making over time, particularly if seeking to establish the degree of influence an individual performer had over their stage garments. Even so, there is strong potential for the expansion of the existing discussions to encompass performers, productions and costume types, from a much broader time period.

Kinesthetic Imagination

The thesis became increasingly concerned not only concerned with theatre costumes, but also with the bodies which once inhabited them. As it has shown, both historic theatre costumes, and the performers who wear them, have the capacity to carry both personal and public memories acting as, what Roach termed, 'an eccentric but meticulous curator of cultural memory [and] a medium for speaking with the dead.'¹⁶

Extant costumes therefore have a crucial part to play in rediscovering the pace and physicality of past performances and performers. The ability of costumes to activate what Roach termed the 'kinesthetic imagination,' offers a fruitful area for further research,

¹⁶ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 80.

particularly in relation to dance costume where, in the absence of choreographic notation, the evidence of movement preserved in extant costumes provides ‘a way of thinking about movements-at once remembered and reinvented-the otherwise unthinkable.’¹⁷ A case in point is a tutu designed by Oliver Messel and worn by Margot Fonteyn (1919-1991) in a touring production of *The Sleeping Princess*. Dating from circa 1960 the tutu was used in a scene in which Fonteyn danced the ‘Rose Adagio.’ It exhibits specific evidence of wear at the waist, the point at which Fonteyn’s partner’s hands were repeatedly placed to support her body during the lifts and balances which form part of extremely challenging routine.¹⁸

Costumes and ‘Ghosting’

Another function of stage costume brought to light through discussions within the thesis was the role(s) that stage costumes can play in what Carlson termed ‘ghosting.’¹⁹ The thesis has considered the ability of historic theatre costumes to function as ‘surrogates’ for absent performers. This analysis has opened up the possibility for investigations into the manner in which performers might self-consciously reference their own past roles by re-creating, or alluding to, previous costumes. By establishing the role of costumes as ‘carriers of identity’ and ‘memory’ the thesis has also provided a means through which to engage with, and explore, important debates regarding actors who deliberately wear costumes that reference a previous performance, or a specific aspect of their celebrity. An action which exploits the fact that, for their audiences, this new incarnation will be ‘ghosted’ by the positive memories associated with their past success.²⁰ In the case of Terry’s own wardrobe, for instance, marked similarities were identified between the costume she wore as Ellaine in *The Amber Heart* (1887) and the dress designed for her

¹⁷ Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 16-17.

¹⁸ See Museum Number S.301-2001, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

¹⁹ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 2-3. See also Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 93.

²⁰ Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 2, 58-9.

appearance as Rosamund six years later, in the 1893 production of *Becket*. The first production marked a highpoint in Terry's career and the moment at which she began working with her personal costume designer. Reviving this costume for the later production therefore enabled Terry to recapture, and revive, memories of this past success, within both her own mind, and that of her audience. The fact that her surviving correspondence and writing reveals that, by the 1890s, Terry was losing confidence in her ability to sustain the illusion of 'eternal youth' which her position as the leading lady of the Lyceum Theatre increasingly demanded, underscores the significance of the decision to revive the 'ghosts' of earlier performances at this particular moment.

As this example indicates, further investigations into these issues have the potential to reveal important details about the part stage costume plays in the transmission of theatrical traditions, and its role in the 'ghosting' of performances, not only by past productions, but also, past performers.²¹

Conclusion: Contribution to Knowledge

The thesis is the first text to propose a thorough and specific methodology for the analysis of historic theatre costume. It has established that any such research must take into account the context in which a costume has been created, used, and preserved. It has also revealed the extent to which these garments become imbued with identities of their original wearer(s) and the implications this has for the 'meanings' which can be ascribed to them.

The research has produced the first detailed catalogue of Terry's dress on and off the stage (See Appendix 1, 2 and 3). Through this detailed investigation of the personal and

²¹ Simon Sladen has begun to explore the costume traditions associated with Pantomime, specifically the strong similarities identifiable between the costumes created for pantomime dames. His initial research has revealed evidence that costumes associated with particularly successful dames have been consciously referenced, or even, in certain instances, deliberately retained and worn again, by later performers. See Simon Sladen, "From Mother Goose to Master: Training Networks and Knowledge Transfer in Contemporary British Pantomime" *IFTR Conference 2014*, 28 July – 1 August. Warwick: University of Warwick. Conference Paper.

theatrical dress of this actress, it has demonstrated the value of extant garments as material culture, and also that scope exists for investigation of historic theatre costume, even when garments do not survive. It is recognised that Terry was an exceptional figure, with a rare degree of interest and engagement in the design and creation of her dress, both on and off the stage. Nevertheless, by focusing specifically on Terry's costume and dress the thesis has offered a fresh perspective on her career and status within the 'theatrical aristocracy' of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.²²

This is the first research to fully explore this significant element of Terry's self-fashioning and, in so doing, has provided a fresh perspective on her biography. It has demonstrated that Terry was an individual who recognised the power of self-fashioning, and whose professional career had made her acutely conscious of the important part that 'performance' both on, and off, the stage, played in this process. The thesis has established the extent to which Terry took active control over her personal and professional identity not only during her lifetime, but also when fashioning her legacy. Through this, it has offered a new understanding of Terry, enhancing existing research into her personal and theatrical dress, and demonstrating the significant role these garments played in her self-fashioning. Specifically, it has revealed the degree to which Terry's stage costumes expressed and reinforced her 'public' identity, in particular her prominent status within the Aesthetic movement. As the research has shown, it was Terry's understanding of the 'art' of dress which enabled her to appreciate and exploit the power of dress to communicate her different 'identities,' and which has made her such an interesting and valuable case study for the thesis.

Significantly, the thesis has drawn upon and refined established methodologies from a range of interconnected fields, to present and demonstrate an effective methodology for

²² Gardner, "The Three Nobodies," 33.

the analysis of theatre costume. Uniting the work of researchers from within dress history, theatre history, and material culture, it has explored the theoretical language and models through which it becomes possible to articulate and analyse the multiple ‘meanings’ that can be carried by a single costume. The thesis illustrates the importance of acknowledging the complex and layered nature of the biography of these garments. It has demonstrated that a biographical approach offers a viable model for the analysis of historic stage costume, enabling researchers to document and analyse the identities accumulated by these garments, and has also identified theoretical models through which to articulate and examine the shifting function of costumes and the implications of their role as ‘carriers of identity.’ Through the examination of extant costumes associated with a specific performer, it has opened up the existing debate relating to stage costumes, highlighting their status as objects worthy of examination and study in their own right.

In so doing, the thesis has accomplished its primary aim and established a methodology for the analysis of historic theatre costume. It has illustrated the important contribution that the evidence obtained from extant costume can make to the disciplines of dress and theatre history and has addressed the challenges and debates raised in the course of such investigations. Most importantly, by creating a methodology which demonstrates the value and potential for object based material culture research into historic theatre costume, the thesis has established a valid and strong platform for further research, and made apparent the wide scope which exists for such investigations.

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Archives and Museum Collections:

This list provides an outline of key elements of the source material within museum and archive collections referred to in the course of the thesis.

Full catalogue records and details of the material examined from archival and museum collections which relates directly to Ellen Terry is provided the Appendices.

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

1949.M.36.11 - Silk brocade bodice and skirt made by Sarah Fullerton, circa 1893

1988.M55.1906 – Fine linen dress made by May Morris of her goddaughter, circa 1906

2003.0458 – ‘Owl Hanging’, embroidered design on linen, circa 1905-1908

1938.M.268 – Hanging/Prayer Mat, May Morris, late nineteenth century.

British Library

Archives of Ellen Terry and Edith Craig Loan MS 125 (On long term loan to the library from Smallhythe Place, National Trust).

The archive comprises:

Edith Craig Papers: Loan MS 125/1-20 and 80-82

Ellen Terry Papers: Loan MS 125/21-75 and 84

Polling Collection: Loan MS 125/76-77

Powell Collection: Loan MS 125/78-79

Material awaiting conservation: Loan MS 125/83

Fashion Museum, Bath

BATHC.I.09.438 – Silk bodice and skirt, decorated with a pattern of flowers and leaves, maker unknown, circa 1905.

BATMC.I.09.454 – Pinafore style dress decorated with a pattern of oranges and leaves, worn over cream muslin blouse embroidered with matching patterns, circa 1906-1910.

BATMC.2000.319 – Hand sewn cream muslin jacket with embroidered decoration. Worn by Ottoline Morrell circa late 19th / early 20th century.

BATMC.2000.317/8 – Cream muslin jacket and skirt both parts printed with geometric stripes and patterns. . Worn by Ottoline Morrell circa late 19th / early 20th century.

BATMC.I.09.471 – Floor length tabard style gown with long train at rear in shot lilac/green silk, circa 1910-1915.

BATMC.2011.3 – Cream striped silk empire line dress, with moss green puff sleeves. Originally worn by Lady Ida Darwin (1854-1946), maker Liberty & Co, circa 1890-1899.

Gallery of Costume, Platt Hall, Manchester

1947.4107 – Long unfitted tunic worn with separate flounced skirt, made from white muslin printed with small design of bull rushes, circa 1875-1880.

1947.4128 – Ensemble of sleeveless tunic, waist-length bodice and separate skirt, made from cream silk woven with small geometric motif, circa 1879-1880. Worn by Louisa Starr (1845-1909).

1947.4173 – Deep green wool dress with trained skirt, decorated with hand embroidery, circa 1878-1883.

1947.4175 – Fine cream wool dress, with draped bodice and skirt central bow and sleeves with turned back cuffs, circa late nineteenth century.

MC/CAG/1955.28 – Salmon pink crepe tea gown with full upper sleeves and panels of green cotton velvet, circa 1890s.

1947.4222 – Dark green wool dress with smocking at bodice and on sleeves, sash at waist, circa 1890-1900.

1947.4169 – Fine cream wool dress with printed decoration, skirt gathered into imitation bustle at rear, circa 1880s.

1947.4195 – Blue/Green crepe wool dress, with full puffed upper sleeves small upright collar. Decorated and shaped with smocking, circa 1893-98.

1947.4066 – Floor length pale gold fine cotton dress, elbow length sleeves and soft round collar. Pleated panel at centre front and decorated with embroidery.

1964.229 – Deep blue silk velvet gown, soft round neckline, narrow belt at waist and elbow length sleeves, made by Liberty & Co circa 1900-1905.

1957.426 – Pale pink silk crepe dress with square neckline and elbow length sleeves. Both dress and matching bag decorated with smocking, circa late 19th or early 20th century.

1947.4261 – Pale pink silk sleeveless dress with crossover empire line bodice and white silk chiffon sleeves. Decorated with beading. No maker's label, but possible link to Liberty & Co 'Hera' style dress, circa 1905-9.

1987.4 – Gold brown crepe and figured silk teagown, low wide round neckline, long wide sleeves and trained skirt. Made by Liberty & Co, circa 1906-1908.

1952.233 – Cream silk teagown with long loose sleeves and rectangular yoke. Both dress and sash are decorated with pale blue/green embroidery.

Garrick Collection, London

The Percy Fitzgerald Albums, Vols. 1-22 (assembled by the painter and sculptor, Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald (1834-1925) these contain a wide range of reviews and articles relating primarily to Irving, but also documenting the career of Terry and of the Lyceum Company between circa 1878-1905.) The pages are numbered and some, though not all, of the press cuttings and images they contain have been dated by hand.

The Ruth Canton Albums, 4 leather bound albums in total covering the years 1879-1892, comprising:

Album 1, Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre (1879-83)

Album 2, Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre (1884-92) Vol.1

Album 3, Chronicles of the Lyceum Theatre (1884-92) Vol.2

Album 4, Henry Irving Album

The majority of the clippings mounted in these albums have been dated, though the name of the periodical is seldom recorded. The pages are numbered and the material appears to have been organised both chronologically and thematically. The albums were assembled

by an artist, Susan Ruth Canton (1849-1932) and contain press cuttings and articles relating to Lyceum Productions together with many of Canton's own painted illustrations of productions she had seen.

The Garrick Collection also holds an annotated copy of Hamlet with accompanying watercolour sketches of stage sets, which was previously owned by Sir Henry Irving (1838-1905) and annotated texts of the plays *The Amber Heart* and *Olivia* previously owned by Terry.

Leeds Discovery Museum

LEEDM.E.2002.0011.0003 – Theatre costume consisting of a pale gold brocaded silk dress with silk chiffon sleeves. Provenance on museum record suggests that it was 'originally designed for Ellen Terry' but was actually worn by the actress K.L.Langstaffe (fl.1898) when playing Desdemona in 1898 at the Grand Theatre in Leeds. No evidence could be found to substantiate this connection.

Playbill, 1881, Lyceum Company tour to the City at this time (LEEDM.E.2010.0509.0039).

Museum of London

34.159 – Green silk velvet and silk satin teagown with integral bustle, circa 1892.

49.3/2 – Evening dress of green short silk decorated with floral embroidery and with hanging bag attached, worn by Miss Estella Canziani, circa 1910.

54.101/1 a&b – Grey silk dress decorated with Brussels lace, small shells and Italian buttons from the Abruzzi. Made for Louisa Starr (1845-1909), circa 1900.

58.6/5 and 6 – Pinafore dress made of wool and matching cap, handwoven in Ethel Mairet's workshop and worn by Estella Canziani, circa 1916.

64.92.1 – Coffee brown silk velvet dress with elbow length sleeves and matching belt. Gift of Estella Canziani, circa 1907-1908.

81.242/7 – Pale blue and silver figured silk bodice, with square neckline, made by Liberty & Co, circa 1898.

84.64/2 – Lilac shot silk dress and matching jacket made from fabric handwoven by Charlotte Brown (Kensington) and made by Madame Forma. Worn by Edith Dawson, circa 1910-1914.

2009.3 – One piece cream silk wedding dress with long sleeves, made and worn by a dressmaker working Shoreditch for her wedding in December 1909.

Also a range of garments from the collection connected with Ellen Terry, as recorded in Appendix 2 and 3.

National Portrait Gallery

Sitter Boxes for Terry

Registered Packets relating to portraits of Terry in the NPG collection, as follows:

NPG 46/23/28 - RP 2273: Relating to Replica of John Singer Sargeant's painting of Terry

NPG 46/23/29 - RP 2274: Relating to Watt's - 'Choosing.'

NPG 46/32/32 - RP 3132: Relating to W.G. Robertson's painting of Terry.

NPG 46/37/42 - RP 3662: Relating to Cyril Robert's painting of Terry.

NPG 46/38/20 - RP 3789: Relating to John Forbes Robertson's painting of Terry.

NPG 46/51/35 - RP 5048: Relating to Watt's - 'Choosing.'

NPG 46/66/51 - RP 6567-6568: Relating to James Ferrier Pryde's image of Terry as Nance Oldfield.

The digital copies of photographs, sketches and paintings of Terry which form part of the collection were also examined and accessed through the gallery's online catalogue.

Russell Coates Collection

A range of prints, paintings, caricatures, press cuttings and decorative objects relating to Terry which form part of this large collection were examined in the course of the research.

These included:

BORGM.00966 - Oil portrait painting showing Ellen Terry by Edward Matthew Hale entitled "Ellen Terry - A Sketch at Halliford 1881."

MORGM.01329 - An oil painting on canvas entitled 'Ellen Terry, Study for her Jubilee Picture' by William Ewart Lockhart, dated 1887. This work is a study for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee picture and shows a head and shoulders profile portrait of the sitter.

BORGM: 2009.24 - A large decorative plate showing an underglaze colour head and shoulders portrait of the actress Ellen Terry entitled 'Iolanthe' by Ellen Graham Stow, 1880. There is a faded paper label attached to the reverse of the plate for 'Howell and James' Art-Pottery Exhibition 1881'.

RC1149 - An ebony casket inlaid with ivory panels and engraved with classical subjects. This casket was used by Ellen Terry in her performance as Portia in 'The Merchant of Venice', 11.1879.

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Uncatalogued documents and ephemera connected with Terry, Edith Craig and Christopher St. John. Amongst this material are includes letters, legal documents and images connected with Terry. There is also a box of material relating to publications written for and about Terry by St. John and two scrapbooks (originally part of the Barn Theatre Society Archive) assembled by Craig to document the establishment of the Barn Theatre and the Ellen Terry Memorial Museum (1929-1947).

The collection of costume dress and accessories also held at the property and examined in the thesis is detailed in Appendix 1

Furniture, Fashion and Textiles Department, Victoria and Albert Museum

T.171-1973 –Dress of cream silk, designed by Sir Harno Thorneycroft and made up and worn by his wife using silk purchased at Liberty & Co, circa 1881.

T.56-1976 – Dress of silk velvet and embroidered silk damask, retailed by Liberty & Co., London, circa 1894.

T.31-1987 – Two piece ‘Reform Dress’ made from dark brown silk and wool and consisting of a pinafore overdress and sleeved bodice, maker unknown, circa 1893.

CIRC.638&A-1964- Dress of Liberty crêpe and tabard of embroidered velvet in cottons, designed by Forma for Liberty & Co. Ltd., London, circa 1905.

T.32-1987 - Evening cloak in figured silk damask, probably designed by Liberty & Co, circa 1890.

T.36-2007 - Full length evening or opera coat of bronze-coloured silk, with 'rainbow' patterned silk lining, and hand embroidery at neckline and sleeves, circa early 20th century.

T.80-1963 - Cloak made from Liberty's green and beige figured silk, English, 1890s.

T.89-1976 - Evening dress made of velvet and satin, probably made by Liberty & Co, circa 1900.

T.148-1967 - Silk damask tea-gown trimmed with lace, designed by Callot Soeurs, Paris, circa 1905.

T.407-2001 - Jewel green silk velvet dress lined with striped cream cotton, with pleated/gathered full length panels of olive green silk at centre front and woven ribbon at waist. Shaped to fit figure but no boning. Integral bustle, circa 1888.

T.737-1972 - Gown of block printed silk velvet, designed by Babani, Paris, worn by the actress Eleanora Duse (1858-1924), circa 1913.

Department of Theatre and Performance, Victoria and Albert Museum

Autographed Letters Series, THM/14, Terry

Biographical Boxes, Ellen Terry 117 and 118

Production Files, Covent Garden, 1823

Production Files, Lyceum Theatre, 1878-1902

Photograph Files, Terry (Personal Images and in role)

The Ellen Terry Collection, THM/384 (A full catalogue for this archive is available online through Archives Hub)

Watts of Westminster (Company Archive)

Through the assistance of the then Project Archivist Uthra Rajgopal I was granted rare and privileged access to papers within the Watts of Westminster Company Archive. Many documents from the archive were destroyed as the result of bomb damage in the Second World War. I was, however, able to examine the Account Books (covering the years between 1879-1882) and the Stockroom Book (from 1878).

Newspapers

The majority of the newspaper articles referred to in the thesis take the form of press cuttings in archival collections connected with Terry. In such cases the origin of the press cutting has been indicated. Specific articles and reviews from sources outside these archival collections which have been cited in the thesis they are detailed below.

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**‘DRESSING THE PART:’ ELLEN
TERRY (1847-1928) – TOWARDS A
METHODOLOGY FOR ANALYSING
HISTORIC THEATRE COSTUME**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Brighton
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Appendices

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APPENDIX 1 - ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE OF GARMENTS HELD AT SMALLHYTHE PLACE

Contents:

The process through which the costume collection now held at Smallhythe Place was originally assembled has never been fully documented. The research undertaken in the thesis, in particular the evidence revealed through examining the garments themselves, has established that whilst the majority of the garments were worn and collected by Terry herself, the collection was added to and expanded after her death. As a consequence the collection also includes costumes and garments connected with Terry's daughter Edith Craig (a costumier and theatre director). There are also a number of textile fragments, some decorative textiles, and even some garments, for which there is no provenance.

The focus during this research has been on cataloguing the garments in the collection, in particular those connected with Terry. Where provenance is unknown or has not been possible to establish, this has been indicated.

To clarify the content and arrangement of the collection, the catalogue records which follow have been arranged in the categories outlined below:

- Ellen Terry - Theatre Costumes [These are listed chronologically by production. The venue of the production was the Lyceum Theatre unless otherwise stated]
- Ellen Terry - Personal Dress and Accessories
- Theatre Costume – Others [Theatre costumes connected with Terry's family or contemporaries or where the provenance is unknown]
- Personal Dress – Others [Personal garments connected with Terry's family or contemporaries or where the provenance is unknown]

Numbering:

Many of the items in the collection have two reference numbers. The first of these reference numbers was allocated earlier in the history of the collection and takes the format SMA.TC or SMA.COST, followed by a three digit number and, where the object has part numbers, a letter, with 'a' designating the first part and so on. For instance SMA.TC.177a. The second reference number is an official National Trust Inventory Number and these numbers were allocated to items within the Ellen Terry Collection

during the course of the research. This second reference is entirely numerical and generally consists of seven digits. Where part numbers exist a numerical suffix is added to the first seven digits. For example, 1118902.1. Most, but not all the garments and textiles examined have this second reference number.

For the purposes of this catalogue both reference numbers, where they exist, have been listed on the records and both numbers have also been quoted when items from the collection have been referred to in the thesis.

ELLEN TERRY - THEATRE COSTUMES

Listed chronologically by production. The venue, unless stated otherwise, is the Lyceum Theatre.

Existing records within Smallhythe were drawn upon in the course of the cataloguing process. These records included a conservation assessment of the collection carried out by Zenzie Tinker in 1998.

All measurements are in centimetres and are approximate.

