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Anonymity as a Bridge from Actress to Author: The Case of Elizabeth Robins

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by

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Panel "Anonymity, Pseudonymity, and Autobiography:
Elizabeth Robins Adapts Herself for Multiple Roles"

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[I have cut or simplified the parts of the paper that relate to the redesign and reassignment of page address for The Elizabeth Robins Web. My commitment to this presentation and revisiting it at a later date for publication to Digital Commons has enhanced my commitments to the web content. Updated information added in brackets.]

Any scholar working on the origins of the feminist journey of the actress turned writer Elizabeth Robins ought to be aware of her two earliest short works of fiction she wrote and published in *The New Review* under nearly perfect anonymity. This paper will profile these two earlier stories, published in 1894 even before her first novel, *George Mandeville's Husband*, attracted attention when it appeared under her perhaps thinly disguised pseudonym, C. E. Raimond. These works are now available in electronic format. My web site, established in 1996, has undergone a new "template" design. This

allows me to more emphatically commit to the availability of documents in electronic format which I consider vital to the transmission of our collected knowledge to next generations of feminist scholars.

Robins' earliest fiction was not entirely unknown until my dissertation (1987) disclosed it. Sue Thomas, in a 1995 article for *Victorian Periodicals Review*, cites my dissertation but also a 1920 correction to a Florence Bell profile in *Time and Tide.* This rebuttal by Arthur Waugh, "Miss Elizabeth Robins' First Story," corrected Bell's statement that the story was published under a pseudonym in *Fortnightly Review,* that, in fact, it was *The New Review* which launched Robins as anonymous author of her first story. Much like Bell and Robins (as co-adaptors and co-translators of the story that became the play, *Alan's Wife*, staged and published in 1893), kept *their* anonymity *virtually* private, a small circle of acquaintances *did* guess or assume Robins' authorship. Both Angela John and Sue Thomas point out that "A Lucky Sixpence" was published in the British edition of C. E. Raimond's collected short stories, *Below the Salt*, published in the United States as *The Fatal Gift of Beauty and Other Stories*. This re-titled American edition does not contain "A Lucky Sixpence"; nor does it contain "'Gustus Frederick." [For a time, I had mis-identified that "Miss de Maupassant" appeared in the English printing. I now have corrected the Robins Web edition to state this later story was never anthologized."]

The second anonymous *New Review* story, "Dedicated to John Huntley," was connected to the first only by a line in the index to the volume. (Even though "John Huntley" was also anonymous, the fact that the index indicated it was "By the author of

'A Lucky Sixpence'" may have set some who otherwise would not, to speculate.) To any that were deemed too dangerous to know, Robins appears to have asserted her actor's prerogative of deception and false denial. She also made clear in correspondence to Florence Bell that she feared risking acting opportunities if it were revealed she were also attempting to become a published fiction writer.

Robins saw the potential and, yes, to her mind, the necessity, of establishing herself as a writer so that she could more securely support herself. Her journey of the 1890s is one not only of becoming a leading Ibsen actress, but includes that of securing her own voice as a writer, independent of any associations with her performances. In addition to writing for income, of course, we value where her secret personae reveal aspects of her later feminist voice.

"A Lucky Sixpence," the first of these pieces, reads like the sometimes-anthologized Jemima's story segment of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman.* Yet Robins tells her story with some distance and irony. A poor waif of a servant becomes the target of her master's affections. (The Mrs., who holds the purse strings, treats the girl atrociously.) To make up for his wife's non-payment of the young girl's wages, the master gives her a coin with a hole in it. The servant girl Hester is so snowed by the man's affections that she cannot see that her sympathy for him covers up how she is abused by his intimacy. Shortly after Robins arrived in London, she did discover the "other" Elizabeth Robins, Elizabeth Robins Pennell. It is only speculation, but the fact that Pennell authored an interesting biography of the *Life of Mary Wollstonecraft*. and used her second to last chapter to emphasize that *Maria* (the work

Wollstonecraft left unfinished but that Godwin had published posthumously), might be her most significant could have filtered into Robins' early consciousness.

The second short story from *The New Review,* "Dedicated to John Huntley," is told from the point of view of a young writer who looks up to the more established John Huntley until Huntley dismissed –even yawned at—the oral description of a story the narrator conveys to the mentor. While the narrator is touring Central American and then recuperating from a tropical illness, he remembers his long-abandoned work and returns to complete it with fresh vigor. Meanwhile, back in London, John Huntley has appropriated the oral version of the narrator's story and writes his own version of it. When the younger writer returns to London, he discovers that decent old John Huntley has plagiarized his own story--told it in a tawdry, sensational way—he is left with no choice but to burn his entire opus, down to the last sheet, "Dedicated to John Huntley." This could well be read as melodrama if not for one fact: the anonymous author of *The New Review* story is the woman who first acted the role of Hedda Gabler on the English stage. Hedda's sensational soliloquy moment climaxes act three, when she incinerates her former lover's manuscript with the lines, "I am burning your child, Thea, your child and Eilert Lövborg's child." Ibsen's finely plotted social dramas fueled the craving for independence in the New Woman. Yet Robins was astutely aware that Ibsenism and "Decadence" were almost synonymous; even her finely developed double *bildungsroman* of 1898 that exposed her identity had been designed not to be traced back to Robins the actress.

Closer analysis and fuller context show that clearly, Robins was interested in

decoys, in throwing any suspicious investigators off her track as she developed wonderfully satirical fiction with a non-gendered pseudonym that was likely interpreted as male until Robins identity was disclosed in the fourth volume by "C. E. Raimond," *The Open Question,* in 1898. Robins delivered a scathing attack to the *Daily Chronicle* (reproduced in full in the Open Question section of my Robins Web, https://www.jsu.edu/robinsweb/openq/opqaddre.html). Quite obviously, the specter of Ibsenism hung over the *fin de siècle* more than we might assume, looking back. Robins is acute and specific about the preference for a pseudonym. In Robins' case, she was *the* actress most associated with Ibsen roles on the London stage. She reasoned:

> I care very little for the doctrines supposed to be embodied in Henrik Ibsen's dramas. They interest me as they interest every intelligent person, neither less nor more. But I well knew that every one who had been in any way concerned with Ibsen's works was irrevocably written down an "Ibsenite," a "faddist," a fanatic, in the minds of many critics; and it seemed to me equally undesirable that my shortcomings should be laid to the account of the innocent, unconscious, Ibsen, and that the "Ibsenite" creed, which I certainly do not hold, should be read into what I write. Therefore, I did my best, from the first, to preserve my incognito. Three books and some magazine stories by "C. E. Raimond" preceded *The Open Question*, and no one, to the best of my knowledge, discovered the cloven foot of "Ibsen" in them. Then came *The Open Question*, and for a fortnight or so, the secret of its authorship was kept. During that time the book was reviewed, favorably and unfavorably, by about a score of newspapers, and not one of those twenty reviewers raised the "Ibsen" cry. The book was judged on its merits, and on the whole, I hasten to add, was very generously appraised. Then *The Daily Chronicle* published the damning fact that the writer of *The Open Question* had acted in

> Ibsen's plays. What was the result? From the moment my publisher (who has been loyalty itself in this matter) found himself constrained to admit the fact, every reviewer has discovered and deplored the paramount influence of Ibsen in my work. The "Daily News" reviews my book under this widely-displayed heading: --"*The Open Question* --Ibsen and Anarchism in Fiction," and scents in it, not only Ibsenism and Anarchism, but "the cultis of the ego," whatever that may be. The "Westminster Gazette" finds that I have "deep prepossessions, gained chiefly from Ibsen, on the subject of heredity." All the (real or imaginary) tenets of a creed I never dreamed of holding are dogmatically thrust upon me. I am no longer an independent worker, good, bad or indifferent, to be judged on my own merits and condemned for my own sins--I am simply a notorious and convicted "Ibsenite." It is monstrous; it is ludicrous; it is heart-breaking.

It was, of course, this 1898 novel that localized the childhood home of Robins and elevated her status on both continents. When Robins had first appeared on stage, in James O'Neill's company, she took the stage name Claire Raimond, quite obviously to spare her family the humiliation of being associated with the actress. By the time she appeared in her home town of Zanesville Ohio, the local paper wrote a glowing review of the triumph of her fourth act Mercedes in O'Neill's *Count of Monte Cristo.* In a few short years she grew out of her need for a masked name. It would seem the same set of circumstances applied when the slight transformation to her British writing pseudonym, C. E. Raimond, made the author gender neutral. But again, the proximity to real life circumstance helped give the secret identity away, as it had for Brontë's *Shirley.*