Ellen Terry. Ophelia. *Hamlet*. first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1878



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.168 1118893	Pale salmon pink surcoat. Silk/wool [?] blend damask woven with a floral pattern. The damask fabric has been used to make the upper section of the garment, which has a short sleeved loose fitting bodice fastening at the centre front with 10 pairs of hooks and eyes. A cream silk facing has been added to the interior proper left and proper right side of the opening, which reaches from the base of the collar to below the hips and is some 52cms in length. A	Length: 91cms (collar, centre front hem), 127cms. Width: 36cms (across shoulders),	FAIR/POOR: Fabric is generally good, but there are areas of staining and discolouration where the fabric appears to be breaking down. This has resulted in groups of small holes and some slight shattering.	The colour and cut of the garment suggest that it may be from the original run of this production, or at least, early in Terry's career. See Ellen Terry, <i>The Story of my Life</i> (London: Hutchinson,

	<p>self-covered weight has been added to the base of this opening.</p> <p>The upper garment flares out towards the hem, which is curved and extends into soft points at the proper left, proper right rear side.</p> <p>6 self-covered weights have been added to the hem of this garment which is itself bound with a silk twill tape. A further weight has been added at the interior base of proper right upper sleeve, but not to the left sleeve.</p> <p>The collar and cuffs of these upper sleeves have been trimmed with a band of rabbit fur dyed to appear like ermine.</p> <p>The main body of this upper garment is not lined but a cream silk facing has been added to the interior of the bodice.</p> <p>The same fabric has been used to line the interior of the under sleeves.</p> <p>These sleeves are formed from a salmon pink wool based fabric and reach from the shoulder to the wrist. They have been gathered on the interior seam to fit the line of the arm, and close with three pairs of metal hooks and thread eyes at the interior wrist.</p> <p>Bands of cream linen have been used to create cuffs for the sleeves. These have been gathered with lines of ribbon (previously black now faded to brown).</p> <p>A collar made from the same fabric has been added to the interior neckline of the surcoat. This has been gathered in the same way.</p>	39cms (across front waist).	<p>The fur is not shedding but there has been some loss to the surface in patches.</p> <p>Past conservation treatment: 1988, E. Telford – Solvent cleaned, some patch support and protective netting.</p>	1908), 129-130 and early images.
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	<p>Two lengths of cotton tape have been added to the interior proper right and proper left of the garment, about level with the base of the centre front opening. Several small conservation patches have been added to the interior of the garment.</p>			
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Ellen Terry. Portia, Merchant of Venice, first at the Lyceum Theatre staged in 1879



Ellen Terry, *Portia, Merchant of Venice*, first at the Lyceum Theatre staged in 1879

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.COST.112 a, b, &c 1118837.1,2,3	<p>Three part costume comprising robe (SMA.COST.112a), dress (SMA.COST.112b) and sash (SMA.COST.112c). The costume is made from a combination of materials of differing weights. The centre bodice panel and upstanding collar and skirt are made from heavy deep red ribbed silk, with a central ruched band at bust/waist level in deep red silk crepe.</p> <p><u>Robe</u> Long dark rust red silk crepe robe extending into a train at the rear, no sleeves. It has a slightly stiffened round collar with soft lapels and is lined with a pale rust red silk. The interior lining has been hand finished.</p> <p><u>Dress</u> Floor length crimson ribbed silk long sleeved dress which fastens with a row of hooks and eyes at the rear. These fastenings have been hand stitched. Two heavy weights have been added at the interior hem of the skirt, which has been taken up by about 5cms. This dress has a high upstanding collar. The exterior of the collar has been highlighted with an additional separate collar section of cream/off white cotton/silk blend fabric, secured with hand stitching to the interior. Two large,</p>	<p><u>Robe</u> Length: 159cms. (longest point)</p> <p><u>Dress</u> Length front: 139cms. Length rear: 152cms (slight train) Width: 34cms (across shoulders)</p> <p><u>Sash</u> Length: 26cms (across centre front, as pleated) Width: 64cms (as loosely shaped around waist of dress)</p>	<p>FAIR: Splits, tears and holes. Most supported by conservation treatment, but some have developed subsequently or are not supported. Seams intact, but appear to have been taken apart for past conservation treatment. Silk remains fragile.</p> <p>Conserved in 1979-80 by K. Drury. Report extant. Conservation seems to be holding – a combination of adhesive coated crepline support with additional couching, sometimes through several layers.</p>	<p>A portrait of Terry wearing a costume which closely resembles this garment was painted by G.W. Baldry in 1883. This is now held by the Garrick Club, London.</p>

<p>acorn shaped gilt/brass [metal] decorations are suspended from the centre front of the outer collar.</p> <p>It has long hanging outer sleeves in rust red silk. These outer sleeves are constructed from vertical panels of silk which have been gathered into shape at the sleevehead and open into wide hanging cuffs, some 130cms in circumference. The edges have been machine finished.</p> <p>The dress also has a close fitting inner sleeve. This is made from ribbed crimson silk with cream cotton band at the cuff. There is a metal press stud fastening at the wrist. A self-covered weight has been added at the underside of this inner sleeve and a crescent shaped fabric pad, covered in net has been added at the top of the sleevehead.</p> <p><u>Sash</u> A soft ruched silk sash has been at the waist of the dress bodice. It fastens with a row of metal hooks and eyes.</p>				
<p>SMA.TC.112d, 1118837.4</p>	<p>Cap worn by ET as Portia in Merchant of Venice. Silk crepe de chine covering cotton cap lined with cotton sateen, and pleated around base.</p>	<p>Diameter: 20cms by 21cms.</p>	<p>POOR: The cap has been partially conserved but the silk remains brittle and fragile and is fragmenting especially on crown.</p> <p>Cap partially conserved (possibly K.Drury?). Couched with very fine cotton thread to cotton</p>	

No number recorded	Off cuts of the robes worn by Ellen Terry as Portia. The remnants show evidence of discolouration, shattering and darned repairs. There is also evidence of shaping as if originally part of a larger garment, rather than a simple off cut. Some hooks and eyes are also present. There are also the remains of a sleeve. This is formed from a deep red silk. It is full and fastens with a hook and eye at the wrist.		lining. Treatment is holding well where carried out.	
No number recorded	<p>Remains of a costume which bears a strong resemblance to Terry's costume for Portia.</p> <p>These consist of a dark red ribbed silk floor length robe. This has a close fitting bodice and integral long flaring skirt. Sleeves now lost. Collar also lost. The robe fastens at the centre back with a row of nine alternating metal hooks and eyes. It is not lined. The full width of the fabric has been used selvedge to selvedge. (51cms approximately)</p> <p>Some bands of peach/brown coloured cotton panels at hem are present at the hem. The robe has been machine stitched at seams, and hand stitched at waist (where the bodice is roughly joined to the skirt).</p> <p>In the same box are off cut of the same fabric as used for the robe. This fabric has been shaped into a collar with a pair of hooks and eyes to secure it. One eye lost. The collar is faced with cream cotton/silk.</p> <p>The box also contains a long dark silk velvet 'sash.'</p>	<p>Robe: Width: 40 cm (waist, rear) Length: 160 cm (collar to hem)</p> <p><u>Off-cut</u> Length: 37cms Width: 5cms [approximate]</p> <p><u>Sash</u> Length: 216cms Width: 5cms</p>	<p>EXTREMELY POOR: Extensive shattering. No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	

Ellen Terry. Henrietta Maria, Charles I, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1879



Ellen Terry, Henrietta Maria, Charles I, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1879

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.147a, 1118872.1 (bodice)	<p>Bodice of dark brown damask/ribbed silk. The sleeves fit closely at the wrist where the 'cuffs' are made from brown ribbed silk, rather than the woven damask used for the main body of the garment. They are full at the top, where an imitation 'slashed' effect has been created using long bands of the brown silk damask, the edges of these bands are bound in brown silk and open to reveal the deep pink and bronze silk undersleeves. The fullness of the upper sleeve is gathered in a band, just above the elbow where the sleeve is bound with a length of the deep pink silk and accented with a double self-coloured bow.</p> <p>The bodice reaches to about waist level where it has been finished using a vandyked hem. A narrow band of plain brown silk some 1.5cms in width sits just below the bustline and may indicate the position of previous trimming or a belt.</p> <p>The bodice fits closely above this silk band (across the bust) and this upper section fastens at the centre front with a vertical row of 5 self-covered buttons.</p> <p>The lower section of the bodice has been divided into 4 panels, with a small vent at the rear, and at each side seam. These panels have been edged with a repeated pattern of isosceles triangles in deep brown ribbed silk.</p>	<p>Length: 29cms (CB to waist), 31cms (CF to CF waist), 45cms (CB to CF hem 'trim').</p> <p>Width: 64cms (interior waistband)</p>	<p>Evidence of wear, particularly at cuffs, once secured with hook and eye at wrist.</p> <p>Conserved by Judith Dore in 1988.</p> <p>The box contains replica rosettes and belt, together with two cream/beige cotton panels. [It is not clear if these were created during/as part of the conservation treatment.]</p>	

SMA.COST.147b 1118872.2	<p>The interior of the upper bodice is faced with cream cotton, the base panels have been faced with deep brown silk.</p> <p>The bodice interior has not been stiffened in any way, There is evidence that a drawstring ran across the rear neckline of the bodice (possibly used for shaping).</p> <p>The front panels of the bodice are plain, as is the rear.</p>			
	<p>Underskirt of bronze silk, matching that used as part of the sleeves of the bodice.</p> <p>A band of knitted wool jersey has been stitched to the upper part of the skirt, possibly forming an integral bodice support or lining. A channel and drawstring has been added to the top edge of this 'bodice' which can be gathered at the centre front.</p> <p>The hem of the skirt has been edged with a wool braid dust catcher. A heavy 'weight' has been added slightly below the centre back rear waist seam of the skirt. A further weight is present at proper left seam, about a third of the way up skirt, above hem.</p> <p>It is not lined.</p>	<p>Full length: 107cms (CB to rear hem).</p> <p>Width: The top edge of the 'bodice' and waistband of skirt are similar in width and are between 88 and 90cms when not gathered. There is no obvious evidence of further shaping at the skirt waist.</p>	<p>The hem of the skirt shows evidence of extensive wear and some soiling. There is some evidence of past insect damage at neckline and waistband of bodice.</p> <p>There is also evidence of staining from past water damage.</p> <p>Conserved by J. Dore 1988. This included solvent cleaning and support. Couching was used throughout skirt linings with no additional support given resulting in some 'tensional' problems.</p> <p>Examined by NT Blickling Textile</p>	

SMA.COST.147c 1118872.3	<p>Underskirt of brown silk with integral and shaped cream linen bodice.</p> <p>The exterior of the skirt is deep brown silk, the hem of which has been edged with a band of metallic braid some 3.5cms in width. Several weights have been added at the interior. It is lined with brown cotton.</p> <p>A combination of machine and hand stitching has been used.</p> <p>The bodice has a 'v' shaped neckline at the centre front and is shaped to fit the bust. It is sleeveless, with wide shoulder straps and is unlined. It has been stitched to the waistband of the skirt with the join masked by a band of brown cotton some 2.5cms in width. It fastens at the centre back with a vertical row of 5 hooks and eyes, and a further larger hook and eye at the waistband.</p> <p>There is evidence that the fastenings at the rear of the bodice have been moved, possibly to increase the size.</p> <p>The hem of the skirt has been weighted and extends into a train at the rear.</p>	<p>Full length: CB bodice to rear hem, 164cms Width: 64cms (waistband)</p>	Conservation studio in 2000.	<p>Evidence of numerous past repairs and possible alterations. There are several holes present in the skirt which is also heavily abraded at hem. There are also considerable holes and tears in cotton lining and at the hem. The braid trim is stiffened and distorted at the hem as a result of past water damage. There is also some discolouration to silk. Possibly as a result of the same water damage.</p> <p>Partially conserved by J.Dore 1988 from report included solvent cleaning, removal of old repairs, support and re-assembly. Not holding up well to rigours of display and hem lining unsupported.</p>
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Ellen Terry. Henrietta Maria, Charles I, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1879



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.139a, 1118864.1	Black or very deep blue silk velvet bodice. Long sleeved, and waistline raised slightly above the natural level. The bodice fastens at the centre front with a vertical row of 4 self-covered buttons (there are 5 matching button holes). The sleeves are full and are formed in two parts with a black silk undersleeve which is lined with cream cotton. The upper part of the sleeve is decorated with 5 identical bands of black silk velvet (some 5.8cms in width), each	Length: 31.5cms (CB neckline to waist), 45.5cms (CB neckline to hem) Width: 69.5cms	FAIR: some fading and evidence of past modification (5 buttonholes, one turned over at the neckline, but only four buttons). General creasing to trim and discolouration to	

	<p>edged with a border of black silk on either side. These bands run in vertical lines from the shoulder to the wrist and are gathered at the elbow with a horizontal band of pleated black silk which is in turn decorated with a black silk rosette. The cuff of the sleeve is trimmed with a pointed band of cream lace.</p> <p>A peplum has been added to the waist of the bodice. This is shaped into curved panels at the proper left and proper right front side, and a line of pointed triangles run along the bottom edge. The waist of the bodice is defined by a false deep blue/black silk velvet belt (some 4.8cms in width) which is secured with a 3 pairs of hooks and eyes at the centre front. This fastening is masked by a central black silk rosette.</p> <p>Two further lines of pointed triangles run in diagonal lines from the proper left and proper right shoulder to the proper left and proper right waist.</p> <p>The interior of the bodice is lined throughout in cream cotton. The front of the bodice is not boned, but two channels of boning have been added to the rear of the bodice, one at either side of the centre back seam. A further panel of black silk has been used to face the interior of the 'peplum' present at the base of the bodice. Dress protectors have been added at the interior of the sleeve heads. A cotton tape hanging loop has also been added at the interior top of the proper right sleeve head.</p> <p>A combination of machine stitching (for principal seams) and hand finished (trims and other details) has been used.</p>	<p>(waist), 33cms (across shoulders)</p>	<p>lining through wear and storage. Some fading and slight loss to surface on velvet. Areas of wear and loss are visible to the silk used to face the peplum at the base of the bodice.</p> <p>No conservation treatment recorded.</p>
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<p>SMA.COST.139b 1118864.2</p>	<p>Very full, floor length skirt formed from panels of black/dark blue silk velvet. The hem of the skirt is extremely wide (approximately 370cms in circumference). The fullness present at the hem of the skirt has been gathered into the waistband. A triangular panel of black silk velvet has been added at the centre front of the skirt, just below the waist.</p> <p>The skirt fastens at the waist, which is edged with a cream cotton twill waistband. This waistband fastens at the centre back with a row of two hooks and three eyes. The positioning of the fastening suggests that the fit of the skirt could be, or was, deliberately adjusted.</p> <p>There is a further opening (some 33cms in length) at the centre back, which is secured with a vertical row of 2 metal press studs. This opening sits above the centre back seam.</p> <p>The skirt is not lined. A combination of machine and hand stitching (particularly at the hem) has been used.</p>	<p>Length: 106cms (CF waist to hem), 123cms (CB waist to hem).</p> <p>Width: 69.7cms (tape at waistband)</p>	<p>FAIR: areas of wear at waist, with discolouration visible at waistband. Some loss and repair to stitching at panels.</p> <p>Evidence of past moth damage across the surface of the skirt, particularly evident at the rear.</p> <p>A laundry mark, in red cotton, is present on the waistband.</p>	
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Ellen Terry. Henrietta Maria, Charles I, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1879



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.148 1118873	Dark brown silk semi-circular shoulder cape, with upright cotton velvet collar and secondary wide lapels, or falling collar below. The hem and centre front opening of the cloak are edged with deep brown fur. Two vertical bands of gold openwork braid have been added to either	Length: 71cms (CF to hem), 74cms (CB to hem) Width: 43cms (across)	FAIR: Some shedding (fur) but structure sound. Some loss to tape originally securing pleat at interior. Evidence of	

	<p>side of the front opening, one at the proper right, and a matching one at the proper left.</p> <p>The cloak fastens with two alternating hooks and eyes at the centre front of the cotton velvet collar. A secondary collar/partial cape sits beneath this upper collar. This runs in a semi-circular curve across the shoulder line of the cape and is some 16.5cms in width This secondary 'collar' is edged with pointed triangles of dark brown petersham ribbon. It has also been decorated with wide bands of gold net at the upper and bottom edge.</p> <p>The cape is lined throughout in dark brown silk. A wide box pleat, some 24cms in width at the upper edge, and in which the pleats are secured in place with length of black silk ribbon, has been added at the centre back interior of the cloak.</p> <p>A row of 5 (possibly 6) weights have been added at the bottom hem of the cloak. One of these has become dislodged, but three remain in situ at the centre back hem, and two further weights are present at the proper left and proper right sides of the cloak.</p>	<p>shoulders), 124 (across CF hem).</p>	<p>damage to weighting at hem. Some signs of tarnishing on metallic braid.</p>	
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Ellen Terry. Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1882



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA/COST/110 a,b,c 1118835	Costume in three parts comprised of open gown, skirt and stomacher. <u>Open gown</u> Open gown formed from stamped silk velvet. The gown has an integral stiffened, upright collar (possible founded	<u>Open gown</u> Length: 26cms (CF to waist), 132cms (CF of skirt	FAIR: Beads on bodice and skirt liable to fall off if poorly handling Elastic in puffed sleeves deteriorating. Satin beginning to split	An extremely similar costume is held by the Museum of London, Museum Number 65.90/4.

	<p>on an internal wire support). Both the collar and cuffs are trimmed with lace/white work. The tops of the sleeves are crowned with a padded roll of silk bound with strips of beading. The waist of the gown is defined with a piped seam and large brass belt hooks has been stitched to the exterior.</p> <p>The interior of the skirt of the gown has been lined with cotton twill. The centre front edges of this open skirt have been faced with two triangular panels of gold ribbed silk which reach from the waist to hem. Cotton ties and loops are present at the interior of the gown's skirt – possibly used to gather up and shape the gown into a 'polonaise' effect.</p> <p>There are 3 pairs of hooks and eyes present at the centre front of bodice but these appear to be replacements. Channels of boning are also visible at the interior of the bodice. These appear to have been reinforced with cotton tape.</p> <p>The long sleeves of the open gown end with plaited loops of silk at each narrow cuff.</p> <p>The full seam allowance of the stamped velvet has been used.</p> <p><u>Petticoat</u></p> <p>The petticoat or skirt is formed from cotton with a front panel of ruched gold silk satin applied to the centre front. The decoration is focussed on front and the rear of the skirt is formed from a plain cream figured silk satin.</p>	<p>waist to hem), 158cms (total length shoulder to CF hem).</p> <p>Width: 33cms (Bodice, across the CB), 29-30cms (rear waist) 31cms (front waist).</p> <p><u>Skirt</u> Length: 134cms (CB waist to hem), 118-9cms (CF waist to hem).</p> <p><u>Stomacher</u> 31cms (widest point, top edge) by 25cms (across centre).</p>	<p>severely on skirt and stomacher. Hem lining of robe splitting badly. . Heavily soiled at hem</p> <p>Partially conserved by Judith Dore in 1985. Reconstructed for display in 1998 at Blicking Conservation Studio.</p>	
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	<p>The skirt is gathered with a drawstring at the waist which is edged with a length of woven cotton tape. This waistband is stamped 'AUGUSTE'. The skirt fastens with a pair of hook and eye fastenings at the proper right hand side of woven waistband.</p> <p><u>Stomacher</u> Separate internal triangular panel of ruched silk with central decorative detail in silk velvet and edged with glass bugle beads. The top edge of this 'stomacher' has been decorated with a band of lace.</p> <p>The box also contains a separate tubular false pearl belt mounted on silk. This seems to be later addition.</p>			
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Ellen Terry. Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1882 [possibly]



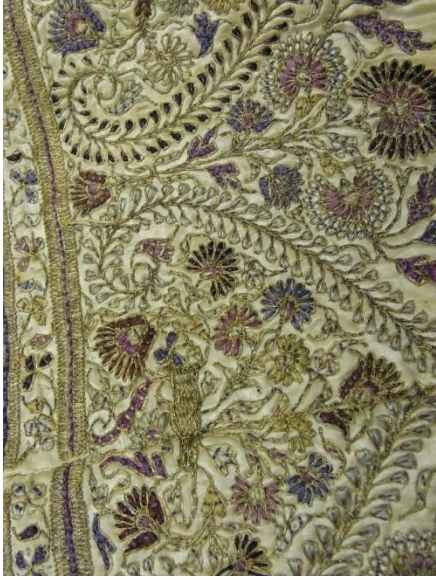
Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.157 1118882	Rich dark yellow silk damask dress. The silk is woven in gold with small stylised flowers and larger geometric shapes which flow across the surface. The dress is Elizabethan in inspiration, with a full skirt and closely fitting bodice which finishes in a deep point	Length: 145cms (shoulder to front hem)	FAIR: Metallic elements tarnished. Breakdown and discolouration evident at net collar. Further	Link to Terry not fully confirmed. Associated with separate cuffs

	<p>at the centre front. There is a centre triangular 'stomacher'. This stomacher is formed from a piece of dark gold cotton/metal fabric. It is decorated with spiralling metal embroidery and lines of imitation pearls and gold beads of varying sizes. Bands of scalloped net, stiffened with wire and decorated with spangles and gold beads has been added to the top edge.</p> <p>A high and stiff wired collar rises from the shoulders of the dress. This collar has a net ground and a scalloped edge decorated with a crocheted metallic braid. It is decorated with large imitation pearls and gold beads (many now lost).</p> <p>Two scallop edged wire 'peaks' are positioned over each shoulder. These peaks are decorated with lines of small gold and imitation beads and gold metal spangles.</p> <p>The sleeves are full and long, finishing at the wrist in a cuff edged with a band of net placed around a spiralling length of gold braid. The upper part of the sleeves are decorated with metallic embroidered motifs which have been couched to the ground fabric. Curved lines of imitation pearls and gold beads have added at either side of the applied embroidery present on the upper sleeve.</p> <p>The waist of the dress is defined with lines of imitation pearls and gold beads of differing sizes. These are interspersed with square metal medallions, moulded into geometric patterns.</p> <p>The hem of the skirt is decorated with a row of couched metallic discs and embroidery above a yellow silk fringe.</p> <p>The interior of the skirt hem is faced with a wide band of dull gold cotton.</p>	<p>206cms (shoulder to longest point of hem at rear)</p> <p>48cms (shoulder to front waist)</p> <p>Width: 33cms (across shoulders), 36cms (front waist), 31cms (rear waist)</p>	<p>significant loss to beading and distortion to wired collar and trimmings.</p> <p>Area of loss to surface of ground fabric – possibly the result of wear or past storage.</p> <p>Evidence of past repairs.</p>	<p>SMA/TC/108a-b, and possibly underskirt SMA/TC/151.</p>
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SMA.TC.151	<p>The bodice and skirt are joined at the waist, where the fullness present at the base of the trained skirt has been tightly gathered. The stomacher is also stitched in place. The dress fastens at the centre back with a double pair of vertical rows of 10 hooks and eyes running from the neckline to the waist. The interior fastening shows signs of significant breakdown</p> <p>The interior of the bodice is lined with cream cotton, with further peach cotton added at the interior of the sleeveheads. Two small discs has been added to provide slit padding at the bust. A stiff cream leather busk has been added at the centre front of the bodice, it is 4cms wide and 30cms in length. A line of 4 round weights have been added to a strip of cream cotton which is stitched to the centre front interior of the skirt, running from slightly below the waistline to the upper part of the hem. Further weights have been added to the interior of the skirt. 12 channels of bonding have been added at the proper left and proper right front and side panels of the bodice.</p>		
	<p>Vivid yellow underskirt (Part of SMA.TC.157). The upper part formed from a panel of yellow cotton the lower part formed from a panel of yellow silk damask. The hem edged with a band of metallic braid. Band of woollen tape added at interior hem. Cotton drawstring tape at waist. Lengths of elastic tape attached to the cotton tapes at skirt [possibly used to gather into bustle effect] now perished.</p> <p>Combination of machine and hand stitching.</p>	<p>Length: 105cms (waist to hem) Width: 96cms (interior of waist, would be gathered on drawstring)</p>	<p>FAIR: No signs of obvious damage. Relatively stable.</p> <p>No conservation treatment recorded.</p>