Useful in understanding Robins' desire to write is that she did cultivate collaborative relationships, especially in the early stages of her career. Manuscripts of her first play and the abandoned satire of the school of (Richard) Le Galliene aesthetes credit William Archer for tutelage. Robins also retrospectively admitted that *Benvenuto Cellini* had been co authored. Florence Bell was supposed to collaborate on the play *Angela*, which later became Bell's sole project. More interesting is that C. E. Raimond's second novel was to have two rewrites of the same action, written from a different character's point of view. Robins completed *A New Moon.* Blanche Crackanthorpe wrote and insisted to Heinemann she be paid the same amount for *Milly's Story*, even now (and not just in electronic databases) often attributed to Robins as *A New Moon: Milly's Story.* To round out the fabrication, Florence Bell drafted her take, written from the point of view of Dorothea. This was never published, but the idea of the threesome attaching disguised names to novels could be looked at today as almost the rival of the three Bronte sisters writing as the Bells or, later for *Harper*'s, Henry James and William Dean Howells adding their chapters to a deliberately unsigned joint author project, *The Whole Family.*

[Neither "John Huntley" nor a later *New Review* story, "Miss de Maupassant" (in which a youthful sensational author is discovered to have plagiarized from an obscure French author) were later anthologized, suggesting perhaps a sensitivity to the theme of authenticity of authorship. Despite their lesser interest for feminist scholarship, the "John Huntley" and the "whose story is it?" topic resurfaces in such cases as *The Plot*

by Jean Hanff Korelitz (2021), especially given the narrator's almost throw-away line when pretending he is not offended that Huntley admits to borrowing his plot idea:

> "It was your story--your story," said Huntley sharply, getting up and walking back and forth.
>
> "No, it wasn't mine."
>
> "Eh?"
>
> "Half of it was the story of my cousin, Mary Hampden, and the end was suggested by the Conover case. So if you owe your groundwork to anybody, you owe it to those two women." (DJH, 755)]

However, Robins would continue to gravitate to anonymity when she most wanted her argument to stand on its own. One of her most curious stances was to insist on non-disclosure of her authorship in a contract that granted Herbert Beerbohm Tree a year's long exclusive stage rights to her play *Benvenuto Cellini.* Robins earned 100 pounds (and apparently left the text and signed contract with Henry James, to server as her proxy while she traveled to Alaska-- *TF 223-4*). I can only speculate, but one reading of the evidence suggests that Tree may have deliberately leaked her name, to get out of producing it. Robins at the time, 1899-1900, hoped to break free of the mark of Ibsenism that, as she predicted, had branded her 1898 novel *The Open Question.* With *A Dark Lantern,* in 1905, she feared that her real-life rest-cure doctor would be exposed. Her diary notes that when she began *A Dark Lantern,* she assumed she would not live. She projected it would be a "wild love story I must write <u>if</u> I have enough days left that are not wholly swamped in pain." Not only would she publish anonymously, she would "for caution's sake" not publish with William Heinemann "for

fear that people should imagine it to be autobiographical and recounting Harley was my doctor at the last, fit the cap on his innocent head" (qtd. in Gates *Actress* 138 from ER diary Volume 1903-8). Heinemann talked her out of anonymous authorship. Much later, in 1924, her feminist credentials thoroughly established, Robins insisted on anonymity in both the writing and first printing of *Ancilla's Share: An Indictment of Sex Antagonism*, until talked into a new addition with her name attached (because it would sell more copies). I have argued in my biography that the perspective Robins might have adopted had she been straightforwardly autobiographical would have better placed her attack on Colonel Repington; likewise, her analysis of Edith Wharton and criticism of the Pankhursts' leadership of the WSPU might have benefitted from the personalized perspective.

Perhaps even more enlightening than to study Robins' journey from simple anonymity to established feminist novelist is to study the works Robins completed but never saw published. I divide these in several categories: **First)** Those works she credits Archer for apprenticing and those she then abandoned because she thought either his influence too great or the topicality of the subject too outdated. These are "Stall B15," "Valentine Cobb," and her first original play, "The Mirkwater." **Second**) There are then those she nearly had a publisher or producer for, meriting at least some interest in those interested in her full career: "The Silver Lotus," "White Violets," two versions of her father's exploits in Colorado, "The Pleiades" and "Rocky Mountain Journal;" the plays "Benvenuto Cellini" and the unfinished "Evangeline;" the stage adaptation of her successful novel, "Where Are You Going To?" (published as *My Little*

Sister in the States). [This play is now published. See bibliography under Johnson, K.] Each text had its own reasons for not obtaining publication or production, the last of them that the outbreak of World War I interrupted plans to produce Robins' adaptation of her novel indicting white slave traffic.