SMA/TC/108a-b. 1118832	<p>Pair of wired cuffs. Set on a net ground, with a band of yellow silk damask at the interior of the wrist and a pair of parallel scalloped flounces at the wrist. Bands of wire run across the surface of the cuff, these are bound with thread. The sections of net framed by these wires are embellished with rows of silver and gold pearlescent beads.</p>	<p>Length: 13cms Circumference: (at wrist) 21cms</p>	<p>FAIR/POOR: Some distortion to wire frame, significant loss to beading and shattering to bands of yellow silk damask.</p>	
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Ellen Terry, Viola, *Twelfth Night*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1884



Ellen Terry, Viola, *Twelfth Night*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1884

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.167a 1118892.1	<p>Bolero style jacket, decorated with bands of embroidered fabric at cuffs, collar, the centre front and waist.</p> <p>The bolero finishes at waist level. It has long sleeves which finish in turned back cuffs. There is no centre front fastening as the bolero has a shawl collar which, like the cuffs (some 9cms in width), is turned back to reveal the bands of embroidered cream silk satin with which both are trimmed. A band of the same cream silk satin some 5cms in width has been added to the waist of the bolero. These bands of silk satin are embroidered with interlinked stylised floral and leaf link motifs in tones of deep green, yellow, blue, pink and purple and are a scaled down version of the embroidery which appears on the surcoat.</p> <p>The interior of the bolero is lined with cream silk. Curved bands of knitted cotton jersey has been added at the interior of the sleeveheads.</p>	<p>Length: 51cms, (top of the collar to the waist)</p> <p>Width: 39cms at the waist(fits loosely to the body)</p>	<p>There are signs of perspiration damage at the interior, resulting in stiffening to the fabric at this point.</p> <p>There are also signs of extensive shattering to the lining.</p> <p>No record of conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Possibly designed by Alice Comyns-Carr (then collaborating with Patience Harris)</p> <p>Terry contracted blood poisoning early in the run of this production and was forced to retire from the play, her sister Maron understudying.</p>
SMA.TC.167b 1118892.2	<p>Sleeveless cream wool/silk blend surcoat. The surcoat has a soft, round, collar and a crossover bodice which sits in a deep 'V' at the centre front of the chest. The interior of the surcoat is faced with cream silk.</p>	<p>Length: (from shoulder to hem): 98cms</p>	<p>There are signs of shattering visible in the cream silk lining. These are particularly evident</p>	

SMA.TC.167c 1118892.3	<p>The surcoat is generally plain and has no fastening, opening only at the neck. It fits relatively closely at the bodice widening out at the hem. 3 self-covered discs (weights) are present at the interior of the front hem.</p> <p>Shaping has been added at the rear of the surcoat with a row of gathering drawn together with a cream silk tape.</p> <p>The only decoration is present in a band, some 15cms in width at the hem. This band is formed from a cream silk satin band which is embroidered with stylised floral patterns and oversized leaves in tones of deep purple, blue and pink, outlined in metallic gold thread. This band appears to have been applied to the surface of the surcoat.</p> <p>The surcoat has been finished by hand.</p>	<p>Width: (at chest – same width at waist): 36cms</p>	<p>at the interior of the sleeveheads. There are also signs of staining at the centre front of the bodice of the surcoat. A small tear is present at proper right the sleevehead of the surcoat.</p> <p>No record of conservation treatment.</p>	
	<p>Sleeveless, cream linen shirt, decorated with embroidered panels at the centre front part of a costume worn by Terry as Viola in <i>Twelfth Night</i>.</p> <p>The shirt has a soft, 'V' shaped collar, the base of which is edged with a band of open work gold metallic lace work[?]. Bands of cotton[?] embroidered with geometric floral patterns in tones of blue, bright pink, pale lilac, peach and gold.</p> <p>The shirt fastens at the centre front with a vertical row of three concealed pearlescent buttons. It fits loosely to the figure and is not lined.</p>	<p>Length: 62cms (collar to hem) Width: 61cms (fits loosely to figure) Width: 4cms (embroidered bands at centre front).</p>	<p>Some slight discolouration at the interior of the collar but generally sound.</p> <p>No record of conservation treatment.</p>	

SMA.TC.167d 1118892.4	The shirt appears to have been stitched by hand.			
	<p>Cloak worn by Terry as Viola in <i>Twelfth Night</i>.</p> <p>Pale gold silk velvet rectangular cloak. The cloak is formed from 4 panels of fabric. Parts of the cloak have been faced with panels of cream cotton twill. All four edges of the cloak are decorated with a border of couched gold metallic braid in an interconnected swirling pattern.</p> <p>There is no shaping at any point.</p>	<p>Length: 196cms Width: 114cms</p>	<p>The cloak is generally sound and in good condition. There are some black stains across the exterior.</p>	

Ellen Terry. Viola, *Twelfth Night*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1884



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.146 1118871	Brown silk velvet surcoat. The surcoat is sleeveless and has a small upright collar. It reaches to approximate calf level and is lined throughout with pale teal green ribbed silk. The coat follows the	Length: 127cms (shoulder point to CF hem)	FAIR: Some past rodent damage at hem recorded in	The costume has two labels: One reads: 'First Viola Costume from 12th Night', Second reads 'Edith Craig,

	<p>line of the body from shoulder to hip, the 'skirt' flaring out below this point. It is open at centre front and trimmed with long bands of gold metallic braid and metal machine net at the centre front openings and sleeveheads.</p> <p>Two 'V' shaped vents, also edged with braid and net, have been added at the proper left and proper right side rear. These vents reach from the hem to about hip level.</p>	<p>Width: Front waist 45cms, loose fitting.</p>	<p>conversation fold record. Evidence of shattering and staining present at lining. Some slight tarnish present on braid and net trim. Some loss to stitching on trim, and evidence of weakening at seams.</p>	<p>7 Smith Sq'. They are positioned at the back of collar.</p>
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Ellen Terry. Olivia. *Vicar of Wakefield*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885



Ellen Terry, Olivia, Vicar of Wakefield, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA/COST/171 1118896	<p>Floor length dress with 'Watteau back' designed to resemble the 'sackback' dresses fashioned in the mid to late 18th century. The dress is formed from panels of deep maroon silk brocade. The 'Watteau back' has been attached to the rear of the dress as separate section of fabric rather than gathered into box pleats at shoulders.</p> <p>The bodice follows the line of the figure and has elbow length sleeves ending in wide machine lace/net cuffs (engageantes). The maroon silk brocade fabric uses for the rear of cuffs has been stitched to create stylised box pleats.</p> <p>The dress has a wide open skirt which extends into a train at the front. The interior of the front panels of the open robe are faced with panels of red ribbed silk figured with flowers. Scrolling scallops of silk chenille in salmon pink and deep red have been used to decorated the front of the bodice and the skirt</p> <p>The corners of the neckline of the bodice (at either side of the centre front) have been fixed in turned back points.</p> <p>3 pairs of modern hooks and eyes have been added to the centre front interior of the bodice</p>	<p>Length:</p> <p>151cms, (Shoulder to front hem), 231cms (Shoulder to base of train at rear), 43cms, (Sleeves of bodice, from shoulder to cuff).</p> <p>Width: 37cms (front waist, loosely shaped to figure), 34cms (across shoulders)</p>	<p>FAIR: Patches of mould appearing across interior and exterior of skirt-particularly along fold lines. Structure otherwise sound.</p> <p>Has been frozen and treated for mould damage since inspection.</p>	<p>Closely resembles costume for the same role in the Museum of London collection, museum number 51.93.</p>

SMA/COST/172 1118897	<p>(tacked to strips of deep purple silk). There is a further large hook at the rear of the bodice at the top left proper left hand corner of the gown. A pair of black cotton tapes run horizontally across the interior of the gown, possibly used to hold the structure of 'watteau back'/train in place. A further 3 pairs of black hooks and eyes have also been added at the interior of the dress, at the rear.</p> <p>Also in box is a replica deep plain purple silk petticoat and stomacher.</p> <p>Fine cream cotton lawn triangular fichu. The bottom part of the fichu is edged with a wide band of scalloped cotton tape lace.</p> <p>Handstitched and finished.</p>			
		<p>Length: 170cms (maximum) Width: 59cms (widest point)</p>	<p>GOOD: Red cotton laundry mark present at edge. Some minor staining.</p> <p>Conserved at Blicking Conservation Studio 1998 for display.</p>	

Ellen Terry. Marguerite, *Faust*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.COST.102	Heavy cream wool/flannel shift. The raw edges have been finished with blanket stitched. Cut on the bias. Full sleeves, wide cuff. Slight train at rear. Drawstring neckline, the string placed	Length (collar to hem) 166cm [front] 181cm [back] Width 103cm (widest point)	FAIR: Extensive insect damage, and casings (poss. Woolly bears). In need of stabilisation	

	<p>directly through the wool, (no eyelets). Very plain and simple construction and design. Both the hem, neck opening and sleeve openings are edged with blanket stitch in a thick cream thread. The same thread has been used to create an integral 'loop' at the edge of the proper left sleeve</p>		<p>and treatment before display) Conserved by J.Dore, 1988. "Cleaned in trichlorofluoroethane, deionised water, enzymes and non-ionic washing solution. Steamed. Holes repaired and darned. Blanket stitch repaired.</p>	
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Ellen Terry. Marguerite, Faust, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885



Ellen Terry. *Marguerite, Faust*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.144 a & b, 1118869.1 & 2	<p><u>Part 1: SMA.TC.144a</u></p> <p>High-waisted bodice with deep round neckline in tones of deep slate blue and cream. The front waistline is straight and high, the bodice deeps into a deep 'V' at the centre back rear. The bodice has long sleeves flaring out at the cuffs and fastening at the centre front with a vertical row of 8 gold metal hooks and thread bound metal eyes. The bodice is stiffened with 9 channels of boning, 2 positioned in diagonal pairs at the proper right and proper left side of the bodice, 1 under each arm and 1 either side of the single boning channel at the centre back seam.</p> <p>Two large metal hooks are positioned at either side of the centre back seam, presumably to allow the attachment of the skirt.</p> <p>The interior of the bodice is lined with cream cotton twill.</p> <p>A tightly woven cotton tape waist band, stamped in gold with the maker's name "Auguste et Cie" has been added at the interior waist of the bodice. The size of this waistband can be adjusted with a metal buckle.</p>	<p><u>Part 1</u></p> <p>Length: 37cms (shoulder to waist) Width: 74cm (cotton tape waistband)</p> <p><u>Part 2</u></p> <p>Length: (waist to hem) 109cms. Width: (internal waist) 76cms approx.</p>	<p><u>Part 1:</u></p> <p>GOOD/FAIR: The bodice is generally sound, some discolouration to fabric. Conservation treatment has been carried out to stabilise lining.</p> <p><u>Part 2:</u></p> <p>FAIR: Evidence of past insect damage and some breakdown to lining fabric. Some loss to boning.</p> <p>A length of cotton tape has been added to the top edge of the skirt (presumably for mounting)</p>	<p>Terry's costumes for this production were thoroughly researched and created in collaboration with Alice Comyns-Carr. The props and costumes included some original items from Nuremberg. Comyns-Carr not yet Terry's primary costume maker and designer at this stage.</p> <p>A maker's label at the interior of the bodice reads 'Auguste et Cie.'</p>

	<p>Curved dress shields have been added at the interior of the sleeves.</p> <p>The body of the bodice and the sleeves are formed from a heavy, cotton and silk furnishing fabric with a cream/blue woven with a pattern of slate blue stylised leaves. Both have been decorated with bands of slate blue wool braid with a pair of these bands outlining the neckline and waist.</p> <p>The sleeves follow the line of the arms and are formed in several parts. A puffed and slashed effect has been created with panels of pleated cream open-weave cotton and wool braid, which are placed at the upper part of the sleeve and just above the elbow. Between these panels of pleating are panels of the heavier weight woven cotton/silk. A section of false lacing, (9cms in length) and formed from narrower tightly woven tape runs through 6 pairs of thread bound metal rings. This lacing sits 11cms above the base on the bottom part of the sleeve at which point the cuff flares out slightly into a cuff, stiffened with wire.</p> <p><u>Part 2: SMA.TC.144b.</u> Long pleated slate blue wool skirt, flaring out at the hem. Closely pleated, and plain, with the only decoration being restricted to four parallel bands of cotton braid stitched to the waist band of the skirt. Unlined but</p>			
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	<p>faced at the waistband with a panel of cream linen.</p> <p>Open at the rear centre back of the skirt (35cms in length). Secured at this point with six hooks and eyes, 4 tightly spaced smaller hooks and eyes at the centre back waist, and two larger, more widely spaced hooks and eyes below.</p> <p>A pocket has been added at the proper left side, with a 14cms opening, and positioned some 13cms from the top.</p> <p>Seams seem hand stitched or at least hand finished. Hem appears machine stitched.</p> <p><u>No Number</u>: Replica rich cream cotton shirt top with upstanding smocked collar and pleated edge.</p>			
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Ellen Terry. Marguerite, Faust, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885



Ellen Terry. Marguerite, Faust, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.145 1118870	<p>Figured floral [damask?] silver blue silk empire line bodice with wide, low, round neckline, and with an integral fine cotton blue patterned blouse which has a high, smocked collar.</p> <p>The bodice has long sleeves, which narrow towards a close fitting cuff, fastening with a row of four self-covered buttons and thread loops at the wrist.</p> <p>The sleeves are formed from panels of blue figured silk over a cream cotton [replica?] undersleeves. They are formed in several parts, shaped to re-create the effect of 'slashing'.</p> <p>The bodice fastens at the centre front with a vertical row of 6 pairs of alternating hooks and eyes.</p> <p>The fine cotton shirt which sits below the outer bodice is printed in pale blue with a pattern of five petalled flowers and five geometric lines. The shirt is secured with a fine drawstring and gathered at the waist. The upright collar of the shirt is pleated and shaped with smocking at the base.</p> <p>Beneath this shirt is a further fine rust gold silk inner bodice. This inner bodice fastens with a vertical line of four metal hooks and thread loops.</p>	<p>Length: 16.3cms (CF to waist), 36cms (shoulder to waist) and 41.8cms (CB to waist)</p> <p>Width: 76.5cms (Waist) 40cms (Across shoulder, approx.).</p>	<p>FAIR: The fabric is generally sound. There is evidence of unpicking at the neckline of the bodice, indicating that a decorative trim has been removed.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment. There is however evidence of past conservation in the form of crepeline net and a replica skirt.</p>	

	<p>It is shaped to fit and support the bust and extends into two long points at the centre front.</p> <p>The interior of the bodice is lined with cream cotton, with further panels of green silk added at the inside of the front opening. There are 13 channels of boning. These are spaced evenly around the body of the bodice, beginning at either side of the centre front opening and meeting at the centre back.</p> <p>A metal hook has been added at the proper left waist of the bodice, it is likely that this was originally used to secure the bodice to the matching skirt.</p>			
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Ellen Terry. Marguerite, *Faust*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885



Ellen Terry. Marguerite, Faust, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC. 169, 1118894	Sleeveless Cream Wool/flannel underdresses. A band of open weave wool with yellow and cream striped wool around the bodice. Lacing at the front with string, hooked through a series of brass eyelets. Square neckline edged with scalloped lace. Flaring at the hem, blanket stitched around the hem. Drawstring neckline. Fastening at back with hook and eyes.	<p>Length: 149cms (shoulder to hem – approx.)</p> <p>Width (across upper shoulders) 40cms, (across front bust) 43cms (across front waist) 49cms [unlaced]</p>	<p>FAIR: Extensive insect damage, and casings (poss. Woolly bears). In need of stabilisation and treatment before display)</p> <p>Conserved by J.Dore, 1988. “Cleaned in trichlorofluoroethane, deionised water, enzymes and non-ionic washing solution. Steamed. Holes repaired and darned. Blanket stitch repaired.</p>	

Ellen Terry. Marguerite, *Faust*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885



Ellen Terry, Marguerite, Faust, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.170a 1118895.1	<p>Full length dark yellow/ochre dress with high-waisted bodice above a long pleated woollen skirt.</p> <p>The bodice has a deep round neckline edged with silk fringing. It is formed from a rich gold silk velvet fabric printed with stylised foliate motifs. The interior of the bodice and the sleeves are lined with a pale saffron silk.</p> <p>The sleeves are formed in two parts, the outer sleeves are long and open into falling 'angel' style cuffs, (some 41 cms in width- the sleeve itself is about 69cms long) they are edged with a band of cream and gold braid and edged in cream silk fringed braid.</p> <p>The interior sleeves are formed from a fine cream cotton and fit closely to the arm. An opening some 20cms in length has been set into each sleeve, this opening closes with a line of cross laced thin cream silk thread.</p> <p>The bodice fits closely to the figure, a central panel of dark gold ribbed silk has been added to the centre front. This panel has a curved top which is edged with a wide band of braid woven with a pattern of cream four petalled flowers with a metal disc stitched to the centre of each. The</p>	<p>Length: 145cms (shoulder to hem), 15cms (centre waist to bust)</p> <p>Width: 34cms (front waist exterior)</p>	<p>FAIR: Insect casing, though no evidence of current infestation or serious past damage found 24th June 2014. Some discolouration to skirt.</p> <p>The lining at the interior of the bodice has been stabilised during past conservation treatment.</p> <p>Possibly that previously conserved by J.Dore when lining was supported on adhesive crepeline which became stiff and brittle.</p> <p>Since conserved and mounted by Zenzie Tinker.</p>	

	<p>burnt gold fabric from which the panel is formed has been softly gathered into large pleats and sits behind a section of cross lacing at the centre front of the bodice. This lacing is formed from a length of metallic tape and runs between 3 pairs of gold metal horseshoe shaped links which are set into 3 pairs of heart shaped metal 'leaves'. This panel masks an opening at the proper left of the bodice, which though stitched to the skirt at the waistband, is secured with a hook at the top edge with a metal hook and eye.</p> <p>Three channels of boning, positioned closely next to one another, are present at the centre front of the bodice, but the bodice is otherwise unstiffened.</p> <p>The waist of bodice is defined by a wide band of cream cotton braid woven with a repeated pattern of gold four petalled flowers and edged with cream silk fringing. Bands of the same braid have been used to trim the neckline and front and rear bodice of the dress.</p> <p>The skirt of the dress is long, plain, wide and heavy. It flares out slightly at the base and has been tightly pleated. The only decoration takes the form of 6 parallel lines of gold thread which run horizontally around the top of the skirt. A long opening runs asymmetrically down the proper left front of the skirt and at the proper right rear of the skirt – almost as if the skirt is formed</p>			
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<p>SMA.TC.170b 1118895.2</p>	<p>in two parts. There are no signs of past stitching or further means of securing this opening but the weight of the fabric appears to hold the skirt closed when upright. The interior of the woollen crepe skirt is unlined, but a cream panel has been used to face the overlapping centre front opening.</p> <p>It is possible that, given the structure of the dress, an underdress was previously worn. The fastenings are such that it would have to be pulled over the wearer's head – assuming that the fastening at the waist is original – (as with the other bodice and skirt a large metal hook is present at the rear waist of the bodice)</p> <p>The sleeves of the bodice show signs of machine stitching but the trimmings and some seams appear to have been finished by hand.</p> <p><u>No Number</u>: Further replica rich cream cotton shirt top with upstanding smocked collar and pleated edge.</p> <p>Length of embroidered cotton net, gathered at the top edge to form a 'collar' and open at the front with scalloped edges at the proper left and proper right 'opening.'</p>			
			<p>FAIR – Some discoloured and wear, but generally sound.</p>	

Ellen Terry. Marguerite, Faust, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.COST.13	<p>Small, curved cream purse decorated at front and rear with metallic gold embroidery.</p> <p>Curved base and straight top/opening which closes with a drawstring at either side.</p> <p>A length of cotton cord extends from both the proper right and proper left top edge, these are finished with a pointed tassel bound in cotton thread.</p> <p>The embroidered patterned round in borders around the bottom and upper edge and formed geometric floral based patterns at the centre.</p>	<p>Length: 12cms</p> <p>Width: 18.5cms (max)</p>	<p>FAIR/POOR: extensive shattering visible to lining. Tarnishing and loss to embroidered decoration.</p>	

Ellen Terry. Fair Rosamund, Becket, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1893



Ellen Terry, Fair Rosamund, *Becket*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1893

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.140a 1118865.1	<p>Floor length cream wool tunic. Entirely plain. Fitting loosely to the body, and flaring out at the hem. High, square neckline and long bell shaped sleeves flaring out at the cuff.</p> <p>The tunic is unlined, but is faced with panels of cream cotton at the interior of the bodice. It extends into a train at the rear. The dress opens at the rear where it is secured with a vertical row of 13 metal hooks and eyes.</p> <p>The thickness of the fabric at the hem creates a 'weighted' effect.</p> <p>Combination of machine and hand stitching.</p>	<p>Length: 140.5cms (shoulder to front hem), 164cms (shoulder to rear hem)</p> <p>Width: 32cms (across shoulder, loose fit) 45cms (across chest)</p>	<p>FAIR: Several holes across surface and some discolouration at hem through wear.</p> <p>Live carpet beetle and cases found in August of 2015.</p>	<p>Handwritten annotation at interior of the neckline reads 'Miss Maitland'</p>
SMA.TC.140b 1118865.2	<p>Full length surcoat. Cream wool hessian[?]. Sleeveless and open at both sides. Flares out slightly hem.</p> <p>Two bands of the same fabric has been at added at the proper left and proper right of the dress, just above hip level. (54cms from shoulder seam)</p> <p>The surcoat fastens at the proper left shoulder with a pair of buttons possibly resin or early plastic.</p>	<p>Length: 129cms (shoulder to hem, front)</p>	<p>FAIR – Evidence of past pest damage in the form of small insect to rear back. Some discolouration through wear. Also staining present on the front of the surcoat.</p>	

	<p>Further metal 'eyes' have been added at the proper left and right shoulder, probably to allow the addition of a cloak.</p> <p>The surcoat is not lined. However a line of cotton tape has been used to edge the interior of the wide round collar. With two hanging loops at the centre interior of each.</p> <p>The seams are wide and relatively rough, having been finished by hand. The seams at the hem are particularly large, possibly to add weight at this point. The interior front hem being 16.5cms in length and interior rear hem being 27cms in length.</p> <p>Remains of rough stitching at the waist bands indicates that past trimming may have been removed.</p> <p>A small cross has been handstitched to the centre front neck.</p>		<p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	
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Ellen Terry. Guinevere, King Arthur, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1895



Ellen Terry, Guinevere, King Arthur, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1895

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA/TC/118, Shelf 3, Box 1 1118843	<p>Olive green floor length dress with a dropped waist marked by a decorative gold net belt decorated with green glass 'jewels.' The dress is heavily embellished with metal spangles, gold metallic braid and cut glass 'jewels.'</p> <p>The majority of the dress has been created made using the same crochet structure as that used for Terry's dress in <i>Macbeth</i> (1888). This is formed from olive green threads interwoven with strands of blue and silver metallic threads. Areas which must have been masked by a cloak (now lost) are formed from green silk. This includes a panel at the rear shoulder line and an integral green silk underskirt which is weighted at the hem. The hem of this underskirt is decorated with a pattern formed from gold metallic braid and metal spangles.</p> <p>A 'V' shaped panel of cream silk, embellished with vertical lines of gold metallic braid, pearls and metal spangles, has been added at the centre front of the bodice. This extends upwards, where it is edged with a panel of cream cotton net, creating a pleated 'collar' at the neckline.</p> <p>Panels of bronze coloured gauze net have been added at the upper arm and across the front of the</p>	<p>Length: 40cms (nape to waist CB), 40cm, 45cms (CF nape to waist).</p> <p>Width: 37cms (rear of Bodice), 40cms (Bodice front) (loose fitting, no obvious side seams)</p>	<p>FAIR: Some breakdown to fabric, evidence of wear and loss and tarnish to decoration.</p> <p>Conserved by Judith Dore in 1994. This treatment seems to have supported some areas onto nylon tulle, possibly coated with adhesive. In some areas silk jap can be seen behind the tulle.</p>	<p>Strong similarities to the dress worn as Lady Macbeth.</p> <p>Costumes designed by Comyns-Carr in collaboration with Edward Burne-Jones.</p>

	<p>bodice. These panels are embellished with amber cut glass jewels set in a diamond cross-hatch pattern. Two oval turquoise paste brooches have been attached to the centre front of the bodice. The smaller is positioned at the base of the 'collar' whilst a larger brooch (surrounded by cut glass jewels) is positioned just below the bust line. Further decoration has been added to the body of the dress in the form of simple bands of floral motifs interspersed with false jewels and gold metallic braid at the hem, waist and sleeve cuffs. There is an integral belt at the dropped waistline. This is formed from gold net and is edged with gold metallic cord. It is embellished with metal spangles and cut glass stones. The waist of the 'belt' is attached to the main body of the dress, but a length of matching fabric, the base edge with gold metallic fringing, is suspended from the centre front waist, hanging freely over the centre front of the skirt of the dress.</p> <p>The dress fastens at the centre back with a vertical row of metal hooks and eyes. A further hook and eye fastening is present at each sleeve cuff.</p> <p>The bodice of the dress is not boned but has been lined with beige cotton. Many details about the interior construction have been masked by past conservation treatment.</p>		
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Ellen Terry. Imogen. Cymbeline, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1896



Ellen Terry, Imogen, Cymbeline, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1896

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA/TC/105 1118830	<p>Dress formed in several parts with a lightweight pleated pale teal silk ground used for the bodice and underskirt. The upper part of the bodice formed from gold lame and embellished with metal 'coins' or 'discs' and cut glass jewels. The upper section of the skirt formed from panels heavy ribbed silk in tones of purple, orange and gold.</p> <p>The bodice of the dress has a slightly raised waistline. The silk ground has been faced with stiff cream cotton [glazed?]. It is not boned. A false muslin collar has been attached at neckline. The current yellow tint of this false collar may have develop over time.</p> <p>The sleeves and upper part of the softly gathered bodice are formed from a pale teal silk gauze[?]. A panel of stiff gold lame runs across shoulder line and upper part of the sleeves. Circular weights have been added at the base of the central panel of this upper bodice. Various jewels and gold coins/discs are also suspended from the hem.</p> <p>The sleeves have been made in two parts. The stiff upper sleeves are trimmed with a band of pale</p>	<p>Length: 155cms (full length of garment)</p> <p>Width: 29-30cms (front waist, from nape to base, slightly lower at back)</p>	<p>POOR: 'Gauze' shredding splitting and tearing. Decoration seems stable. Gauze very unstable and brittle and conservation treatment of silk twill failing as adhesive coated nets are peeling off. Sleeves must be handled with particular care.</p> <p>Conserved in 1995 by J.Dore. Appears that adhesive treatment was used extensively during this treatment. Cleaned as part of conservation treatment.</p> <p>In 1998 Tinker noted that "Pins have previously been used to mount the costume for</p>	

	<p>green silk decorated with glass jewels and gold embroidery (forming floral motifs). The under sleeves are formed from a plain pale green/teal gauze woven with floral motifs. There are also further short cotton machine net inner sleeves though these appear to be original to the costume.</p> <p>Large brass hooks possibly for a cloak have been added the front and rear of the shoulders.</p> <p>The skirt is constructed from draped sections of ribbed/twill silk in tones of deep purple, orange and russet and gold. There is a partial underskirt of teal gauze (formed from the same fabric as used for under bodice and sleeves). Circular weights are present at the front and rear centre of the hem of the over skirt.</p> <p>The dress fastens at centre front with a row of brass hook and eyes. Hand stitching has been used extensively on the cuffs and at gauze bodice. The seams of bodice panels appear to have been machine stitched.</p>		<p>display putting considerable pressure on the fabrics concerned. Machine stitching seemed to have been extensively used when reassembling the costume during conservation, despite the degraded gauze remaining untreated, The silk twill panels have been selectively supported onto adhesive coated nylon tulle which is now affecting the drape of the skirt and the adhesive coated net is sticking some panels to other sections of the skirt.”</p>
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Ellen Terry. Madame Sans Gêne. Madame Sans Gêne, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1897



Ellen Terry. Madame Sans Gêne. *Madame Sans Gêne*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1897

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.103 a&b 1118828.1	<p>Short vivid green felted wool jacket, worn by Terry in Act I. Combination of machine and hand stitching.</p> <p>Close fitting vivid green wool felt jacket, raised, Empire line waistline. The long sleeves fit closely to the arm, flaring out slightly at the cuffs.</p> <p>The hem of the jacket has been edged with a band of pale brown fur (possibly rabbit?) and appliquéd with lengths of metallic braid at the top and bottom edge and with swirling patterns either side of the centre front closure and at the base of the back panels. Short strips of the same metal braid have been stitched to the hem, with a bell hanging from the end of each (43 in total).</p> <p>The Jacket fastens at the front waist with a large hook and eye and with a wide, open flat collar with large revers at the centre front.</p> <p>The interior of the jacket is pale yellow, appears to be a replacement however – possibly during conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Length: 33cms, (CB to hem)</p> <p>Width: 92cms, (waistband)</p>	<p>FAIR: Silk lining shattering under the protective organza layer.</p> <p>Loss to fur in certain areas.</p> <p>Evidence of past insect damage.</p> <p>Some tarnish to metallic elements.</p> <p>Conserved by J.Dore in 1984. Cleaned, patched, trimmings re-attached and lined covered with silk organza.</p>	<p>Handwritten note on paper label inside costume reads ‘Riding Habit. Presented by Edith Craig, worn by Terry is Act I’</p>
1118828.2	<p>Long sleeveless dress of yellow felted wool, stiff, upright, collar, with a long train at the rear.</p> <p>Empire line raised, waist. The bodice is close fitting, shaped to fit the bust with darts and soft pleating and</p>	<p>Width: waistband: 80cms</p>	<p>FAIR: Evidence of past insect damage.</p>	

	<p>is trimmed with 6 parallel horizontal bands of metallic braid alternating with 5 lines of metal bells. A black silk bow has been appliquéd at the collar, and is tied to resemble a cravat. The fullness present at the hem of the trained skirt has been gathered into pleats either side of the centre back closure. The bodice has been lined with unbleached linen and the skirt with fine green silk. There is no interior boning. Bells add significant weight to the front of the bodice. Fastening at the centre back from the rear of the upright collar to the base of the raised waistline with a vertical row of 14 hooks and eyes – smaller size at rear of collar, larger at rear of bodice.</p>		<p>Lining now too small for upper garment (after re-assembly during conservation treatment)</p> <p>Adhesive repairs leaching through to face of fabric, likely to result in staining over time. Fabric lifting off adhesive.</p> <p>Conserved by J.Dore in 1984. Cleaned, patched with adhesive repairs, trimmings re-attached and lining reapplied.</p>
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Ellen Terry. Madame Sans Gêne. Madame Sans Gêne, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1897



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.127 1118852	<p>Fine white cotton muslin apron. The apron is secured at the waist and tied at the integral waistband.</p> <p>The surface of the apron is decorated with hand embroidered stylised leaf motif with further scrolling lines of embroidered bordering the hem. The fullness present at the hem is gathered with pleating at the waistband. The apron has been hand stitched and hemmed.</p>	<p>Length: 75cms (CF to hem) Width: 65cms (waistband - creased) 132cms (hem)</p>	<p>FAIR – Creasing, and general surface soiling. Some staining and evidence of cellulose degradation. A tear is present at the proper left hem. No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Link to <i>Madame Sans Gene</i> not confirmed but this is the production listed in current records.</p>

Ellen Terry. Madame Sans Gêne. Madame Sans Gêne, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1897



Ellen Terry. Madame Sans Gêne. *Madame Sans Gêne*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1897

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.152	<p>Pale grey wool twill spencer. The bodice is cut in crossover style, with a triangular shaped panel reaching across from the proper right to shoulder to the base of the proper left bust. This panel is secured with a single metal hook at this point (though there are two thread loops, neither of which match the hook, at this point). The spencer has close fitting, long sleeves, the cuffs of which are trimmed with pleated frills of the same pale grey wool. A further, closely pleated, cream organdie [?] frill, has been added at the interior of the cuff.</p> <p>The 'V' shaped neckline of the bodice is also edged with a pleated frill.</p> <p>The main body of the spencer fastens at the centre front with a vertical row of 6 metal hooks and 4 matching thread loops.</p> <p>The seams of the sleeves and the neckline of the spencer have been edged with piping.</p> <p>Further shaping and detailing has been added to the bust with two sections of smocking at the proper left and proper right. A matching section of smocking and pleats have been used to shape the rear of the spencer.</p>	<p>Length: 18.5cms (CF to waist, including pleated trim), 32cms (CB to waist – not including pleated collar)</p> <p>Width: 67cms (under bust) 33cms (shoulders)</p>	<p>FAIR – The bodice is generally sound and there is no evidence of current infestation, but a carpet beetle case was present at the interior of the spencer. There is evidence of extensive discolouration and breakdown at the interior of the cuff.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Link to <i>Madame Sans Gêne</i> not confirmed but this is the production listed in current records.</p>

	<p>The interior of the bodice is lined with glazed cream cotton twill. A narrow band of the same cream cotton twill has been used to face the waistband of the bodice. Two narrow lengths of cotton tape (20cms in length) have been added at the rear waist of the spencer, one at the proper left and one at the proper right.</p>			
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Ellen Terry. Madame Sans Gêne. Madame Sans Gêne, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1897



Ellen Terry. Madame Sans Gêne. Madame Sans Gêne, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1897

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.176, 1118901	<p>Long pale red silk velvet cloak, lined with plain silver silk and extending into a train at the rear. The cloak fastens at the neck with lengths of gold metallic cotton tape.</p> <p>The collar of the cloak is edged with a band of peridot and clear cut glass jewels in gold settings. Below this upper band are a series of rectangular pendants, set with diamante, and with pearl drops and delicate gold bells hanging beneath them.</p> <p>The front opening is decorated with a pattern formed from circles of gold braid, four petalled flowers and swirling lines. Further embellishment has been added using gold glass beads, spangles and false pearls.</p>	<p>Length: 170cms (collar to hem – very approximate)</p> <p>Width: 53cms (across collar)</p> <p>About 200cms (across hem, very approximate)</p>	<p>POOR: Extensive breakdown of silk velvet exterior and shattering to pale grey silver/gold silk lining. Metallic braid trimming tarnished. Loss to cut glass and faux pearl decoration.</p> <p>Discolouration has occurred through wear.</p> <p><i>Too fragile to remove from box to examine fully without larger surface and assistance.</i></p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Link to <i>Madame Sans Gêne</i> not confirmed but this is the production listed in current records.</p>

Ellen Terry. Hjordis. *The Vikings*, the Imperial Theatre, 1903



Ellen Terry, Hjordis, *The Vikings*, the Imperial Theatre, 1903

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.116 a-c 1118841.1-3	<p>Costume in three parts, comprised of an open tunic SMA.TC.116a, 1118841.1, underdress SMA.TC.116b, 1118841.2 and stole SMA.TC.116c, 1118841.3.</p> <p><u>SMA.TC.116a, 1118841.1</u></p> <p>Floor length open tunic. Black cotton net ground decorated with vertical strips (about 3.5cms wide) of blue ribbed wool (possibly Petersham?) tape. These strips are embellished with lengths of green toned leather with a sheen like finish. The lengths of leather are themselves interspersed with square oval and circular metal discs, some with a burnished plain finish, others with an etched surface, which have been applied to the blue wool strips. These discs are hollow and comparatively light.</p> <p>A band of blue felted wool has been added to the base of the dress. This is some 19cms in width. Further metal discs and strips of leather have been used to add detailing to this fabric. The hem is trimmed with narrower strips of the green toned leather (23cms in length), cut to create a fringe effect.</p>	<p><u>SMA.TC.116a, 1118841.1</u></p> <p>Length: 132cms (from shoulder to base, not including hem)</p> <p>Width: 38cms (at shoulder)</p> <p><u>SMA.TC.116b, 1118841.2</u></p> <p>Length: 160cms (shoulder to hem, hem curved, possibly designed to rest on floor - front), 64.5cms (sleeve)</p> <p>Width: 40cms (front waist, loose fitting), 33cms (across shoulder)</p> <p><u>SMA.TC.116c</u></p>	<p>FAIR – Some loss to stitching securing decorative discs and other elements.</p> <p>Numerous holes present in net ground.</p> <p>Fumigated</p> <p>In Part 2 there is Evidence of perspiration damage at sleeveheads and neckline resulting in some discolouration. Evidence of past repairs and loss to stitching at flounce, and additional base panel.</p> <p>1997-8 – Conserved by J. Dore</p>	<p>Made by Edith Craig – for a production directed and designed by her brother Edward Gordon Craig.</p>

	<p>The sleeves of the dress are also made from the same black cotton net and decorated with metal discs but these are stitched directly to the net and interspersed with diagonal bands of deep emerald green grograin ribbon.</p> <p>The round neckline of the dress is defined with circular panels of bronze silk velvet. These panels are decorated with closely positioned metal discs, matching those used on the body of the dress.</p> <p><u>SMA.TC.116b, 1118841.2</u></p> <p>Deep blue [teal?] underdress formed from panels of knitted silk/wool blend jersey. Cut straight to follow the line of the figure, with an additional flounce at the hem. Waist set at about hip level and defined by sections of tightly pleated woven silk/Petersham [?] ribbon now much shattered. The sleeves are long and fit closely to the arm finishing in a curved cuff, which tapers into a soft point at the wrist.</p> <p>Fastening at the rear with a vertical row of 14 large metal hooks and eyes.</p> <p>The dress in not lined.</p> <p>Two metal hooks, designed to secure to a further part of the costume – possibly a cloak – are present at the proper right and proper left front and rear shoulders.</p> <p><u>SMA.TC.116c, 1118841.3</u></p>	<p>Length: 132cms (from shoulder to base, not including hem)</p> <p>Width: 38cms (at shoulder)</p>	
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	<p>A stole formed from the same bronze silk velvet is attached with two metal hooks at eyes at the proper left shoulder and runs the length of the dress. The rear of the rear is faced with a panel of deep emerald green silk. This is decorated with a lattice work pattern of dark brown cotton tape. A panel at the base of the stole is decorated with a series of 19 circular metal discs, with a black bead pattern at the centre. This finishes in a cut leather fringe. Many of the beads which form this pattern have now been lost.</p> <p>A circular metal hoop has been added at the proper left shoulder.</p> <p>The dress fastens at the centre back with a vertical row of 8 pairs of metal hooks at eyes. These are positioned closely together at the centre back of the collar, but more widely down the centre back.</p> <p>The dress is not lined.</p>		
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Ellen Terry. Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, the Imperial Theatre, 1903



Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, the Imperial Theatre, 1903

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.107 1118832	<p>Full length dress with fitted bodice and full skirt, extending into a slight train at the rear. Formed from panels of heavy woven fabric which has a beige ground with raised 'velvet' pattern in green, claret and gold forming pomegranates, flowers, and tendrils of leaves and plants. The bodice fit closely to the figure and has been stiffened with 9 channels of boning and is lined with fine bronze cotton. It has a square neckline edged with a narrow band of pleated cream net, and extends into a point at the centre front. The waistline is defined by a belt (at the front only) formed from strands of metal beads which extend into a hanging 'chatelaine' effect at the centre front. Large cut glass jewels in deep crimson and emerald green have been added both to this 'belt' and also the strands of metal beads used to decorate the neckline of the bodice. A band of openwork cream net has also been used to decorate the neckline of the bodice, but much of the stitching securing this 'infill' in place has now been lost.</p> <p>The sleeves are long and a very full at the top, narrowing at the cuff which is decorated with a row of lacing (formed from narrow length of elastic). A</p>	<p>Length: 164cms (shoulder to front hem) 192cms (shoulder to edge of train, rear)</p> <p>Width: 35cms (across shoulders) 32cms (front waist)</p>	<p>FAIR/POOR: significant loss to thread at shoulder seam. Significant breakdown of the gathered cream net trim at the front neckline of the bodice. Further loss to the cut glass jewels and related decoration at the neckline of the bodice. Faded and worn through wear at the interior of the hem.</p> <p>Some holes present at the centre back rear of the skirt hem.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Dress designed and made for Terry by Edith Craig for the revival of the production at the Imperial Theatre in 1903.</p>

	<p>gold silk bow has been added at the underside of the lower part of each sleeve, possible to suggest 'lacing' and 'aiglets' at this point.</p> <p>The bodice is secured at the rear with 13 pairs of alternating metal hooks and eyes at the rear, with a further hook at eye present at the skirt opening.</p> <p>The skirt is very full and is unlined. The fullness present at the hem is gathered with pleating at the waist. A dark fabric loop has been added to the centre back seam of the skirt, about 87cms above the rear hem.</p>			
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Ellen Terry. Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, the Imperial Theatre, 1903



Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, the Imperial Theatre, 1903

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.149 (a&b) 1118874.1&2	<p>Rose pink silk damask bodice and skirt woven with a stylised pattern of meandering leaves and flowers.</p> <p><u>Bodice, SMA.TC.149 a</u> The bodice has a square neckline and long sleeves which are full at the top and narrow towards the cuff. It ends slightly above the natural waistline extends into a point at the centre front.</p> <p>The neckline and sleeve cuffs are decorated with a line of scrolling metallic braid. 3 further narrow bands of gold braid have been added to the lower part of each sleeve which is also decorated with a line of ribbon lacing.</p> <p>The bodice is stiffened with 9 channels of boning, 3 of these are spaced across the centre back interior, with a further 3 channels of boning at the proper left and proper right interior. The bodice is not lined and fastens at the centre front with a vertical row of metal hooks and eyes. A dressband at the interior is woven with the text ‘Edith Craig, 13 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.’</p> <p><u>Skirt, SMA.TC.149b</u></p>	<p><u>Bodice, SMA.TC.149 a</u></p> <p>Length: 24cms (centre front to base), 27cms (centre back to base)</p> <p>Width: 41cms (across shoulders), 63cms (dress band, though evidence this has been altered, possibly reduced)</p> <p><u>Skirt, SMA.TC.149b</u></p> <p>Length: 122cms (waist to hem)</p> <p>Width: 73cms (waistband, to edge of furthest of three hooks)</p>	<p>FAIR/GOOD: Signs of wear and some discoloration but bodice and skirt primarily sound.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Dress designed and made for Terry by Edith Craig for the revival of the production at the Imperial Theatre in 1903.</p>

	<p>The skirt is round and full, extending into a very slight train at the rear. The fullness present at the hem is gathered into tight pleating just below the dark brown cotton waistband. It is not lined and fastens at the waist with pairs of metal hooks and eyes.</p>			
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Ellen Terry. Mistress Page. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. His Majesty's Theatre. 1906



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.233 1118958	Pale crimson silk cap or bonnet with stiffened 'wing' at left and right bottom edge. Cream silk chiffon wide 'frill' at rear, back edge. Each wing is semi-circular in shape. The curved edge of the semi-circle is positioned at the base of	Width: Diameter: 22.5cms – 24cms 23cms average. Circumference: 75cms (approx.)	FAIR: Some signs of shattering visible to crown of cap. No record of past conservation treatment.	Similar cap in Museum of London Collection 53.94/1 and 53.94/2.