Third and Finally) Robins left unpublished an important cluster of fiction about the acting profession, often highlighting the trials of the actress. Especially in light of the fact that as soon as Robins learned her story was accepted, she wrote to her friend Florence Bell, '"Isn't this a lark? I wonder what else will befall Hester--will she find herself before the footlights before she dies?" She had earlier toyed more directly with a story of the stage. "The Coming Woman," begun 1892, was likely abandoned because her portrait of Della Stanley too closely resembled Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Other portraits of stage life composed about this time are a curious blend of the naive Hester and various "types" she observed in the theatre, loosely collected as "Scenes Behind the Scenes." [I suspect that Robins did not energetically pursue publication for these; not only was Robins so busy with other projects, but that these more tellingly personal portraits of actress's lives risked the exposure of her identity.] After her successes with her feminist fiction of the early nineteen hundreds, Robins returned to her own experiences to fashion a closely drawn *künstlerroman*, "Theodora, A Pilgrimage," partly in response to her noticing in her friend Henry James's preface to the New York edition that he sought to portray his *Tragic Muse*, exclusively from the objective (and male) perspective. This reinforces the early 1890s evidence that Robins did seek to write best what she knew best, especially once she found her main voice.

Mary Kelley, in her study of twelve American Literary domestics briefly addresses anonymity and pseudonymity. Because it was not seen as "respectable" ambitious women writers needed to keep secret their public voice. Surely, they needed to have anticipated their unmasking. Like Robins, or Brontë before her, there was likely the assumption, especially after the private circle of those who knew widened, that the pseudonym was a way to bide for time, so the work could "stand on its own" for its first hearing, at least. And yet, to be exposed was "monstrous, ludicrous, heart-breaking."

Since conducting my original research for my dissertation / and published biography, two of the most prominent female voices, English and American, who published anonymously or pseudonymously, Charlotte Brontë and Louisa May Alcott, have received important attention. Madeleine Stern has put out several volumes of the anonymous fiction of Alcott, culminating in the *Collected Thrillers* (1995). Juliet Barker has narrated the details of Charlotte Brontë's unmasking, over the excruciatingly painful year or so in which she also bore the deaths of her siblings, Patrick, then Emily, and Anne. Stern and Barker have also devoted energy to editions of these writers' journals.

Even the author of the boldly fantasized 2010 novel *The Secret Life of Emily Dickinson* has appropriated the excitement over the identity of the author of *Jane Eyre.* Jerome Charyn devotes his Chapter 12, "Valentine Season, 1850," to an Amherst College Chapel debate on whether the author of *Jane Eyre* is male or female. Emily attends, having had her "gewgaw" published in *The Indicator* and its anonymous female author branded "as much of a witch as Jane Eyre" (76). Accusations fly. No

woman could have written this or if she had, she is to be labeled as a traitor to her sex. Robins would make use of a parallel sentiment in "Woman's Secret," the essay that was to preface her breakthrough feminist novel, *The Convert*--but was instead published as a separate pamphlet, then later anthologized in *Way Stations*: "If a woman had written 'Macbeth,'" Robins jibed, "her critics would have believed she must have murdered her husband; or, if he wasn't her husband, the more shame!" (Robins, *Way Stations* 8).

END OF PRESENTED TEXT

DRAFTED, NOT READ:

Part of my being here is to argue for access to at least the public domain texts of Robins and encourage younger researchers to pursue Robins scholarship. This panel and renewed interest in Robins by *The Henry James Review* encouraged me to explore funding so that upgrades to the web and to making more texts freely available online are greatly expanded. Currently, of course, accessible texts are machine scanned and easy to reproduce. PDF views are available from Google books for *The Dark Lantern, The Magnetic North, Camilla, The Messenger, The Florentine Frame, The Convert, The New Moon, The Mills of The Gods, Way Stations, The Open Question, Come and Find Me. My Little Sister.* The last five of these, *The Mills of The Gods, Way Stations, The Open Question, Come and Find Me*, and *My Little Sister* are also available at my site, in plain html. In addition, either *Project Gutenberg* or *A Celebration of Women's Writers* offers these plain texts that are, in my opinion, more accessible: *The Convert, The Magnetic North,* and *Under the Southern Cross.* At one point, the University of Michigan

Library offered *Both Sides of the Curtain* available as page-by-page viewable text. Indiana University's *Victorian Women Writers Project* makes available the 1909 printed text of Robins' play, *Votes for Women*, in an edition that preserves the pagination and, like most others mentioned, offers picture shots of the title page and the original Court Theatre Program. [Unusually, a never published play, not her best nor her most finished, *The Mirkwater*, had been for a time available from Miami University, Ohio, where it was produced in their 1998-99 season. See my bibliography for the link to the Way Back Machine's access. Celebration of Women Writers has excellent links to online texts, including those translated in German. They prioritize those at Hathi Trust. I was able to retrieve, and repost with credit to the original source, many short works of Robins, all now considered public domain.]