	<p>the wing. The ground fabric is a dark gold, edged with crimson silk.</p> <p>The proper left 'wing' is decoration with a central 'p' embroidered in straight stitch. A cockerel has been appliqued in a pale gold fabric at the front edge of the wing, with a purple six petalled flower with green leaves. Appliqued motif is outlined in black thread and executed in silks and velvets.</p> <p>The interior of the cap is faced with the same cream silk chiffon used for the 'frill'.</p> <p>An interior frame or support of wire has been added to the interior.</p> <p>Wire has also been used to stiffen and support the wing's.</p>			
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Ellen Terry. Mistress Page. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. His Majesty's Theatre. 1906



Ellen Terry, *Mistress Page, The Merry Wives of Windsor, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906*

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.113a 1118838.1	Salmon pink overdress/tunic with soft, wide, round neckline. The overdress is formed from horizontal panels of ribbed silk. It is loosely cut, following the line of the body and extending into a train at the rear. The overdress has no sleeves, but has wide, low opening at the shoulder line. Both these openings and the neckline are edged with a band cotton braid woven in a pattern of cream and black rectangles. The same braid has been used to edge the hem of the overdress. The interior of the neckline is edged with a band of cream cotton tightly gathered with a cream cotton drawstring at the top edge and resembling a 'chemise'. The interior of the overdress is not lined, though it is faced at the interior of the hem with bands of salmon pink ribbed silk. The overdress is secured at the proper left shoulder with three black metal hooks and eyes.	Length: 154cms (shoulder to front hem) 208cms (shoulder to rear hem) Width: 45cms (across shoulders) 38 (across front chest panel, loosely cut)	FAIR/POOR: The surface of the garment has become discoloured through wear and there is evidence that the silk is breaking down and shattering. 1984 – J.Dore, partially conserved with note that costume required further work. Treatment included use of adhesive patches.	
SMA.TC.113b 1118838.2	Cream underdress with a knitted wool jersey bodice following the line of the body from the shoulders to the knees. Flaring out at this point into a wide fine cream wool skirt. An additional band of wool has	Length: 155cms, (shoulder to front hem)	FAIR/POOR: There are a number of darned repairs and extensive moth and carpet beetle	

	<p>been added to the hem of the dress. A series of metal weights have been added to the interior of this hem. A fine cream wool has also been used to create the sleeves of the dress, which are loosely cut and follow the line of the arms, flaring out slightly at the cuff. Both the cuffs and the upper edge of the sleeve have been edged with a band of cream and black braid patterned with rectangular motifs.</p> <p>The bodice has a soft round neckline, gathered with a drawstring.</p> <p>Embroidery carried out by hand in black wool has been used to decorate the sleeves, bodice and hem of the dress. The sleeves are decorated with a repeated pattern of petalled flowers, the bodice with stylised geometric circular and triangular motifs following the shapes of leaves and flowers.</p> <p>The hem of the dress is decorated with similar patterns, dominated by larger circular 'flowers.'</p> <p>The dress fastens at the rear with a vertical row of 16 metal hooks at eyes.</p> <p>Much of the dress has been stitched by hand.</p>	<p>Width: 47cms (front chest- loosely cut)</p>	<p>damage across the surface of the costume, but the garment is generally sound.</p> <p>Carpet beetle cases and frass discovered in the box.</p>	
<p>SMA.TC.113c 1118838.3</p>	<p>Pair of cream cotton net sleeves. The sleeves narrow at the wrist, but are full at the top and the upper edge is bound with cream silk.</p>	<p>Length: 55cms (maximum) Width: 20cms (upper part) 10cms (lower part)</p>	<p>FAIR – The sleeves are generally sound, but there is slight tear near the cuff of one.</p>	

Ellen Terry. Hermione. *The Winter's Tale*. His Majesty's Theatre, 1906



Ellen Terry, Hermione, *The Winter's Tale*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.COST.156 1118881	<p>White cotton net full length dress.</p> <p>Construction difficult to interpret as designed to mask figure, creating impression of inanimate statue, rather than human form.</p> <p>Extremely Long, 'bat wing' ending in pointed/vandyked hem the point of the triangles weighted.</p> <p>The main body of the dress is straight and loose fitting (almost tubular) with a series of tiers of cotton net stitched to a fine cream cotton ground fabric.</p> <p>The neckline is cut square across the bust.</p> <p>Hooks have been added near the shoulder line of the bodice, presumably to wrap layers of the cotton net around the figure of the wear.</p> <p>The dress fastens at the rear with a vertical row of 13 buttons. A drawstring has been added at the neckline of the dress.</p> <p>There is a slight train extended into a sharply defined point at the CB rear.</p> <p>Several sections of the layers of fabric, both in the sleeves and on the main body of the dress have been stitched to one another.</p>	<p>Length: 178cms (Shoulder to point of hem).</p>	<p>FAIR: Some surface dirt. Weights at neckline threaten to damage/distort fabric. Some small holes and tears.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Not a Lyceum production. Designed by Edith Craig.</p>

Ellen Terry. Hermione. *The Winter's Tale*. His Majesty's Theatre, 1906



Ellen Terry, Hermione, *The Winter's Tale*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA/TC/159	<p>Floor length, vivid yellow silk dress decorated with a printed gold fleur d'lys inspired pattern and decorated with a horizontal band of gold lame just above the hem.</p> <p>The bodice, which is formed from a plain yellow silk crepe, fits loosely to the body and has a gathered waistline set at 'the natural level.' The square neckline is edged with a band of cream linen embroidered with flowers which have a green centre and yellow petals and are connected with metallic gold thread.</p> <p>The bodice fastens at the centre back with a vertical row of hooks and eyes (3 pairs currently present, one of these pairs being set on a pair of elastic tapes at the centre back of the waist)</p> <p>The sleeves long and wide. The upper part of the sleeve has no seam, but is gathered together in scalloped sections, each join being decorated with a cut glass amber jewel (alternating between a circle and rectangle in shape).</p> <p>The dress is not lined.</p>	<p>Length: 152cm (front shoulder to hem) 185cms (front shoulder to rear hem)</p> <p>Width: 38cms (front waist) 58cms (across front neckline, very softly draped)</p>	<p>POOR: Extensive shattering to silk at shoulder line. [extremely vulnerable to further damage]</p> <p>The elastic tapes at the waist have become stiff and brittle.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	

Ellen Terry, Hermione, *The Winter's Tale*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.186 1118911	Pale cream wool/silk [challis?] mix twill shawl with embroidered rust coloured wool motifs. Pink and rust silk ribbon machine stitched to all edges. Hand stitching stem stitch motifs, 5 points, graduating out in a 'sun ray' shape. Ribbon edging the shawl, square rectangular [reminiscent of mosaic] design. Machine stitched.	Width: 288cms	FAIR/POOR: Numerous holes across surface. Seem to reflect both past and recent pest damage. Woolly bear casings present in shawl and signs of frass on surrounding tissue. No record of past conservation treatment.	

Ellen Terry. Lady Teazle. School for Scandal. Venue not recorded, circa 1906 (role revived in scenes from the play staged during Terry's Jubilee year)



Ellen Terry. Lady Teazle. School for Scandal. Venue not recorded, circa 1906 (role revived in scenes from the play staged during Terry's Jubilee year)

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.174, 1118899	<p>Heavy, damask silk open front gown with pale gold ground, woven with a pattern of flowers and birds in tones of pale pink, cream, blue and green. The interior of the bodice is faced with dark green cotton, but the pleated skirt of the gown is not lined, and extends into a train at the rear. The gown is cut in a sack back style with a large box pleat at the centre back of the bodice, between the shoulders. The base of the bodice, which fits closely to the body, has been edged with a line of gold bound piping. It has elbow length sleeves and the square neckline is edged with a pleated band of raspberry pink ribbon [this may be a later addition as appears to be synthetic]. The same ribbon has been used to edge the cuffs of the elbow length sleeves. An undersleeve, formed from cream cotton net, has been added at the interior of the sleeve cuff of the upper sleeve. The bodice is secured at the waist with a large metal hook and eye, and a vertical row of 5 pairs of small cut blue glass false buttons runs down the front. Two large metal press studs (one half only) have been added to the interior of the bodice, at either side of the front opening. A combination of hand and machine stitching has been used.</p>	<p>Length: 144 cm (shoulder to front hem), 173 cm (shoulder to rear hem) Width: 44cms (across shoulders), 74cms (interior waist)</p>	<p>FAIR/POOR There is extensive evidence of shattering at the top part of each shoulder of the dress with evidence of darned repairs. The pattern woven on the remainder of the garment has been almost entirely lost. Further splits are present in the silk of the skirt. The undersleeves show evidence of discolouration. Evidence of past conservation using adhesive. Synthetic pink trim on bodice may be a later addition.</p>	

Ellen Terry. Julia Lovelace, *Her Greatest Performance*, film role, 1916



Ellen Terry, Julia Lovelace, *Her Greatest Performance*, film role, 1916

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.119, 1118844	<p>Cream silk crepe t-shaped open gown. The gown has a hanging, triangular hood at the centre back of the shoulders and the sleeves and wide and hang below the arm.</p> <p>It is embellished at the hem, centre front opening and cuffs with a band of metallic silver braid (this braid masked within a translucent layer of cream silk crepe). The same braid trim (not masked) has been used to add a rectangle of decoration at the upper part of the sleeve and further vertical bands run down the front and side panels of the gown.</p> <p>Heavy metallic silver/gold tassels has been added to the shoulder line, and hang suspended from the upper seam of the hanging sleeves.</p> <p>The gown is unlined and is primarily hand stitched</p>	<p>Length: 161 cm (shoulder to hem), 71cms (hood, not including tassel)</p> <p>Width: 55 cms (across shoulders – loosely cut)</p>	<p>FAIR/POOR: The fabric is extremely fragile and there are several small tears across the surface, resulting in part from the weight of the decoration. Some distortion and discolouration through storage.</p> <p>Evidence of past conservation using adhesive.</p>	<p>Film costume, created for ET in 1916.</p>

Ellen Terry. Susan Wildersham, Crossings, Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, 1925 (Last professional appearance on stage)



Ellen Terry. Susan Wildersham, *Crossings*, Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, 1925 (Last professional appearance on stage)

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.111a 1118836.1	<p>Dress worn by ET as Susan Wildersham in <i>Crossings</i>. Worn with a lace fichu – also still in collection.</p> <p>Slate grey silk dress striped in blue and black, possibly adapted from an original dress from circa 1830-1840.</p> <p>Fitted bodice with deep ‘V’ ‘crossover’ neckline, finishing in a piped seam at a ‘v’ shaped waistline and gathered into smocked ‘v’ at centre front. It has been shaped to fit the figure with soft pleats over the shoulder, running in diagonal lines down to the ‘V’ at the waistline.</p> <p>The sleeves finish at elbow level in a slightly flared cuff decorated with three tiers of scalloped self-covered fabric edged with deep blue silk fringing. Narrow thin silk tapes have been added to the interior of the sleeves, potentially to control shaping and fit.</p> <p>The sleeves may have been altered, and the slate grey ribbed silk founce, some 22.5cms in width appears to be a replacement (annotated label reads ‘put on 1979 K.D’). The original silk founce (itself probably a modification to extend the original dress) has almost entirely shattered.</p>	<p>Length: 150cms (shoulder to hem) Width: 38cms (across front waist)</p>	<p>FAIR/POOR: Severe shattering, particularly to original silk founce</p> <p>Extensive wear under the arms of the bodice.</p> <p>Evidence of a range of modifications to structure.</p> <p>Fichu in good condition.</p> <p>Carpet beetle case in tissue (recently frozen however).</p> <p>Conserved in 1977, by K.Drury – possibly cleaned, couched to lining in some areas.</p> <p>Much altered – possibly from an original 1830s</p>	<p>Terry’s final stage role.</p>

	<p>The skirt is full. The original hem appears to have been taken up, and the new hem line edged in a woollen braid and trimmed with a silk flounce. The bodice fastens at the rear with a vertical row of 13 hooks and eyes, concealed behind a row of false, none functional, 17 blue silk covered buttons. Long slit/opening at the centre back extends beyond this closure.</p> <p>Neckline also altered – potentially originally round or ‘v’ neck.</p> <p>The interior of the skirt does not appear to be lined but there is a functional pocket at the proper right side, about hip level.</p> <p>The interior of the bodice has been faced with cream cotton.</p> <p>Separate machine cream lace with crochet scalloped edge – floral pattern. Has been stitched to shape (rather than pinned or tied) at the centre front.</p>		<p>dress – some evidence of patching. Many lines of stitching at waist area suggest that it has be moved on at least one occasion.</p>	
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ELLEN TERRY – PERSONAL DRESS

This list details the items of personal dress within the collection at Smallhythe which have a confirmed link to Ellen Terry. It also includes details of further items (primarily accessories) which form part of the collection, but for which there was no documentation or photographic evidence to confirm or disprove a link to Terry.

All measurements are in centimetres and are approximate.

Ellen Terry. Dress, maker unknown, circa 1877-1882



Ellen Terry. Dress, maker unknown, circa 1877-1882

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.201 1118926	<p>Full length dull gold raw tussore silk tabby weave dress, circa 1877-1882. The dress has a 'Watteau' style back (formed from four pleats at either side of central seam) and extends into a slight train at the rear. It is lined with beige cotton at the interior of the skirt and bodice and has been hand finished.</p> <p>The dress is primarily plain, but there is a triangular embroidered panel at the centre front which is 134cms in length, 27cms wide at the base and 15.5cms wide at the top. The embroidery with which this central panel is decorated has been carried out using tambour work in pale tones of pink, blue, yellow, brown and cream.</p> <p>The dress has a soft falling collar which is formed from an embroidered panel edged with a band of pale blue silk. It is about 8cms in width (including the blue silk trim) the embroidered panel from which is it formed is about 6.5cms in width.</p> <p>A band of pleated pale blue silk has been added to the edges of the soft falling collar with a soft curved frill of the same material added above the cuffs. Both the cuffs and collar of the dress feature bands of fabric decorated with tambour work embroidery.</p> <p>Two pockets have been added to the left and right side of the centre front opening, both set at hip level. The top of both are decorated with a wide band of embroidered fabric (about</p>	<p><u>Dress</u> Length: 140cms at back collar to hem front, 171cms back collar to back hem.</p> <p><u>Pockets</u> Length: 30cms long Width: 39cms wide.</p>	<p>GOOD/FAIR: Slightly soiled and small stains. One buttons detached (retained within box). Small holes at back rear.</p> <p>1997 - Solvent cleaned by Judith Dore.</p> <p>2014-5 – Conserved and mounted by Zenzie Tinker</p>	<p>Previously attributed to Liberty though it has not proved possible to substantiate this connection. The silhouette of the garment predates the establishment of the Costume Department at Liberty's in 1884, but the fabric could have been purchased from the department store.</p> <p>The conservation treatment carried out by Tinker revealed that the dress had been worn over an extended period, with evidence of wear at the pockets and that the fabric had been placed under tension (stretched) near</p>

	<p>8cms in width). As with the bands of embroidered fabric added to the cuffs and collar, the embroidery designs resemble those used on the central panel and are executed in tambour work. The right hand side pocket is divided into three sections using length of internal stitching. The pockets are wide and reaching around the side of the dress, towards the rear, rather than being contained within the front panels. The dress fastens at the centre front. There is a single interior row of self-covered buttons (18 originally, one now missing), with a further vertical row of 16 pairs of hooks and eyes running down the interior edge of the embroidered panel at the centre front of the dress. This panel overlaps the inner bodice section and extends into a small triangular point at the top proper right edge which tucks in under the right hand side of the collar. The opening is about 67cms in length from the base of the collar, and finishes at about hip level.</p> <p>There is no inner boning or stiffening of any kind, but the train of the dress has been shaped to mimic the ‘bustle effect’ popular in the late 1870s and early 1880s.</p> <p>Most of the major seams are machine stitched, but trimmings (such as pale blue ribbed silk added to the collar and cuffs) have been finished by hand and the embroidery has also been carried out by hand.</p>		<p>the centre front opening.</p>
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Ellen Terry. Chinese Robe, circa 1910-1920



Ellen Terry. Chinese Robe, circa 1910-1920

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.85	<p>Pale silver blue Chinese robe reaching to about mid-thigh. The sleeves are wide and square and about elbow length. The robe has a soft, round collar and this, the hem and the front opening are edged with a pleated back of black silk.</p> <p>The body of the robe is decorated with silk floss embroidered flowers in tones of pale pink, cream, blue and green, but the sleeves are plain.</p> <p>Bands of black silk (about 3.8cms in width) have been added at the hem, collar and proper right opening. A further narrow band of braid (1.8cms) with a cream ground and a woven pattern in blue and green has been applied to the front panel of the robe. This runs around the hem, along the centre front opening and around the collar. Further slim strips of braid have been added to the collar and swirls of black silk which sit above the vents (some 27cms in length) positioned in the proper left and proper right side seam.</p> <p>The robe is lined throughout with a pale blue twill silk.</p> <p>The robe has an asymmetrical opening at the proper right front. This is secured with a 4 flat gold 'buttons' (marked with a lion rampant) and black</p>	<p>Length: 67cms (right hand side opening) and 82.5cms (left hand side opening) 97cms (Centre back of collar to hem)</p> <p>Width: 72.5cms (across shoulders), 48cms (sleeve cuff)</p>	<p>FAIR: Some loss to fabric, particularly at fastenings and collar.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>This jacket (originally worn by Terry) was presented to Smallhythe Place by Percival Small</p>

	<p>thread loops which are positioned at the collar and above the right side vent.</p> <p>The robes are primarily hand stitched.</p>			
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Ellen Terry. Chinese Robe, circa 1910-1920



Ellen Terry. Chinese Robe, circa 1910-1920

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.86	<p>Knee length Chinese robe, teal blue ground embroidered using satin stitch in silk floss with flowers and stylised butterflies in tones of pink, green, blue and cream. The sleeves are long and wide, opening out at the cuff which is edged with a band of teal blue silk damask woven with a stylised floral pattern, some 11.2cms in width. The underside of this band is faced with a further band of contrasting yellow silk embroidered with flowers and motifs which match those on the exterior.</p> <p>Two vents have been added at each of the side seams, these are some 38cms in length and are edged with a band of contrasting silk (matching that used for the front opening).</p> <p>The robe fastens at the proper right side front opening with a series of 5 thread loops and metal 'ball shaped buttons', two at the small upright collar and three positioning vertically at the side of the opening.</p> <p>A band of contrasting patterned silk (possibly the underside of the ground fabric used for the tunic) has been added to the edge of the front opening. A contrasting fabric collar, just under 4 cms in width has been added to the robe. Stitches are visible at this point. This collar is edged with bands of black</p>	<p>Length: 115cms (collar to hem) 85cms (sleeves, neck to cuff), 38cms (side vent) Width: 74cms (across shoulders), 43cms (cuffs of sleeve)</p>	<p>FAIR: Areas of wear and breakdown to the threads visible at the hem and interior of the collar and some fading to the fabric as a result of light damage but generally sound. Also loss to fastenings.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>This jacket (originally worn by Terry) was presented to Smallhythe Place by Percival Small</p>

	<p>silk at either side, with narrow lengths of black braid running up the centre, either side of embroidered motifs. The hem is edged with a 5 cm wide band of deep crimson braid woven with a stylised pattern in metallic gold thread. The body and sleeves of the tunic are lined with a rose pink silk damask, woven with a floral pattern. Each of these bands are edged with a line of black silk covered piping. It is primarily hand stitched.</p>			
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Ellen Terry. Re-modelled Chinese Longua



Ellen Terry. Re-modelled Chinese Longua

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
Not yet formally accessioned.	<p>Ankle length, sleeveless 'robe' / 'tunic' seemingly adapted from a Chinese Longua.</p> <p>The robe has a deep midnight blue ground (fine wool/silk blend[?]) and is lined with a silver grey/blue silk[?].</p> <p>The majority of the stitching has been carried out by hand.</p> <p>The robe is formed from four panels. It has a soft, round, collarless, neckline and opens at the front. The armholes are long, low and deep and these openings are edged with bands of dark black/gold woven metallic braid, narrow lengths of coloured silk plaited braid and couched metallic gold thread. Deep vents have been set into the centre back and side seams of the tunic [some 77cms in length and side, evidence of break down to stitching at the seams, with evidence of slight tearing at the top edge of these vents, perhaps as a result of wear]</p> <p>The hem of the robe is embellished with extensive bands of embroidery in tones of gold, cream, green, blue and red. These form patterns of waists, trees, lines and spirals.</p>	<p>Length: 126.5cms (shoulder to hem)</p> <p>Width: 36cms (across shoulders)</p> <p>61cms (across chest – loosely cut)</p>	<p>FAIR: Some breakdown to lining and slight discolouration to surface of garment through wear.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Provenance – Found in Barn Theatre. Connection to Terry not confirmed</p> <p>Identity of original wearer not recorded. Cotton tape label stitched with characters in red thread has been added to the interior of the collar indicating that it has been worn.</p> <p>A direct connection between this robe and Terry has not been fully substantiated. Susannah Mayor, House Steward at Smallhythe 'found the robe some years ago in the Barn Theatre' and suggested 'that it should be looked after.'¹</p>


¹ Susannah Mayor, Personal communication with the author. 4 May 2016. Email.


	<p>6 medallions, each containing a metallic gold dragon at the centre, have been added to the front and rear of the tunic. One at the centre back of the shoulders, one at the centre of the chest, and two at hip level on either side of the front opening and rear vent. The tunic is secured at the centre front with a vertical row of 5 cord loops (bound in blue silk) and 3 gilt buttons (each stamped with different design). A sea green fabric loop has been added at the side seam of the tunic at the exterior base of each sleeve.</p>			<p>Helen Persson has suggested that the robe within the collection at Smallhythe, could originally have resembled a formal robe in cut and style, but '[...] most likely once made up an informal women's robe, probably dating to around 1860-1880.'²</p>
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² Personal email communication with Helen Persson 4th September 2014. Helen Persson was, formerly Curator of Chinese Dress and Textiles at the V&A, now Senior Curator of Dress and Textiles, Swedish History Museum, Stockholm. A comparable robe, but with a front opening similar to Terry's modified garment, can also be found in the collection of the MET Museum, New York, 1983.216.



Further accessories and items of personal dress, possibly worn by or connected with Terry

The items listed in the chart below all form part of the Ellen Terry collection. The nature and history of the collection is such however that there is no documentary or photographic evidence to confirm whether the items were worn and used by Terry or her daughter, Edith Craig, who added to the collection after her mother's death. Where a connection to Terry has been confirmed this is indicated below.
 In many instances the manner in which these items were packed, together with time constraints, meant that it was not possible to take measurements.



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.82 1118617	 <p>Clothes cover formed from pale yellow silk ground and embroidered with large floral designs executed in silk floss thread. Small tassels hang around edge made from same floss silk.</p>		FAIR/POOR: Several holes, evidence of wear to silk.	Monogram in the centre indicates that this was used by Terry after her marriage to James Carew in 1907.



SMA.TC.83 1118618	<p>Monogram of EC in centre (?Ellen Carew). Lined with yellow silk</p> <p>Length of blue linen with yellow floss silk decorated with hand embroidery and sections of mirror. (Indian shisha work). Trimmed with later black fringe.</p> <p>Seems to consist of several pieces of fabric pieced together. Fringe trimming is incomplete.</p>				Files record that it was 'used as window seat cover in Lyceum Room' but do not record when this was.
			<p>GOOD/FAIR: Currently in fair condition but some evidence of frass on surrounding tissue</p>		


<p>SMA.TC.84 1118619</p>	<p>Square cushion cover. Dark brown and purple floral brocade. Thick brown and purple rope/cord around edge. Lined with brown linen.</p> 		<p>FAIR: Very faded and evidence of breakdown, particularly at edges.</p>	<p>Used at ET's house in Barkston Garden's, London</p>
<p>SMA.TC.106a &b 1118831</p>	<p>Pair of cotton tulle sleeves with cuffs of Valenciennes lace and Swiss embroidered lace. English c. 1880 – 90.</p> 		<p>FAIR</p>	


<p>SMA.TC.117, 1118842</p>	 <p>Long length of pale grey/silver silk woven with a meandering vertical pattern [cornucopia design?] in metallic gold thread.</p> <p>Hand stitched</p>	<p>Length: 299cms Width: 97cms</p>	<p>FAIR: Fringe seen in photographs of funeral now missing, some patched repairs. Some tarnishing.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment</p>	<p>Possible made from an old theatrical costume by Edy Craig. Created as a pall for Terry's funeral.</p>
<p>SMA.TC.128 111953</p>	<p>Sash. Pale blue silk grosgrain ribbon. Shaped with pleating.</p> 		<p>FAIR</p>	<p>Past notes suggest that this could have been associated with Terry's costume for <i>Henry VIII</i>, 1892.</p>

<p>SMA.TC.129 1118954</p>	<p>Sash. Pale blue moiré artificial silk ribbon. Shaped with pleating.</p> 		<p>FAIR</p>	<p>Past notes suggest that this could have been associated with Terry's costume for <i>Henry VIII</i>, 1892.</p>
<p>SMA.TC.130 1118955</p>	<p>Piece of machine made, needle run black lace, possibly a veil. No provenance. Decorated with a repeated floral design along bottom edge and with smaller stylised leaves and flowers across the remainder of the fabric ground. Remnants of black ribbon running across top edge.</p> 		<p>FAIR</p>	

<p>SMA.TC.133 1118858</p>	<p>Muslin and lace cap. Possibly a night cap.</p> 		<p>FAIR: Some discolouration and fabric breakdown.</p>	
<p>SMA.TC.134 1118859</p>	<p>White cotton muslin sleeve with embroidered cuff. Puff sleeve in muslin with Swiss embroidery lace band/cuff. "Phebe" inked on cuff.</p> 		<p>FAIR</p>	
<p>SMA.TC.135 1118860</p>	<p>One single cuff, formed from crochet work.</p>		<p>FAIR</p>	

				
<p>SMA.TC.136, 1118861</p>	<p>Chemisette formed from Crochet work. Triangular in shape, suspended from a narrow tie collar and extending into a scallop edged point at the centre front.</p> 		<p>FAIR</p>	

<p>SMA.TC.162, 1118887</p>	 <p>Pale pink silk satin skirt, formed from a long upper skirt, and lower flounce (some 50cms in length). The lower flounce is faced with a heavy canvas and with glazed silk at the upper section and the internal hem. The skirt is trimmed with a vertical band of cream machine net with a scalloped edge and woven with a floral motif at the centre front. There is a cord drawstring at the waist and a single hook and eye fastening at the centre back opening.</p>		<p>FAIR: Evidence of heavy wear, particularly evident at hem and on flounce.</p> <p>Clear central crease in lace.</p> <p>The skirt has been altered but there is no record of past conservation.</p>	<p>The wear and quality of the finish suggest it was part of a more complex outfit and possible worn under an open gown. Circa late nineteenth century.</p>
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<p>SMA.TC.175 1118900</p>	 <p>Cream sleeveless dress of ribbed silk. Bodice lined with cream silk, skirt with organdie and an interlining. Hem flounce is of cream woven silk lined with muslin. Arm holes trimmed with blonde lace. A patch of the same lace has been attached to the front to a 'pocket'. Laces down the back (lace not original). Hook and eye at top of neckline. Square neckline ad bodice pointed at the centre front. Roughly finished.</p> <p>Not boned but stiffened at back lacings</p>	<p>Length: 31 bodice centre to base Width: 32 bodice front.</p>	<p>FAIR: some break down and wear to fabric. Silk shattering.</p>	
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SMA.TC.191
1118916






Three quarter length black silk velvet jacket. The coat follows the line of the body, but loosely, and flares out slightly at the hem. It has long sleeves, very full at the top, and narrowing towards the lower arm finishing in a close fitting pointed cuff at the wrist. The upper section of the sleeves, which has been gathered with bands of ruching, is 'gigot' in style as worn in the early 1890s, the cuff, with its medieval 'point' is however closer in style to the 1930s revival of this trend. The coat is lined throughout with cream silk satin. There are no fastenings and the coat is open at the front, but the proper right and proper left opening have been edged with a vertical band of blue silk ribbon.


Length: 97cms. (shoulder point to hem)
Width: 34cms (shoulders), 38cms (waist, approx, not fitted)


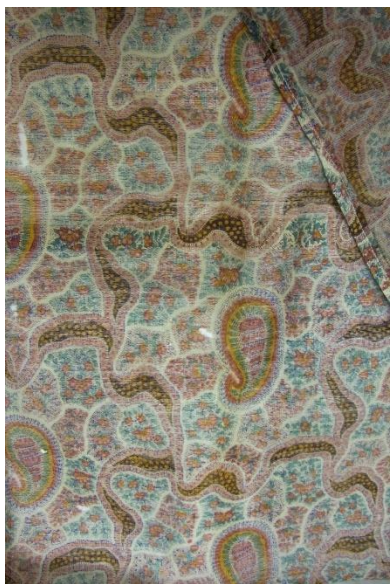
GOOD: Some rust staining present at lining. The exterior and fabric is however generally sound.
No record of past conservation treatment.



<p>SMA.TC.202 1118927</p>	<p>The coat has a soft round neck and a cream silk hanging loop at the centre back interior neck. Weights have been added at the interior of the proper right and proper right centre front hem. The interior of the proper left cuff has been edged with machine lace, this trimmed appears to have been lost from the proper right cuff.</p>		<p>FAIR</p>	
	<p>Evening stole, long, gathered at each shoulder and hanging in points at the centre back and at either end. Formed from black cotton net, and edged with a band of needlerun[?]lace. This band is decorated with a wide central black and white checked line, bordered with stylised white floral motifs.</p> 			


<p>SMA.TC.203 1118928</p>	<p>Shawl, cream ground printed with small motifs. Fine material, darned repairs.</p> 	<p>Length: 165cms from folded size) Width: 80cms</p>	<p>FAIR</p>	
<p>SMA.TC.204 1118929</p>	<p>Translucent muslin blouse with gold chain stitch embroidery, gold spangles and drawn threadwork at the cuffs. Similar decoration at deep V centre</p> 	<p>Length: 57cms, Nape to hem Width: 35cms, Waist CF, 40cms, across front shoulders</p>	<p>FAIR/POOR: Tears at shoulder, delicate construction. Has been stretched and distorted in the past.</p>	<p>Possibly Turkish, existing documentation dates the blouse to circa 1880-1900 and suggests it was an example of Terry's personal dress.</p>


SMA.TC.205a &b 1118930	front opening, draw string neckline with hanging tassels. Crescent moons, swirls and stylised leaves. Pair of cotton net sleeves. With one pearl button and on the other a cotton covered button. Formed from cotton tulle, with machine-made Valenciennes lace at cuff.			Circa 1880-1900.
SMA.TC.207 1118932	 <p>Triangular shaped chine silk shawl. Cream ground dyed with brown foliate pattern. The shawl is edged with a hanging cream and brown tasselled silk fringe.</p> <p>Very large shawl over 80cms in width and with a deep triangular point at base. Similar in shape, though not quite as large, as the Kashmir shawls</p>	Width: Over 80cms (not possible to fully unpack)	<p>GOOD: Some minor distortion and tangling to fringe but generally sound and stable.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	English ca.1860-5 [notes in file]


	<p>associated with the mid nineteenth century. Further investigation required to confirm date.</p>			
<p>SMA.TC.208 1118933</p>	<p>Cream cashmere shawl with blue and red woven borders in paisley pattern.</p> 			


<p>SMA.TC. 209 1118934</p>	<p>Cream woollen shawl, printed with paisley pattern in dark reds and pale blue</p> 			<p>English c.1860-1870</p>
<p>SMA.TC.210 1118935</p>	<p>Printed challis shawl, with all over Paisley type design. 2nd piece hemmed to make stole.</p> 			<p>English/French c.1860-70</p>


<p>SMA.TC.211 1118936</p>	<p>Long cashmere stole with cream ground and green wool border. Decorated at either ends with embroidery incorporating 'Boteh' style motifs.</p> 			<p>Kashmir/English early 19th century, circa 1800-1830.</p>
<p>SMA.TC.212 1118937</p>	<p>Woven cream and coffee coloured damask pelerine. Design of foliage in buff and beige with hanging silk fringe at edges. Beige fabric hanging loop at centre back interior of collar.</p> 	<p>Length: 82cms (end to end) Width: 45cm (widest point)</p>	<p>GOOD: Generally sound.</p>	<p>Circa 1855-1865.</p>


<p>SMA.TC.213 1118938</p>	<p>Cream, pelerine. Embroidered in cream thread with patterns of flowers and leaves and edged with a tiered silk fringe formed from 4 rows of tassels.</p> 			<p>Circa 1860-1865.</p>
<p>SMA.TC.214 1118939</p>	<p>Machine net shawl with woven with large floral motifs. The edges of the shawl trimmed with a hanging silk tasselled fringe.</p>	<p>Very large – not possible to examine in full – only record shots taken</p>	<p>FAIR: Some small holes and tears. Some loss to fringing. Some evidence of past mould damage.</p>	


			<p>FAIR: No obvious signs of damage.</p>	
<p>SMA.TC.215 1118940</p>	<p>Triangular shawl of black canton crepe[?] silk. Embroidered with design showing figures against a landscape in black floss silk. Raw edges. One half cut diagonally and hemmed.</p>		<p>FAIR: Some surface dirt and staining but generally sound.</p> <p>Some evidence of past insect damage – small holes and areas of ‘grazed’ fabric.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment but small darns are present on the surface of the shawl.</p>	
<p>SMA.TC.216 1118941</p>	<p>Shawl of black wool crepe with long lattice edge. Two corners of the shawl are embroidered with beads, and floss silk embroidered has been used around the borders of the shawl. The shawl is also trimmed with a hanging silk fringe.</p> <p>No maker’s label present.</p>			



<p>SMA.TC.217 1118942</p>	<p>Square shawl of machine knitted jersey. Cream ground and woven with patterns in pastel tones of yellow, blue, pink and white, with darker lines of blue and brown. The centre of the shawl is divided into a rectangular grid, the centre of each rectangle woven with a Paisley inspired motif. The shawl has a wide border which is woven with a pattern of yellow roses and blue and green leaves and flowers. The shawl also has a long fringe.</p>		<p>FAIR</p>	<p>Circa late nineteenth century</p>
<p>SMA.TC.218 1118943</p>	 <p>Rectangular, cream silk bag. Ribbon drawstring fastening at top. Hand embroidered at centre front with a design of theatrical masks, leaves and a wand. The initials 'E.T.' embroidered above. The leaves are green, the masks black and the initials coral. These designed are outlined in gold. Four parallel bands of gold braid stitched to rear.</p>		<p>FAIR/POOR: Silk Shattering</p>	



SMA.TC.219 1118944	Black cotton net square shawl trimmed with a hanging silk fringe. The cotton net ground has been woven on a machine and is patterned with stylised, and large, flowers and leaves.		FAIR: some tears and small holes to structure, but appears stable (not fully unpacked)	
SMA.TC.220 1118945	<p>Square shawl of fine silk jersey with vivid turquoise printed ground at the centre and cream ground at the edges. The edges have also been printed with multi coloured paisley patterns. The shawl is edged with a long hanging silk fringe.</p> <p>Very worn and torn. Various repairs have been carried out at different stages in the object's past. These additions include a section of stiffened and pleated muslin with a lace trim.</p>		FAIR: Has been repaired at some stage with open weave net in large sections and cotton in other areas.	
SMA.TC.221 a- b. 1118946	 <p>Printed silk challis shawl. Decorated with paisley style motifs in stripes of red, white, green and black. One piece cut from end.</p>			

<p>SMA.TC.222 1118947</p>	<p>Burnous style cloak formed from bright purple twill wool. Mock hood. Decorated with white silk floss embroidery forming geometric patterns, stylised boteh motifs and petalled flowers. The edges of the cloak have also been decorated with a hanging cream silk floss fringe. It is lined with floral purple silk and has a pair of silk ribbon ties at the centre front. It has been finished by hand.</p> 	<p>Length: 114cms (not including hood)</p>	
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<p>SMA.TC.223 1118948</p>	<p>Cream cotton shawl, embroidered in silk with round petalled motifs in tones of red and blue.</p> 		<p>Molly Thomas states it was used as a dressing table cloth. Indian 19th century.</p>
<p>SMA.TC.224 1118949</p>	<p>Silk foulard long stole. Blue ground, the ends patterned with yellow, green and orange flowers.</p>		<p>English/French c.1840-50</p>

SMA.TC.225 1118950	<p>Cashmere shawl with red ground. Square in shape with embroidered border patterned with 'boteh' motifs in tones of pale yellow, blue and green.</p> 			Kashmir, early 19 th century.
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<p>SMA.TC.226 a- b 1118951</p>	<p>Pair of sleeves, gathered into cuffs with rows of ridged tucking and French knots.</p> 			<p>Marked JPR 1862 in ink</p>
<p>SMA.TC.227 a- b 1118952</p>	<p>Pair of sleeves linen lawn, gathered into cuffs edged with a band of broderie anglaise</p> 			<p>English circa 1860</p>

SMA.TC.228	<p>Pair of shirt sleeves in muslin with lawn cuffs (starched) with 3 rows of ridged tucking.</p> 			English c.1860
SMA.TC.229, 1118954	<p>Large square cashmere shawl of cream wool with embroidered borders in Paisley motifs in pink and blue silk. Further added borders of woven shawl. Short fringe on ends.</p> 		<p>POOR: Extensive pest damage (woolly bear – recent). Some darning repairs (possibly contemporary with use)</p>	<p>Handwritten label reads “Ellen Terry”. Has been used as ottoman cover (M.Thomas) (before 1966)’</p>

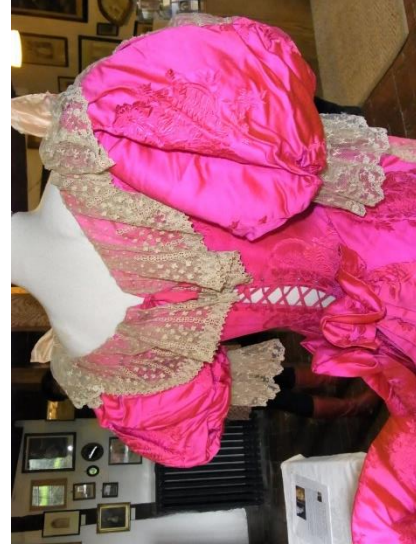
THEATRE COSTUME RELATING TO OTHERS

This list details the items of theatre costume within the collection at Smallhythe which have a confirmed link to the friends and family of Terry. It also includes details of further items which form part of the collection but for which there was no documentation or photographic evidence to confirm the original wearer and for which a link to Terry could not be confirmed.

Time constraints made it impossible to create full catalogue record items for all the items listed in this section as garments with a definite connection to Terry had to be prioritised, but a general description is provided for all key items.

All measurements are in centimetres and are approximate.

Lillie Langtry (1853-1929) – Unidentified role



Lillie Langtry (1853-1929) – Unidentified role

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.190 1118915	<p>Theatrical costume Fitted bodice and open 'robe' skirt. Reminiscent of last quarter of 18th century. Very bright pink silk satin brocade woven with a floral and basket design.</p> <p>Bodice stiffly boned with full short sleeves. Skirt long, open at front, trained at rear.</p> <p>Bodice has a false peach silk front panel with a large appliquéd bow (the edges stiffened with wire) at the centre front. The rear of this front panel has been stiffened with 3 channels of boning with 4 further channels of boning in the rear panels at the proper left and proper right of the bodice.</p> <p>Two vertical rows of 12 eyelets have been added to edge of the proper left and proper right rear panels and the dress appears to have been fastened with lacing at this point. A brass hook and eye has been added at the neckline of the dress, just above this closure.</p> <p>The sleeves of the dress are very full and have been gathered up into a puffed effect, finishing on the upper arm. The ground fabric matches that of the body of the dress, but panels of pink silk chiffon have been added to a large 'opening' in the front side of the sleeves, the edges of this 'opening'</p>	<p>Length: CF of bodice to bodice hem: 34cms Length of skirt: 168 (shoulder to CF hem), 136cms, (Waist of bodice to CF hem), 151cms (Waist of bodice to CB hem), 190cms (CF to CB hem)</p> <p>Width: Across Dress band: 54cms</p>	<p>FAIR/POOR: Extensive alterations make it difficult to establish construction of original costume.</p> <p>Exterior silk satin sound. Silk lining vulnerable. Lace is sound, but some small holes. Some surface dirt.</p> <p>Past mould damage.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Unidentified production. Craig designed costumes for Langtry so it is possible that this item was acquired by Craig rather than Terry (though Terry was also a friend of Langtry).</p> <p>Langtry was a known costumer of the couturier, Worth.</p>

	<p>edged with machine lace. The base of these sleeves have also gathered to fit the arm and are edged with a frill of the same cream machine lace. Machine lace has also been used to edge the centre front and hemline of the skirt, and a further frill of the same lace has been used to decorate the front and rear neckline of the bodice.</p> <p>The interior of the skirt is not lined, but a pale peach silk has been used to face the interior of the bodice. The bodice appears to have been constructed separately from the skirt and then stitched to the skirt interior, though it is possible that modifications have been made to the original construction.</p> <p>Dressband at waist of dress woven 'Worth, Paris'. This band has been stitched to the interior rear of the front panel – in mainstream fashionable dress is would generally be stitched to the rear of the bodice, in which the bodice would fasten at the front.</p>			
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Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) – Lady Macbeth, *Macbeth* circa 1888[?]




Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.124 1118849	Cream wool flannel 'Night dress', possibly worn by Sarah Bernhardt in <i>Macbeth</i> Very simple construction. Hanging straight in 'T' shape. Combination of a machine and hand	Length: Full length 137cms.	FAIR: Surface dirt. Evidence of past insect infestation.	Craig designed costumes for Bernhardt so it is possible that this item was acquired by Craig rather than Terry

	<p>stitching. Hems at cuffs and hem hand finished. Front hem very deep – 29cms at point (curved at interior edge) much deeper than rear. Cuffs also have a deep hem.</p> <p>Very plain. Only detailing pleated gathering at neckline, which is also gathered with a drawstring, tying at the centre front. Cut in a low ‘V’ some 29cms in length at centre front. Single brass hook at eye at top edge of this neckline.</p> <p>Unlined.</p>		<p>Possibly altered around neckline.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>(though Terry was also a friend of Bernhardt)</p>
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Henry Irving (1838-1905) – Various Roles


Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information or role
SMA.TC.177a - 1118902.1	 <p>Crimson ribbed silk robe worn by Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in Henry VIII, ca.1892. Extends into a train at the rear. Flares slightly at the cuffs. Fastens at the centre front with a row of thread bound buttons. Small upright collar. Pale rose pink silk lining and narrow band of facing in fine cream wool at the interior of the collar.</p>	<p>Length: 155cms (front shoulder to front hem) 163 (shoulder to rear hem, approx.) Width: 42cms (across shoulders)</p>	<p>GOOD: Some signs of discolouration, staining and wear but generally sound</p>	<p>Henry Irving, <i>Henry VIII</i>, 1892</p>


<p>SMA.TC.182a&b 118907.1&2</p>	<p>Paned velvet doublet and trunk hose worn by Henry Irving as Benedick in <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>, circa 1882.</p>	<p><u>Doublet, SMA.TC.182a</u></p> <p>Length: 60cms (CF to Hem) Width: 41cms (across shoulders)</p>	<p>FAIR – some tarnishing to beads and evidence of wear at the fastenings but general sound.</p> <p>Some evidence of shedding to velvet on tissue paper.</p> <p><u>Doublet, SMA.TC.182a</u></p> <p>Lining split and shattering. Steel beads rusting in many areas. Has been altered, but shape otherwise sound. Many beads lost.</p> <p><u>Hose, SMA.TC.182b</u> Repairs to side openings</p>	<p>Irving, <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>, 1882</p>
<p><u>Doublet, SMA.TC.182 a</u></p>		<p>Velvet doublet with slashed sleeves. Gold velvet with stamped pattern of leaves at sleeves and central panels of deep chestnut velvet at centre front and back. Mock slashing on body and sleeves with ribbed dark brown silk. Slashed detailing outlined with metal faceted beads. Further lines of silver metal beads in running across surface. Fastening at centre front with metal faceted button. Cream/coffee linen cuffs with band of cotton lace. Same style at collar. Lined with pale blue ribbed</p>		

	<p>silk lining. Pointed waistline, with belt. Leaf shaped metallic buckle.</p> <p><u>Hose, SMA.TC.182 b</u></p>  <p>Brown silk velvet stamped with a pattern of leaves. Paned hose formed from bands of velvet edged with lines of beads (hand stitched to surface). The bands are decorated with oval brown silk leaves, outlined in metal beads. The hose are lined with brown cotton and have a fall front fastening and button fly at the centre front.</p> <p>The hose are extremely heavy – possibly as a result of the level of decoration and beading that has been used.</p> <p>Most of the buttons that has been added to the waistband (including the 5 used for the centre front fastening) have been</p>	<p>Conserved in Blicking Conservation studio, 29/9/99</p>	
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	covered in ribbed cotton, others are stamped with 'Best Ring Edge' [same button have been used for other costumes in the V&A collections].			
SMA.TC.184 1118909	Fitted dressing gown, formed from yellow-grey floral satin brocade with frogging down the centre front. It has a pale yellow quilted lining and a collar with revers.		FAIR	Existing documentation suggests that this costume was possibly worn by Sir Henry Irving in 'Peter the Great', 1898.
SMA.TC.188a 1118913.1	Semi-circular crimson ribbed silk hooded shoulder cape worn by Henry Irving as Cardinal Wolsey in <i>Henry VIII</i> in ca.1892. Lined with silk and fastening at the centre front with a row of thread bound buttons. Large metal weight at centre back hem.		GOOD/FAIR	

SMA.TC.196 1118921	 <p>Hat in 'liripipe' style of pink and crimson crepe silk. Padded at brim in darker crimson silk and extending into flaps over the ear.</p>		FAIR	Possibly Irving and associated with <i>Faust</i> , 1885, or <i>Dante</i> , 1903.
SMA.TC.197.a,b,c 1118922	<p>Collar and cuffs. Deep scarlet silk velvet embellished with strips of metallic gold braid and cut glass jewels. Press stud fastening on rear of cuffs. Metal hook and eye fastenings at centre back rear of collar.</p>		GOOD/FAIR: Some tarnishing present on decoration and some discolouration through wear.	Donated by Daniel Thorndike. Worn by Henry Irving as Mephistopheles in <i>Faust</i> , ca.1885.

SMA.TC.198 1118923	 <p>Dressing gown of pink silk brocaded silk. Made in style of early 'dressing-gown' or banyon, in ornate silk brocade, pink ground, multicoloured and gilt brocading. Lined with coral pink silk taffeta.</p>		FAIR	Existing documentation indicates that the costume was worn by Irving, possibly as <i>Peter the Great</i> or <i>Digby Grant</i>
SMA.TC.200 1118925	<p>Pale cream fine wool waistcoat. Close fitting. Fastening at the centre front, left over right with 9 bright 'gold' buttons down front. High neckline, and with small upright collar.</p> <p>The waistcoat has two functional pockets, with self-coloured flaps at the base of the proper left and proper right panels. It is lined throughout with cotton. The same cream cotton has been used for the rear panels of the waistcoat where two straps,</p>		GOOD: Some evidence of past insect damage and general surface discolouration and soiling.	Poole & Co, Tailors, London. Known to have made several garments for Henry Irving as evidence by related costume in the V&A collection. This could be an example of his

	<p>fastening with a metal buckle have been added to allow adjustment of the fit.</p> <p>A fabric label has been attached to the interior edge of the proper right rear strap, reading 'Henry Poole & Co, 36,37,38,39, Saville Row, London ,97. Henry Irving No.1815.</p> 		<p>personal or theatrical dress as the company as known to have made both styles of garments for the actor manager.</p>
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Fred Terry (1863-1933)

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.178 1118903	Long pale grey felted wool greatcoat, lined with multi-coloured floral brocade. Two capes at the shoulders and beige silk velvet collar and cuffs.		FAIR	Fred Terry as Sir Percy Blakeney in <i>The Scarlet Pimpernel</i> , 1903
SMA.TC.180a,b,c 1118905.1, 2, 3	<u>SMA.TC.180a, 1118905.1</u> Coat, black silk plush velvet with beaded border trim decorated with blue cut stones, marcasite and steel braid. <u>SMA.TC.180b, 1118905.2</u> 17 th century style waistcoat in black silk velvet. Steel buttons, rear vent. <u>SMA.TC.180c, 1118905.3</u> Cream cotton and needlelace stock suspended from a thick horizontal band which is secured at the centre back of the neck.		FAIR: Some fading to velvet and tarnishing on metal decoration	Worn by Fred Terry as Charles II in <i>Sweet Nell of Drury Lane</i> , ca.1900
SMA.TC.181 1118906	Coat cut in a style reminiscent of the late 17 th century. Formed from gold and green brocade lined with black cotton sateen and trimmed with passementerie and ribbons around cuffs (black and gold).		FAIR	Existing documentation suggests that this costume might have been worn by either Fred Terry or Henry Irving as Charles I
SMA.TC.194	Doublet possibly worn by Fred Terry		FAIR: Extensive tarnish and rust present on	Original wearer not confirmed. The design and


<p>1118919</p>	<p>Peach silk damask[?] ground fabric woven with a pattern of circular flowers. Appliqued with an interlocking pattern of leaves on a brown cotton backing and decorated with heavy silver gilt beads. These run in trailing bands at the centre front opening and around the cuffs, upper sleeves and hem. The doublet appears to have a crossover style opening, the closure running diagonally from the proper right shoulder to the proper left waist at the centre front. This opening is marked with wide turned back panels in a contrasting dark rose pink ribbed silk. The same fabric has been used to face the interior of the upstanding, wired collar and also to line the interior of doublet. The doublet has false, hanging sleeves, decorated with metallic lacing and with decorative aiglets at their base.</p> 		<p>beads. Some slight discolouration and staining present on lining. Generally sound. No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>style of the garment is reminiscent of Elizabethan dress. Could be associated with productions of <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>. Maker not known.</p>
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William Terriss (1847-1897) – Henry VIII, Henry VIII, 1892

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.179,a,b 1118904.1&2	<p>Doublet, Cloak (also associated with hat SMA/TC/22 and garter SMA/TC/23.)</p> <p>SMA.TC.179a, 1118904.1</p> <p>Stiff and heavy deep blue/black silk velvet cloak with hanging sleeves and a wide tawny fur collar. The sleeves and front embellished with lines of stiff metallic braid and bands of fur.</p> <p>SMA.TC.179b, 1118904.2</p> <p>Surcoat or doublet form silver and green brocade woven with metallic silver thread and decorated with braiding, faux pearls and jewels. The long slashed sleeves are formed from cream twill silk (possibly a replacement fabric) and are lined with green/grey silk. Padding has been added at the stomach and shoulders.</p>	<p>SMA.TC.179a, <u>Cloak</u> Length: 110cms (collar to hem)</p>	<p>SMA.TC.179a, Cloak</p> <p>GOOD/FAIR: Some loss to pile of velvet and tarnishing to metallic gold braid. Some shedding to fur, but generally sound.</p>	<p>William Terriss, <i>Henry VIII</i>, 1892. Terriss appeared in several Lyceum productions before his murder in 1897.</p>
No inventory number listed	Handkerchief used as <i>Henry VIII</i> , 1892			William Terriss, <i>Henry VIII</i> , 1892


Wearer Unknown


Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.COST.121	Length of turquoise synthetic machine net. Decorated with black beads in patterns of roses and leaves. Possibly originally part of an 'open gown'.	Incomplete, not fully unpacked or measured.	POOR – Incomplete garment (raw edges), some loss to beading.	Unknown, colour and style of decoration suggest c.1920s
SMA.COST.202	Three oval panels of black machine cotton net. The panels have scalloped edges and a band of cream trim woven with a pattern of leaves and a band of rectangular motifs in cream and black. Further groups of cream leaves, edged in black, decorate the surface of the shawl. The panels have been grouped to form a shawl with a central panel hanging down in a triangle at the rear and two front panels, one hanging forward over each arm/shoulder.	Length: 101cms, top (approximate, edge to base) Width: 96cms (across centre back)	GOOD – some small holes, but generally sound	Unknown – possible connected to Merry Wives? (rectangular motifs used on both)
SMA.TC.80.a,b, &c 1118805	Crown and wreath made from fabric flowers. artificial flowers on paper covered twine and green velvet ribbon. Wire stamens in flowers.			Unidentified, child. Probably made for a pageant devised by Edith Craig for 'Puck' (see NT/SMA/TC/234). c.1930.

<p>SMA.TC.137 1118962</p>	 <p>Long, 17th century style sleeveless waistcoat of metallic green/gold fabric. The waistcoat has long front panels which reach to the base of the thigh, and shorter, waist length, beige cotton panels at the centre back. The waistcoat fastens at the centre back with a vertical row of cream plastic/bone[?]and metal buttons – six of each. Cotton twill tapes have been added at the rear centre back to allow adjustment of fit. The front panels have 29 steel cut decorative buttons running down the centre front. These panels are lined with pale green silk/wool.</p>		<p>FAIR: Significant evidence of rust to present buttons at centre front fastening. Some discoloured and staining evident on rear panels.</p>	<p>Unidentified, male The cut and construction of the waistcoat indicate theatrical origins</p>
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SMA.TC.138 1118863	<p>Heavy weights have been added at the base of the proper right and proper left front panels.</p>  <p>Long yellow silk brocade waistcoat – mid 18th in cut. Rear panels and lining of yellow cotton sateen.</p>		FAIR/POOR: Worn abraded, small holes and tears.	Unidentified, male
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<p>SMA.TC.141 1118866</p>	<p>Underdress with cream wool knitted body and long linen 'bat-wing' sleeves. Gathered linen lower skirt. V-neck style front and back. Inner label 'Edith Craig'</p> 			<p>Unidentified, female.</p>

SMA.TC.142 1118867	Grey green silk/wool trained skirt. Possibly a petticoat or underskirt? Gathered onto cotton tape waistband. Hook and eye fastenings at front. Deep cotton lined pockets at either side. Wide hem.			Unidentified, female
SMA.TC.150 a+b 1118875	 <p>Mustard fine yellow wool or wool/silk blend dress. Decorated with metallic gold braid, lace and glass beads. The dress is constructed from a bodice and skirt sewn together. The sleeves are in two parts with inset pleated muslin cuffs and padded bands of decoration at the shoulder line. The skirt is unlined whilst the bodice, which is closely shaped to the figure, is lined with cotton and boned. The hem of the skirt is trimmed with metallic braid and cotton needle lace and extends into a slight trained at the rear. The dress fastens at the centre back with hooks and eyes.'</p>	<p>Length: 146cm (front shoulder to hem) 165cms (front shoulder to rear, trained hem).</p> <p>Width: Inner waist of bodice between 56 and 60cms.</p>	<p>FAIR: Slight tears in muslin. Fastenings and boning missing. Many of the glass beads are missing. Metallic thread slightly tarnished. Two parts have been attached together but misaligned. Some insect damage in wool fabric.</p> <p>Frass and woolly bear case present in box. (August 2015)</p> <p>Evidence that the dress was taken out and in at the bodice and sleeves.</p>	<p>Unidentified, woman. Measurements make it unlikely to have been Terry. Could have been an understudy for the actress and potentially be intended as a copy of Terry's costume as Beatrice in <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>.</p>

<p>SMA.TC.163a&b 1118888.1&2</p>	<p>There is a panel of pleated muslin at the centre front of the bodice at a clear resin[?] style bead trim, edged with bands of metallic lace/braid, at the pointed waist. A similar 'V' shaped detail features at the centre of this bodice and extends across the upper part of the sleeves. These sleeves also have slightly pointed cuffs, extending over the upper part of the hand. Principal fabric of bodice shows evidence of machine stitching.</p>			<p>Unidentified, female (Labelled 'Charlotte Corday' not known to be a role played by Terry.) Existing documentation suggests that this costume could have been worn by Terry as 'Olivia' in <i>The Vicar of Wakefield</i> (1885) or Clarisse De Mauluçon in <i>Robespierre</i> (1899). The bodice detail resemble the costumes in the latter production more closely.</p>
	<p>Open gown of printed cotton with trained skirt and elbow length sleeves and bodice of similar material. The robe is decorated with pale blue silk bows and diamante shoe buckles at the centre front. The sleeveless bodice has false lacing detail at the centre front.</p> 			

SMA.TC.164 1118889	Dark grey silk sleeveless underdress, trained at sides. Hand sewn seams around neck and arms, machine stitch at hem. Pleat at centre front. Press stud fastening at back.			Unidentified, female
SMA.TC.189 1118914	Full length cape of heavy double weave cotton decorated with multi-coloured chiffon silk patches in orange, black and cream on gold lame, using gold tambour stitch. Applied wools on gilt cloth collar. Hem lining of black and metallic thread cotton. Tie fastenings. Shoulders lined with cotton calico.		FAIR	Unidentified
SMA.TC.192 1118917	Pale orange/gold ribbed silk coat. Wide lapels and raised waistline. Resembling the silhouette of circa 1790-1800. Stiff folded collar. Lined throughout with black silk with lines of gold thread machine embroidery at the interior of the sleeve heads. The sleeves lined with pale cream cotton. The sleeve cuffs are decorated with small thread bound buttons with further oversized buttons decorating the functional pockets at either hip. Maker's label at interior of collar: 'L&H Nathans, Court and Theatrical Costumiers, 17 Coventry Street, Piccadilly Circus, London W'	Length: 41cms (shoulder to front hem), 121cms (shoulder to base of 'tail' at rear) Width: 38cms (across shoulders)	FAIR/POOR: Several areas of loss to silk resulting in holes and shattering.	Unidentified, male

SMA.TC.195 1118920	Man's doublet in style of Elizabethan dress. Red and gilt brocade body, lined with peach cotton slashed sleeve made from dark red velvet, inset with gold silk. Padded cuffs on shoulder. Lace cuffs. 9 various buttons.			Unidentified, male (Possibly made or owned by Edith Craig.)
SMA.TC.199 1118924	Brocade silk, 18 th Century style open gown. Brocade taffeta chine woven with roses and decorated with vertical yellow satin stripes. The short sleeves are trimmed with lace.		FAIR	Existing documentation notes that it was possibly worn by Edith Craig in a production of the <i>Beggar's Opera</i> but does not specify the date.
SMA.TC.234 1118959	Child's tunic with long sleeves and soft round collar. Formed from a fabric striped in red, black, green and cream woven with geometric patterns in gold metallic thread. Edged with rabbit fur at the collar, sleeve cuffs and hem.		FAIR: Some tarnishing to the metallic thread.	Unidentified, child. Created for Edith Craig's 1930 Hastings Pageant of Ellen Terry's roles by Maud Gibson.
SMA.TC.235 1118960.	Bright purple cotton dress. One shoulder style construction with short, full skirt. 		FAIR	Unidentified, child (Made by Maud Gibson for Edith Craig as a copy of Ellen Terry's costume in <i>The Winter's Tale</i> (1856) for a costume pageant at Hastings). Circa 1930.

<p>No inventory number</p>	<p>Unpicked beige and green striped dress</p> 			<p>Unidentified – female</p>
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PERSONAL DRESS RELATING TO OTHERS

This list details the items of personal dress within the collection at Smallhythe which have a confirmed link to the friends and family of Terry. It also includes details of further items which form part of the collection but for which there was no documentation or photographic evidence to confirm the original wearer and for which a link to Terry could not be confirmed.

All measurements are in centimetres and are approximate.

Edith Craig, Kimono (circa 1874)



Edith Craig, Kimono (circa 1874)

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.COST.97, 1118822	<p>Child's Kimono with wide, open, sleeves, circa 1874.</p> <p>The kimono is formed from panels of peach silk crepe which has been stencilled with a design of roses in tones of orange and red. It has wide sleeves opening fully from the top to base edge (rather than constructed in a hanging style) and is unlined. There is no padding at hem or at interior. The kimono is hand stitched (relatively roughly) A vertical line of pairs of hook and thread fastenings has been added at the proper left interior opening (there were originally 5, 4 remain).</p>	<p>Length (collar to hem): 92cms, 97.5cm</p> <p>Length (shoulder to hem of sleeves) 50cms – longest point.</p> <p>Width (across shoulders): 58cms</p>	<p>FAIR - Particularly worn at neck, some tears and some staining and resultant discolouration. Loss to fastenings and stitching.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Personal Dress for Edy. Reputedly given to Terry for Edy by Whistler.</p>

Edith Craig, Kimono (circa 1874)



Edith Craig, Kimono (circa 1874)

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.COST.98, 1118823	<p>Child's Kimono, floor length, and asymmetrical, with short, hanging, sleeves, circa 1874.</p> <p>Silk/wool fabric. The yellow/cream ground has been stencilled (katagami technique) in burnt orange with floral/star patterns.</p> <p>The kimono is interlined with fleece, and lined with pale orange silk and padded at hem and base of hanging sleeves.</p> <p>The kimono is hand stitched with evidence of repairs at seams and with staining and soiling at proper right sleeve cuff.</p>	<p>Length (collar to hem): 102cms [approx.]</p> <p>Length (shoulder to hem of sleeves) 51cms – longest point.</p> <p>Width (across shoulders): 36cms [tuck taken at PR shoulder]</p>	<p>FAIR: Some surface dirt and evidence of darned repairs to surface wear. Lining shattering.</p> <p>Evidence of past repairs, in red thread.</p> <p>Damage in the form of stains and discolouration. Further damage has occurred through wear. Some fading evident at lining.</p> <p>Possible that kimono shortened at hem.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment. Previously cleaned some darned (not conservation standard repairs.)</p>	<p>Personal Dress for Edy. Reputedly given to Terry for Edy by Whistler.</p>

Clare Atwood (1866-1962) Cycling Suit, late nineteenth century



Clare Atwood (1866-1962) Cycling Suit, late nineteenth century

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.238 a&b, 1118963.1 AND 1118963.2	<p>Tweed trouser suit, possibly a cycling outfit. Ca.1895-1905.</p> <p>The outfit consists of a fitted jacket and breeches. The rounded necked bodice fits closely to the figure. It extends in to a squared off point at the centre back and is lined with cotton. It fastens at the centre front with a vertical row of 13 thread bound buttons. The sleeves follow the line of the arm narrowing towards the wrist. A thread bound button hole has been added at the centre back interior of the jacket.</p> <p>The fall front breeches fastened at each side with a row of three buttons. They fit closely at the waist and narrow towards the ankle. They are faced with a band of striped cotton at the interior waist and lined throughout with yellow cotton. There is a loop at the base of each leg designed to secure them in place and which runs under the foot of the wearer.</p>	<p><u>Jacket,</u> <u>SMA.TC.238a,</u> <u>1118963.1</u></p> <p>Length: 43cms (front collar to hem), 52cms (rear collar to hem).</p> <p>Width: 36cms (across shoulders)</p> <p><u>Breeches,</u> <u>SMA.TC.238b,</u> <u>1118963.2</u></p> <p>Length: 109cms (waist to hem) Width: 39cms (across rear waist)</p>	<p>FAIR</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Recorded as being made of 'Shepherd's plaid.'</p>

Edith Craig, Loose Grecian Style Dress



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.154 a&b 1118879.1 and 2	(1118879.1) – Loose ‘Grecian’ gown and piece of fabric, Constructed from panels of fine cream Indian muslin. The fabric has been embroidered with diagonal meandering motif of gold metal foil ‘foliage’ and a repeat small motif in the same style. The gown is semi-circular in shape, it is open at base and unlined. The hem finished by hand. There is a deep ‘V’ at the centre front and the long sleeves		FAIR - Evidence of tears and darned repairs.	Handwritten cotton tape label, reading ‘Edith Craig’ in neckline.

	<p>extend into a point at the wrist. The fullness gathered into smocking at the shoulders.</p> <p>(1118879.2) Piece of identical fabric – roughly cut, long and narrow.</p>			
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Wearer Unknown

The items listed in the chart below all form part of the Ellen Terry collection. The nature and history of the collection is such however that there is no documentary or photographic evidence to confirm whether the items were worn and used by Terry or her daughter, Edith Craig, who added to the collection after her mother's death. Where a connection to Terry has been confirmed this is indicated below.
 In many instances the manner in which these items were packed, together with time constraints, meant that it was not possible to take measurements.

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
SMA.TC.132 1118857	Rayon crepe de chine belt. Puce floral design printed on white ground, ca.1930s. Handmade. Fastening with three pairs of hooks and eyes.		FAIR – Some slight fading	Existing documentation suggests possibly Edith Craig's personal clothing but very narrow.

SMA.TC.155
1118880




Straight, sleeveless tunic secured from leaf green, gold and saffron silk and chiffon. Edged with metallic gold braid. Formed from Indian Sari Silk. The silhouette appears to be 1920s in inspiration. It has been finished by hand.




Length: 129cms
(shoulder to front hem, not including integral fringing at base)

FAIR – The tunic is roughly finished and there is evidence of some past damage.

Circa 1920-1925, possibly used a Pageant Costume and created by Edith Craig.

SMA.TC.206 1118931	Fine white cotton baby's cap. Decorated with embroidery and trimmed with a band of lace. Secured with a drawstring fastening.			Dated to mid-19th century. Possibly one of Terry's children's caps.
SMA.TC.233 1118895	<p>Woollen shawl with deep red ground printed with bright floral patterns in tones of blue, yellow and green at the centre.</p> 		FAIR: Evidence of past pest damage, but generally sound.	Probably Edith Craig's for stage costume. English, c. 1933
No inventory number	Series of petticoats, one short, stiffly starched, one narrow, white, cotton, one full length, horizontal pleats at hem. (3 in total) original purpose unclear.			
No inventory number	Dark Grey Sleeveless Tunic			

<p>No inventory number allocated</p> <p>Bodice and skirt</p>	 <p>Pale pink silk bodice and skirt woven with geometric sprigged pattern. The bodice is not boned. It has panel of pleated material inserted at waist, presumably to accommodate bustle. Short, high collar and lined with white striped cotton. The skirt has a cotton tape waistband with hook and eye fastening. It has a flounced and pleated hem. It is gathered in swathes towards rear and has an apron style skirt front. Very lightweight fabric.</p>		<p>GOOD/FAIR</p>	
<p>No inventory number -Late 19th C bonnet</p>	<p>Box also contains a lady's cap from mid to late nineteenth century. This cap is formed from cream lace and decorated with a scalloped black velvet band at front.</p>		<p>FAIR</p>	<p>Stored in the same box as the bodice and skirt listed above.</p>

Box of Shawls, Textiles and other dress related items, unlabelled

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
Shawl 1 (no label)	Long bronze knitted silk shawl, decorated with metallic braid and cut glass red, gold and green jewels and metal discs. Edged with curling bands of metallic braid.	Length: Too fragile to measure – in excess of 205cms Width: 73cms	POOR: Decoration tarnished and damaged. Significant tears across surface of shawl.	Style of decoration indicates created for use in Theatre. Unknown production Could potentially have been used in <i>The Vikings</i> or created as prop by Craig
20 matching pieces of printed cotton – in total	20 matching pieces of cotton printed in blue with stylised geometric motifs, flowers and foliage. Possibly Japanese inspired[?]. Each panel shaped with a narrow rectangular top, widening out into curves at the base. Several cotton ties added to the edge – 3 at each point of the top edge, one at the centre of the base, and one at the PL edge, and one at the PR edge.	Length: 63cms Width: 81.5cms (widest point), 33cms (narrowest point)	FAIR: Some fading, and loss to tapes, but generally sound.	
Shawl 2	Vivid yellow rectangular shawl/scarf, lightweight silk gauze, bordered with bands of green and with vertical lines of gold metallic thread woven through the fabric	Length: Not measured Width: 48.5cms (across)	GOOD- Some creasing, but sound.	

Shawl 3	Black machine net long sleeve tunic, woven with integral bands of scalloped cream tape. Evidence of modification to structure.	Length: 104cms (shoulder to hem). Width: 61cms (across, loose fit)	FAIR - Several holes and tears across surface. Some distortion.	
Misc x 2	Blue silk bow spotted with gold and length of black silk[?] gauze.	Not possible to measure	FAIR	
Misc	Length of beige machine net, cream and black striped borders at either end. <i>Not measured</i>	Not possible to measure	FAIR	
Blouse 1	Dis-assembled piece of vivid green/gold ribbed artificial silk blouse. Machine stitched.	Length: 59.5cms (blouse front) Width: 51cms (blouse front)	GOOD	Colour palette and silhouette means that the original wearer (who is not identified) is unlikely to have been Terry.
Hanging sash	Black silk [?] hanging sash, machine[?] embroidered at either end with a motif of flowers and ears of corn (chain stitch). The rear fced with cotton machine net. The ends of the sash widen into a triangular point and these 'points' are embroidered in chain stitched with cream geometric patterns.	Length: 165cms.	FAIR	
Lengths of cotton	Two matching lengths of cream cotton lawn. Possibly Indian in origin. Embroidered in tambour work with stylised leaves, stems and flowers. Decorated with strands of gold metal thread.	Length: 70.5cms Width: 34.5cm	FAIR - Some fading and rust stains but generally sound.	Use not clear. Original owner not recorded.

	Top edge uneven and unfinished, bottom edged finished with black blanket stitch.				
Scarf	Long narrow red wool shawl with fringing at either end, blue blanket stitch line at either end.	Not measured		FAIR	
Length of purple silk brocade	Length of deep purple silk brocade woven with a stylised flower and leaf pattern in gold metallic thread. Evidence that efforts have been made to shape the silk into a garment, but these are incomplete.	Not measured		FAIR	
Scarf	Long, narrow deep blue and cream cotton striped scarf with tassel trim at either end.	Length: Over 200cms. Width: 30cms		FAIR	
Heavy hanging sash	Heavy hanging rectangular sash, widens into triangular points at either end. Gold metallic fabric ground, faced with ribbed beige artificial silk[?]. Largely plain but some hand painted brown//bronze flowers scattered across surface.	Length: 164cms		FAIR- some tears and small rust stains.	
Length of fabric	Length of fabric matching that used for the heavy gold sash. Raw edges.	No measurements taken			
Length of calico	Length of cream calico, stencilled decoration in gold and blue. Repeated pattern of four petalled stylised flowers.	No measurements taken		FAIR	Rough decoration, possibly intended as a theatrical prop.

Sleeveless, unfinished Top	<p>Sleeveless top formed from silk and a wide panel of woven, stiff tapestry style fabric. The front panel is woven with diagonal bands of geometric patterns and interlinked flowers in tones of deep crimson, burnt gold, black and blue. Panels of deep blue silk, possibly from an original bodice, have been added to the rear of the tapestry front and used to create a 'back' section and to line the interior of the tapestry panel. This back section fastens with a vertical row of black metal hooks and eyes.</p>	<p>Length: 64cms (shoulder to hem) Width: 43cms (across chest)</p>	FAIR	Colour palette and silhouette suggests that it is unlikely that the original wearer was Terry.
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ELLEN TERRY - THEATRE COSTUMES (HELD OUTSIDE SMALLHYTHE)

Listed chronologically by production. The venue, unless stated otherwise, is the Lyceum Theatre.

All measurements are in centimetres and are approximate.

MUSEUM OF LONDON - Ellen Terry, *Iolanthe*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1880



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
50.11/1	<p>Cream and gold overdress woven in metallic gold thread with a pattern of large flowers. The hem is bordered with a wide band of heavy gold metallic braid.</p> <p>The costume takes the form of a sleeveless tabard which is narrow at the shoulder line but widens out from the hip into a wide trained skirt. The wide armholes and neckline are bordered with what might be calf skin. There is a hook and eye fastening at the shoulder and large metal press studs securing the tabard at either side.</p>	<p>Length: 134 cm (CF); 171 cm (CB); 145 cm (shoulder to hem)</p> <p>Width: 35cms (across shoulders); W 22cm (waist).</p>	<p>FAIR – Some loss to the calf skin[?] trim.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Gift to museum in 1950 from Lady “Nell” Martin-Harvey. Letters from Martin-Harvey in the museum registry record that she was given this costume by Terry.</p>

MUSEUM OF LONDON - Ellen Terry, Desdemona, *Othello*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1881



MUSEUM OF LONDON - Ellen Terry, Desdemona, *Othello*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1881

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
67.89a, b	<p>Theatrical costume, ensemble, consisting of overdress or open gown (a) and underdress (b). Ribbed silk, with net ruffles, gold braid decoration and metal button fastenings.</p> <p><u>Overdress/Jacket</u></p> <p>Cream ribbed silk overdress (a) with a long train at the rear. Net ruffle details at sleeves and collar. Decorated with bands of gold braid. Fastening at centre front with loops and metal buttons.</p> <p><u>Underdress</u></p> <p>Sleeveless underdress (b), simple plain silk bodice at back with ribbed silk front panel. Ribbed silk skirt trimmed with three bands of figured velvet each with a metallic gold braid scalloped border. Front of bodice not boned but stiff hook and eye fastening at rear.</p> <p>The museum record suggests that the style of this dress may have been inspired by Spanish Fashions of circa 1550.</p>	<p><u>Underdress</u></p> <p>Length: Full length 150cms.</p> <p>Width: 39cms front waist, 42cms rear waist, 137.5 full waist.</p>	<p>Good, No conservation treatment recorded.</p>	<p>Part of an ensemble of items worn by Terry as Desdemona in <i>Othello</i>. Museum catalogue dates the garment to 1916. Research has revealed that is more likely to date from the 1881 production of <i>Othello</i>.</p> <p>The costume was donated to the museum in 1967. The register states: "The donor is the great-great niece of Ellen Terry."</p>

MUSEUM OF LONDON – Alternative version, or deliberate duplicate of Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1882



MUSEUM OF LONDON – Alternative version, or deliberate duplicate of Ellen Terry, Beatrice, *Much Ado About Nothing*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1882

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
65.90/4a-c	<p>Theatrical costume, ensemble consisting of open gown (a), petticoat (b) and stomacher (c). Gold ribbed silk, appliqued with bands of silk patterned velvet and with additional hand sewn bead decoration.</p> <p><u>Open Gown (a)</u> The open gown is formed from a gold cotton velvet stamped with an abstract pattern of flowers and leaves. The skirt of the gown is open at the front. It is not lined. The bodice has long, close fitting sleeves, and a stiff, upright collar. The top edge of the sleeves is defined with a stiff crescent shaped pad. This pad is covered with gold silk and decorated with lines of silver beads. The underside of the sleeves feature a line of lacing formed from gold ribbed silk ribbon.</p> <p>The long bodice is stiffened with boning and the pointed waistline is defined with a line of piping bound in gold silk. It fastens at the centre front with a vertical row of metal hooks and eyes.</p> <p>The collar of the bodice is stiffened with wire and decorated with cotton machine lace.</p> <p>It is decorated with glass beads and there is a large brass hook at the waist.</p>	<p><u>Open Gown (a)</u> Length: 170.2cm-249cms (front and rear) 39.4cm (shoulder to waist); 48cm (collar to rear waist), 34cm (interior base of collar to interior waist). Width: 46cms (across shoulders)</p> <p><u>Petticoat (b):</u> Length: 106cms in length Width: 65cms (Across waistband,</p>	<p>FAIR</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>The provenance recorded at the Museum of London states is that this garment was worn by Jessie Millward (1861-1932) and later Winifred Emery (1861-1924) as Hero in the Lyceum production of <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>, 1882. The Register states: '<i>This dress looks white under stage lighting and was worn in the church scene in Act 3 of the Lyceum production. Forbes-Robertson's picture shows it clearly. Later it belonged to Edith Craig and was given to me by her executors</i></p>

	<p><u>Petticoat (b)</u> The Petticoat has a gold cotton ground. A panel of ruched gold silk has been added to the centre front. This panel is decorated with a stylised appliqued design formed from gold cotton velvet and edged with lines of beads. It is gathered at the waist and extends into a slight train at the rear. There is a hook and eye fastening in waistband of the petticoat. Attached to this waistband is a label marked ‘Edith Craig.’</p> <p><u>Stomacher (c)</u> There is also a separate triangular stomacher. This has a gold silk ground and is decorated with bands of gold cotton velvet (matching that used on the open gown). These bands are edged with lines of glass beads and a band of cotton lace has been added to the top edge.</p>	<p>additional cord, gathering).</p> <p><u>Stomacher (c)</u> Length: 28.5 cms (including lace trim) Width: 27.5 cms (widest point)</p>	<p><i>Miss Atwood and Miss St John, for my own plays. M.R.Holmes’.</i></p> <p>The dress strongly resembles the costume worn by Terry as Beatrice in <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> between circa 1882-1900. The reason for this close resemblance may lie in the fact that it was actually created for Act V, Scene IV in which many of the female characters appear disguised as identical potential ‘brides’ for Claudio. The appearance of Edith Craig’s name in the waistband of the petticoat indicates that this dress may be a re-make’ of the original costume, created by Craig who worked as a costumier from the late 1890s.</p>
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MUSEUM OF LONDON - Ellen Terry, Olivia, *Vicar of Wakefield*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885



MUSEUM OF LONDON – Ellen Terry, Olivia, *Vicar of Wakefield*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
51.93	<p>Two part costume consisting of open gown and petticoat. Silk damask woven with a deep maroon ground and design of flowers in coral with additional embroidered detailing on petals.</p> <p><u>Open Gown</u> The open gown is formed from a silk damask with a maroon ground which is woven with a floral design. Additional detailing and depth has been added to this design using embroidered in silk floss thread.</p> <p>The gown has elbow length sleeves ending in lace cuffs and a soft falling collar of cream cotton net. It has a Watteau style back which extends into a long train at the rear and a fitted bodice. The interior of this bodice is faced with a panel of deep purple cotton and a cotton tie, or drawstring has been added to the proper left interior. The bodice and skirt of the gown are open at the front revealing the petticoat beneath.</p> <p><u>Petticoat</u></p>	<p><u>Overdress:</u> Length: 134 cm (front edge); 114 cm (centre back) Width: 44 cm (across shoulder); 80 cm (circumference chest); 72 cm (waist, edge to edge)</p> <p><u>Petticoat</u> Length: 125 cm (centre front); 147 cm (centre back) 145 cm (shoulder to hem) Width: 39 cm (across shoulder); 98 cm (circumference chest); 74 cm (waist).</p>	<p>GOOD</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment but has been mounted in the past.</p>	<p>Terry first played the role at the Royal Court theatre in 1878. The costumes for this earlier production were designed by Marcus Stone.</p> <p>Museum catalogue record previously listed costume as worn by Terry as Olivia in <i>Twelfth Night</i>, but she never played this role.</p> <p>Museum documentation lists the item as a gift which was accompanied by a receipt describing the dress as a item “sack-back dress of maroon silk brocade worn by Ellen Terry in Olivia up to 1900” and dated 26 Nov 1951</p>

	<p>Floor length petticoat with a sleeveless bodice and wide skirt. The skirt of the petticoat is formed from a deep silk damask in tones of maroon/coral which matches the open gown. The front of the bodice is also formed from silk damask and has a triangular panel of gold metallic fabric at the centre front. The rear of the bodice (which would be masked by the open gown) is formed from a deep yellow cotton. The interior of this bodice is stiffened with channels of boning and it fastens at the rear with a row of hooks and eyelets.</p>			
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MUSEUM OF LONDON - Ellen Terry, Marguerite, Faust, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885



MUSEUM OF LONDON - Ellen Terry, Marguerite, *Faust*, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1885

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
57.20/1	<p>Long sleeved, floor length dress with high waisted bodice and full, pleated skirt. The dress is formed from a pale blue silk and has a square neckline with a false chemise/shirt in cream silk which is gathered with a length of pale blue cord at the neckline.</p> <p>The long sleeves are divided into three parts joined by vertical bands of pale blue silk fabric which float over a long cream undersleeve creating a 'slashed' effect. They follow the line of the arm and a row of eyelets have been added just above the narrow cuff at the wrist.</p> <p>Both the sleeves and the bodice are decorated with metallic gold braid piping which has been couched in place. The centre front of the bodice is edged with a band of ruched silk and features a panel of green/blue silk brocade. Curved lengths of gold cord run horizontally across this panel.</p> <p>The interior of the bodice is stiffened with channels of boning and is secured at the proper left interior with a row of metal hooks and eyes.</p> <p>The high waisted skirt is plain, and closely pleated. It is not lined but the interior of the bodice is faced with cream cotton.</p>	<p>Length: 124 cm (centre front); L 137 cm (shoulder to hem); 27cm (Rear of bodice) Width: 380 cm (across shoulder); 740 cm (circumference chest); 66 cm (interior waist, approximate), 32cm (Rear of bodice)</p>	<p>FAIR: Some fading and discolouration through wear. Evidence of breakdown to the fine fabric used for the false undershirt/chemise. Signs of tarnishing to metallic piped decoration and cord.</p>	<p>Gift from Lady Elizabeth Brunner (grand-daughter of Henry Irving) in 1957. The accompanying letter stated that: "[...] This has always been said to be Ellen Terry's dress as Marguerite in Faust. As you will see, the underskirt is missing."</p> <p>The museum record notes that the costume is an imitation of German Dress, Kronach, c.1520-30.</p>

57.20/2	<p>Blue and green silk bag. Triangular in shape extending into three points at the base. The two 'outer points' are equal in length, the 'central point' extending slightly further. A gold metallic braid tassel is suspended from the base of each point.</p> <p>The bag is edged with a band of ruched green silk which is itself decorated with lines of metallic gold piping and a vertical line of the same ruched green silk extends up the centre of the bag.</p> <p>The bag is suspended from a thick gold cord and is also decorated with hand gold metallic braid tassels.</p>		<p>FAIR: Some tarnish to the metal cord and embroidery.</p>	<p>See above</p>
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MUSEUM OF LONDON - Ellen Terry, Nance Oldfield, Nance Oldfield, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1891



MUSEUM OF LONDON - Ellen Terry, Nance Oldfield, Nance Oldfield, first staged at the Lyceum Theatre in 1891

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
47.11	<p>18th century style sackback style dress, in two connected parts. Cream ribbed silk dress woven with a floral pattern. Lace details, steel boning. Hook and eye fastenings. Machine stitched.</p> <p>The external, open gown has a 'watteau' back and is formed from cream, ribbed, watered silk woven with a pattern of pink, yellow and lilac roses. It is trimmed at centre front and elbows with gathered bands of silk and is lined with vivid pink silk. The bodice follows the line of the figure, the skirt widens out into a long train at the rear and is open at the front.</p> <p>The internal gown consists of a sleeveless vivid pink silk bodice with an inverted triangular panel of machine lace covering the centre front. The same lace has been attached to the front base of this bodice where it extends into a long apron.</p> <p>A panel inserted into the bodice of the open, external gown, has been stiffened with steel boning. Cotton tapes have also been added at the proper left and proper right rear of the interior of the bodice. A row of three small metal hook and eyes have been added to the proper right interior of the bodice, these can be used to secure the internal dress to this open gown and hold it in place.</p>	<p>Length: Back of inner bodice, 33cms, Front of bodice, 35cms.</p> <p>Width: Rear of inner bodice, 34cms across. Front of bodice, 26.5cms wide, 67cms waist, 85cms chest.</p>	<p>Fair, evidence of discolouration and damage through wear.</p> <p>No conservation treatment recorded.</p>	<p>Research suggests that this costume was worn by Terry in the 1909 production of <i>Pageant of Great Women</i> at the Scala Theatre.</p> <p>Documents in the Museum of London file include letters and postcard from donor Jean Sterling Mackinlay. Amongst them are a postcard showing Terry in this costume alongside a receipt for a "flowered silk pannier dress, with lace-trimmed bodice and lace apron, worn by Ellen Terry as Nance Oldfield" dated 21 Apr 1947.</p>

	<p>Larger hooks and eyes have also been added at either side of the front opening of the external gown.</p> <p>The bodice of the sleeveless inner dress has been stiffened with boning with channels of steel inserted into the front at rear panels. It is secured at the rear with a vertical row of hooks and eyes.</p>			
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MUSEUM OF LONDON - Ellen Terry, Mistress Page, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
53.94/1	Circular pink round silk hat with further triangular panels of black fabric bound with pink silk at the proper left and proper right base. A thick band of cord bound in alternating diagonal stripes of black and pink material runs around the centre of the brim. Further decoration added to the base panels with applied floral motifs and an embroidered letter 'P.' A hanging panel of cream cotton net, the hem decorated with glass beads, is suspended from the interior base of the cap.	Height: 8 cm (brim to crown), 12 cm (flaps, without attached net); Diameter: 29cms (crown) Width: 33 cm (including flaps)	FAIR/POOR – Extensive shattering to silk and some loss to decoration.	Donated to the Museum in 1953. No further details recorded.

MUSEUM OF LONDON - Ellen Terry, Mistress Page, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, His Majesty's Theatre, 1906



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
53.94/2	<p>Circular pink cotton hat with further triangular panels of black fabric bound with pink cotton at the proper left and proper right side. A thick band of cord bound in alternating diagonal stripes of black and pink material runs around the base of the cap.</p> <p>Further decoration added to the side panels in the form of appliqued motifs. A letter 'P' is positioned at the centre of each side flap, with a purple flower at the rear and a stylised brown and yellow motif at the front.</p> <p>A hanging panel of cream cotton net, the hem decorated with glass beads, is suspended from the interior base of the cap.</p>	<p>Circumference: 63cms (interior) Height: 12cms (crown) 13cms (flaps, without attached net) Width: 33cms (including flaps)</p>	<p>FAIR— Some fading to pink cotton. Loss to black fabric used on side panels and slight loss to decoration.</p>	<p>Donated to the Museum in 1953. No further details recorded.</p>

LEEDS MUSEUM AND DISCOVERY CENTRE-- Dress said to have originally been made for Ellen Terry, but worn by K. L. Langstaffe as Desdemona in Othello, Grand Theatre Leeds, 1898.



LEEDS MUSEUM AND DISCOVERY CENTRE – Dress said to have originally been made for Ellen Terry, but worn by K. L. Langstaffe as Desdemona in Othello, Grand Theatre Leeds, 1898.

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
LEEDM.E.20 02.0011.0003	<p>Floor length dress of pale gold brocaded silk woven with a meandering pattern of abstract waves/curving lines in a deeper gold. The interior of the bodice and skirt is lined with a fine butter yellow silk. The majority of the dress is machine stitched but certain areas are finished by hand, including the hem.</p> <p>The dress follows the line of the figure from the shoulder to the waist. It is gathered asymmetrically at the left hip with three tucks/pleats. The front hem of the dress (which is barrow with a narrow line of dark gold metallic braid) rises up exposing a further pale gold silk skirt. The hem of this interior skirt is decorated with three tiered flounces, the hem of each weighted with gold metallic braid. There is also a central floating panel of dark gold net positioned at the centre front of this interior skirt. The hem of this net panel is bordered with a woven pattern of interlinked fans.</p> <p>The bodice has a 'V' shaped neckline which is edged with a band of metallic braid formed into swirling patterns and couched in place.</p> <p>There is minimal boning at the interior front of the bodice which fits closely to the figure, but there are 6</p>	<p>Length: Full length from shoulder to hem 140cms (front) 154cms, (back)</p> <p>Shoulder to waist 43cms.</p> <p>Width: Dressband inside the bodice of the costume, 65cms, across the bust 42.5cms, interior waist 37cms (across).</p>	<p>GOOD/FAIR– Some slight rust stains to external silk fabric, silk lined of bodice interior shattering and some break down of silk chiffon used for outer sleeves, but generally sound.</p> <p>Conserved in 2012 by Jacqueline Hyman.</p>	<p>Museum record states that the costume was 'originally designed for Ellen Terry' but was actually worn by the actress K.L.Langstaffe (fl.1898) when playing Desdemona in 1898 at the Grand Theatre in Leeds.</p> <p>It has not been possible to confirm a link between Langstaffe and Terry. No correspondence was discovered and Langstaffe is not referred to in Terry's autobiography <i>The Story of My Life</i> (1908).</p>

	<p>boning channels in total. There run from side seam to side seam in the centre back panels at both the left and right hand sides. The dress fastens at the centre back with a vertical row of 15 hooks and eyes. There are concealed by a false fastening in the form of 12 pairs of thread 'French knot' buttons secured with matching dark metallic gold thread loops.</p> <p>The dress has long, open 'angel style' sleeves made from a fine silk chiffon. These are edged with pairs of gold glass beads at the bodice. There are also undersleeves which fit closely to the arm. These are formed from a loosely woven translucent fabric which laces at the interior cuff. Lengths of gold metallic braid are used for this lacing, these run through 10 pairs of eyelets and finish with a pair of gold metal aiglets chased with leaves and flowers.</p> <p>The hem, which is finished by hand, is very wide, being some seven centimetres in width, but there are no obvious signs of alteration to shorten the garment.</p> <p>There is a maker's label on the dress band on which the stamped gold text reads "Alice Mason, 4 New Burlington Street, London."</p>			<p>Mason was a dressmaker, based in London in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. Again there is no known connection to Terry.</p> <p>Whilst surviving playbills and newspaper articles show that Terry did perform in Leeds, there are no records that she performed, or was due to perform there, in 1898.¹ Furthermore Terry is only known to have played the role of Desdemona in 1881, and the production was not revived by the Lyceum Company.²</p>
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¹ A playbill, also in the Leeds Discovery Museum's collection, and dated to 1881, records a Lyceum Company tour to the City at this time. It has the Museum Number LEEDM.E.2010.0509.0039.

² No biographies record any future performances of Terry in the role after the 1881 Lyceum production, but an undated letter from circa 1901 sent by Terry to her brother Fred Terry and his wife, Julia Neilson, describing her preparations for *Coriolanus* does however include the phrase 'but first, more Desdemona' with, unfortunately, no additional details to illuminate the reference. Letter from Ellen Terry to Fred and Julia, THM/14/20/TERRY/3, undated, Autograph Letter Series, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

ELLEN TERRY – PERSONAL DRESS (HELD OUTSIDE SMALLHYTHE)

All measurements are in centimetres and are approximate.

MUSEUM OF LONDON – Cotton drill jacket labelled ‘The Farm’ early twentieth century



MUSEUM OF LONDON – Cotton drill jacket labelled ‘The Farm’ early twentieth century

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
64.154/1	<p>Stiff off-white cotton drill jacket. Collarless, double breasted jacket with self-covered buttons. Not lined. Handwritten annotation, interior of proper left hand side opening ‘Ellen Terry/The Farm/1912’.</p> <p>Maker unknown, circa 1912-1928.</p>	<p>Length: Sleeve length 63cms, Front length 68cms</p> <p>Width: Front, base - 55cms, Across Front shoulder 45cms.</p>	<p>FAIR – some evidence of wear and discolouration across shoulders.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Gift. Letter from donor dated 6 Dec 1964 reads: “At last I am sending the jacket that belonged to Ellen Terry: I made a mistake as the name is not in full, just “ET The Farm”. It came from Smallhythe with several other things.”</p> <p>Museum records states “Worn by Ellen Terry in “The Farm” 1912, but as Smallhythe referred to as “The Farm” by Terry, more likely that this is an example of Terry’s personal dress</p>

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM – Silk batik tunic, circa 1910–1920.



DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM – Silk batik tunic, circa 1910–1920.

Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
S.1415-1984	<p>Full length Batik silk dress with a pale pink/red ground, printed with a repeat pattern of pale yellow floral motifs with deep blue/black leaves. The dress is formed from a long "T" shaped piece of fabric, probably silk, with sleeves which are wide at the top but narrow to fit the line of the arm at and the cuff, set into the side seams.</p> <p>The dress is not shaped to fit the line of the figure, but a single, round weight has been added at the base of the interior sleeve seam on the proper right hand side. There is no weight, or evidence of previous presence of a weight, at the same position on the proper left interior sleeve seam, or elsewhere.</p> <p>It is plain and unlined, the only detailing adding in the form of narrow bands of gold metallic braid at the cuffs and 'V' shaped neckline.</p> <p>The seams of the dress are primarily machine stitched but finished by hand at the hem (some 7.5cms in wide) and cuffs.</p>	<p>Length: 135cms (neckline to hem) Width: 84cms (across body)</p> <p><i>The measurements are approximate as the dress fits loosely to the figure.</i></p>	<p>FAIR: Some tears to dress and some tarnish to metal braid trim at neckline.</p> <p>No record of past conservation treatment.</p>	<p>Donated to the British Theatre Museum Association by Marguerite Steen in October 1973. The BTMA collection subsequently became part of the Department of Theatre and Performance at the Victoria and Albert Museum.</p>

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM – Lace edged cap, made for Terry, early twentieth century



Reference Number	Item and Description	Key Measurements	Current Condition and Past Conservation Treatment (if known)	Relevant additional information
S.1416-1984	Net cap, edged with Honiton lace. The cap fits the head extending over the forehead and either side of the face into a scalloped lace frill. A band of the same lace has been added to the base, resting on the neckline.	Length: 34cms Width: 30cms	FAIR: Some discolouration but generally sound. No record of past conservation treatment.	Marguerite Steen said that she made the cap for Terry. Donated to the British Theatre Museum Association by Marguerite Steen in October 1973.