Also available at my JSU site are all the shorter pieces Robins published about Alaska, fiction and non-fiction, the stories collected in *The Mills of the Gods and Other Stories*. [At the time of this writing, search engines had trouble distinguishing Robins and Elizabeth Robins Pennell.] Elizabeth Robins herself got confused with another Elizabeth Robins, American in London in the 1880s and 1890s This was Elizabeth Robins Pennell, of Philadelphia. She and her husband Joseph Pennell co authored travel books. Any search for /author / Robins, Elizabeth / may sometimes yield titles by Pennell, unless one has access to the filtering system to exclude that Elizabeth Robins. Robins was soon made aware of the other Elizabeth Robins. [There is no separate folder of their correspondence at the Fales, but that does not mean there is not a letter or two filed with the Ps. My understanding from memory of the ER to Bell correspondence is

that they did meet.] In Pennell's last chapter, she recounts, but dismisses, the rumor that Wollstonecraft was on her way to recovery but had to hear adjacent tenants fighting, including, most probably a man who threw his wife out of the window (Pennell 204-5, citing H. W. Reveley, recounting his mother's memory). It is only speculation, but perhaps through her shared namesake, the younger Elizabeth Robins, discovering the married Mrs. Pennell, connected to this last disappointingly incomplete novel that sought to illustrate Wollstonecraft's treatise on *The Rights of Woman* with despairing accounts of *The Wrongs of Woman, Maria*'s subtitle. Jemima's story, sometimes extracted for anthologies for today's students, is itself richer, more complex and convoluted that the simple tale Robins tells with Hester and her horrific experiences with master, mistress, and neighbor maid.

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Gates, Joanne E. *Elizabeth Robins, 1862-1952: Actress, Novelist, Suffragist.* Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1994. Cited as Gates *Actress.* I discuss more extensively the plots of these earliest short stories and Robins' efforts to

swear to secrecy those who knew of her stories in chapter 3, "The Power of Anonymity." Other Robins publications and presentations at my critical papers and credentials page, of the Robins Web.

- - - - . "Elizabeth Robins: From *A Dark Lantern* to *The Convert* (A Study of her Fictional Style and Feminist Viewpoint)." *Massachusetts Studies in English*, Neglected Authors Double Issue, VI.3-4 (1979): 25-40. Print. Imaged at the Robins Web.

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Johnson, Katie N. *Sex for Sale: Six Progressive-Era Brothel Dramas.* University of Iowa Press (Studies in Theatre History and Culture), 2015. This anthology publishes Robins' play, *My Little Sister*, pp.114-175, with Johnson's important introduction and notes, pp. 107-113, 256-259. Johnson verifies that Robins rewrote the ending that co-dramatist Cicely Hamilton had proposed, and that thus, despite hints of collaborating with Jerome K. Jerome, she represented script version of the adaptation of her novel "as her own—and as distinctly different from, and superior to, Hamilton's" (257). I agree with Johnson that William Archer was forceful in prodding Robins to reject Hamilton's ending and compose a new final act. [This item added after presentation.]

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Omitted from the presented version due to time constraints:

Sue Thomas' article of 1995 hints at some changes Robins was forced to make in the text of "A Lucky Sixpence." I have been unable to track what changes these were, but my sense of her discussion of the story in her correspondence to Florence Bell is that Robins resisted changes and suggested alterations even when more prudish times dictated them. And in "Miss de Maupassant," she made fun of male editors who could not tolerate racy and suggestive details despite thinking they had uncovered a writing sensation. It turns out their new protégé has lifted her prurient bits from an obscure French novelist. Henry James, in an attempt to "edit" Robins as Ibsen performer, famously suggested that her Hilda Wangel change her dress for the last act; she did not. In her translation of a Björn Björnsen novel, the translation dealt with a female indelicacy by re-wording the original Norwegian to a phrase about a woman having an "accident in her dress." Robins conceded to dropping much of the pacifist plot from *The Messenger.* But in her very next novel resisted pressure to give the story its expected happy romantic ending. No doubt influenced by her taking in Octavia Wilberforce, who pronounced herself "Sister of Camilla" and thereafter signed her letters to Robins "S.C.," Robins braved the resistance of her publishers and gave Camilla at least a temporary reprieve from a second marriage, refusing to script more than the independence of feeling she has when disentangling herself from her disastrous first marriage.

Authors need to separate their writer's self from how they present themselves to their audience when they first begin writing. And as the Brontës proved, it was

relatively easy to pose as male as a first instinct to the emerging writer. But there must also be the subconscious dread of the inevitable. It must cross the author's mind: *One of my friends whom I have taken into my confidence may go public with the information that he or she has assured me will stay secret.* Or: *An enterprising journalist or letter writer will put two and two together.* Or (shades of Marianne Evans): *An obscure parson has taken credit for authoring my own fiction.*

[Sue Thomas, in the above-mentioned essay, compliments Robins for her later achievement of *George Mandeville's Husband,* and I have noted elsewhere that Robins' brief association with Constance Fleming who wrote as George Fleming may have given her the spark for that character. Robins acted in Fletcher's play, *Mrs. Lessingham,* actively assisting in last act revisions and cultivating interest with actor-manager John Hare. The two had a falling out when Fletcher would not grant Robins performance rights in America. William Archer, in his published review of the production, practically invited audiences to suspect the gender of playwright "George Fleming" as female. "George Mandeville," in contrast to Fletcher, is married; and that makes Robins' character's book-making and playwriting the more scandalous: one might interpret Robins' first full-length work as that of the ambitious George Mandeville's daughter death as one of maternal neglect-- even as Robins, writing her first novel as "C.E. Raimond," satirizes the excesses of the female novelist writing as male.]

Keywords

Elizabeth Robins Reclaimed, A Lucky Six Pence, Dedicated to John Huntley, Women Writers publishing anonymously, C. E. Raimond, The Open Question, George Mandeville's Husband, Mary Wollstonecraft, The New Review, Elizabeth Robins Web

Abstract

Any scholar working on the origins of the feminist journey of the actress turned writer Elizabeth Robins ought to be aware of her two earliest short works of fiction she wrote and published in *The New Review* under nearly perfect anonymity. This paper will profile these two earlier stories, published in 1894 even before her first novel, *George Mandeville's Husband*, attracted attention when it appeared under her perhaps thinly disguised pseudonym, C. E. Raimond.

Robins saw the potential and, yes, to her mind, the necessity, of establishing herself as a writer so that she could more securely support herself. Her journey of the 1890s is one not only of becoming a leading Ibsen actress, but includes that of securing her own voice as a writer, independent of any associations with her performances. In addition to writing for income, of course, we value where her secret personae reveal aspects of her later feminist voice.

"A Lucky Sixpence," the first of these pieces, reads like the sometimes-anthologized Jemima's story segment of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman.* Yet Robins tells her story with some distance and irony. A poor waif of a

servant becomes the target of her master's affections.

The second short story from *The New Review,* "Dedicated to John Huntley," is told from the point of view of a young writer who looks up to the more established John Huntley until Huntley dismissed –even yawned at—the oral description of a story the narrator conveys to the mentor. While the narrator is touring Central American and then recuperating from a tropical illness, he remembers his long-abandoned work and returns to complete it with fresh vigor. Meanwhile, back in London, John Huntley has appropriated the oral version of the narrator's story and writes his own version of it. When the younger writer returns to London, he discovers that decent old John Huntley has plagiarized his own story--told it in a tawdry, sensational way—he is left with no choice but to burn his entire opus, down to the last sheet, "Dedicated to John Huntley." This could well be read as melodrama if not for one fact: the anonymous author of *The New Review* story is the woman who first acted the role of Hedda Gabler on the English stage.

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Supplements to the Presentation

[Only these cover pages and not the entire handout packet is included here.]

Anonymity as a Bridge from Actress to Author: The Case of Elizabeth Robins

by

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Panel **"Anonymity, Pseudonymity, and Autobiography: Elizabeth Robins Adapts Herself for Multiple Roles"**

Session 4.A. 3:15-4:45 on Thursday. Moderated by Carol Hanbery MacKay
18th- and 19th-Century British Women Writers
18th Annual Conference: Journeys
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX
April 8, 2010

Co presenters:

Carol Hanbery MacKay, University of Texas-Austin: "Her Transatlantic Heritage: Representing the Rest Cure in Elizabeth Robins's *A Dark Lantern*"
Tammie Beassie, University of Texas-Austin: "'A Personal Masquerade': Elizabeth Robins In and Out of *The Convert"*

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Contents: