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THE INTERPRETATION OF ROMEO AND JULIET FROM GARRICK TO BRIDGES-ADAMS: AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN ENGLISH SHAKESPEAREAN PRODUCTION

by

© SYLVIA ALEXA BERG

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "The Interpretation of Romeo and Juliet from Garrick to Bridges-Adams: An Historical Study of Tradition and Innovation in English Shakespearean Production" submitted by Sylvia Alexa Berg in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

(Supervisor)

Russell Jackson

Date: July 4, 1989

In memory of my father

ABSTRACT

Very little critical attention has been accorded Romeo and Juliet's rich history of interpretation on the English stage. This dissertation examines critically various changes in interpretation that the play has undergone in performance and focusses on six important productons from 1748 to 1933. It then places these productions into a larger historical framework that establishes two distinct trends in Shakespearean presentation from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century, embraces critical theories and dramatic currents of each age, and evaluates the influence of staging techniques.

Altered though David Garrick's 1748 text of Romeo and Juliet was in its more "refined" language and conceding to eighteenth-century popular taste in sentimentality, his was by far the most faithful text of Romeo and Juliet on the English stage from the Restoration until the 1840's. A great acting vehicle, Garrick's text exerted enormous influence on the productions of the play in the nineteenth century and was used, with very little alteration, by all the great actor-managers until the 1840's. During the second part of the nineteenth century and until World War I, popular productions such as those by Henry Irving at the Lyceum in 1882 and Herbert Beerbohm Tree at His Majesty's in 1913 were the culmination of a trend since the Restoration toward lavish spectacle, archaeological "realism" and sentimentality, and toward the exploitation of Shakespeare's leading characters as vehicles to highlight the idiosyncratic talents of celebrated actors and actresses.

From the middle of the nineteenth century, however, a small group of managers persistently argued that plain, ungarnished productions of

Shakespeare should be presented on the stage. Samuel Phelps in 1846 presented Romeo and Juliet at Sadler's Wells with a simple setting, a spirit of ensemble playing, and a concern to follow Shakespeare's text. William Poel at the Royalty Theatre in 1905 aimed at the most complete restoration of Shakespeare's text on the English stage since the Restoration, used that text as the sole authority for interpretation, and sought to reinstate the non-localized scene, continuity of action, and swift and musically inflected speech. William Bridges-Adams' major achievement at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in 1933 was to synthesize the innovations of Poel and Granville-Barker and to adapt them to the needs of large-scale commercial production. Bridges-Adams' revival initiated movement at Stratford-upon-Avon toward reinterpretation of Shakespeare: restoration of fuller texts, introduction of flexible and unobtrusive settings, and effort to secure a workable ensemble.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writing of this stage history has been a huge labour of love. I am indebted to so many people who have given me help and encouragement.

First of all, I owe a huge debt of gratitude--more than I could ever express--to my advisor, Professor Ronald Ayling, for his many years of support and guidance. I could not have wished for an advisor more generous to me with his time and more supportive of my efforts. He helped me to make this dissertation the very best that I could make it. His own fine research as well as his cheerfulness and conscientious dedication to all that he has undertaken have been a great source of inspiration to me.

I am also very grateful to Professor John Orrell and Professor Fred Radford who read drafts of the dissertation, who provided excellent suggestions for improvement, and who gave me much food for thought.

Mrs. Linda Passmore computer typed the many drafts of the dissertation and I could not have worked with a more efficient, competent and cheerful typist.

This dissertation could not have been researched without the valuable assistance of many librarians. I wish to thank especially Mr. Eugene Olson, Reference Librarian at the University of Alberta, who guided me through the labyrinth of periodicals held by the University, and the staff of Inter-library Loans, who laboured through the years to obtain more than five hundred reference materials not available at the University of Alberta. The librarians at Special Collections, University of Calgary Library, gave me generous access to the Bridges-Adams papers held there.

To many people in England I am indebted for advice and help in obtaining theatrical materials. I wish to acknowledge especially the generosity of Mr. Brian Toames of Ormande Publishing who presented me with the entire microfilmed collection of William Poel's Shakespearean promptbooks. It was a pleasure for me to meet with the members of the Society for Theatre Research, many of whom have a lifetime of experience in theatrical research, and I am grateful for their advice. Mr. Derek Forbes, Secretary of the society, kindly guided me through theatrical collections in London and aided me in gaining access to materials normally inaccessible to me; and Mr. George Rowell, distinguished Reader of Drama at Bristol University, kindly looked up reference materials for me in the Garrick Club. I am grateful to the Reference Librarians as well as staff of theatrical collections: the staff of the British Library and the Colindale Newspaper Library in London, who obtained hundreds of books and periodicals for me; Mrs. Webb of Finsbury Public Library in London, who allowed me to examine the Sadler's Wells Collection and who helped me gather materials on Samuel Phelps; Mrs. Ann Brooke-Barnett and Mr. Christopher Robinson of Bristol University Theatre Collection, who gave me free access to the entire Herbert Beerbohm Tree Collection in their keeping; Ms. Sylvia Morris of the Shakespeare Centre Library at Stratford-upon-Avon, who provided aid in obtaining materials from the theatrical archives there; the staff of the Birmingham Shakespeare Library, Birmingham, who helped me collect playbills; and the staff of the Study Room, Theatre Museum, London, who gave me access to materials on William Poel from the Enthoven Collection.

It would have been impossible to research and write such a comprehensive study without financial support. I am very grateful to the

Killam Trust and to the University of Alberta for awarding me the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarship for doctoral studies; the University of Alberta also awarded me the Andrew Stewart Prize for Outstanding Research. I am also thankful to the late Dr. Gordin Kaplin, Vice-President of the University of Alberta (Research), for his kind interest in my research and for providing me with a grant in aid of research; and to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for a grant in aid of research. I wish to acknowledge the Government of Alberta for its award to me from the Alberta Heritage Fund of the Ralph Steinhauer Award of Distinction in Doctoral Studies.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the support and encouragement of my parents throughout the many years of my studies. This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father, a fine research scientist and a man whose positive attitude towards everything he undertook in life was a constant source of inspiration to me. He willed me to succeed. My mother's unfailing encouragement and support, too, have meant more than words can relate.

To Dieter Ehlert goes a huge debt of gratitude for patience and understanding, and for listening and listening.

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INTRODUCTION

Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet has undergone a nearly unbroken chain of performances for almost four centuries. William Hazlitt concluded in his preface to Oxberry's edition of Shakespeare in 1819 that "of all Shakespeare's plays, this is perhaps the one that is acted, if not the oftenest, with most pleasure to the spectator."[1] Although the text of Romeo and Juliet has received a fair measure of study from scholars, it is surprising to discover that, in light of the play's consistent popularity on the English stage, little critical attention has been accorded its lengthy history of interpretation on the stage, and most of this criticism has been of a general nature only: chronicles of notable English stage Romeos and Juliets, and dates and places of famous performances. Even such recent editions of Shakespeare's plays as the highly acclaimed New Arden series contain abundant supplementary material but give very little information on Shakespearean stage history. Moreover, while the Macmillan Text and Performance series contains some analysis of Shakespeare in performance, that discussion is limited to the handling of key themes or staging problems in modern productions. The New Cambridge Shakespeare claims to be more attentive than earlier editions have been to the realization of the plays on the stage, yet the very concise history of performance it accords Romeo and Juliet presents primarily a conjectured staging of a few scenes during Shakespeare's own time. The newest complete edition of the plays, the Oxford Shakespeare, devotes only cursory attention of a few pages to performance history.

Finally, even Jill Levenson's very recent monograph on stage presentations of Romeo and Juliet (1987) also has a limited focus. Part of a series on Shakespeare in performance whose intention "is not concerned to provide theatre histories," the work looks instead at a small number of productions to show the range of possible interpretations, and concentrates on modern revivals. Levenson's major focus is on several presentations after World War II; an examination of productions from earlier centuries is limited to a brief look at Garrick's production of 1748 and Charlotte Cushman's production of 1845, in which the actress played her popular "breeches" role of Romeo.[2]

My M.A. thesis, completed in 1982, examined critically various changes in interpretation that Romeo and Juliet underwent in four centuries of performance on the English stage and established two distinct trends, that which could be called the spectacular and which one can trace right from David Garrick to Henry Irving, and that which might be called the nonspectacular and which I associated primarily with William Poel. Since 1982 I have been extending earlier research on the stage interpretation of Romeo and Juliet and for this doctoral dissertation am focussing on six important productions: David Garrick's at Drury Lane in 1748, Samuel Phelps' at Sadler's Wells in 1846, Henry Irving's at the Lyceum in 1882, William Poel's at the Royalty in 1905, Herbert Beerbohm Tree's at His Majesty's in 1913, and William Bridges-Adams' at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1933. Although the dissertation begins with David Garrick in the mid-eighteenth century and ends with Bridges-Adams in the 1930's, the thesis concentrates heavily on the Victorian and Edwardian periods, which are particularly prolific areas for future scholarship. The Garrick production is important for what it leads to, for the text of Garrick lives on in the nineteenth century. Similarly, the dissertation extends beyond the Edwardian era: Poel's ideas have marginal influence in late Victorian and Edwardian times but bear fruit later in the work of theatre people who were influenced by them.

As in my M.A. thesis, each chapter not only examines a particular production of Romeo and Juliet in detail, but also places it in a larger historical framework that embraces critical theories and dramatic currents of each age and evaluates changes in staging techniques. Emphasis varies necessarily from chapter to chapter: the analysis of Garrick's production, for example, emphasizes heavily the text used; that of Irving concentrates more on staging. Poel was the most theoretically based of all producers; critical principles are therefore much more important in a discussion of his stage presentation than they are in that of Tree. Common to all analyses of the productions, however, is discussion of the actor-manager's or producer's major ideals for the play and his interpretation of the titular figures, as well as any changes made to the text. Some attention is also paid to the critical reception of the production and to the influence that the producer's ideas and stage work have had on successive generations of theatrical taste and practice.

Especially useful for textual changes are the promptbooks; much of my research during the past few years has been concerned with the careful study of primary sources, and, in particular, of most of the Romeo and Juliet promptbooks since the Restoration, accumulated over the years from various theatrical collections in the United States and Britain. It has been my intention to avoid using derivative scholarship--as far too many theatrical studies tend to do--and as far as possible to base conclusions on the use of contemporary sources. For many Shakespearean plays the printed playtexts are accompanied by valuable annotations made by producers and actors on aspects of performance, but for Romeo and Juliet productions the promptbooks are generally less illuminating than one might hope, except, as in all cases, where they show an actor-manager's or producer's intentions for abridgment and rearrangement of a text. The careful study of promptbooks, however, does lead to important conclusions not previously acknowledged: that Samuel Phelps' revival of Romeo and Juliet in 1846 most likely presented the most complete restoration of the text on the nineteenth-century stage, for example--more complete by far than Henry Irving's 1882 presentation which the actor-manager widely advertised as a restoration of the original--and that William Poel's production in 1905 embodied the most faithful presentation of Shakespeare's text since the Restoration.

A great deal of the work concerned in researching a comprehensive performance history is of a bibliographical nature, in collecting first-hand accounts of these performances. Other valuable first-hand sources such as contemporary dramatic criticism, theatrical reviews and accounts of performances; and actors' and producers' diaries, letters, autobiographies and biographies have been utilized to come to conclusions about the interpretation of Romeo and Juliet on the stage. Much of the material for this research is held in theatrical collections in Britain in such places as the Theatre Museum in London; the University of Bristol Theatre Collection; and The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham; and in such libraries as the Birmingham Reference Library; the Shakespeare Centre Library in Stratford-upon-Avon; the British

Library in London; the Colindale Newspaper Library in London; and the Finsbury Public Library in London. In Canada The University of Calgary Library, Special Collections, holds the entire collection of Bridges-Adams' letters and papers. Care has been taken to present a variety of contemporary criticism for each production and era ranging from comments, reflecting popular opinion, by critics such as Francis Gentleman on Garrick, W. L. Courtney on Tree and Clement Scott on Irving, to comments, sometimes avant-garde, by critics of a more lasting stature such as Henry Morley and John Ranken Towse on Phelps, C. E. Montague on Poel, Desmond MacCarthy on Tree, and George Bernard Shaw on Irving, Tree, Poel and Bridges-Adams.

Altered though David Garrick's 1748 text of Romeo and Juliet was in its more "refined" language and conceding to eighteenth-century popular taste in spectacle and sentimentality in its interpolated Masquerade Scene, funeral procession and dirge, and death scene in which the lovers take a final farewell, his was by far the most faithful text of Romeo and Juliet on the English stage from the Restoration until the 1840's. A great acting vehicle, Garrick's text became the most enduringly successful text of Romeo and Juliet on the English stage since the Restoration; it exerted enormous influence on the productions of the play in the nineteenth century, and was used, with very little alteration, by all the great actor-managers--John Philip Kemble, Edmund Kean, William Macready--until the 1840's. Some of its innovations were used until the 1880's. During the second part of the nineteenth century and until World War I, popular productions such as those by Henry Irving and Herbert Beerbohm Tree were the culmination of a trend since the Restoration towards lavish spectacle, historical "realism" and sentimentality, and toward the exploitation of Shakespeare's leading characters as vehicles to highlight the idiosyncratic talents of celebrated actors and actresses.

An opposing trend, however, was running concurrently with the spectacular: from the middle of the nineteenth century, a small group of managers argued persistently that plain, ungarnished productions of Shakespeare should be presented on the stage. Between 1844 and 1862 Samuel Phelps produced thirty-one of Shakespeare's plays at Sadler's Wells with simple settings, a spirit of ensemble playing that prohibited star acting, and a concern to follow Shakespeare's texts. In his presentation of Romeo and Juliet in 1846, Phelps rejected many of the theatrical conventions that had long been traditional in the performance of this play. Spearheading the mounting reaction against nineteenth-century theatrical conventions, William Poel in 1905 aimed at the most complete restoration of Shakespeare's text on the English stage since the Restoration, used that text as the sole authority for interpretation, and sought to reinstate what he believed to be an Elizabethan manner of presentation with the non-localized scene, continuity of action, and swift and musically inflected speech. Poel's production contained a number of startling innovations; demonstrating that Romeo and Juliet could be produced effectively without the many cuts, transpositions and lavish interpolated business that had marked its presentation since the Restoration, he taught subsequent producers such as Harley Granville-Barker and William Bridges-Adams to discover the dramatist's structuring of the play.

Poel was labelled as a crank by most critics in his own time and it took the acute perceptiveness of producers such as William Bridges-Adams, the first post-World War I director of Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon, to see past incidental idiosyncrasies to the essential soundness of Poel's theories and to verify them in his own professional productions. Bridges-Adams' major achievement was to synthesize the innovations of Poel and Granville-Barker and to adapt them to the needs of large-scale commercial production. His production of Romeo and Juliet in 1933 was remembered several decades later by critics such as J. C. Trewin as a highlight in Stratford-upon-Avon theatrical history. Bridges-Adams' revival initiated movement at Stratford-upon-Avon toward reinterpretation of Shakespeare: restoration of fuller texts, introduction of flexible and unobtrusive settings, and effort to secure a workable ensemble--principles that have become axioms of the best modern Shakespearean productions. The director laid a solid foundation at Stratford-upon-Avon for future exploration of Romeo and Juliet's dramatic potential.

My study of Romeo and Juliet, an interdisciplinary one taking an historical and literary, as well as theatrical approach, will not only illuminate one of the most popular of Shakespeare's plays but will also give a fresh presentation to the work of important figures in the theatre, some of whom have been little enough acknowledged by theatre historians. Garrick has generally been well served by the scholarship of George Winchester Stone, Jr., most notably in a recent critical biography by Stone and George M. Kahrl, yet the great influence of Garrick's production of Romeo and Juliet on nineteenth-century stage presentation has been little studied by these two eighteenth-century specialists.[3]

When one reads the hundreds of reviews spanning the four decades of Phelps' theatrical career, in such periodicals as the Athenaeum, Illustrated London News, and Examiner, one recognizes the great esteem in which this theatrical reformer was held by his contemporaries and why he is worthy of study today. Phelps' work has been accorded only two major contemporary studies: one, by W. May Phelps and John Forbes-Robertson, which presents articles about the actor from current journals and which gives playbills and cast lists from the actor-manager's many productions; and the second one, by actor John Coleman, which accords great praise to Phelps but which is not a reliable document and which contains many errors in Coleman's recall of productions.[4] There is surprisingly only one modern book on Phelps, a good general biography written in 1971 by Shirley Allen.[5] Intended as an introduction to his life and work, Allen's study spans Phelps' long theatrical career in both Shakespearean and non-Shakespearean productions and consequently is necessarily brief in details concerning individual productions. Allen's major thesis is that Phelps is not merely an imitator of Macready. She makes only a few statements about Phelps' production of Romeo and Juliet and, because her scholarship on this revival is derivative, she repeats the errors of a number of scholars before her. Phelps, she says, restored Garrick's "happy ending," and Madame Vestris, she writes, was the first to restore the text of Romeo and Juliet. The former statement is incorrect and the latter statement, one for which I have found no proof, is obviously derived from G. C. D. Odell's Shakespeare From Betterton to Irving.[6] Many of Phelps' ideas are commonplace today in good Shakespearean productions. One does not recognize Phelps' production of Romeo and Juliet as revolutionary unless one places the actor-manager in his time and realizes how strongly Garrick's text and performance innovations influenced Shakespearean production throughout much of the nineteenth century and how firmly entrenched the star system in Shakespearean acting was at the time.

Henry Irving has been accorded a good deal of interest by scholars, especially for his mesmeric acting and his use of lavish settings. The finest critical study on his Shakespearean productions is Alan Hughes' recent Henry Irving, Shakespearean (1981).[7] Attempting to clear Irving from Shaw's remark of "costly bardicide" and to discredit Shaw's easy dismissal of Irving's contribution to the theatre, Hughes concentrates on Irving's strengths and at times is guilty of glossing over the actor-manager's weaknesses, justifying them by repeatedly explaining that Irving had to accommodate Shakespeare to the theatre of illusion. Although Romeo and Juliet was Irving's first lavish production and received much contemporary commentary for its magnificent scenery as well as Irving's controversial interpretation, Hughes gives it little attention.

Until very recently only one study existed on William Poel; indeed, Robert Speaight in his survey of the work of this theatrical revolutionary, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival (1953), was forced to answer for his readers "Who was William Poel?"[8] An actor who worked with Poel, and later, a distinguished director on the British stage, Speaight in this solid, yet unscholarly, work shows how important Poel's work was but is not afraid to point out Poel's eccentricities. No production receives detailed examination by Speaight; Romeo and Juliet is accorded only a few lines. Although Poel's Romeo and Juliet was also given very little attention by critics in 1905 and was presented to very small audiences, it was a production whose influence was far-reaching: Shaw was delighted by Poel's innovative approach in using teenage actors for the leading roles, and Granville-Barker was clearly influenced by Poel's ideas on the stage presentation of Romeo and Juliet in his own introduction to the play in his influential Prefaces to Shakespeare. Poel's sound stage-centred interpretation of Romeo and Juliet and his production theories for this play have met with no recognition by scholars. Indeed, this revolutionary producer has generally been seen much more as a visionary than as a practical man of the theatre. I believe that Poel's work would repay a comprehensive revaluation and have accorded him great importance in this study as a theatrical pioneer. Rinda Lundstrom's recent book William Poel's Hamlets: The Director as Critic (1984), a fine critical work on Poel's five productions of Hamlet, shows how Poel's theories about this play influenced his production work and examines how these productions in turn raised further critical questions.[9] It is noteworthy, however, that while most critics, including Lundstrom, emphasize Poel's attempts to recreate Elizabethan staging conditions, they rarely acknowledge that contemporary scholars, such as Chambers and W. J. Lawrence, researching Elizabethan staging conditions, by no means advocated their recreation in modern production. Moreover, Poel later always regarded his verse-speaking methods as his most important work in the theatre and it is therefore surprising that very little work to date has been done in this field. Yet there are many accounts, largely neglected, by noted actors and actresses who credit Poel for their acclaimed verse-speaking skills. This dissertation gives importance to Poel's valuable work in setting new standards for verse speaking on the English stage.

Largely dismissed by modern critics, Herbert Beerbohm Tree has usually been seen as a ludicrous impresario who showed a penchant for livestock on the stage. Interest has been largely centred on Tree's most lavish productions such as his presentations of Henry VIII and A Midsummer Night's Dream. Romeo and Juliet, the last production of his final Shakespearean Festival in 1913, has been especially neglected because, although the production appealed to the masses who came to admire the ultimate in the spectacular presentation of Romeo and Juliet on the English stage before the Great War, the production was largely condemned by contemporary critics. By this time they judged Tree devoid of all originality and lamented his resolute adherence to the highly illustrated Lyceum methods of mounting which had reached their height earlier in the productions of Henry Irving. An attempt has been made to be fair to Tree, however, by studying him within the context of the Victorian spectacular theatre, to show that Tree's productions were supremely of their age. To meet the taste of the general public and to ensure their continued and profitable attendance at his unsubsidized theatre, Tree bent his efforts to establishing a performance pattern for Shakespeare that in its time represented the theatrical establishment in its security and splendour. Modifying an existing language of scenography, Tree consequently explored that language's limits; without development of the film, that art could go no further. Often overlooked is the fact that Tree, more manager than artist, was a much more generous man than was Irving, encouraging top-rate actors to play in major roles against him and allowing prophets of a counter-faith, like Poel, into his theatre for the Shakespeare Festivals.

Poel's ideas, conceived mostly in late Victorian and Edwardian times, had only marginal influence on the English theatre until after World War I. Bridges-Adams is a fine example of a modern producer who, seeing the value of Poel's ideas and yet recognizing that a modern audience could not turn itself into Elizabethans, was able to adapt the best of Poel's ideas, as well as those of the Irving tradition, to the twentieth-century commercial stage. Producers such as Bridges-Adams were, on the whole, reluctant to give up the technical advantages of the modern theatre in order to regain the speed and continuity of Elizabethan playing, but the impetus, the principles and the methods, which determined the nature of their productions, bore a direct link with Poel's insistence upon the relationship between the play and its own stage. The idea that the author knew his business was a serious factor in Bridges-Adams' calculations; after three centuries of cutting and rearranging, the theatre was beginning to come to terms with Shakespeare's texts. It is surprising that no critical study exists on Bridges-Adams, an important theatrical innovator who was the first major modern director of Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon and who had formative influence on Shakespearean productions there. Only one collection of letters exists, edited and introduced by Robert Speaight.[10] General introductions to Bridges-Adams' work are encompassed in larger studies such as Sally Beauman's recent The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades (1982)[11] and in Susan Brock and Marian Pringle's Theatre in Focus: The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1919-1945 (1986),[12] an audio-visual collection, accompanied by written commentary. These works clearly indicate that this director is worthy of much future attention by scholars.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are particularly rich areas for future scholarship and it is understandable that there has been new interest lately in this period. A good deal of work has very recently been done on the dramas of the Victorian and Edwardian periods, but a detailed history of interpretation of Shakespeare's plays during this period has been largely neglected. Recently the proceedings of the first conference on Shakespeare and the Victorian Stage were published and constitute the first modern concerted effort to deal with Shakespeare on the nineteenth-century stage.[13] Russell Jackson, a few years ago, evaluated the state of scholarship in Shakespeare in performance in "Before the Shakespeare Revolution: Developments in the Study of Nineteenth-Century Shakespearean Production."[14] It was his finding that only one work, G. C. D. Odell's Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving (1920), contained a major study of Shakespeare on the nineteenth-century stage. The study's limitations are especially apparent, says Jackson, towards the end of the second volume where this Victorian enthusiast of Shakespeare and the theatre draws on his own experience of late Victorian and Edwardian productions and mounts a rearguard movement against new ideas. Jackson concludes his analysis of the state of scholarship on Shakespeare in performance by declaring that a modern study of Shakespeare on the nineteenth-century stage is very much needed and that "a necessary prerequisite to the revision of Odell may be comprehensive stage histories of individual plays."

This dissertation presents not only a comprehensive history of the major interpretations of Romeo and Juliet in performance, but also places representative productions of the play into a larger historical framework that establishes two distinct trends during the Victorian period and the early decades of the twentieth century; it also embraces critical theories and dramatic currents of the time, and evaluates the influence of staging techniques. Only a handful of Shakespearean stage histories have been published, showing a diversity of approaches. Best of these works are the fine comprehensive histories written by Dennis Bartholomeusz and John Ripley for Cambridge University Press.[15] Both of these authors, however, have been faced with the publisher's demands to have their histories span four centuries of production on the English stage, from Elizabethan to current productions, as well as to examine American productions throughout the centuries. Analysis of any one production or the work of any single producer is thus necessarily limited.

No major stage history of Romeo and Juliet has yet been published, nor has any Shakespearean stage history to date presented the historical framework that the present dissertation establishes. The study goes far beyond an analysis of productions of Romeo and Juliet. I place great emphasis on this as an historical work: nearly half the dissertation consists of an examination of the context in which these productions are grounded, an approach which has still to be adequately dealt with in the study of Shakespeare in performance.

NOTES

[1] William Hazlitt, "Prefatory Remarks" to the Oxberry edition of Shakespeare, London, 1819.

[2] Jill Levenson, Shakespeare in Performance: 'Romeo and Juliet' (Manchester: MUP, 1987).

[3] George Winchester Stone, Jr., and George M. Kahrl, David Garrick: A Critical Biography (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1979).

[4] M. May Phelps and John Forbes-Robertson, The Life and Life-Work of Samuel Phelps (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1886); John Coleman, Memoirs of Samuel Phelps (London: Remington, 1886).

[5] Shirley Allen, Samuel Phelps and the Sadler's Wells Theatre (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Press, 1971).

[6] G. C. D. Odell, Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving (2 vols., 1920; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1963). Odell, in turn, accepts actor George Vandenhoff's belief that Madame Vestris restored the play. See Phelps chapter, note no. 48.

[7] Alan Hughes, Henry Irving, Shakespearean (Cambridge: CUP, 1981).

[8] Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1953).

[9] Rinda Lundstrom, William Poel's Hamlets: The Director as Critic (Ann Arbor, Mich.: U.M.I. Research Press, 1984).

[10] Robert Speaight, comp. & introd., Bridges-Adams: A Letter-Book (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1971).

[11] Sally Beauman, The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades (Oxford: OUP, 1982).

[12] Susan Brock and Marian Pringle, Theatre in Focus: The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1919-1945 (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey Ltd., In Association with the Consortium for Drama and Media in Higher Education, 1984).

[13] Richard Foulkes, ed., Shakespeare and the Victorian Stage (Cambridge: CUP, 1986).

[14] Russell Jackson, "Before the Shakespeare Revolution: Developments in the Study of Nineteenth-Century Shakespearean Production," Shakespeare Survey, 35, 1982, 1-12.

[15] Dennis Bartholomeusz, 'The Winter's Tale' in Performance in England and America, 1611-1976 (Cambridge: CUP, 1982) and 'Macbeth' and the Players (Cambridge: CUP, 1969); John Ripley, 'Julius Caesar' on the English Stage in England and America 1599-1973 (Cambridge: CUP, 1980).

CHAPTER I

THE GARRICK TRADITION: SHAKESPEARE REFINED

When Charles II came to the English throne in 1660 the London theatres had been closed for about eighteen years--since the puritans in 1642 had ordered that actors in all "Stage Plays, Interludes, or other common Plays" were to be "punished as Rogues, according to Law."[1] On August 21, 1660, the new king issued letters patent for the incorporation of two companies of players; by this official act the theatrical interregnum was brought to an end, and the stage, now protected by royal patronage, was safe from the attacks of its puritan enemies.

The Restoration therefore gave Londoners public theatres once again and the managers of the new houses very soon gave their audiences Shakespeare. Londoners who recalled the last performances allowed in the public theatres under Charles I, however, found that major differences between the two ages soon began to be evident, at least to the more "discerning" theatrical patrons. John Evelyn saw Hamlet in 1661 and liked it himself but reported in his diary, "Now the old plays began to disgust this refined age, since his Majesty's been so long abroad."[2] Great changes in society and theatrical taste had taken place since the publication of the First Folio of Shakespeare's plays in 1623. The theatres of Shakespeare and his contemporaries had enjoyed the patronage of all classes of society from courtier to 'prentice, but the new playhouses tended to attract an audience more homogeneously upper class and consequently their repertory was much more obviously subject to the influence of courtly and fashionable taste. The theatres inevitably became theatres of a coterie, interested primarily, though not entirely, in satisfying the taste of a sophisticated few, not of the many.

During the interregnum in England, the classical ideal had been in vogue in France. Charles Stuart and his court had seen French and Italian plays during their exile abroad and preferred them to the English; so that Charles intended that his playwrights and theatre managements should regard them as models. In Paris and Versailles elegance, wit, classic dignity, and pseudo-Aristotelian "rules" were at a premium, and these dramatic principles became indispensable for the English court. Largely through the influence of French example and criticism, the English after 1660 inaugurated an Age of Classicism; consequently, from 1660 onwards classicism in acting, staging and drama was reinforced in its conflict with the native romanticism of English drama and succeeded in transforming the English stage. The French criteria were well suited to the French critical temper and its love of clarity, but unhappily they were at war with that spacious, romantic nature of the English which had already produced such a luxurious and extravagant flourishing of poetry in Spenser and Marlowe, as well as the plays of Shakespeare and his fellows. With the Restoration of the stage there came, therefore, a new type of drama, with plays having a much more sophisticated veneer than Shakespeare's audiences had been accustomed to, and with classical themes and academic aims entirely alien to the Elizabethan's work.

Restoration critics nonetheless praised Shakespeare as an extraordinary genius; Dryden, for example, attributed Shakespeare's undeniable power to his imagination; his ability to describe, express, and evoke the passions; to create characters whose "manners" are lifelike and brilliantly distinguished. "Within that circle none durst walk but he," Dryden wrote in praise of Shakespeare's magic, in the prologue to his version of The Tempest which he and Sir Robert Howard produced in 1670. In the Restoration's assessment of Shakespeare's plays, there was no doubt that Shakespeare and some of the Elizabethans were men of great native genius but unhappily they lacked "art" and had not required that refinement of manner demanded in an age of politeness. Their plays, though sufficient for a "rude" and "barbarous" generation, could charm an "understanding" age no more. Restoration critics deplored the fact that Shakespeare's plays displayed numerous faults of construction, language and taste: unlike Ben Jonson, Shakespeare lacked the discipline of classical drama, particularly noticeable in his neglect of the unities of time, place and action. His language was generally defective, for he employed too many figurative expressions which were extravagant and unnatural. His characters, though lifelike, often lacked decorum in their actions and he was dangerously prone to giving too much dramatic prominence to the lower orders. More serious, he frequently mixed his styles and genres, inappropriately introducing comic characters into tragedies. Lastly, he was at times guilty of "moral" imbalance, for want of moral emphasis in some of his endings. To be acceptable from 1660 onwards, therefore, Shakespeare's plays had to be reshaped to suit the tastes of the new age; the change in public taste offered, as the only alternative to Shakespeare's banishment from the stage, the obligation of bestowing on his work every advantage of the new dramatic principles.

In December 1660 grants were issued to Sir Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant to "erect two companies of players" and to establish two theatres. Existing English plays were divided between the two companies. The patents for theatrical monopoly continued until 1843 and no other theatre in London could legally perform a Shakespearean play or that of any seriously regarded dramatist. The proprietary attitude to Shakespeare on the stage after the Restoration, and a measure of the extraordinary liberties taken with his plays by the two patent managers, is indicated in this act in which Davenant is awarded monopoly for a number of Shakespearean plays for his "proposition of reformeinge some of the most ancient Playes" and "of makeinge them fitt."[3] In that short phrase is the motto of Shakespeare's adapters in the Restoration period. Davenant was neither a dilettante nor a philistine; he admired Shakespeare, but the tastes of his times and his own predilection for novelty turned the plays in his hands into mere shreds of the originals.

In Hamlet, for example, Davenant greatly reduced the player-scenes, and Hamlet's advice to the players; the "mousetrap" play was considerably shortened; twenty-seven lines were cut from the soliloquy "O what a rogue and peasant slave"; much of the text in scene one was cut. This process represents one type of seventeenth-century altering of Shakespeare, based on the principle of what Gareth Lloyd Evans calls "purification by curtailment."[4] An equally popular form of emendation was the seventeenth-century adaptation: in an adaptation of Measure for Measure, for example, Davenant introduced a sub-plot which consisted of material from Much Ado about Nothing. A third type of restoration alteration is indicated by Davenant's popular version of Macbeth in which Lady Macduff, greatly enlarged as a character, became Davenant's spokesman of moral tidings, and through several wholly new scenes was built up into an opposite number to wicked Lady Macbeth. Davenant's improvements upon the language of the play were in tune with the best efforts of the age to free English from what was seen as luxury and redundance, to eliminate metaphor in the interests of scientific exactitude, and to establish principles of appropriateness and decorum. Tragic heroes, since they dwelt in the highest social strata, could not utter anything "low." Thus Davenant's King Duncan does not cry out "What bloody man is that?" but in more elevated and refined language, "What aged man is that?"[5] When in the final act Shakespeare's Macbeth rages at a frightened messenger, "The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd loon!/ Where got'st thou that goose-look?" Davenant's Macbeth, mindful of his dignity, can only muster, "Now friend, what means thy change of Countenance?"

Most of the other Shakespearean plays which fell into Davenant's hands underwent similar translations, and treatment of this kind became the standard image of Shakespeare's plays that was projected on the seventeenth-century stage. The most notable adapter of the century was Dryden whose version of Troilus and Cressida, called Truth Found Too Late, appeared in 1679. The play was greatly rewritten to achieve a quality of simple formal unity, and Cressida's character was sentimentalized so that she remained faithful to Troilus. In the preface to the play Dryden implied some of the motivations which lay behind the broadly accepted principle of bending Shakespeare to fit the strict mold of seventeenth-century thought and feeling. Shakespeare's barbaric language, he suggested, had to be refined to take on the quality of contemporary literary speech; the imagery of Shakespeare was a barrier to understanding and had to be expunged or reduced; his plots were diffuse and confusing. In 1680 Dryden summarized the attitude of his own age to the work of the great writers of former times when he defined an "imitation" as being one in which the writer "assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion; and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division on the groundwork, as he pleases." Later in the same essay Dryden elaborated on the term, seeing "imitation" of an author

> to be an endeavour of a later poet to write like one who has written before him, on the same subject; that is, not to translate his words, or to be confined to his sense, but only to set him as a pattern and to write, as he supposes that author would have done, had he lived in our age.[6]

Nahum Tate, another major adapter of Shakespeare's plays in the seventeenth century, made, in his 1681 adaptation of King Lear, Edgar and Cordelia in love from the beginning, omitted the Fool, and imposed a happy ending on the play. Even Garrick, in the eighteenth century, recognized the histrionic advantages of the Restoration's preference for poetic justice and used Tate's version, which contains the following words in the final act:

Lear: Why I have heard News that will recall thy Youth;
Ha! Did'st thou hear't, or did the inspiring Gods
Whisper to me alone? Old Lear shall be a King again.
Kent: The Prince that like a God has Pow'r, has said it.
Cordelia: Cordelia then shall be a Queen, mark that;
Cordelia shall be a Queen; winds catch the sound;
And bear it on your rosy Wings to Heav'n
Cordelia is a Queen.[7]

It is a reflection of the tenacity of such adaptations and, perhaps, on the unknowing acceptance of theatre audiences, that Tate's version held the stage for more than 150 years. It is worth remembering, however, in defense of the Restoration audiences, that the reading public was, on the whole, unacquainted with the original plays, their only contact with Shakespeare being in the theatre. The collected editions of Shakespeare, the folios, published in 1623, 1632, 1663, and 1685, were large, cumbersome books, expensive to buy. By the time the fourth folio was printed in 1685, only three thousand copies had been sold, a scant number for a sale of sixty-two years.[8]

The process of remodelling the elder poets for the stage began with the Restoration almost as soon as the playhouses opened their doors and continued without abatement for fully a hundred years. Shakespeare thus was to be "reformed" and made "fitt" to suit the neoclassical tastes of the audience, so that the plays were not merely cut but also drastically changed. From that time onward, the theatre had a new Shakespeare.

II

By the beginning of the eighteenth century most of Shakespeare's plays had been reformed; Romeo and Juliet was no exception. The play, "wrote by Mr. Shakespeare," was presented on March 1, 1662, shortly after the opening of the first theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. Allotted to Sir William Davenant's company and presented under his management, the play was performed with the admired actor Henry Harris as Romeo and Thomas Betterton as Mercutio. Actresses had now been introduced to the English stage and Mrs. Saunderson was probably the first woman to play the role of Juliet.[9] Samuel Pepys, a man who disliked poetry and romance, attended the opening night. Having already seen five of Shakespeare's plays revived, Pepys judged this play in his Diary as "a play of itself the worst that ever I heard in my life," and recorded his displeasure with the opening performance at the Opera: "and the worst acted that ever I saw these people do; and I am resolved to go no more to see the first time of acting, for they were all of them out more or less."[10]

To John Downes we are indebted for our sole information regarding the non-extant first "improvement" of Romeo and Juliet on the Restoration stage. Under Davenant's management, the play was transformed by James Howard to please those sensitive persons among the public who would wish every story to come to blissful termination; consequently,

> the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, was made some time after into a Tragi-comedy by Mr. James Howard, he preserving Romeo and Juliet alive; so that when the Tragedy was Reviv'd again, it was Play'd Alternately, Tragical one Day, and Tragicomical another; for several Days together.[11]

In 1679 the play appeared as the altered The History and Fall of Caius Marius by Thomas Otway, an adaptation which, with its Roman republican setting, accommodated the renewed interest in the classics. In this adaptation large sections of Romeo and Juliet were interpolated into a new plot drawn from North's Plutarch. The conflict of Marius and "Sylla" took the place of the Montague-Capulet feud in Verona, and the two lovers were now Marius Junior and Lavinia, daughter of Sylla's chief supporter, Metullus. Marius Senior had previously negotiated a union between his son and Lavinia but, of course, the liaison was now broken off and the civil war caused Metullus to order Lavinia to marry Sylla. The tragedy of the young lovers was interwoven in and made subordinate to the larger political struggle between Marius Senior and Metullus. The adaptation, performed by Davenant's company in October of 1679, had Thomas Betterton as Caius Marius, a far more important character than Montague in Shakespeare; Smith and Mrs. Barry were the lovers; and James Nokes received acclaim as the Nurse. A very poor substitute for Mercutio had a part in the play, but there was no equivalent for Tybalt.

A predecessor of Otway's Venice Preserv'd (1682), The History and

Fall of Caius Marius contains many of the same ingredients: political plots, uprising of the rabble, and unprincipled demagoguery; yet it retains unmistakable plot motifs from Romeo and Juliet, including the feud, the secret wedding, the magical potion, and finally, the drinking of poison at the tomb of Lavinia. Otway made influential changes in the last scene: following Bandello, he allowed Lavinia to awaken just after Marius Junior takes the poison and gave the lovers a dialogue before Marius dies. The balcony scene, the scenes between Lavinia and the Nurse, the farewell scene (now transferred to the garden), the potion scene, the scene with the Apothecary, and the tomb scene are to a large extent in Shakespeare's wording. In other scenes, however, Otway's alterations replaced much of Shakespeare's lyrical phrasing with prosaic Restoration language, complicated the plot with extraneous action, and omitted the ominous element of fate that hangs over Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers.

Never was there a more incompatible mixture of neoclassical and Renaissance language than in Caius Marius. Side by side with Otway's political scenes, spoken in elevated and "refined" Restoration speeches, we find the Nurse babbling as in Shakespeare, about Lavinia, going abroad with the Roman substitute for Peter, and playing Lavinia false at the end. Her Elizabethan prattle sounds odd enough in Rome, but not more so than Mercutio's Queen Mab speech as delivered by the Republican tribune Sulpitius, commander of the Martian guards. The Romans are struck now by a Roman thought, now by an Elizabethan, and, as in the following passage, they can pass at will from the sobriety of the republican stoic to the airy lightness of Shakespeare's gay Italians:

Sulpitius: Is not this better now than whining Love?
Now thou again art Marius, son of Arms,
Thy Father's Honour, and thy Friends' Delight.
[Enter Nurse and Clodius]
Marius Junior: Sulpitius, what comes here? a Sail, Sulpitius.
Sulpitius: A tatter'd one, and weather-beaten much
Many a boist'rous Storm has she bin toss'd in,
And many a Pilot kept her to the wind.
Nurse: Clodius.
Clodius: Madam.
Sulpitius: Madam.
Nurse: My Fan, Clodius.
Sulpitius: Ay, good Clodius, to hide her Face.[12]

Neoclassical critics in the next century had little charitable to say about Otway's "improvement." Elizah Haywood, writing on the "Adaptations of Romeo and Juliet" in The Female Spectator in 1745, allowed that Otway had "moderniz'd and clear'd" Shakespeare's play "of some Part of its Rubbish" but wished that the "same kind Corrector" had been somewhat more severe and had lopped off not only more superfluous scenes from the original, but whole characters, particularly those of the Nurse and Sulpitius, "neither of them being in the least conducive to the conduct of the Fable," and their speeches savouring more of comedy than of tragedy:

> It is methinks, inconsistent with the Character of a Roman Senator and Patrician to suffer himself to be entertained for half an Hour together with such idle Chat as would scarcely pass among old Women in a Nursery. Nor does the wild Behavior and loose Discourse of Sulpitius at all agree with the Austerity of the Times he is supposed to live in, or in any way improve the Morals of the Audience.[13]

For audiences after the Restoration Shakespeare's Apothecary was not seen as heightening the tragedy; rather, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as Haywood explained, "his meagre Appearance always occasions a loud Laugh." Such a character, therefore, was in her view incongruous to tragedy and "ill dispose[s] us to taste the solemnity of the ensuing Scene." Francis Gentleman, writing in 1770 during the age of Garrick, drew attention to the incongruous mixture of the Elizabethan love scenes and neoclassical political scenes in Otway's adaptation. Otway, in his attempt to paint "the tender passions," had transplanted whole scenes from Shakespeare's love-tragedy into his own plot of The History and Fall of Caius Marius, thereby producing, in Gentleman's view, "a most unnatural connection which only served to prove that in endeavouring to keep pace with Shakespeare he fell far beneath himself."[14]

On the stage, however, Otway's The History and Fall of Caius Marius was successful. Genest records performances as late as 1727, and The London Stage reveals that it continued to be acted in the first three decades of the eighteenth century, one or two performances in most seasons through 1727, the final performance in 1735.[15] Otway's play superseded both the original and Howard's adaptation and held the stage intermittently for more than fifty years. When Otway presented his adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, he could not have foreseen that his efforts would drive the original tragedy from the stage for sixty-five years or that the inclusion of a prolonged death scene between the two lovers would be the standard in performances of Romeo and Juliet for more than 160 years.

In 1744, "revised and altered" by Theophilus Cibber, Romeo and Juliet reappeared; finding himself momentarily as manager of the little Theatre in the Haymarket, Cibber launched a brief season with this drama on September 11, 1744. The revival of the "much admir'd Play of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet" proved so popular, especially among the high proportion of the audience who were women, that, the General Advertiser tells us, "Many Persons of Distinction were in Pit and Gallery, who could not find room in the Boxes, which were all bespoke" on the first night.[16] After ten performances, in which Cibber himself played Romeo and his daughter Jane, then not quite fifteen, played Juliet, the Licensing Act of 1737 was invoked by local magistrates under pressure from the patent managers, and Cibber's company was forbidden to perform.

Although Cibber was the first eighteenth-century producer to present an adaptation under Shakespeare's title and announced the great love tragedy as "not acted these hundred years," the play was far from the original.[17] Examination of the Cibber text, published (n.d.) probably in 1748, reveals, in a number of scenes, close adherence to the Shakespearean play, yet shows customary use of a free hand in stage adaptation. The text borrows occasionally from Otway's Caius Marius, takes a soliloquy from Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona, omits some scenes, shortens others, adds some lines, and, as in Otway, allows Juliet to awaken before Romeo expires. His adaptation excludes all that part of the original which relates to Romeo's passion for his first love Rosaline and all that relates to old Capulet's feast.

Cibber's opening scene, between Capulet and Paris, is found neither in Otway nor in Shakespeare; Paris fears that Romeo is the favourite of Juliet, but the wise father assures him "she knows not what is Love, Unless to love her Father, Mother, Kinsmen."[18] They hear the sound of the fray outside, and Lady Capulet tries in vain to keep her lord within doors. At the beginning of the next scene, the Prince immediately utters his warning to the heads of the rival houses, mid-century standards eliminating the inconsequential quarrelling servants. After the customary scene between Montague and Benvolio, we are treated to a long episode from Otway, Romeo protesting that his father had formerly selected Juliet for him and is now acting unfairly in forbidding the union. After the Nurse's babbling of Juliet's age comes another scene from Otway: Juliet pleading with Capulet (now not Metullus) against the marriage to Paris. Act I ends with Juliet remarking, "'Tis hardly yet within two hours of Day:/ I'll to my window which o'er hangs the Garden."[19] Because the lovers know each other already, the ballroom scene is omitted.

The second act begins with "a garden scene" and differs but slightly from Shakespeare's, but in the third scene, with Mercutio and Benvolio, Benvolio alone is made the recipient of the Queen Mab speech. The play now proceeds in Shakespearean order of word and episode until we reach Romeo's banished scene, in which, with slight alterations, Valentine's soliloquy on his banishment from Silvia in The Two Gentlemen of Verona serves Romeo very well for his own enforced banishment from Juliet:

> Romeo: O' Thou will speak again of Banishment!
> Death's more desirable than living torment?
> To die is to be banished from myself:
> And Juliet is myself, my Life, my Soul.
> Unless I be by Juliet in the Night,
> There is no Musick in the Nightingale;
> Unless I be by Juliet in the Day,
> The day grows hateful as the blackest Night:
> She is my Essence, and I cease to be,
> If not by her fair Influence kept alive.[20]

After the farewell of the lovers in Juliet's chamber, a long "angry" scene is introduced from Otway for Lady Capulet, again taking the place of Metullus. The longest inclusion from Otway comes in the tomb scene in which the awakening of Juliet is taken entirely from The History and Fall of Caius Marius.

As late as 1833 Cibber's version evoked positive responses from critics. John Genest that year in Some Account of the English Stage

1660-1830 summarized Cibber's major changes from Otway and gave a favourable account. Cibber's revival, he stated, "on the whole does him no discredit; his most severe censurer must allow, that he attracted the attention of the public to one of Shakespeare's tragedies, which in its original state had lain dormant for about eighty years."[21]

III

It was David Garrick's version of Romeo and Juliet, however, that proved to be the most enduringly successful production of the play since the Restoration; first performed in 1748, it was immediately popular and received twenty-one performances at Drury Lane that season, and two years later it was again revived, this time for nineteen performances.[22] Today a current play at a London or Broadway theatre may run for years, during which time it is acted every night and on frequent matinees. Different indeed was the situation in the eighteenth century. A run of nine or ten nights was considered good; fifteen, unusual. Moreover, a play did not always hold the stage for all the nights of its run consecutively, but was interchanged with stock plays and revivals of various kinds. The success of a piece must be judged not by the length of its initial run, but by the number of performances it had throughout the entire season and by the number of seasons in which it was later revived. Garrick's acting text exerted enormous influence on the stage presentation of Romeo and Juliet for over a century and was used, with only very slight variations, as the standard text in performance until the 1840's; some of its innovations were still in use in the 1880's. Garrick's version of Romeo and Juliet merits close examination, for a small group of actor-managers seeking restoration of Shakespeare's text on the nineteenth-century stage would mount battle against the long theatrical tradition established by Garrick's presentation of the play.

By the middle of the eighteenth century Garrick dominated the English theatrical world, becoming the greatest actor of the century and, as manager of Drury Lane, one of two theatres allowed a license in London, influencing the entire English theatrical world with his ideas. In the first decades of the eighteenth century over two thousand performances of Shakespeare had been given to London audiences, and the great, generally-known Shakespearean characters such as Hamlet, Othello and Lear belonged to the permanent repertoire of every distinguished actor. A great admirer of Shakespeare, Garrick did more in his thirty-five years at Drury Lane to popularize the playwright than anyone before him: from 1741 until 1776 he presented over 1400 performances of twenty-seven Shakespeare plays, producing at least ten plays each season.[23]

To the eighteenth century Garrick was "Shakespeare's priest" and little or no distinction was made between the two men: the actor-manager was received as the dramatist's heir and representative, self-entrusted with the mission of defending his ancestor's glory. "Shakespeare is not more admired for writing his plays," said Walpole, than "Garrick for acting them."[24] More than any other man, Garrick was responsible for enabling his audience to hear more of Shakespeare's actual lines spoken on the stage than at any time since their original productions.

> 'Tis my chief wish, my joy, my only plan,
> To lose no drop of that immortal man,

wrote Garrick in a prologue.[25] That not only theatregoers but also performers in Garrick's time were still generally unacquainted with the original Shakespearean plays can be seen in a contemporary anecdote from Garrick's first biographer, Arthur Murphy. When Garrick announced to his actors in 1744 that he would stage Macbeth "as written by Shakespeare," the phrase prompted James Quin's plaintive query, "Don't I play Macbeth as Shakespeare wrote it?"[26] Garrick replaced Davenant's flat language with Shakespeare and discarded the interpolated Lady Macduff scenes. These were indeed improvements. Nonetheless, he cut hundreds of lines from the original, retained Davenant's additions to the Witches, and added a moralizing dying speech for the hero.

Although it was Garrick's constant intention to restore to the eighteenth-century stage as much as possible of Shakespeare's own words, he was subject to the limitations both of his audience's and his own taste. Consequently, alterations were made to the plays that accorded with his own interpretations of how the plays should be acted or that he felt necessary to conform to the tastes of an age which mingled censure with its admiration for the great Elizabethan; the eighteenth-century critics, with their model of history as a progress of ever-greater refinement, had placed the century in the highest degree of culture yet known and, perhaps inevitably, regarded Shakespeare's age as one of barbarity.

Thus, when Garrick brought out his version of Romeo and Juliet in 1748, it was his purpose to return to what he considered to be a more authentic Elizabethan text than had been used on the English stage for over a century, and it became his challenge both to restore Shakespeare and yet to fit the play to the mid-eighteenth-century stage. Some of the changes imposed upon Romeo and Juliet by him were grounded in the tenets of neoclassical tragic theory. Although the "rules" had long been under attack and though the eighteenth century did not slavishly and mechanically apply them to Shakespeare, a pattern of critical belief approximating what we call neoclassicism nevertheless still exerted an influence upon eighteenth-century playmaking and, consequently, upon the alteration of Shakespeare. A change in the critical opinion regarding Shakespeare occurred in the first three decades of the eighteenth century when a gradual ascendance of praise over blame evolved. By 1744 Sir Thomas Hanmer, in the preface to his edition of the works of Shakespeare, was writing that the Elizabethan "does great honour to his country as a rare and perhaps a singular genius."[27] Nonetheless, the fundamental assumptions behind the "rules" were still largely in force, and in practice plays were judged by their conformity or non-conformity to these prevailing critical standards. Hence tragedies were praised for their excellence of plot construction, for their observance of morality, for the preservation of decorum of character, as well as the decorum of the genre itself--that is, no mingling of the comic and the tragic. Alterations from 1745 on, however, were much milder than preceding ones. Neoclassical theory seemed to have less weight than theatrical effectiveness in motivating changes, and much of a play might remain essentially unchanged. Instead of saving only the passage that was especially admired, the adapter now discarded only what was especially offensive. Whereas the earlier adapter was inclined to think of a play as a work of his own with borrowings from Shakespeare, the adapter of mid-century and later nearly always proclaimed his work as Shakespeare's "with alterations."

Samuel Johnson, pre-eminent among eighteenth-century critics, praised Shakespeare as a poet of nature who held up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life, and whose characters had universal truthfulness. It was his judgment that the scenes of Romeo and Juliet were "busy and various," its incidents "numerous and important," and its catastrophe "irresistibly affecting." The play, however, was not fully acceptable to him and the century's other critics without alterations to the language that Shakespeare had employed.[28] After Otway's presentation of the play in 1680, the drama was not presented on the English stage until Cibber's version appeared in 1744. David Garrick blamed this long absence on Shakespeare's use of "jingle and quibble, which were always thought the great objection to reviving it." His design, he stated in his 1748 advertisement to the first edition of his acting text of the play, would be to "clear the original, as much as possible," from this defect.[29] Both Francis Gentleman in The Dramatic Censor and Elizah Haywood in The Female Spectator compared Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet to a fine garden filled with "some beautiful flowers of genius"; Shakespeare's language, however, had caused the garden to become choked with weeds.[30] Critics generally felt that the language given to Shakespeare's characters was excessive, redundant, and suffering from the two extreme vices of bombast and quibble. Accordingly, Garrick made those alterations that he felt were necessary to fit the language of the Elizabethan dramatist to eighteenth-century standards of taste. Garrick's alterations fell into three categories: he omitted quibble (puns and plays on words), he cut a great deal of jingle (rhyme), and he substituted many words and phrases of his own.

Following Addison's criticisms the pun was now condemned as the lowest form of wit and thought highly inappropriate for serious drama.

Garrick, following mid-century critical opinion which blamed quibbles upon the uncouth nature of Shakespeare's age rather than upon the bard himself, set about eliminating the puns and plays on words he found in Romeo and Juliet. He omitted all the punning in the opening scene of the play, pruning all but four of the first thirty-two lines; he excised the extensive passage of wit exchanged by Romeo and Mercutio in the fourth scene of Act II (II.iv.51-97), and cut Mercutio's famous pun in Act III: "Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man" (III.i.92). In Act II Romeo's reply to the Nurse when she is sent to find him appears in Shakespeare as follows:

> I can tell you; but young Romeo will be older when
> You have found him than he was when you sought him:
> I am the youngest of that name, for fault of a worse.
> (II.iv.108-10)

Such passages, said Samuel Johnson, affect "a disproportionate pomp of diction, and a wearisome train of circumlocution."[31] In Garrick's play these lines simply became "I am the youngest of that name, for fault of a worse" (p. 106). Garrick's most important cuts of word play occurred in his abbreviating the love scene between Romeo and Juliet at the masquerade ball, but, in reducing the quibble, he lost some pretty love-making which turns upon the word-play concerned with "Saint," "Pilgrim," "Lips," and "Sin." Consequently, even Francis Gentleman was forced to comment upon the swiftness of Juliet's falling in love as a result of excision in the scene.[32]

The eighteenth-century theatregoers expected blank verse as the proper medium for tragedy; Shakespeare's occasional use of rhymed lines in his tragedies therefore posed problems for his adapters. Act-end and sometimes scene-end rhymes were usually retained because they were seen to fulfill a definite purpose; in Romeo and Juliet, however, the play's 498 rhymed lines were abundant enough to cause concern. Cibber had made some alterations to reduce rhyme, and Garrick now proceeded systematically to reduce a greater number of rhymed lines in the play, retaining scene-end, act-end and even speech-end rhymes for Romeo and Juliet, who were allowed a more "poetic" speech than the other characters. The revisions centered mainly on those 281 lines of the play that contained consecutive rhyme: the sonnets between Romeo and Juliet were therefore altered. Shakespeare's first dialogue between Romeo and Juliet begins as follows:

> Romeo: If I profane with my unworthiest hand
> This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this,
> My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
> To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.
> (I.v.91-94)

Garrick's version reads:

> Romeo: If I profane with my unworthy hand
> This holy shrine, the gentle fine is this.
> Juliet: Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
> For palm to palm is holy palmer's kiss.
> (p. 95)

Injury done to the play because of the cutting of rhyme was not great, inasmuch as Garrick's emendations of rhyming words amount to less than twenty-eight throughout the whole play.[33]

Shakespeare was often offensive to eighteenth-century tastes in his choice of words, one of the principal reasons being the alleged violation of the dignity of tragedy. Garrick therefore omitted from Romeo and Juliet various words that seemed unsuited to the elevated nature of tragedy, and substituted words that appealed more to mid-century rationalism: the Nurse's "dugs" became "breasts," "beast" became "wretch," and "knife" became "steel" or "dagger."

Language was judged advanced or primitive according to the degree of its clarity and its capacity to express abstract ideas. Because the critics of Garrick's age were convinced that excessively figurative language marked a primitive state of civilization, many strategies were employed to reduce Shakespeare's imagery in the play. All emotional expressions that seemed excessive and that worked on various levels were suppressed or toned down. Thus in

> These violent delights have violent ends
> And in their triumph die, like fire and powder
> Which as they kiss consume
> (II.vi.9-11),

Garrick altered "kiss" to "meet." Juliet's cry

> Prodigious birth of love it is to me,
> That I must love a loathed enemy
> (I.v.137-38)

was omitted entirely.

Thus, although the play prospered on the London stage in the eighteenth century on the basis of its emotional impact and drawing power, its text was cut to bring it into greater regularity with the prevailing standards of eighteenth-century criticism. Shakespeare's language, his more elaborate conceits, passages that seemed out of place in tragedy, and speeches which detracted from the decorum of Romeo and Juliet's characters were generally excised by the eighteenth-century promptbooks and acting editions. Much of the beauty and variety--indeed, the richness--of Shakespeare's language is in its ability to suggest, but the Augustans favoured reason over poetical fancy and the language was therefore often modified.

When Garrick presented Romeo and Juliet for a second revival at Drury Lane, he made further major alterations to Shakespeare's play;

these alterations in 1750 were, clearly, concessions to popular taste. Shakespeare's young lovers had long been regarded as symbols of ideal love, and for this very reason the eighteenth-century adapters of Romeo and Juliet felt that no blemishes should lessen the purity of the pair. In their view the theme of the play concerned not the caprices of love but the peculiar purity of emotion that is sometimes attributed to the young. The characters were therefore altered to conform to that idea. Garrick, however, in his Advertisement to the first edition of his adaptation in 1748, insisted that Shakespeare had dwelt particularly "upon the sudden change of Romeo's love from Rosaline to Juliet," and "so great a Judge of Human Nature, knew that to be young and inconstant was extremely natural" (p. 77). The actor-manager, nonetheless, conceded to popular taste and when he presented the play for a second run in 1750, he included the following advertisement:

> The sudden change of Romeo's love from Rosaline to Juliet, was thought by many, at the first revival of the play, to be a blemish in his character; an alteration in that particular has been made more in compliance to that opinion, than from a conviction that Shakespeare, the best judge of human nature, was faulty. (p. 79)

Garrick, consequently, in his presentation of the play from 1750 on, had Romeo love Juliet from the outset of the play and made no mention at all of Rosaline; in this alteration he was following Cibber, who had already introduced and popularized the change to the stage. Apologizing for his omission of Rosaline, Garrick told his readers "it is to be hoped that an alteration in that particular will be excused; the only merit that is claimed from it is, that it is done with as little injury to the original as possible" (p. 79).

Romeo's swift transformation from lover of Rosaline to lover of

Juliet was changed not because Garrick's audience might feel that such a hasty decision was unrealistic, but because the audience preferred Romeo and Juliet to be idealized abstractions that were esteemed in lovers. Romeo was given the opportunity to make clear his feelings shortly after his first entrance when, in his conversation with Benvolio, he said:

> This love feel I; but such my froward fate,
> That there I love where most I ought to hate.
> Dost thou not laugh, my cousin!--Oh Juliet, Juliet!
> (p. 87)

Francis Gentleman, who was at various stages of his career an actor, playwright and an editor of dramatic works, had much to say about Garrick's _Romeo and Juliet_. His contributions can be found mainly in a work he published in 1770, _The Dramatic Censor_, a series of essays providing a running commentary on many of Shakespeare's plays as they were acted; and in Bell's 1773 theatre edition of the plays, which Gentleman not only edited but also supplied with introductions and notes. No promptbook of Garrick's _Romeo and Juliet_ is extant. The text of the plays (twenty-four in all) which Bell printed in his Shakespeare edition was taken from the promptbooks used at either Drury Lane or Covent Garden, and thus it provides us, along with Gentleman's notes and comments, with an invaluable guide to what the eighteenth-century theatre esteemed or disliked in its Shakespearean productions. While dramatic reviews and commentary can often be ephemeral, and sometimes of little more use than to document actors and events of which we would otherwise have no record, the special value of a number of mid-eighteenth-century theatre critics such as Gentleman and Elizah Haywood is that they frequently evaluate performances by reference to a critical concept of how a play or character ought to be performed, according to their idea of what the author intended. That is, they attempt to define the spectrum of viable interpretations. In The Dramatic Censor Francis Gentleman approved of Garrick's omission of Rosaline, saying, "We must be of the opinion that the change of affection from Rosaline to Juliet is judiciously omitted, as it certainly served no purpose but throwing an imputation upon Romeo's constancy."[34] In an editorial comment made in Bell's Edition of Shakespeare's Plays, Gentleman went on to remark that "making no mention of Rosaline, but rendering Romeo's love more uniform, is certainly improving upon the original, notwithstanding the caprices of love."[35]

In its treatment of love Shakespeare's play encompasses two disparate views: idealistic love, as reverentially expressed in the religious imagery used by the young couple; as well as the contrasting bawdy, down-to-earth view of their sexual attraction. Because of eighteenth-century conventional delicacy and taste in idealized characterization, Garrick had Romeo talk only in such abstract exemplary terms as would befit innocent young love. Any sexual interests were therefore removed from the character. In Shakespeare's play, for example, Romeo expresses much of the lusty young man's frustrated sexual interest in Rosaline:

> She'll not be hit
> With Cupid's arrow; she hath Dian's wit,
> And in strong proof of chastity well arm'd,
> From love's weak childish bow she lives unharm'd
> She will not stay the siege of loving terms,
> Nor bide the encounter of assailing eyes,
> Nor ope her lap to saint-seducing gold.
> (I.i.201-07)

Garrick removed the double entendre, changed Romeo's attitude, and gave him a new cause for his frustration: the stars had not befriended him:

> she's fair I love:
> But knows not of my love, 'twas thro' my eyes
> The shaft empierc'd my heart, chance gave the wound,
> Which time can never heal; no star befriends me,
> To each sad night succeeds a dismal tomorrow,
> And still 'tis hopeless love, and endless sorrow.
> (p. 88)

The eighteenth-century portrayal of Romeo was summarized by The Dramatic Censor in these generalized terms:

> The hero of this piece is vested with very warm passions, with much love, and what in that case may well be expected little prudence; he fixes his affections upon a particular object, and determines to have her at any rate; the two valuable qualifications of courage and friendship he seems happily possessed of . . . ardent in affection, vehement in rage, poignant in grief.[36]

The same journal then happily concluded that Romeo "affords capital talents a fine opportunity of displaying themselves."

Juliet had no previous lover to be eliminated, but Garrick felt that Shakespeare's fourteen-year-old heroine was unrealistically mature. Accordingly, he altered Juliet's age to eighteen, a change that he felt would be more consistent with probability. Capulet thus explained to Paris that his daughter "hath not seen the change of eighteen years" (p. 86). The Dramatic Censor found Garrick's Juliet to be "tender, affectionate, and constant; possessed of liberal sentiments and delicate feelings."[37] Several of Juliet's lines in the third act had to be cut to remove allusions to physical love: such knowledge as these lines betrayed seemed inappropriate to the kind of character Garrick believed his audience wanted Juliet to be. In Garrick's play, for example, Juliet says of her unconsummated marriage to Romeo: "O I have bought the mansion of a love,/ But not possessed it" (p. 116); she does not continue in Garrick's version as she does in the original: "and though I am sold,/ Not yet enjoyed" (III.ii.27-28). With all reference to Rosaline deleted and with Juliet's knowledge of and interest in sex removed, "the two lovers were cleansed of any mark that might prevent their complete acceptance as symbols of ideal and idyllic young love."[38] As Robertson Davies rightly points out in his introduction to an analysis of the playwrights and plays of the period, the eighteenth century held a mirror up to nature, but, "like one of the convex mirrors of the period, was required to recompose the elements it reflected in a pleasing pattern, some things being brought very much into the foreground and others diminished almost out of existence."[39] Imitation of nature was to be the end of drama, but in eighteenth-century aesthetics, the imitation could be selective.

Throughout the first act of Garrick's version bawdy was eliminated. The opening lines between the servants and the bawdy dialogues between Mercutio, Benvolio and Romeo, for example, were all excised. Two passages at the beginning of the second act in which Mercutio speaks mockingly of Rosaline were deemed by critics as "unpardonably gross" and "not fit for readers to peruse or spectators to hear."[40] Lines such as the following were therefore excised:

> I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,
> By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,
> By her fine foot, straight leg and quivering thigh,
> And the demesnes that there adjacent lie.
> (II.i.18-21)

Edward Taylor, a neoclassic critic of Shakespeare, objected to the inclusion of bawdy on the grounds that it degraded the majesty and dignity of tragedy:

> It must be acknowledged that Shakespeare abounds in the true sublime; but it must be allowed that he abounds likewise in the low and vulgar. And who is there, that after soaring on eagle

> wings to unknown regions and empyreal heights, is not most sensibly mortified to be compelled the next moment to grovel in dirt and ordure.[41]

By far the most serious charge levelled against Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet in the eighteenth-century acting texts was that the play's tone of tragic intensity in action and incident was all too often destroyed. A number of critics felt that Shakespeare continually vitiated his tragedy by mingling it with comedy, or with characters or incidents fit only for comedy. Many instances in the play were viewed as violent intrusions upon the decorum of tragedy. Francis Gentleman, for example, expressed his displeasure at the Nurse's loquaciousness in the first act: "The nurse's trifling rhapsody of circumstantial nothingness, which although extremely natural, means nothing but to raise some laughs, which we deem highly disgraceful to the nature, bent and dignity of tragic compositions."[42] Idolized though Shakespeare was during the eighteenth century for his mastery in the depiction of passions and his creation of character from nature, critics had many complaints about his general offences against decorum. A great number of Francis Gentleman's notes on Shakespeare reflect the typical eighteenth-century stance of outrage against the "indecent" behaviour of Claudius in Measure for Measure, against the "infamously licentious" language of Mistress Quickly, and the "indecency" and "fulsome ideas" in Antony and Cleopatra, "rightly" cut in performance. The Daily Journal, a contemporary periodical, lamented that there was scarcely a play of this great man in which he did not "descend beneath him and play Defense to the reigning Barbarism of his times" and constantly throw "a Vein of low Humour, in complaisance of the low Capacities of the coarse Laughers of his Days."[43] Samuel Johnson was one of the eighteenth-century critics to offer an aesthetic defense to Shakespeare's mingling of tragedy and comedy, but even he felt that Shakespeare's comic scenes were not entirely pleasing:

> In his comic scenes he is seldom very successful when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners.[44]

Garrick's version of Romeo and Juliet shows a number of other structural changes. Despite a typically cautious approach in some of his other Shakespearean adaptations, in this tragedy he cut and added at will. All was accomplished, however, with a canny understanding of what his age would accept or permit. In this alteration he sought fast stage movement, while trying to keep as much of Shakespeare as possible. Garrick's changes include scene rearrangement, and a large number of line deletions and additions. Shakespeare's Act I is composed of five scenes containing 716 lines. Garrick considered the Prologue to be unnecessary, rearranged scenes, and, with many cuts, turned the material into an act of 456 lines divided into six scenes. To the lines of Shakespeare he added forty-two lines of his own which were necessary either to bridge gaps or to effect transitions for his new arrangement; his purpose here was to gain speed and clarity of movement.[45]

It was Garrick's practice in his Shakespearean alterations to increase the roles of the major characters and lessen the roles of the minor characters. In his version of Romeo and Juliet two of the older women suffered most: Lady Montague was cut entirely from the play and her few lines were given to her husband; likewise, Lady Capulet's speeches were reduced.

After the initial two performances of the drama in 1748, a new play notice was published, advertising the play "with a new Masquerade Dance proper to the play."[46] The masquerade scene, interpolated into the last scene of Act I, was obviously added to the play to please the audience with special music, choreography and costumes. Since the reopening of the theatres in the Restoration, the dance had become an integral part of many plays as well as an important form of entr'acte entertainment. In the season of 1662-63, for example, Pepys commented occasionally upon the vogue for dances in Shakespeare; on September 29, 1662, he saw the King's Company intersperse dances upon the scenes of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Many plays had dances as embellishment to the action including such operatic versions as Macbeth in which "The Dance of the Witches" elaborately mingled dance with song and dialogue. During the eighteenth century theatres regularly advertised "with entertainments of Dancing" as part of the bill, and each patent theatre during the Garrick period employed a ballet master, a premiere danseuse, and a company of from ten to twenty dancers. George Winchester Stone, Jr. records that one reason, among many to be sure, for the popularity of a number of Shakespeare's plays lay in their dance possibilities.[47] The interpolated "Masquerade Scene" in Romeo and Juliet seldom fails to be mentioned in playbills of the latter half of the eighteenth century, as a special attraction, and often playbills included information that the performance would include a minuet by Juliet and the leading dancer of the company.

In Garrick's production a large part of the acting company was involved and the text was cut even further. The verbiage in the first love scene between Romeo and Juliet was shortened; at this point, however, the two main characters had opportunity to reveal their growing youthful love by pantomimic action. George Winchester Stone, Jr.

describes the staging of this scene:

> Time was elongated for this. The text was made lean, but the burden of responsibility was not removed from the main actors. At this point they had opportunity for unfolding themselves in their growing youthful love by pantomimic action, in a location of prominence on stage against the background of the dancers and soft music.[48]

Stone cites as evidence for his description a set of five prints he found in the Folger Shakespeare Library, portraying scenes in Romeo and Juliet engraved by Mr. Ant. Walker (1754); one of these engravings is the Masquerade Scene.

The second and third acts of Garrick's play were kept essentially faithful to the original text of Shakespeare, Garrick, however, omitting the Prologue to Act II. The balcony scene, which in Garrick's play was presented as a garden scene, remained as a high point in Act II, but it too suffered some loss; of its 193 lines, Garrick cut seventeen, most of them from Romeo's speeches, and lines which displayed anything other than pure idyllic love were omitted.

Although Garrick was generally faithful to Shakespeare's text in the second act, he could not resist interpolating comic pantomimic stage business to make II.iv more entertaining to his audience. Francis Gentleman described Garrick's presentation of the Nurse and Peter bearing Juliet's message to Romeo:

> Stage policy, to lease the upper regions, generally presents Peter as bearing an enormous fan before his mistress; skipping also and grinning like a baboon; the beating which he gets for not resenting Mercutio's raillery is a very mean, pantomimical, yet sure motive of laughter.[49]

In the third act the scene between Friar Lawrence and Romeo was shortened; Romeo, as a heroic figure, was made to rant less about his banishment and Friar Lawrence was quicker to comfort him. Likewise, Juliet hurled fewer imprecations upon Romeo's head for killing Tybalt. For instance, no longer did she cry, "O serpent, hid with a flowering face/ Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?" etc. (III.ii.72-84). One hundred and eighty-three lines were cut from the lush Shakespearean verbiage in scene viii, in which Juliet finds she must marry Count Paris. In Garrick's play there was no bedroom scene; the parting of the lovers took place in the garden with little excision.

In Act IV cuts reduced Garrick's text to half the length of the original. The neoclassic dictum of unity of action required that not more than one thread of plot should be admitted into a play and that all episodes not strictly necessary to the design should be rigorously excluded. Servants, musicians, Capulet, Paris, and the Friar suffered loss because they were minor characters and the century's adapters were unsure of their dramatic functions, but nothing vital to the clear movement of the plot was omitted. Eighteenth-century theatregoers had developed a sense of order and expected each part to be in place and the totality to be not so complex that the relationship of the parts was not easily discernible.

It was in the fifth act that Garrick made his major alterations. Friar Lawrence, toward the end of Act IV in Shakespeare, asks Juliet's parents and Paris to "prepare/ To follow this fair corse unto her grave" (IV.v.91-92). In the 1750 revival of the play, at the opening of the fifth act, an elaborate funeral procession for Juliet was introduced in which appeared the following dirge written by Garrick:

CHORUS

Rise, rise!
    Heart-breaking sighs
The woe-fraught bosom swell;
    For sighs alone,

And dismal moan,
Should echo Juliet's knell.

AIR
She's gone--the sweetest flow'r of May,
That blooming blest our sight;
Those eyes which shone like breaking day,
Are set in endless night!

CHORUS
Rise, rise! etc.

AIR
She's gone, she's gone, nor leaves behind
So fair a form, so pure a mind;
How could'st thou, Death, at once destroy,
The Lover's hope, the Parent's joy?
CHORUS
Rise, rise! etc.

AIR
Thou spotless soul, look down below,
Our unfeign'd sorrow see;
O give us strength to bear our woe,
To bear the loss of Thee!

CHORUS
Rise, rise! etc.
(pp. 148-49)

Garrick asked the pre-eminent English musician Dr. William Boyce to compose music to his words, and the dirge, involving at least seven vocal parts, was then sung during the play's performances.[50] Many of Shakespeare's original texts have songs in them, testifying that music had already been a popular feature in dramatic productions during Elizabethan times. Opera now flourished; it was the age of the oratorio; choral and sacred music abounded. The great taste for musical drama affected many of Shakespeare's plays as they appeared on the Restoration and eighteenth-century stage, and the inclusion of additional interpolated songs and instrumental music was often required to maintain the success of Shakespearean productions. Theatres at the middle of the eighteenth century rang with music: three overtures to open each night's performance, entr'acte songs to change pace and atmosphere, background music for appropriate moods.

The taste for processions on the stage was well rooted in the English past and now Shakespeare's plays were often interpolated with further processions, accompanied by choral singing.[51] We are indebted to a foreign visitor, Count Frederick Kielmansegge, who saw a performance of Garrick's Romeo and Juliet in 1761, for a graphic description in his Diary of the staging of Juliet's funeral: "In the play an entire funeral is represented, with bells ringing, and the father and mother with their friends follow. The scene represents the interior of a church."[52]

Garrick's addition of the funeral procession seems to have been forced upon him by the news that such a procession and dirge at the rival patent theatre, Covent Garden, had been instituted.[53] A member of the audience commented in his diary: "Both ye houses play'd on ye same day Romeo and Juliet . . . both Houses too added a scene of Juliet's funeral."[54] Thereafter, playbills for performances at both theatres featured not only the Masquerade Scene but also the Funeral Procession and Solemn Dirge.

Critical reaction to Garrick's interpolated funeral was mixed. Count Kielmansegge's opinion was that "nothing of the kind could be represented more beautifully or naturally." It was his opinion that the funeral dirge and choir made the whole a ceremony rather "too solemn for theatrical representation" and he praised the English stage which he felt "has no superior in the world, and on which everything is produced with the highest degree of truth." The visitor went on to say that this effect could be attained more easily here than upon any other stage, owing to the quantity of actors, including dancers and singers, of whom fifty were sometimes to be seen on one night, whilst there were probably as many absent, and the quantity of different decorations, machinery and dresses, which were provided regardless of cost and with thorough completeness.[55] Other contemporary critics, however, pointed out the absurdity of Garrick's practice: obviously the spectators could not have the slightest twinge of fear and pity for the corpse which they knew to be on the point of waking as soon as it was laid in the tomb. Arthur Murphy made the following evaluation of the "long procession of monks, friars, etc. etc. etc, accompanied with musick" which passed over the stage:

> But what end is all this farce and show to answer? If it be calculated to please the ear and eye only, and not designed to have a proper tragical effect on the mind of the audience, nor contribute to the carrying on or denouement of the plot, it is absurd and ridiculous.[56]

Francis Gentleman, however, revealed Garrick's purpose in adding the procession and concluded: "Though not absolutely essential, nothing could be better devised than a funeral procession, to render this play thoroughly popular." Gentleman justified his remarks by explaining that "three-fourths of every audience are more capable of enjoying sound and show, than solid sense and poetical imagination."[57] The funeral scene, which would persist on the stage as late as 1884, was esteemed as a great attraction by both Drury Lane and Covent Garden, which vied with each other in the splendour of its staging.[58]

The circumstances of the introduction of the funeral procession bear witness to the competitive pressures of stage managership. Before 1750 the parts of Romeo and Juliet were played, under Garrick's direction, by Spranger Barry and Susannah Cibber, but for the 1750-51 season these two actors left Garrick's employ and, armed with Garrick's text and many of his ideas for stage presentation, opened the same play at Covent Garden. Garrick countered by hastily preparing to act the part of Romeo himself with a new promising actress, Anne Bellamy, as Juliet. The rivalry between the two theatres became fierce and centred upon acting abilities. Arthur Murphy reports that the public delighted in the rivalry: ladies of the audience stated that Garrick's passion was so fierce that they expected to see him climbing up the balcony, but Barry's voice so winning that any Juliet would surely wish to go down to meet him.[59] The veteran actress Susannah Cibber was esteemed as the first tragic actress of her time and was considered the better of the Juliets, her voice beyond conception plaintive and musical and her tenderness so natural that in pathetic parts she could not restrain her tears. Miss Bellamy, however, showed amorous rapture and had natural loveliness, and her youth and beauty favoured her in the earlier scenes of the play.[60]

Undoubtedly the most popular feature of Garrick's version of Romeo and Juliet concerned his addition of a seventy-five line death scene in Act V. In Shakespeare's play the star-crossed lovers never have opportunity to take a final farewell. Otway had introduced to the stage a scene in which Juliet awakens before Romeo dies from the effects of the poison. As Otway handled the scene in his The History and Fall of Caius Marius, Marius Junior swallows the poison and then, seeing Lavinia stir, believes he has joined her in life after death:

> [Lavinia wakes]
>
> Lavinia in the Tomb: Where am I? bles me, Heav'n!
> 'Tis very cold; and yet here's something warm . . . .
> Marius Junior: She lives, and we shall both be made immortall.
> Speak, my Lavinia, speak some heav'nly news,

And tell me how the Gods design to treat us.
. . . .
Lavinia: The Gods have heard my Vows; it is my Marius.
Once more they have restor'd him to my Eyes.
. . . .
Marius Junior: Ill Fate no more, Lavinia, now shall part us.
Nor cruel Parents, nor oppressing Laws
. . . .[61]

Cibber, recognizing the stage effectiveness of Otway's revised ending, borrowed Otway's death scene in total for his 1744 revival of *Romeo and Juliet*. Garrick, too, saw the theatrical possibilities of a farewell scene between the two lovers but decided to write his own version of such a scene for his adaptation. Garrick's addition, beginning at V.iii.118 in Shakespeare, is as follows:

Arms take your last embrace; and lips do you
The doors of breath seal with a righteous kiss.
Soft! soft! She breathes and stirs!

Juliet *wakes*.

Juliet. Where am I? Defend me, powers!
Romeo. She speaks, she lives! And we shall still be blessed!
My kind propitious stars o'erpay me now
For all my sorrows past. Rise, rise, my Juliet,
And from this cave of death, this house of horror
Quick let me snatch thee to thy Romeo's arms,
There breathe a vital spirit in thy lips
And call thee back to life and love! (*Takes her hand*.)
Juliet. Bless me! How cold it is! Who's there?
Romeo: Thy husband.
It is thy Romeo, love; raised from despair
To joys unutterable! Quit, quit this place,
And let us fly together. (*Brings her from the tomb*.)
Juliet. Why do you force me so? I'll ne'er consent.
My strength may fail me, but my will's unmoved.
I'll not wed Paris: Romeo is my husband.
Romeo. Her senses are unsettled. Restore 'em, heavn!
Romeo is thy husband; I am that Romeo,
Nor all th' opposing powers of earth or man
Can break our bonds or tear thee from my heart.

Juliet: I know that voice. Its magic sweetness wakes
My tranced soul. I now remember well
Each circumstance. O! my lord, my Romeo!
Had'st thou not come, sure I had slept forever;
But there's a sovereign charm in thy embraces
That can revive the dead. O honest friar!
Dost thou avoid me, Romeo? Let me touch
Thy hand, and taste the cordial of thy lips.
You fright me--speak! O let me hear some voice
Besides may own in this drear vault of death
Or I shall faint, support me!
Romeo. O! I cannot;
I have no strength, but want thy feeble aid,
Cruel poison!
Juliet. Poison! what means my lord, thy trembling voice?
Pale lips! and swimming eyes! Death's in thy face!
Romeo. It is indeed. I struggle with him now.
The transports that I felt, to hear thee speak
And see thy op'ning eyes, stopt for a moment
His impetuous course, and all my mind
Was happiness and thee; but now the poison
Rushes through my veins. I've not time to tell--
Fate brought me to this place to take a last,
Last farewell of my love and with thee die.
Juliet. Die! Was the friar false?
Romeo. I know not that.
I thought thee dead. Distracted at the sight,
Fatal speed! drank poison, kissed thy cold lips,
And found within thy arms a precious grave.
But in that moment--O--
Juliet. And did I wake for this?
Romeo. My powers are blasted,
Twixt death and love I'm torn, I am distracted!
But death's strongest--and must I leave thee, Juliet?
O, cruel, cursed fate! in sight of heaven--
Juliet. Thou ravest; lean on my breast.
Romeo. Fathers have flinty hearts, no tears can melt 'em.
Nature pleads in vain. Children must be wretched.
Juliet. O! my breaking heart!
Romeo. She is my wife; our hearts are twined together.
Capulet forbear! Paris loose your hold!
Pull not our heart-strings thus; they crack, they break.
O! Juliet! Juliet! (*Dies*.)
Juliet. Stay, stay for me, Romeo.
A moment stay. Fate marries us in death,
And we are one; no power shall part us. (*Faints on Romeo's body*.)

(pp. 143-44)

In his Advertisement to the third edition of his adaptation in 1753, Garrick felt compelled to justify this addition to the work of the dramatist he idolized: he explained that Bandello, the Italian novelist from whom he claimed Shakespeare had borrowed the subject for his play, had Juliet awaken before Romeo dies; Shakespeare did not read Italian, having taken the story from French and English translations, "both of which have injudiciously left out this addition to the Catastrophe," and thus he did not know the ending, to which certainly his better judgment would have given approval (p. 79). Acknowledging that Thomas Otway had made use of "this affecting circumstance," Garrick wondered why "so great a dramatic genius did not work up a scene from it of more nature, terror and distress." Such a scene, he declared, was attempted in his own revival of the play.

Arthur Murphy praised Garrick's ending and proclaimed that Otway had given his audience "nothing but unaffecting Conceits, which can never agitate the Passions." The scene as it now stood as written by Mr. Garrick had "not an Idea or Expression through the whole which is found ineffectual; so well has he judged of the natural force of unornamented Dialogue in Distress."[62] Murphy concluded that Garrick's superior ending "rouzes a variety of passions"; we are transported with joy, surprise and rapture, and, by a rapid change, we are suddenly overwhelmed with despair, grief and pity."[63]

During the first half of the eighteenth century there was an increasing preoccupation with what now seem to be sentimental effects; the audience's powers of identification with the characters were cultivated to a remarkable degree and it was now the goal of drama to "shock one's sensibility, whether it caused to be 'melted into tenderness the heart of every spectator,' or produced a feeling of terror."[64] Such a conception of tragedy was indeed far removed from that held in the days of Shakespeare. Instead of the varied passions of Elizabethan heroes and heroines, contemporary tragic characters were activated solely by love. From the Restoration onwards the love element, considered essential to tragedy, had therefore been expanded in most Shakespearean productions. Moreover, the human being in distress had become dominant, and the interplay of emotions had given way almost entirely to whatever would provoke a feeling of pity in the audience. In Shakespeare's tragedies, mid-eighteenth-century audiences found their chief pleasure in scenes that most readily provoked tears: the distress of Ophelia, the pitiable reunion of Lear and Cordelia, and the dying kisses of Juliet.

Eighteenth-century critical opinion considered pathetic situations to be useful devices because they demonstrated the goodness of the characters who withstood all trials and because they provided the spectator with an occasion for displaying his own goodness, since to be moved by the sight of virtue in distress was a sign of a properly sensitive and moral nature. Pity, considered a genteel emotion, was therefore a passion that might be freely indulged; indeed, indulgence in it was a mark of a superior spirit. The Restoration had been disturbed by the lack of poetic justice in some of Shakespeare's plays. By the eighteenth century, however, critical opinion was more in favour of Shakespeare's endings, as evidenced by Addison's defense in _The Spectator_:

> The Instruction and Moral are much finer, where a Man who is virtuous in the main of his Character falls into Distress, and sinks under the Blows of Fortune at the end of a Tragedy, then when he is represented as Happy and Triumphant. Such an example corrects the Insolence of Human Nature, softens the mind of the Beholder with Sentiments of Pity and Compassion, comforts him under private Affliction, and teaches him not to judge of Men's Virtues by their Successes.[65]

In the last scene of Garrick's version of Romeo and Juliet a splendid opportunity arose for the two main actors to display their greatest acting talents in wringing emotion from the audience. Garrick not only wished to make Shakespeare's tragic force yet more powerful, but also aspired to create for himself an opportunity of playing one of those sensational scenes of passion and death in which he excelled. The interpolated death scene was, accordingly, elongated with many contortions and groans as Garrick divided the scene up into its emotional components, punctuating and interrupting its flow with frequent pauses to indicate transitions of thought. After viewing Garrick's scene, Thomas Wilkes made the following judgment:

> His transition from the settled satisfaction of his presages, to silent horror and despondency in receiving the news of Juliet's death, the despair which he ever after maintains thro' the character, are as strong proofs as any I know of his judgment and abilities.[66]

This "whirlwind of conflicting passions," which exerted an intense appeal to the compassion and sentimental engagement of the audience, constituted the foundation of Garrick's remarkable art on the eighteenth-century stage.[67] Predominant weight was placed on intensified dramatic "effects" which emphasized a passion through the whole range of speech and actions, playing on the emotions of the audience through continued, artful variations. The breaking up of speeches was accompanied by a rapid succession of expressive attitudes, gestures, and mimicry.

Garrick's interpolated death scene in Romeo and Juliet gave scope, said John Potter, "for that sudden transition from rapture to despair which make the recollection that death is approaching infinitely more affecting and the distress of Juliet, as well as his own, much deeper than it stands in the Original Play."[68] Garrick's ending thus provided the skillful actor with an opportunity to make the most of a pathetic scene. The result was a stage piece that, although often satisfying to critical theorists, depended almost entirely upon the opportunities it offered for stage business or for the histrionic ability of a principal actor in a role specifically heightened for that purpose.

Even Garrick's stern opponent MacNamara Morgan acknowledged the pathos of Romeo's death scene, thus complimenting the actor-manager on his imagination and creativity: "Nothing was ever better calculated to draw tears from an audience. . . . The circumstance of Juliet's awakening . . . is perhaps the finest touch in any tragedy ancient or modern."[69] Francis Gentleman also expressed his delight in Garrick's conclusion to the play: "Criticism could never ever [meet] more melting incidents or expression, than the catastrophe of this piece furnishes. We deem it rather too great a strain for tender sympathy."[70]

Because the versions of Cibber and Garrick were the only ones acted with any frequency in the mid-eighteenth century, audiences were largely unacquainted with the real nature of the Shakespearean ending. Garrick cut extensively in the last act, mainly from the parts of Friar Lawrence, Paris and those people who appear in the tomb to view the dead lovers. The little-understood lines in which Friar Lawrence recounts what he knows of the circumstances that brought on the tragedy were almost entirely excised. Francis Gentleman approved of Garrick's deletion, maintaining that "Shakespeare has given the friar, here, a tedious circumstantial narrative of forty lines; cutting it off to five, is perfectly right, as the catastrophe is sufficiently wrought up."[71] Explanations by other characters at the end of the play were briefly given, Montague and Capulet became reconciled, and the Prince closed with

Garrick's lines:

> From private feuds, what dire misfortunes flow,
> Whate'er the cause, the sure effect is WOE.
> (p. 149)

Francis Gentleman, summarizing Garrick's presentation of Romeo and Juliet, said that the adapted play

> has many poetical beauties, expressed in smooth, nervous, agreeable versification, and takes, in several places, tender possession of the passions; it conveys very instructive admonitions, rises by just degrees to a Striking conclusion, and must be allowed the candid praise of great merit.[72]

Garrick's alterations in plot, characterization and language met the approval of Drury Lane and Covent Garden audiences well into the nineteenth century. From 1748 to 1776 Romeo and Juliet was the most popular tragedy in the two licensed theatres in London; by 1800 the play had received more than 450 performances, and was second only to The Beggar's Opera (1727) as the most frequently repeated piece of the eighteenth century.[73] Garrick continued to play the part of Romeo with great success until 1761, after this time relinquishing the role to younger members of his company. At Drury Lane Romeo and Juliet missed only one season between 1750 and 1777; and at Covent Garden the play was staged every year from 1750 to 1800 except during 1780, a striking proof of its popularity since no actor of eminence but Barry appeared in it there. Francis Gentleman, in his introduction to Bell's 1773 edition of Shakespeare, judged that it was Garrick's catastrophe, "so much improved" over the original, to which he imputed "a great part of the success which has attained this tragedy of late years."[74] The interest of the public carried on for years in the reissuing of three editions (1748, 1750, 1753) of Garrick's adaptation and a new printing appeared once every three years on the average from 1748 to 1789.[75]

The first four decades of the nineteenth century did little towards freeing Shakespeare's text of Romeo and Juliet in performance from Garrick's alterations. Thomas Bowdler's edition of The Family Shakespeare, completed in 1818, was in vogue with readers at the time and was dedicated to removing "words and expressions which are of such a nature as to raise a blush on the cheek of modesty."[76] It is rarely acknowledged that John Philip Kemble's text of Romeo and Juliet, "published as it is acted at Theatre Royal in Covent Garden" in editions ca. 1800, 1811, and 1814, was essentially that of David Garrick, with only very slight modifications; it was this text that was used on the stage by such famous actors as John Philip Kemble, Edmund Kean, and William Macready until the 1840's and that was presented in such dramatic editions as Oxberry and Cumberland.[77]

Garrick's adaptation of Romeo and Juliet not only proved popular with his own generation but was stageworthy through the greater part of the nineteenth century. His addition of the final death scene appealed to the melodramatic tendency in drama found throughout the nineteenth century and was used as the final episode in Gounod's opera, in which the lovers sing a duet before the curtain falls. For almost a hundred years Garrick's alterations as well as his additions of the Masquerade Scene, Funeral Procession and Dirge, and Death Scene were used in productions of Romeo and Juliet throughout England. C. B. Hogan points out that Garrick's alteration of the tomb scene was used as late as 1875 by Charles Wyndham and not discarded until Henry Irving's revival of the play in 1882; Garrick's funeral procession at the beginning of Act V was still used in Mary Anderson's production of the play in 1884.[78]

Even with all its alterations and additions, however, Garrick's was by far the best text of Shakespeare's play which was carried on the English stage from 1680 until the 1840's when Samuel Phelps presented his tradition-breaking restoration of the play. Garrick's pre-eminence did allow him to return more original Shakespeare to the theatre than any of his predecessors, yet the hegemony of the London stage during the eighteenth century meant that the split between stage and printed text was altogether more powerful than in the twentieth-century theatre. Garrick's was usually the most faithful version of Shakespeare that could be seen in performance on the London stage. On the other hand, fuller texts, which had always been available, not only became more easily accessible to the reading public throughout the course of the eighteenth century, but, through the textual work of Steevens, Warburton, Capell, and Johnson, among others, more faithful to the first folio text. Hence, the gulf between Shakespeare seen on the stage and the Shakespeare read in the "closet" was actually wider than it is today.[79] Modern theatre is essentially pluralist in its aesthetic approach; in Garrick's London, by contrast, two major companies dominated serious theatre, and at Drury Lane Garrick's was the definitive Romeo of his period.

Although it is commonly agreed that Garrick made the age "Shakespeare conscious," not always was the bard the only attraction: any survey of the calendar of performances will show the great amount of singing, dancing and music used in a night's presentation at a London theatre. One cannot understand the impact of eighteenth-century drama in the current of eighteenth-century life and ideas merely by reading the texts of the plays. One should bear in mind that an evening's entertainment in a London theatre in the mid-eighteenth century included a Prologue; a full-length five-act mainpiece; a spectacular pantomime or three-act farce (sometimes both) as an afterpiece; and specialty masquerade dances, songs, or pageants as entr'acte diversions. And it was the "whole show" that counted.[80]

Moreover, catering to the audience's passion for "sound and show," theatre managers during the eighteenth century introduced an increasing proportion of entr'acte music, dancing and lavish spectacle into productions. This trend, already discerned in the first decades of the century, is demonstrated by the following notice which the Daily Post carried in May of 1726, advertising a Drury Lane production of Macbeth

> with all Songs, Dances and other Decorations proper to the play; and several additional entertainments. viz. After the 1st Act, the Musette by Y. Rainton and Miss Robinson. After the 2nd, the 8th of Corelli's Concertos; after the 3rd, a Wooden Shoe Dance by Mr. Sandham's Children; after the 4th, a Dutch Skipper by Mr. Sandham; after the 5th, La Peirette by Mr. Roger the Peiror and Mrs. Brent.

That Garrick in his Romeo and Juliet presentations similarly conceded to theatregoers' apparently unquenchable thirst for spectacle and novelty has not been recognized by modern scholars, but can be seen from an examination of playbills for various performances of the play at Drury Lane. After the initial few performances of the play, Romeo and Juliet was advertised on December 3, 1748, with "a Dutch Dance" to replace the Masquerade Dance, as performed by the popular dancers Cooke and Anne Auretti. On April 18, 1750, the play was given with "the two Pierots," "Grand Scots Dancing" and "a Louvre and Minuet" at the play's conclusion.[81]

Garrick, by his own testimony, was an avid lover of Shakespeare and was driven, as Thomas Davies, his eighteenth-century biographer says, by a "passionate desire to give the public as much of their admired poet as possible."[82] Garrick's texts and stage presentations, however, as

George Winchester Stone, Jr. has remarked, reveal the dilemma of an eighteenth-century mind "caught between an ideal liking of Shakespeare and a canny understanding of box-office appeal."[83] Despite Garrick's professed love of Shakespeare he was the most active adapter of the mid-century, and some of his alterations to such plays as Romeo and Juliet may strike a modern reader as "extraordinary acts of vandalism" as John Barnard has indeed termed them.[84] Even some critics in Garrick's own time found his versions of Shakespeare to be mutilations of the original texts. In 1750 Arthur Murphy, for example, especially condemned Garrick, whom he considered a key theatrical role figure, for continuing to use Nahum Tate's greatly altered King Lear on the stage;[85] Samuel Richardson likewise used the postscript to Clarissa to exhort Garrick to have "the courage to try the Public Taste" on this topic by banishing Tate's verison.[86]

Such objections, among the first marked signs of dissatisfaction with the heavily transformed acting "vehicles" which still held the stage, were to be made for many years in vain. Many writers, such as Elizah Haywood in "On the Adaptations of Romeo and Juliet" (1745) actually preferred the adaptations, and even Arthur Murphy confessed to liking Thomas Otway's ending of Romeo and Juliet better than Shakespeare's: "I must confess that the additional scene in the last act between the two lovers in the tomb is very happily imagined, and excites both pity and terror, the two principal objects of tragedy."[87] Probably the strongest defence for the long tradition established by Garrick's version on the stage came from the performers themselves. Attesting to the great histrionic power of Garrick's version and showing that old allegiances in the theatre die hard, Fanny Kemble, the niece of John

Philip Kemble and daughter of Charles Kemble, could still state as late as 1879 that she preferred the Garrick-Kemble text of Romeo and Juliet over Shakespeare's: "I have played both; my father has played both; and I know which is best for the stage."[88]

NOTES

[1] This order is in the Journal of the House of Lords 12 Sept. 1642, as quoted in Philip Edwards et al., eds., *The Revels History of Drama in English* (London: Methuen, 1981), V, 61.

[2] E. S. DeBeer, ed., *The Diary of John Evelyn* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1959), p. 431.

[3] Document Dec. 12, 1660, as quoted in Allardyce Nicoll, *Restoration Drama, 1660-1700* (London, 1928), pp. 314-15.

[4] Gareth Lloyd Evans, *Shakespeare in the Limelight: An Anthology of Theatre Criticism* (London: Blackie, 1968), p. 23.

[5] William Davenant, *Macbeth, a Tragedy with All Alterations, Amendments, Additions and New Songs*, London 1674; in Christopher Spencer, ed., *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare* (Urbana: U Illinois P, 1965), p. 99.

[6] John Dryden, Preface to "Translation of Ovid's Epistles," 1680, in W. P. Ker, ed., *Essays of John Dryden* (Oxford, 1926), I, 237, 239.

[7] Nahum Tate, *The History of King Lear*, London, 1681; in Spencer, *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, p. 272.

[8] Bernard Grebanier, *Then Came Each Actor* (New York: David McKay, 1975), p. 26. Even Samuel Pepys, for all his addiction to reading, seems not to have owned Shakespeare's plays until the summer of 1664.

[9] John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*, 1708, eds. Judith Milhous and Robert Hume (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1987), pp. 52-53. Downes, who had long experience as a prompter in Davenant's company, published in 1708, as an old man, his memoirs of the stage, *Roscius Anglicanus, or an Historical View of the Stage from 1660 to 1706*, which provide an invaluable commentary on the theatre of the time. An interesting addition to the cast list is mention of "Count Paris's wife."

[10] Robert Latham and William Matthews, eds., *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1970), III, 39.

[11] Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*, p. 53.

[12] Otway, Thomas, *The History and Fall of Caius Marius* (London, 1680; rpt. London: Cornmarket, 1969), p. 27.

[13] Elizah Haywood, "On the Adaptations of Romeo and Juliet," *The Female Spectator* (Book VIII, 1745, ii), 90-93.

[14] Francis Gentleman, *The Dramatic Censor* (1770; rpt. Farnborough, Hants.: Gregg, 1969), I, 171.

[15] John Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage*, 10 vols. (Bath: Thomas Rodd, 1832), 1, 284; A. H. Scouten, ed., *The London Stage 1660-1800*, Part 3 (Carbondale: University of Illinois Press, 1961), II, 1.

[16] *The General Advertiser*, September 11, 1744. The adaptation continued to play to crowded houses throughout the fall.

[17] Scouten, *The London Stage*, Part III, II, 1117.

[18] Theophilus Cibber, *Romeo and Juliet*, "revised and altered" (n.d., rpt. London: Cornmarket, 1968), p. 4.

[19] Cibber, *Romeo and Juliet*, p. 13.

[20] Cibber, *Romeo and Juliet*, p. 37.

[21] Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage*, IV, 167-68.

[22] Statistics in Kalman Burnim, *David Garrick, Director* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1961), p. 127.

[23] George Winchester Stone, Jr., "Garrick's Significance in the History of Shakespearean Criticism." *PMLA*, 65 (1950), 186.

[24] Walpole, quoted in *The Sun*, March 13, 1808.

[25] Prologue to *Catherine and Petruchio*, in *David Garrick, The Plays of David Garrick*, eds. Henry William Pedicord and Frederick Louis Bergmann (Carbondale: Southern Illinois U.P., 1981), III, 191. *Catherine and Petruchio* is Garrick's adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*.

[26] Arthur Murphy, *The Life of David Garrick* (London, 1801; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), I, 71.

[27] Thomas Hanmer, preface to edition of *Works of Shakespeare*, 1744, I.vi; quoted in Brian Vickers, ed., *Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), III, 120.

[28] Walter Raleigh, ed., *Johnson on Shakespeare* (London: Henry Frowde, 1908), p. 188.

[29] David Garrick, "To the Reader." Advertisement to *Romeo and Juliet*, 1748, in David Garrick, *The Plays of David Garrick*, eds. Pedicord and Bergmann, III, 77. References to this work hereafter appear in the text by page number.

[30] Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, I, 171; and Elizah Haywood, "On the Adaptations of Romeo and Juliet," 90-93.

[31] Samuel Johnson, *Preface to Shakespeare's Plays* (1765; rpt. Menston, Yorkshire: Scolar Press, 1969), p. xxii.

[32] Francis Gentleman, Note, *Bell's Edition of Shakespeare's Plays* (1774; rpt. London: Cornmarket, 1969), II, 98.

[33] Statistics in George Winchester Stone, Jr., "*Romeo and Juliet: The Source of Its Modern Stage Career*," in *Shakespeare 400*, ed., James McManaway (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), p. 199.

[34] Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, I, 179.

[35] Gentleman, *Bell's Edition of Shakespeare's Plays*, II, 93.

[36] Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, I, 188.

[37] Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, I, 192.

[38] George Branum, *Eighteenth-Century Adaptations of Shakespearean Tragedy* (Berkeley: U California P, 1956), p. 121.

[39] Robertson Davies, Introd. to "Playwrights and Plays," *The Revels History of English Drama*, Philip Edwards et al., eds., VI, 160.

[40] MacNamara Morgan, "Letter to Miss Nossiter . . . upon her manner of playing the character of Juliet" (London: W. Owen, 1753).

[41] Edward Taylor, as quoted in Clarence Green, *The Neo-Classic Theory of Tragedy in England during the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1934), p. 167.

[42] Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, I, 175.

[43] Occasional Prompter # XXI, *The Daily Journal*, Feb. 11, 1737.

[44] Johnson, *Preface to Shakespeare's Plays*, p. xxi.

[45] Statistics in Pedicord, "Notes," p. 410.

[46] Stone, "*Romeo and Juliet*," p. 201. This play notice was for Thursday, Dec. 1, 1748. The play was first performed on Tuesday, Nov. 29, 1748.

[47] George Winchester Stone, Jr., *The London Stage*, Part IV, pp. cxxxv and cxlif.

[48] Stone, "*Romeo and Juliet*," p. 201.

[49] Gentleman, *Dramatic Censor*, I, 180.

[50] Stone, "*Romeo and Juliet*," p. 203. The music for this dirge has been found and is given in Charles Haywood, "William Boyce's 'Solemn

Dirge' in Garrick's Romeo and Juliet Production," Shakespeare Quarterly, II (Spring 1960), 173-88.

[51] Stone points out that plays were now often revised to include a procession, which was generally accompanied by choral singing. The Romeo and Juliet of Jan. 24, 1763, at Covent Garden, the rival theatre, is an example. The playbill called especial attention to the vocal parts and solemn dirge sung at Juliet's funeral procession by artists including Beard, Tenducci, Peretti, Mattocks, Miss Brent, Miss Poitier, Miss Polly Young, Miss Catley, Legg, Baker, Roberts, Mrs. Lampe, Miss Miller, Mrs. Jones--which calls the roll of about the highest musical theatrical talent of the period. (George Winchester Stone, Jr., The London Stage, IV, cxxxiv.)

[52] Count Frederick Kielmansegge, Diary of a Journey to England 1761-62, trans. Countess Kielmansegge (London: Longmans and Co., 1902), pp. 221-22.

[53] Tate Wilkinson, who played a torchbearer in a 1752 presentation of Romeo and Juliet, provides in his Memoirs of His Own Life (York: Wilson, Spenser and Mawman, 1790), I, 37, a playbill for Sept. 28, 1750, at Covent Garden. In the play "an additional scene will be introduced, representing the Funeral Procession of Juliet which will be accompanied with a Solemn Dirge. The Music composed by Mr. Arne."

[54] Cross in his Diary, October 2, 1750. Ms Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

[55] Kielmansegge, Diary, p. 221.

[56] Arthur Murphy [Theatricus], "Arthur Murphy on Romeo and Juliet," The Universal Museum, Oct. 1762, 571; Also in The Ladies' Magazine, 1750, II, Nov.-Dec.

[57] Gentleman, Dramatic Censor, I, 185.

[58] Perhaps the Covent Garden version was not as lavish or as well done, for another foreign visitor, Christlob Mylius, was not impressed when he saw it in the 1753-54 season: "The newly added scene, the burial of Juliet, is stupid and ridiculous. A bell is actually tolled on the stage. The costumes are mediocre and the decorations positively bad." Tagebuch seiner Reise nach England, cited by John A. Kelly, German Visitors to English Theatres in the Eighteenth Century (Princeton, 1936), p. 25.

[59] Arthur Murphy, The Life of Garrick (London, 1801; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), I, 192-94.

[60] The audience, however, soon tired of the exclusive diet of Romeo and Juliet, and the following poem appeared in The Daily Advertiser on Oct. 1, 1750:

'Well, what's tonight?' says angry Ned,
As up from bed he rouses:
'Romeo again!' and shakes his head--
'Ah Pox on both your houses!'

Mrs. Cibber at Covent Garden tired after the twelfth night and Garrick triumphantly staged a final performance at Drury Lane with Miss Bellamy.

[61] Thomas Otway, The History and Fall of Caius Marius, pp. 63-64.

[62] Arthur Murphy, London Chronicle, Feb. 12-15, 1757, 160.

[63] Arthur Murphy, Life of Garrick, I, 152.

[64] James Lynch, Box, Pit and Gallery: Stage and Society in Johnson's London (Berkeley: U California P, 1953), p. 280.

[65] Addison, The Spectator, No. 548, Nov. 28, 1712.

[66] Thomas Wilkes, A General View of the Stage (London: Coote and Whetstone, 1759), pp. 248-49.

[67] Samuel Derrick, Dramatic Censor (London, 1752), p. 68.

[68] John Potter, The Theatrical Review; or New Companion to the Play-House, 2 vols. (London, 1772).

[69] MacNamara Morgan, "A Letter to Miss Nossiter . . . upon her Manner of playing the Character of Juliet" (London: W. Owen, 1753). Miss Nossiter played Juliet to Spranger Barry's Romeo at Covent Garden in 1753.

[70] Gentleman, Note in Bell's Edition, p. 152.

[71] Gentleman, Note in Bell's Edition, p. 152.

[72] Gentleman, Dramatic Censor, p. 193.

[73] Charles Hogan, Shakespeare in the Theatre 1701-1800, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952-57), II, 716-17.

[74] Gentleman, Bell's Edition, II, 83.

[75] Stone, "Romeo and Juliet," p. 195.

[76] Thomas Bowdler, "Preface," The Family Shakespeare (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1807).

[77] See the text of Kemble in Charles Shattuck, ed., John Philip Kemble Promptbooks, Vol. 8 (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1974). Only very few alterations are made from Garrick's text by Kemble for taste, plus some bowdlerizations, e.g., the Nurse on Juliet's fall is cut. A few lines that Garrick left of bawdy are now excised, e.g., "By

Jesu, a very good blade! a very tall man! a very good whore!" is changed to "Ma foi, a very good blade!--a very tall man!--a very fine wench!"

[78] Hogan, Shakespeare in the Theatre 1701-1800, I, 405.

[79] In actuality, the editors and adapters generally agreed on Shakespeare's "faults," though the editors might shrug off these faults which the adapters tried to eradicate.

[80] George Winchester Stone, Jr., The Stage and the Page: London's Whole Show in the Eighteenth-Century Theatre (Berkeley: U California P, 1981), p. x.

[81] Playbills given in George Winchester Stone, Jr., The London Stage, Part IV, 91 and 102.

Because audiences were demanding an increasing amount of spectacular and superficial entertainment, and because the theatres themselves had to cater to the all-powerful desires of the general public, a manager was well-advised to cut his more serious productions in favour of what was sure to bring money into the house. In Fielding's Tumble-Down Dick (1744) a dialogue takes place between a theatre manager, Mr. Prompter; an actor, Fustian; and the stage designer, Machinist, which, although ironic, aptly illustrates the increasing importance afforded "entr'acte" features during Shakespearean presentations:

> Mach. But, Mr. Prompter, I must insist that you cut out a great deal of Othello, if my Pantomime is perform'd with it, or the audience will be pall'd before the entertainment begins.
> Promp. We'll cut the fifth act, Sir, if you please.
> Mach. Sir, that's not enough. I'll have the first act cut too.
> Fust. Death and the devil! Can I bear this? Shall Shakespeare be mangled to introduce this trumpery?
> Promp. Sir, this gentleman brings more money to the house, than all the poets put together.
> Mach. Pugh, pugh, Shakespeare!

(Henry Fielding, Tumble-Down Dick; or, Phaeton in the Suds, in The Complete Works of Henry Fielding Esq. . . . with an essay on the life, genius and achievement of the author by William Ernest Henley, London, F. Cass, 1967, p. 14.)

[82] Thomas Davies, Dramatic Miscellanies (London, 1783; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1973), II, 368.

[83] George Winchester Stone, Jr., "Garrick's Production of King Lear," Studies in Philology, 45 (Jan. 1948), 91.

[84] John Barnard, "Bottled for Public Taste," The Times Literary Supplement, March 19, 1982, 323.

[85] Arthur Murphy, "Free Remarks on the Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet," The Universal Museum, i (October, 1762).

[86] Samuel Richardson, "Postscript," Clarissa, Introd. R. F. Brissenden (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1964).

[87] Arthur Murphy, "Free Remarks," The Universal Museum, i (October, 1762).

[88] Fanny Kemble, as reported by Clifford Harrison, Stray Records (London, 1893), p. 132.

CHAPTER II

SAMUEL PHELPS: SHAKESPEARE IN HIS INTEGRITY

Londoners who had patronized the public theatres under Charles I not only found a far greater importance accorded music, dancing and processions in the new theatres, but also discovered conditions greatly altered after 1660 with such innovations as the employment of "scenes." In former times, says a writer of 1664, the public theatres were "but plain and simple, with no other scenes, nor Decorations of the Stage, but only old Tapestry, and the Stage strew'd with Rushes (with their Habits accordingly) whereas ours for Cost and Ornament are arriv'd to the height of Magnificence."[1] This statement today seems an extravagant boast, for we know from sources such as Philip Henslowe's diary and papers that simple scenic devices and properties as well as colourful costumes decorated the Elizabethan public stages; nonetheless, the embellishment of drama was greatly enhanced during the Restoration era by the addition of changeable scenes painted on wooden flats and shutters, an innovation borrowed largely from the Court Masque of the early Stuarts. Moreover, use was now made of devices, commonly called "machines," for creating rapid, and sometimes startling, illusions and eye-catching ascents and descents of chariots, angels, tables, and other objects. The employment of these devices was largely an influence from French drama, the "machine" plays of Corneille being one important source. The public theatres were now also roofed, with expensive seats in the "pit" where once the groundlings had stood, while the platform stage was less protuberant than before, and, during the next two centuries, would eventually become merely an extension beneath a proscenium arch within which much of the action took place.

Restoration changes in the structure and technical resources of the stage brought into view what seemed to the fashionable Restoration and eighteenth-century theatregoers the antiquated dramatic techniques of earlier playwrights such as Shakespeare who had been able to treat their material much more plastically, even loosely and episodically, than could their successors, who were writing for a stage decorated with movable painted scenery. As soon as scenic machinery became a routine accessory of the stage, theatrical managers, almost as a point of honour, arranged Shakespeare's dramas to fit the new conditions. The use of scenery may have delighted the eye and helped create dramatic illusion, but, as it became more elaborate, it also made frequent changes of place increasingly awkward and thus impeded the easy cinematographic flow characteristic of plays performed during Shakespeare's own time. Instead of the rapid tempo made possible by the Elizabethan use of multiple acting areas and little extraneous scenery, productions of Shakespeare from the Restoration on became increasingly cramped and retarded by frequent scene changes, laboriously contrived spectacle, and operatic music. Yet the change of public taste resulted, as the only alternative to Shakespeare's exclusion from the stage, in the obligation of bestowing on his work every mechanical advantage, every adornment in the latest mode.

During the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century other developments occurred in English theatrical conditions that were profoundly to affect Shakespearean productions. Already in

Garrick's time and until 1843 the London theatres were regulated by a patent system in which only two theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, were licensed to perform plays, which, of course, included Shakespeare and practically all of English drama. After the lively dramatic activity of the Restoration and much of the eighteenth century, English drama throughout most of the nineteenth century suffered a decline in both the number and quality of serious new plays offered. Prevented from performing anything more worthwhile, the management of the "minor" theatres presented trivial novelty and spectacle to the public. The common practice was to present pantomime or to circumvent the theatre licensing laws by performing farces, melodramas and burlesques, plays in which the dialogue was accompanied by music. Frequently, all these forms of spectacle, together with animal acts, would be presented on the same program. Hence the theatre often became a kind of variety show.

Larger and less literate audiences than in the previous century filled the theatres. In the prologue to Mrs. Inchbald's _To Marry or Not to Marry_ (1805) Mr. Taylor urged the authoress' "anxious hope . [illegible] ill to find/ Some useful moral for the feeling mind."[2] Such an in[illegible] might tempt the more genteel playgoer of the eighteenth century, but now most of the writers for the theatre worked for all the emotional and sensational effects possible. In a mid-century adaptation of Dickens' _Oliver Twist_, for example, the following treatment of the scene of Nancy's murder shows the taste of both performers and audience in the popular theatre: "Nancy was always dragged round the stage by her hair, and after this effort Sykes always looked up defiantly at the gallery . . . . He was always answered by one loud and fearful curse, yelled by the whole mass."[3] All the emotional and visceral effects of the popular theatre--the violence, the macabre, the focussing of strong feeling on the monstrous villain, the audience's emotional response, the mixture of horror and theatrical thrill--are suggested by this performance and its response. It is a graphic illustration of what was commercial and thus successful during most of the nineteenth century.

Serious dramatists could seldom compete with this kind of theatrical spectacle. Shakespeare could compete with bear-baiting pits next door to the Globe, or the slaughterhouse drama of his Jacobean contemporaries, but not with an audience that was unwilling to listen to long speeches, or wanted a variety show of fast-moving entertainment that startled the eye and did not make great demands on the ear or intellect. Sensational effects moved into the two patent theatres and by the time the patent law was repealed in 1843, the use of these effects had become an important part of Shakespearean performances in most theatres.

To accommodate the growing audiences, theatres at the end of the eighteenth century were enlarged, some seating more than three thousand people. The enlargement of the theatres created practical problems: soft voices could not be heard; rapid speech could not be understood; and facial expression, subtle gesture and the fine nuances of delivery had to be omitted or exaggerated. Thus the actors were driven into a slow, heavy enunciation, with each phrase marked off by strong pauses. Because the forestage was shrinking, rapport between actor and audience diminished and with that lost rapport went loss of interest in plays depending a great deal on language for their theatrical effect. In conjunction with scenic interest there was an increased emphasis on broad gesture, eye-catching stage action, and clever stage devices.

As the feeling of direct personal contact weakened, the desire for stage illusion was regularly gratified at performances of legitimate theatre and, as the century progressed, nineteenth-century taste insisted that the scenery and properties should be as life-like as possible. Designers like William Capon (1757-1827) responded to the demand by introducing massive three-dimensional pieces--used in conjunction with side flats, black cloths, and hangings--into their settings. The pieces were often difficult to move, with the result that frequent delays occurred even within the progress of a single act. Producers attempted to recover the time lost in shifting scenes by drastically cutting the plays. These cuts, together with the inherited excisions of Restoration and eighteenth-century adapters, and the temporary distortions occasioned by a star actor's vanity, often reduced the heroic sweep of the major Shakespearean tragedies to a patchwork of short and ill-connected scenes. The problem increased rather than diminished as time passed. Great star performers emerged such as Charles Kemble, Edmund Kean, William Macready, and Charles Kean, who appeared in crudely abbreviated "acting versions" of the major dramas, heavily mounted in an increasingly illusionistic style.

II

It was this 180-year tradition of spectacle, sensationalism, and textual manipulation in productions of Shakespeare that the actor-manager Samuel Phelps inherited when he assumed management at Sadler's Wells Theatre and within which his Shakespearean productions from 1841 to 1862 stand out in marked contrast. Phelps' production of Romeo and Juliet in 1846 would constitute the first significant departure from the long history of damaging staging conventions and textual emendations introduced to that play in performance since the Restoration and exemplified most strongly in the presentation of the play by David Garrick.

It is unjust that Phelps' name is relatively little known today and the place accorded him by theatrical historians usually a minor one, for his accomplishment was prodigious and in his own time critics ranked him with David Garrick, John Philip Kemble, Edmund Kean, and William Macready. Among reviewers of his time who considered him the best Shakespearean actor on the stage were John Heraud of the Athenaeum, Douglas Jerrold of Punch, Henry Morley of the Examiner, John Oxenford of the Times, Bayle Barnard of the Weekly Dispatch, and F. G. Tomlins of the Advertiser, all of whom were literary critics or playwrights as well as theatrical reviewers. His contemporaries justly recognized him as a great actor and acknowledged the originality of his interpretations. Much of Phelps' success was the result of his extraordinary versatility as an actor, a flexibility which caused the actor-manager Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, who trained under him, to assert that he was equally successful in tragedy, character parts, and high and low comedy.[4] "Within the last century," declared John Towse in 1916, after sixty years of reviewing theatrical performances, "no player on the English-speaking stage has demonstrated a versatility even approaching that of Phelps"; with the possible exception of Salvini, Phelps was "incomparably the finest actor" Towse had ever seen.[5]

Towse suggests that one reason why Phelps' reputation by 1916 had already declined was because he had shunned the social limelight and never gained or sought admission to those charmed circles in which other actor-managers like William Macready preferred to bask.[6] Shirley Allen, in the only major modern study accorded Phelps, adds that "the absence of royal patronage and lack of interest in Sadler's Wells shown by the social class which traditionally had been the chief support of the English stage prevented Sadler's Wells from achieving full recognition." Because of these factors, Phelps' career as an actor and his management at Sadler's Wells have both suffered an undeserved obscurity.[7] Today, in making a study of Phelps' Shakespearean productions such as Romeo and Juliet, one can piece together from the many contemporary accounts, most of them in the form of reviews in periodicals and anecdotes in theatrical memoirs, the production theories and practices instituted by this great actor-manager, from which one can clearly see the many valid reasons why he was given the highest esteem by some of his more sensitive contemporaries.

Phelps' success as a theatrical manager is unique in stage history, his management at Sadler's Wells one of the few economically successful managements of the Victorian period. At that theatre he produced thirty-one Shakespearean plays in eighteen years for a total of 1600 nights, supplemented that unrivalled achievement with such noteworthy additions as the Stuart dramas of Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and Webster, depending solely on the patronage of a popular audience and making the adventure a profitable one. Phelps used techniques of staging that achieved illusion without the excessive realism which had begun to dominate the theatre. In a number of Shakespearean productions, Romeo and Juliet among them, he replaced the acting versions used for 150 years as improvements upon Shakespeare's work with Shakespeare's folio texts. He discarded the star system of acting Shakespeare, bringing back to the stage the parts of minor characters. More than fifty years before the turn of the century, Phelps applied to his Shakespearean productions the methods of directing which have become standard in the best twentieth-century productions, imposing his own conception of a play and supervising both acting and staging to carry out his intention. At the same time he made his theatre a training school for actors, providing both instruction and the opportunity to progress from the lowest ranks of a repertory company to a position of importance. By developing his actors to their greatest ability and, more importantly, by training them to act harmoniously together for the welfare of the whole enterprise, he gave new emphasis to the total effect of the play. All of these noteworthy achievements were accomplished during a period in which the majority of modern critics believe the English theatre had reached its lowest ebb. Sadler's Wells became, as Henry Irving with great admiration later expressed it, "by force of mere popular success, a classical national theatre, more truly than was ever established by means of royal patronage or imperial subventions."[5]

As a young man, Phelps had years of apprenticeship in the theatres of Yorkshire. He thoroughly learned his trade in the excellent school of a repertory company where versatility and quick mastery of new parts were demanded; he learned from experienced actors the traditional interpretation of important roles and the stage business handed down from previous generations; and he spent his afternoons in voice training, practice in reading poetry, and the study of plays. Gradually he developed his own style of acting and became sufficiently experienced in stage practice to qualify for leading Shakespearean roles. By 1844 he was a metropolitan actor of seven years' standing and had already been acclaimed by fashionable London as the most promising young actor on the English stage. Even Macready, the leading English actor of the time, feared that Phelps would assume his place and did all he could to prevent the young actor from appearing in major roles in the patent theatres.[9]

In 1843 the theatrical monopoly was repealed, and in 1844 Samuel Phelps, having courageously assumed management of the unfashionable Sadler's Wells Theatre in north London, became the first London manager to take advantage of the New Theatre Regulation Act by which all theatres were now enabled to do what the patent theatres had been privileged to attempt: the performance of the five-act poetic drama. Sadler's Wells, a minor theatre, could now legitimately become a home for Shakespearean drama.

Before his opening night Phelps, armed with a strong conviction of how classic drama should be performed on the stage, circulated in the neighbourhood handbills on which he and his partner Mrs. Warner outlined the policy of the new management at Sadler's Wells. It was their hope, they stated, of "constantly rendering it what a Theatre ought to be; a place for justly representing the works of our great dramatic poets." Furthermore, for the north of London they offered entertainment "selected from the first stock drama in the world," in a theatre smaller than the patent theatres and "where all can see and hear," at a price "within the habitual means of all."[10] Lastly, it was their desire to make Sadler's Wells Theatre "the resort of the respectable inhabitants of the neighbourhood, for the highest purpose of theatrical entertainment."[11]

The undertaking was, indeed, a bold venture. Sadler's Wells Theatre, in Islington, was miles away from the fashionable theatres of London's West End. Moreover, the long-standing reputation of the theatre as a place of low amusements, in Charles Dickens' words, "a bear-garden resounding with foul language, oaths, catcalls, shrieks, yells, blasphemy, obscenity" and "as ruffianly an audience as London could shake together," removed it from consideration as a home for poetic drama.[12] In the early 1800's immense water tanks had been placed under and above the stage for aquatic spectaculars; sea stories with "real vessels floating in real water" could be given with such spectacular effects that for thirty years Sadler's Wells became the home of "nautical drama." It was a theatre for clowns, acrobats and sensational melodramas, not for serious presentations of Shakespeare.[13]

Within a very short time of Phelps' takeover of Sadler's Wells, however, the rougher members of the audience had been expelled and the theatregoers had become noticeably different in character from those who had patronized the theatre a few weeks earlier. The audience was still a local one but it had lost at least the more vulgar elements of former audiences and probably now included many new patrons who had not previously been attracted to Sadler's Wells. Richard Lee, who was among the spectators for the initial production of Macbeth, related that the audience "was hushed by its attention to the action of the tragedy to such perfect stillness as quickened the sense to hear the faintest whisper from the stage." The initial representation of Macbeth proved to be a complete success and melodrama "was joyfully eliminated from the scheme of the management." Henceforth the legitimate drama reigned in its stead.[14]

The Theatrical Journal followed the affairs of Sadler's Wells closely and in reviewing a performance of Othello in the second week of Phelps' management it found that as convincing proof of the intense interest the audience took in witnessing legitimate drama, "the play was listened to with the greatest attention, even by the audience in the sixpenny gallery, who it is said, have no taste for the drama, and who cannot comprehend the plays of Shakespear" (June 8, 1844). In the following weeks The Weekly Dispatch was able to report that Sadler's Wells had not been so well attended for many years and that often the proprietors were obliged to issue tickets to hundreds of people for other evenings. By the end of the first month of Phelps' management the journal could not help contrasting the differences between the present entertainments and those which used to be given in the theatre. In previous dramas, it said, "all was one direct appeal to the eyes" and the mind "was not elevated by reflection or excited to emulation." The journal congratulated Phelps who was obviously moved by "a higher sense of general improvement and national character" (June 30, 1844).

Within a few months Sadler's Wells, not Drury Lane or Covent Garden, began to be regarded by critics as the real centre for legitimate drama in London. The Athenaeum, in comparing Phelps' Macbeth with that of Macready, had found Macready's to contain "too much artifice" and had complimented the "straightforward and right earnest energy of Mr. Phelps' acting" (June 1, 1844); moreover, it found Mr. Phelps' Hamlet "an exceedingly natural impersonation, without exaggeration of manner or anxiety to make points; but marked occasionally with passages of very beautiful elocution" (Aug. 3, 1844). Of Phelps' performance of King John, one reviewer astutely observed the following:

> He has more real genius in him than any actor of our time and it is now making itself manifest. A small theatre is the true test of an actor's genius. Tricks won't do there, all must be

> genuine; and therefore it is that really great actors are always greatest and the most enjoyable where they are the centre upon which eye and ear are absorbed.[15]

John Bull congratulated the "excellent company now established at this theatre" which had converted a place of entertainment dedicated to spectacle and buffoonery "into a home for the Tragic Muse" (Nov. 16, 1844).

At Sadler's Wells Phelps found an audience that must have surpassed his highest hopes. The audience perhaps lacked the discrimination of the experienced playgoer, but it was free of his prejudices, and an initial deference to Phelps' judgment indicated a willingness to learn. Reviewers were surprised that the kind of audience which patronized Sadler's Wells could understand and enjoy serious drama, and they spoke with wonder of the workingmen, shopgirls, tradesmen, clerks, "and innumerable kinds of wage earners" who thronged the theatre and seemed better able to appreciate Shakespeare than the wealthy and fashionable audiences of the West End.[16] Phelps' audiences hailed his productions with enthusiasm and soon learned to applaud them with discrimination. Before long they furnished the most exacting Shakespearean audiences in London. That the spectators came to display an aesthetic appreciation far superior to that of most audiences is confirmed by many commentators. Sir Henry Irving long afterward described the intermissions at Sadler's Wells as "one humming aesthetic debating party" where members of the audience discussed the merits of play and cast.[17]

Henry Morley, whose reviews are the most comprehensive and astute of the time, frequently visited Sadler's Wells; he noted that the behavior of Phelps' audience after a few seasons revealed not only a discriminating appreciation but also knowledge of the texts of the plays.

In a review of a performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream, Morley commented that the play abounds in the most delicate passages of Shakespeare's verse. The Sadler's Wells pit was crowded with a most earnest audience among whom "many a subdued hush arose, not during, but just before, the delivery of the most charming passages."[18] The Athenaeum, in reviewing a revival of Macbeth, similarly remarked upon the numerous spectators "who with book in hand, followed every verse of the poem as pronounced by the actor, sometimes criticizing the form of expression, and always attentive to the lights and shades of emphasis" (March 3, 1855).[19] In drama Sadler's Wells audiences preferred the poetic to the frivolous and sensational; in acting they preferred the intellectual and natural to the melodramatic and artificial. The Athenaeum, seeking to explain the great success of Phelps' production in 1845 of The Winter's Tale, not generally a popular play on the stage, said, "The most poetical have uniformly been the most successful pieces, such is the advantage of a small theatre" (Dec. 6, 1845).

By the time that Romeo and Juliet was presented on September 26, 1846, in Phelps' third season at Sadler's Wells, he had firmly established the policy that was to make his eighteen years at Sadler's Wells a repertory achievement unique in the history of the British theatre. Financial necessity kept Phelps from expensive decoration and the reluctant long run which were characteristic of the productions of other contemporary actor-managers such as William Macready and Charles Kean. Phelps was forced to keep his prices low for his Islington audience and had to use the repertory system to keep regular patrons interested. Consequently, bills were changed frequently and no long run of any one piece was permitted. The simplicity and economy of staging forced upon Phelps by financial restraints challenged him to produce plays in a way that earned the praise of critics while it kept his management financially successful. Charles Dickens, who had enthusiastically viewed Phelps' efforts at Sadler's Wells, commented in a letter of appreciation to the actor-manager that "the excellent sense, taste, and feeling manifested throughout; the great beauty of all the stage arrangements; and the respectful consideration (so to speak) shown by everyone concerned, for the creation of the poet, gave me extraordinary gratification."[20]

The essential attitude of critics for over a hundred years after the Restoration toward the function of decoration in the drama had been aptly expressed in 1755 in John Hill's The Actor: "Something is necessary . . . but too much is faulty . . . because we would not have them engross the attention which is more due to the players."[21] By 1806, however, Richard Cumberland, in a characteristic critical complaint that would be repeated many times during the course of the nineteenth century, was ruefully noting that "the splendour of the scenes, the ingenuity of the machinist, and the rich display of dresses, aided by the captivating charms of music now in a great degree supercede the labours of the poet."[22] Charles Lamb in 1811 complained that the "elaborate and anxious" provision of scenery worked a quite contrary effect to what was intended. A garden or a street, he said, "does well enough in a scene; . . . we think little about it; . . . we do not imagine ourselves there." All these "non-essentials," declared Lamb, had been "raised into an importance injurious to the main interest of the play."[23] Nonetheless, William Macready, actor-manager at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane during his career, stated his theory of staging, typical of the time, as "truth of illustration" and the transfer of the picture from the poet's mind to the stage.[24] Consequently, Macready in 1838 felt justified in omitting the entire first scene of Shakespeare's The Tempest and substituting for Shakespeare's poetic description of the storm, a spectacular fully rigged ship on the stage at Covent Garden, veering and heeling according to the wind and the operation of its crew.

Many times during Phelps' management reviewers compared Phelps' staging favourably with Macready's lavish spectacles. While critics sometimes wished for "greater picturesque effect" in Phelps' Shakespearean productions, they acknowledged that they could more easily dispense with spectacle than with "simplicity and truthful-earnestness" (Athenaeum, Aug. 28, 1847). The Morning Chronicle noted that "in point of pageantry, some of Macready's Shakespearean revivals may have been more gorgeous; but we question whether, even in these cases, the resources of Drury Lane were handled with the tact, taste and effect which the management of the smaller theatre have shown in bringing their more limited means into operation" (Sept. 28, 1847). Henry Morley found that at Sadler's Wells "the scenery is very beautiful but wholly free from the meretricious glitter now in favour; it is not so remarkable for costliness as for the pure taste with which it and all the stage arrangements have been planned" (Examiner, Oct. 15, 1853; JLP 58).

Phelps differed from Macready, and even more from Charles Kean whose spectacular Shakespearean settings in the 1850's would be widely lauded, in that he did not aim all his efforts at realism in his settings, nor did he allow the scenery to overshadow the actors. Macready's King John placed such an emphasis upon pictures of life in medieval times that most reviewers treated his production as a spectacle rather than a drama, devoting their comments largely to a description of the scenery. In reviews of Phelps' productions, by contrast, critics typically referred only briefly to the "appropriate and beautiful" scenery, the "effective grouping" and the "picturesque" costumes and then focussed their reviews on the acting of Phelps' company. Although the trend toward realism may have been furthered by Phelps' staging, the concept of a realistic milieu in which life-like action should take place would have been nearly as foreign to Phelps as to Garrick. Ideas of appropriateness in scenery and costume had changed since Garrick, who had played Shakespearean roles in powdered wig and frock coat, but Phelps would equally have deplored the limitations imposed upon the actor's freedom and the spectator's imagination by the use of realistic settings.

Although a smaller stage area, as well as limited resources, in part restricted Phelps from the sumptuous embellishments and gorgeous splendour of previous, and indeed, of later Shakespearean revivals, Phelps made up for these by giving careful staging to every play.[25] An unusual feature at Sadler's Wells was the stage doors which stood prominently at either side of the stage in front of the proscenium arch; few London theatres still possessed these relics of the earlier English stage and generally they had long since fallen out of use once the demand for increased realism had forced actors to retreat behind the fall line of the curtain. Moreover, at Sadler's Wells there was still a forestage jutting forward into the audience. As a result of these features much of the action still took place in front of the curtain fall line, close to the audience. To change a scene, a pair of shutters could be rolled on the floor grooves from each side of the stage until they met in the centre; for the next scene the pair might be removed to disclose a new setting. The canvas backcloth could be arranged to roll from side to side, giving a panoramic effect, or it could be dropped to reveal a new painted background. Phelps used this stage with ingenuity and imagination to solve the problems posed by Shakespearean plays such as Romeo and Juliet in an age that demanded beautiful scenery with some semblance of reality. Changing scenery in full view of the audience, Phelps did not usually lower the curtain until the end of each act and kept the intermissions between acts to a maximum of five minutes. By avoiding complicated and expensive stage machinery and the inflexible box set, Phelps also avoided the necessity of cutting large chunks and even entire scenes out of Shakespeare's plays. Stage effects at Sadler's Wells, therefore, were not exploited to the detriment of the spoken word.

Phelps' settings were appropriate, planned with an eye for the whole stage picture, and newly designed for each important production. Romeo and Juliet was no exception and playbills for September 16, 1846, announced the play with "new Scenes, Dresses, and Decorations."[26] The Theatrical Journal, speaking of the "innumerable opportunities" which Romeo and Juliet offered "for striking scenic effects, tasteful grouping and elegant costume," declared that "there is scarcely a play in the dramatic literature of Europe which affords such scope for the scene-painter, costumier, and mechanist of our theatre," and the journal complimented Phelps for his "carefully managed and tastefully arranged scenery" (Dec. 5, 1846).

Phelps had been fortunate in securing the services of an unrivalled troupe of experienced and admirable artists at small salaries. The Theatrical Journal reported that for Phelps' production of Romeo and Juliet the scene painters Finley and Fenton had shown themselves "inferior to none in the art of scene painting" and the journal found that "the scenes, almost a panorama, of Verona, the ballroom, the garden, the bedroom, and the last scenes are the most perfect specimens of scenic magnificence." In fact, concluded the journal, "the tout ensemble is entirely novel. The dresses are gorgeous in the extreme, and the liveries of the rival houses are conspicuously shown" (Oct. 3, 1846). Singling out for special commendation "the different night views" in this production, the Illustrated London News concluded that the tragedy was "admirably mounted" and the scenery "of a very superior kind" (Sept. 19, 1846).

Critics, however, consistently pointed out that at Sadler's Wells illustration appealed simply on the ground of appropriateness: there was no boast of lavish expenditure, but judicious use was made of the general arrangements and a completeness resulted in regard to the details of the performance. Henry Morley, summing up Phelps' policy for the settings of his productions, said that "the scenery is always beautiful, but it is not allowed to draw attention from the poet, with whose whole conception it is made to blend in the most perfect harmony" (Examiner, Oct 18, 1856; JLP 129).

III

Anticipating by more than half a century the methods of the best twentieth-century Shakespearean directors, Samuel Phelps aimed at the integration of the text, individual parts, and mise-en-scène into a well-balanced and unified whole. Applying what might be termed the principle of orchestral direction to Shakespeare's plays, Phelps set his performance, like a piece of music, in a certain key, seeking harmony in all the parts and consistent expression in acting and staging in his interpretation of the author's work. Charles Dickens described this harmony in Phelps' productions: "The smallest character has been respectfully approached and studied; the smallest accessory has been well considered; every artist in his degree has been taught to adapt his part, in the complete effort, to all other parts to make up the whole" (Household Words, Oct. 4, 1851).

Within a year of assuming his management at Sadler's Wells, Phelps instituted a systematic method of training the members of his company. Macready had drilled his actors at rehearsals, but Phelps became the first real director of Shakespeare, in the modern sense, in that he worked to ensure that individual performances took their legitimate and proportionate place in the work as a whole. Unlike his predecessors, and some notorious successors too, Phelps was constantly attentive to the meaning and tone of the drama as a unity, and he was tireless in going over with his troupe again and again their interpretations to see that they harmonized with the totality of the work.

Mid-century managers were generally plagued by the star system. Great actors chose to maintain their reputations in Shakespearean and other classic plays that had been cut to show their prowess to advantage. Complaining about the despotism of this system, one reviewer in 1840 remarked that "to these actors every other character in the pieces are sacrificed--made ciphers. Not ciphers placed to increase the volume of the sum; but ciphers merely for the purpose of filling up those hiatus which are necessary for the recovery of the breath of the principal actor" (Era, May 10, 1840). At Sadler's Wells, however, commented John

Bull, "the company does not (like many others) consist of a star or two and a heap of rubbish; but its members are adequate to the parts allotted to them, and perform them with intelligence and verisimilitude" (Nov. 16, 1844).

There were no schools of dramatic art during the Victorian era and beginners obtained instruction where they could. It was quite usual to thrust newcomers onto the stage with little or no formal preparation other than learning the lines from the common acting text and of the traditional "business" or movement patterns. Any effort made by theatrical management to improve skills or to train beginners was thought extraordinary when it did occur. The quick revival of old favourites included revival of traditional staging as well, and rehearsals therefore were minimal: the players already knew the lines and traditional business, and a brush-up was all that was needed. Star actors made certain to acquire public approbation by being seen and heard to the best advantage. Interpretation of roles was dictated partly by tradition in that famous or proved technique would continue to be employed by subsequent generations.

Critics found that there was a wide difference between such major theatres as Drury Lane and the Haymarket and Sadler's Wells: "At the two former," noted one critic, "the actors and actresses are thrown on their own resources! at the latter, they are pupils receiving instruction in every character they are cast for" (Theatrical Journal, Aug. 15, 1850). Phelps' actors at Sadler's Wells were for the most part mediocre. Phelps, first of all, could not afford the star system; moreover, many leading actors were unwilling to perform at the unfashionable Sadler's Wells; and when Phelps trained actors to prominence they often left after a few seasons for the more glamorous lights of Drury Lane or Covent Garden. Consequently, some of Phelps' actors had only rudimentary training on provincial stages; others were young and untrained. Phelps himself spoke of the "laborious rehearsals" and "persistent drillings" that were the backbone of his productions,[27] and the importance he attached to frequent working-over and perfecting details of presentation was recalled by playwright Tom Taylor whose The Fool's Revenge was acted at Sadler's Wells in 1859. Rehearsal at Sadler's Wells, said Taylor, "was what rehearsal should be, continuous, well-considered, patient shaping of the play for public performance, in which not merely the groupings of the personages were attended to, but the delivery of every speech watched--nay, the emphasis and pronunciation of every word noted" (The Theatre, n.s., 1 [1878]).

Of the rank and file in the company it may be justly said that they owed everything to Phelps' tuition: for them no less than for their audience the stage at Sadler's Wells was truly a School of Dramatic Art, of which Phelps was the accomplished master. Phelps rejoiced in his own elocutionary prowess and at Sadler's Wells he paid great attention to the quality and clarity of delivery in all his players, teaching them to speak slowly and distinctly, to pay minute attention to every phrase in the text, to bring out the full meaning of the speeches, and to illustrate the situations with well-practised action. Actors at Sadler's Wells, reminisced one critic, "spoke blank verse not as a dead language but as though it were their everyday dialect, as indeed it was."[28] For Henry Morley the performance of minor roles was one of the most important features at Sadler's Wells and the critic found that every member of the company was taught to regard the poetry he spoke according to its nature rather than its quantity:

> The personators . . . say what Shakespeare has assigned to them to say with as much care, and as much certainty that it will be listened to with due respect, as if they were themselves Timons, Hamlets or Macbeths. . . . Nothing is slurred; a servant who has anything to say says it in earnest, making his words heard and their meaning felt. (Examiner, Oct. 18, 1856; JLP 214)

In his own acting Phelps always tried to convey the total impression of a character and to avoid anything--points, set speeches, applause--which might blur the image. Unlike most leading actors, Phelps was an extremely modest man, never aggrandizing his performances. Once, early in his management, after a performance of Othello, he sternly lectured the audience for having demanded a curtain call (Theatrical Journal, Aug. 2, 1845). On the stage he showed no jealousy of other actors and allowed secondary roles their rightful prominence, a rare treat in the competitive atmosphere of the early nineteenth-century theatre. In his management he began to develop the same concern for the total impression of a performance with the result that productions at Sadler's Wells had an internal unity never before displayed in Shakespearean productions--most likely not even in the bard's own time, when one considers the hasty rehearsal periods characteristic of the Elizabethan theatre, the paucity of resources, and the fact that because of lack of printed texts, most players never had the opportunity to read the entire play.

Reviewers frequently commented upon the completeness of performances at Sadler's Wells, the relation of parts to the whole, and the care with which the smallest parts were acted. In a typical Phelps production, no one, not even Phelps, called attention to himself as a star and as a consequence, with his rigid rehearsal schedule, the Sadler's Wells company probably came closer to true ensemble playing than any English group of the nineteenth century. Phelps' actors took a pride in their work; they showed a willingness to work together for a general effect, frequently foregoing opportunities for winning a round of applause at the expense of distorting the meaning of the lines or the balance of a scene and thus achieving an impression of ensemble that had not been known in the days of jealous competition on the stage of the patent theatre.

Reviewers pointed out that the influence of the stage manager was manifest throughout performances at Sadler's Wells. "Everyone has been evidently disciplined, so as to preserve order and relation," remarked the Athenaeum. "We miss therefore the inspiration of individual actors, but we catch the pervading agency of a presiding intelligence, which insures the requisite unity" (Oct. 21, 1854). Strong artistic confederacy was therefore achieved. Individual strengths became as they should in any picture, whether on stage or on canvas, merged in the general effect. As a consequence, remarked Richard Lee, "the symmetrical balance and sense of artistic proportion" were so well kept in Phelps' productions that on quitting the theatre "the spectator without knowing exactly wherefore, found himself invariably calling to mind the play as a whole, and not any particular scene or person in it."[29] Henry Morley called it poetry:

> The actors are content also to be subordinated to the play, learn doubtless at rehearsals how to subdue excesses of expression that by giving undue force to any one part would destroy the balance of the whole, and blend their work in such a way as to produce everywhere the right emphasis . . . so it is that, although in only one or two cases have we observed at Sadler's Wells originality of genius in the actor, we have nevertheless perceived something like the entire sense of Shakespeare's plays. (Examiner, Oct. 18, 1856; JLP 129-30)

For his production of Romeo and Juliet in 1846 Phelps had a new leading lady, Miss Laura Addison, nineteen years old, from Edinburgh.

Like a number of other leading actresses secured by Sadler's Wells, she was very young and in Phelps' judgment insufficiently trained for Shakespeare's tragic heroines. Richard Lee found that, though immature and untrained, Addison was possessed with the physical attributes of an "exquisitely sympathetic voice and singular personal beauty." Lee relates that Phelps, many years later, was to say that she had "the sweetest voice God ever gave to woman."[30] Phelps introduced her in Marston's tragedy The Patrician's Daughter (Aug. 26, 1846) and critics found that the native grace and maiden freshness displayed by the young actress thrilled the audience with a keen delight. Addison showed intelligence and a natural gift for acting that enabled her to grasp the essential nature of the character and to present it with an impression of complete sincerity. The Athenaeum noted that her execution was highly spirited and that she displayed throughout "singular poetic fervour" (Aug. 29, 1846). "What she needs to acquire," remarked the Athenaeum, "Will not be long in coming, now that she has taken her position in the excellent school of acting which this theatre under the management of Mr. Phelps, has become." The journal uttered a small word of caution: "She has but little to unlearn--a slight occasional excess of action, which experience will soon correct." Addison became a favourite with the Sadler's Wells audience and reviews predicted a brilliant future for the nineteen-year-old debutante.

Phelps also had a new actor from the provinces, William Creswick, who had a solid provincial reputation. The actor-manager capitalized on the popularity of his new actors by casting Creswick and Miss Addison as Romeo and Juliet in what critics immediately recognized as an important, tradition-breaking and influential production of Shakespeare's play from the original text. It was a bold venture on Phelps' part because Benjamin Webster, in an attempt at novelty to prop up declining ticket sales, had cast the American actress Charlotte Cushman in her sensationally successful "breeches" role as Romeo at the Haymarket only a year earlier. The Theatrical Journal had related that Cushman had grappled with the character of Romeo in a manner that electrified the whole audience: "her ardent love, her excessive grief, and classic attitudes were all delineated in the most beautiful and powerful manner it is possible to conceive" (Jan. 3, 1846). The Times had proclaimed her Romeo to be "far superior" to any Romeo that had been seen for years, and the Spectator had asserted that Charlotte Cushman was "the best Romeo that has appeared on the English stage these thirty years" (3 Jan. 1846). The production achieved what at that time was an almost unheard-of popularity, with eighty nights in London and great success in the provinces.

Samuel Phelps' revival of Romeo and Juliet, however, succeeded with critics and audience, establishing beyond doubt the principles of Phelps' management. There was no star in the performance, although Phelps played Mercutio, and no attempt at modern novelty, but rather an emphasis upon the fullest possible expression of Shakespeare's work. Laura Addison gave the audience the pleasure of seeing Juliet played by a girl not yet out of her teens who also had unusual spirit. Her performance, said the Weekly Dispatch, was "extremely meritorious" (Sept. 20, 1846). Miss Addison, reported John Bull, showed talents "which promise great eminence in her art"; the journal found that she gave the great scenes of the tragedy "with a degree of passion and power which strongly excited the sympathies of the audience" (Sept. 19, 1846). It was a great thing to be said in praise of this young lady, commented the Spectator, that her one fault, namely, "a certain want of ease in her delivery," was one that was attributable alone to want of experience, while her intelligence and feeling were such "as no inferior artist could ever acquire" (Sept. 19, 1846). Her voice, said the Spectator, "is much in her favour; being always clear and distinct, and never cracking even when the most vehement emotion is portrayed." Critics found Addison graceful and lady-like and in the more tender passages gentle and touching. The tones of her voice were found to be full of emotion and in the more subdued passages at once penetrated the heart. The Athenaeum judged the pathos of her tones irresistible: "it unlocked the source of sympathetic tears" (Oct. 24, 1846). Laura Addison's interpretation of Juliet "has so far succeeded as to justify us in confidently affirming that she is an actress of no common powers and of considerable judgment" (Sept. 19, 1846).

In a major production of the play in 1841, Ellen Tree's Juliet had been an incongruous mixture of sedate propriety and theatrical extravagance. Critics had regretted to see her adopting the tradition established by Fanny Kemble earlier in the century of overacting in the scenes with the Nurse, and they were disappointed to find a deficiency of impassioned tenderness in those with Romeo (Spectator, July 14, 1841). The Athenaeum found that the love of Juliet, as justly depicted by the teenaged Miss Addison, was in the early scenes "almost girlish in its innocence--in the later, most maidenly in its impetuosity." Her scene with the Nurse in the second act was "deliciously played," commented The Illustrated London News, "full of girlish petulance and winning tenderness" (Sept. 19, 1846). Laura Addison acted with so much "nature," said the Theatrical Journal, that one forgot, on hearing her impassioned voice and gazing on her "artistical, though at the same time inartificial manner and action," that she was an actress and an actress only. So thoroughly did this extremely talented young lady identify herself with the character and so heartily and naturally did she portray the passions of the part she represented. "Particularly pleasing," said the journal, was Miss Addison's depiction of Juliet in the balcony scene, which in Phelps' production, as in Garrick's, was played as a "garden" scene and in which Juliet, "unaware of the presence of her lover, repeats his name, and hearing him accost her, starts and half flies with maiden modesty and timidity."

In the second half of Romeo and Juliet, as the drama increases its demands on the energies of the titular characters, Shakespeare's Juliet must gradually rise to passion and grow into decision of purpose and strengthening form of character. Nothing could surpass Miss Addison's performance, declared the Illustrated London News, "especially in those situations calling for the representation of the more impassioned feelings," in depicting which, "Miss Addison's forte chiefly lies" (Sept. 19, 1846). The Athenaeum summarized Addison's portrayal of Juliet in the later scenes. When Juliet finds that the "ancient iniquity" is no longer to be trusted, her "amen" and "thou hast comforted me marvellous much" were delivered with that solemn and mysterious emphasis which becomes the situation. Thenceforth Juliet must act for herself. Miss Addison evidently felt the responsibility of the new position and assumed an attitude of determination accordingly. At once, she attained to maturity. No longer the minion, the maiden, but the wife and woman; she must now assume an independence of character and resort to such measure as may most effectively meet the present extremity. The joyous and confiding girl, previously all truth and straightforwardness, suddenly compromises, submits to duplicity, dares the perils of falsehood and death itself, to preserve the chastity of a plighted and irrevocable love. "All this," declared the _Athenaeum_, "was beautifully delineated" (Sept. 19, 1846).

But then comes the dreadful potion scene which Juliet "must act alone" (IV.iii.19), a scene which is the test of an actress' powers and in which many a Juliet, successful up to that point, has excited ridicule in place of sympathy. This soliloquy is, in fact, one of the most difficult passages in the entire drama. A theatregoer in Garrick's time, criticizing a contemporary actress' portrayal in this scene, lamented the audience's "immoderate" applause when the actress suddenly threw her body into a "most unnatural" attitude of horror when she asked herself if the mixture may not be a poison, though in the narrative her reasons for so imagining follow the thought, they must have been previous in the mind. "Because, forsooth, those attitudes strike the Galleries," charged the critic, eighteenth-century actresses always threw themselves into them in this passage.[31]

William Hazlitt generally admired Miss O'Neill's rise to passion in her portrayal of Juliet in 1814. Her delivery of the speeches where she laments Romeo's banishment and anticipates her waking in the tomb, "marked the fine play and undulation of natural sensibility, rising and falling with the gusts of passion, and at last worked up into an agony of despair, in which imagination approaches the brink of frenzy." Even Hazlitt, however, who enjoyed impassioned romantic acting, found her actual screaming at the imaginary sight of Tybalt's ghost to be "extravagant" (_The Champion_, Oct. 16, 1814). O'Neill's shriek in the potion scene, then considered a startling innovation, as well as the lengthy business after drinking the potion, became traditional in the part.

When Fanny Kemble made her debut in this scene in 1829, relates John Cole, she ran down from the back of the stage to the right-hand corner of the proscenium, under the stage-box, and there threw herself into an attitude upon one knee, as if drawing the apparition before her. Miss Kemble, says Cole, used to scream out with all her lungs.[32] The Spectator found that Helen Faucit, too, screamed full force in the potion scene in Macready's production of Romeo and Juliet in 1838 and enacted the horrible imaginings that her misgivings conjure up in drinking the potion as if she were "in a state of desperation in the charnel-house" (May 5, 1838, 415). Applause gained by acts "so unnatural and so disgusting," charged Henry Siddons in 1811, could only come from the ignorant or injudicious who were incapable of forming a judgment on the real merit or interest of a touching situation.[33]

Laura Addison, under Phelps' careful direction to draw the audience's attention to the poet rather than to the illustrator, divested the potion scene of all its conventionalities. "No unequal bursts of vociferation struck rudely on the ear," reported one reviewer; "no organic labour distracted and turned aside attention from the action" (Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper, Sept. 20, 1846). It was in this scene that Miss Addison displayed the extent of her genius in great quiet acting. The Athenaeum related that she conceived the scene in a mood and style perfectly original, contrived to live, as it were, "so naturally and unaffectedly in every line" and suffered the horrible imaginings "so progressively to accumulate upon her mind," that "all those exaggerations of manner which are usually permitted to change the sublime into the ridiculous were not even suggested." The climax of the action was reached without a leap, and the most powerful effect produced without any sacrifice of discretion and taste. "In a word," concluded the Athenaeum, "the scene was an artistic triumph" (Sept. 19, 1846). A year later, when Addison and Creswick revived Romeo and Juliet at the Haymarket, the journal reported that Miss Addison had evidently re-studied the text and, even more than in 1846, had "aimed at repose, and accomplished a quiet and graceful interpretation of the whole character" (Oct. 21, 1847).

Critics were also, for the most part, pleased with William Creswick's portrayal of Romeo. The Spectator found Creswick "a very fair Romeo according to the approved conventions" (Sept. 19, 1846); the Theatrical Journal termed his presentation a "clever performance" (Oct. 3, 1846); and the Weekly Dispatch maintained that the role, under Phelps' careful tutelage, had been "rendered with care." Mr. Creswick, said the Dispatch, had not aimed for new features in his performance but at the same time "was guilty of no exaggeration of passion or sentiment" (Sept. 20, 1846). The Athenaeum declared that it was "particularly pleased" with Mr. Creswick's Romeo which was, throughout, "chastely conceived and executed without exaggeration" (Sept. 19, 1846). Only the Observer registered disappointment: obviously preferring the impassioned romantic acting style of Charlotte Cushman, the newspaper found that the "commonplace" was the "prevalent phase" in Creswick's impersonation and that the unconventional lack of emphasis resulted in the role being played by Creswick in a "very inadequate style" (Sept. 20, 1846).

Critics found that William Creswick's Romeo in the initial acts of the play was performed with "much talent and vigour" (Theatrical Journal, Oct. 3, 1846), although John Bull pointed out that in the balcony scene Creswick at times was deficient in the exquisite grace and delicacy which it felt belonged to the character (Sept. 19, 1846). The Athenaeum, in considering William Creswick's portrayal of Romeo in the second half of the play, was pleased to find his conception of the young lover executed without exaggeration. When Charlotte Cushman had performed Romeo at the Haymarket during the previous year, many critics had lavishly praised her passionate acting. The Times described her Romeo as "a creative, living, breathing, animated, ardent, human being." Her Romeo was no fine speech-maker, no stage-lover, no victim to maudlin sentiment, but an impetuous youth, whose whole soul was absorbed in one strong emotion, and whose lips must speak the inspiration of his heart. In Act III.iii, related the newspaper, the grief in Friar Lawrence's cell, when Romeo set forth the sorrows of his banishment in tones of an ever-increasing anguish, until at last it reached its culminating point and he dashed himself on the ground with real despair, took the house by storm (Dec. 30, 1845). It was a scene, described the Theatrical Journal, of "topmost passion! . . . The genuine heart-storm was on--in wildest fitfulness of fury!" (Nov. 21, 1846).

The poetry in Phelps' production, pointed out the Athenaeum, was better preserved than the passion of the character, and in this great scene in the third act of Romeo with the Friar, the journal admitted that "we missed that agonizing emotion to which we have lately been accustomed." Creswick, rejecting the intense external portrayal of suffering chosen by Charlotte Cushman, appealed to "judgment and reason" rather than the seat of the affections in the throbbing and almost breaking heart. Still, continued the Athenaeum, in praise of Creswick's portrayal of Romeo in this scene, there was a manly bearing which, without depriving despair of its vehemence, "lent it dignity and support under the pressure of almost intolerable calamity." Charlotte Cushman had affected the audience from the force of passion and had sunk into pathos from the violence of action. William Creswick, to much greater effect, created pathos from the power of thought and feeling.

Phelps knew himself unequal to the demands of a young passionate lover and therefore never willingly played Romeo. Joseph Knight was many years later to comment that the one major deficiency in the actor's great versatility in roles was that he was never fortunate or successful in the presentation of romantic passion or heroic resolve.[34] For his production of Romeo and Juliet Phelps assumed the role of Mercutio, probably in an attempt, as the Illustrated London News surmised, to "strengthen the bill" (Sept. 26, 1846). The manager laboured hard against the temperament and the force of forty-four years to embody the light and mercurial elements that composed the role and, by general consensus, to a great extent succeeded in the difficult task. Phelps himself, however, clearly knew that his performance, in a measure, lacked the buoyancy which is the characteristic of the part and soon resigned the character to the actor Henry Marston.

Phelps' reading, nonetheless, "was careful and judicious," noted the Illustrated London News (Sept, 19, 1846). The actor-manager did not seize remarkable passages and striking incidents to depict with extravagant colour and unusual force, but "threw a proportionate strength of tint into every individual part," distributing through his whole performance an evenness of effort. Edward Stirling, writing of the parts in which he remembered Phelps, related that Phelps' elocution had "no straining after new readings or false interpretation" and that each performance, given in an unaffected and level style, was a "fair, smooth personation of character."[35] There was a restrained and deliberate quality to Phelps' art and critics found the restraint of this style to have a beneficial effect on the over-all co-ordination of Phelps' productions.

To Phelps the stage was a place for portraying the creations of poetic imagination, and the actor's art in presenting Mercutio consisted in realizing the poetry as much as character and action. Phelps paid minute attention to every phrase in the text, bringing out the full meaning of the speeches; every word was well considered and its relative value and position duly regarded and skillfully illustrated. Elocution was a vital element of Phelps' art, and he preserved the older tradition of really effective and intelligent speaking which had become lost to most of his contemporaries. His virtues were later described in an analysis of his elocution in _Virginus_:

> he has modulated his elocution so as to bring out the utmost variety of which his organ is capable--and carefully distributes the different tones, so as to throw the requisite degrees of colour on specific parts of the text, and secure relative proportions of light and shade, calculated to produce in proper relief the peculiar phrases of sentiment or of passion with which he wishes to impress his audience. All this is artistically managed, and evidently is the fruit of study. (_Athenaeum_, 1853)

At the beginning of Phelps' management elocution, or declamation, was still considered the basis of the art of acting. Careful development of vocal tone, range and volume and constant practice in enunciation, emphasis and phrasing were of major importance in an actor's training. Phelps' best physical asset was a deep and powerful voice which had been deliberately trained through years of practice into what actor John

Coleman described as a"potent resonant organ capable of expressing every varying mood in tragic or comic art."[36] He had sung opera in his provincial days and there was a musical quality in his declamation which was especially noticeable in comparison with the unmelodious character of Macready's speech. In rehearsing a part Phelps worked to perfect details of emphasis so that he read the lines with a subtlety and precision that made nuances of meaning clear to pit and gallery. Phelps' voice was more resonant, musical and flexible than that of any other actor within living memory of contemporary reviewers. So successful was he in his elocutionary training that Richard Lee, after Phelps' death, declared his voice "of singularly full diapason: articulate, resonant, and sympathetic." The sound of that voice was remembered as "music said, not sung."[37]

For his portrayal of the part of Mercutio, Phelps turned to the interpretation of the character offered by Coleridge. In the introduction to Romeo and Juliet in his edition of Shakespeare, Phelps quoted the Romantic critic who perceived Mercutio as "the wit, the scholar and the gentleman," a man of rank who with all his excellences and weaknesses had procreative fancy, courage, an easy mind that without cares of its own was at once disposed to laugh away those of others and yet to be interested in them.[38] During Garrick's time the role of Mercutio had been played in the one house as "an arch buffoon" and in the other "a noisy impudent coxcomb" and in both instances "palpably wrong," said Theatricus in 1762 (Universal Museum, Oct. 1762). On the early nineteenth-century stage it had not been uncommon to present Mercutio as essentially a blustering bully or fop or rake, full of enmity and possessing a propensity for merciless ridicule. It was Charles Kemble, said Gentleman's Magazine, who in 1829 restored Mercutio "from the region of bullies and fops to that of high comedy" (Jan. 1855). Kemble's personation was that of a "gallant, courtly soldier-like high gentleman," said George Vandenhoff, and the critical opinion of the time accounted him supreme as Mercutio.[39] Kemble's presentation of the Queen Mab speech was termed by Charles Rice as "one of the finest pieces of elocution the stage can boast."[40] For the Queen Mab speech Kemble aimed for an impression of spontaneity. His first line, "Oh, then, I see, Queen Mab hath been with you," Westland Marston claimed "was uttered without a touch of formal rhetoric or pose--by no means as a prelude to a set description, but as a simple, whimsical thought springing from mere buoyancy of heart." "The thought uttered," Marston continued, "you saw that it gave birth to another equally unpremeditated." Then came another sudden burst of fancy, born of the first, gaining fresh strength and impetus in its course, until the speaker abandoned himself to the brilliant and thronging illustrations which, amidst all their fire, never lost the simple and spontaneous grace of nature in which they took rise.[41]

Charles Kemble's Mercutio was well remembered when Phelps appeared in the role and critics found that his presentation of the Queen Mab speech was very similar to that of Kemble. John Bull asserted that Phelps' presentation was "judicious and artistical" (Sept. 19, 1846). The Queen Mab speech was traditionally delivered as a separate little oration but Phelps, said the Athenaeum, gave an "entirely new reading," not making a set oration of the speech "but blending it familiarly with the dialogue" in Mercutio's characteristic tone and manner (Sept. 19, 1846). The chief difference between the two portrayals was that Kemble had tended to dominate the first part of the play with the character whereas Phelps restored the character to its proper proportion in the play.

The Theatrical Journal found that the Queen Mab speech and Mercutio's death, "his jesting and merriment growing fainter and fainter, gradually dying upon his lips," were "beautifully executed" by Phelps (Oct. 3, 1846). The gradual decline of physical power; the look of forgiveness which accompanied putting forth his hand in reply to Romeo's "I thought all for the best"; the keen mocking with which he delivered the commencement of his following speech; and the last frightful, brilliant struggle of the mind full of life, light and wit were all presented with great skill (Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper, Sept. 20, 1846). The actor's conception was distinguished by ease and quietness. Going beyond Macready's aim in his acting of making the audience see the characters from the inside, Phelps aimed in his interpretation of Mercutio to make his audience feel the same emotions as the character. This "pathos," as the critics termed it, was an important feature of Phelps' acting. From Phelps' earliest performances critics had perceived that one of the signal traits of Phelps' acting style was his ability to express intensity and depth of emotion without resorting to "making points," the deliberate breaking up of speeches by skillful and conscious use of pantomime and stage business. "Remarkable for judgment and taste among actors," pointed out the Athenaeum, "Mr. Phelps always brings to his performance careful study and selects his points with discrimination. It is seldom that he over-acts, but he is always pathetic" (April 18, 1846). As early as 1836 the critic of the Western Times had confessed himself astonished at Phelps' indifference to these points and remarked that "the spectators were constantly turning and greeting each other with exclamations of wonder and delight. . . . There was nothing of Kean, nothing of Macready, nothing like the following after old 'points,' nothing like a desire to make new. The chief beauty was in its evenness."[42] The Plymouth Herald had remarked that Phelps threw himself upon the chance of "being measured solely by the standard of the poet's meaning."[43]

In the performance of favoured actors eighteenth- and nineteenth-century audiences frequently punctuated passages such as the Queen Mab speech with applause upon the delivery of the most effective "points." What was new about Phelps' acting was that he attempted a more complete and consistent identification with the character and discouraged applause by avoiding abrupt transitions and minimizing the set speeches that were traditionally used to display an actor's art. Phelps' submergence of the actor in the character brought a new sense of reality to the stage and increased the emotional response of the spectators. In the involvement of the audience with the passions and sufferings of the character, Phelps' acting differed from that of the great actors known to his generation in that all of them preferred to have artistic details recognized and applauded. Phelps' audience was too deeply engaged in catching the tones and manner of his performance to allow them to interfere with his vivid declamation. They perceived his new approach and responded with silence where they normally would have applauded. In his desire to impersonate Mercutio without exaggeration of manner or anxiety to make points, Phelps sought to present the dramatic integrity of the character, omitting the famous points and submerging his own personality in that of Shakespeare's creation.

in Phelps' presentation of Romeo and Juliet reviewers remarked on the ability of the secondary actors who bore a good part of the dialogue. The company of Sadler's Wells, with a skill learned in months of Phelps' careful tutoring, was fully competent to bring these smaller parts to life. Extraordinary pains had evidently been taken to impress upon actors of even the smallest parts the necessity for careful speech and action, and by such means an even tone and character were secured in the production. Mrs. Marston's Nurse "pleased the house exceedingly," related the Weekly Dispatch (Sept. 20, 1846). Mr. G. Bennett, reported the Illustrated London News, was an "able representative" of Friar Lawrence, and Mr. Scharfe as Peter was "quaint and droll" without the buffoonery so common in minor parts on the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century stages. Phelps' direction made Shakespeare's comic characters more natural and credible on the stage, his insistence upon faithfulness to Shakespeare's conception stemming from his concern for the balance and harmony of the whole performance. A buffoon could destroy the mood of a scene or distort the relation of characters to one another. In a characteristic comment that revealed the effectiveness of the harmonious ensemble playing in Phelps' production, the Illustrated London News noted that "the other characters do not call for any notice beyond the general commendation we are always enabled to bestow conscientiously upon this excellent working company" (Sept. 19, 1846).

Different indeed was William Macready's attitude towards balance and harmony in stage presentation when he assumed one of the lesser roles in Romeo and Juliet at Covent Garden on April 30, 1838. Having reluctantly cast a young and handsome Mr. Anderson to the Juliet of Helen Faucit, the forty-five-year-old Macready, somewhat to his own disgust, subordinated himself to the role of Friar Lawrence. After the performance, the manager, accustomed to assuming star roles and receiving constant audience appreciation for his "points," recorded in his diary his frustration:

> I find playing a part of this sort, with no direct character to sustain, no effort to make, no power of perceiving an impression made, to be a very disagreeable task. Having required many of the actors to do what they considered beneath them, perhaps it was only a just sacrifice to their opinions to conclude so far--but it is for the first and last time.[44]

A youthful Juliet who could deliver Shakespeare's verse with sensitivity to meaning and a sense of its rhythm while impressing the audience with the sincerity of her passion, and a Romeo who did not overemphasize his role were equally unusual on the Victorian stage. One result of Phelps' careful tutoring appeared in the fresh interpretation of characters. Although reviewers did not always recognize Phelps' hand in another actor's performances, their comments frequently reveal evidence of his work. They praised Laura Addison's new and more natural reading of Juliet without the traditional stage conventionalities and "all those exaggerations of manner which are usually permitted to change the sublime into the ridiculous."[45] At the major theatres, pointed out the Theatrical Journal, "you applaud the actor's own conception. At Sadler's Wells you never know how much of the praise belongs to the manager. Mr. Phelps knows full well that he is much above his company; his desire is to form a picture, for all to work in the same direction and towards one model" (Aug. 15, 1850).

IV

In his presentation of Romeo and Juliet it was a major aim of Samuel Phelps to return to Shakespeare's original version and to discard Garrick's adaptation of the play which had for almost one hundred years distorted the poet's intentions on the stage. Phelps' policy for restoration of texts in his Shakespearean productions stands out as a particularly significant exponent of a trend to return to a more authentic Elizabethan text on the nineteenth-century stage and anticipates the work of William Poel at the end of the century.

During the last decades of the eighteenth century there was still a good deal of re-writing and manipulating of the dramatist's work; large-scale cutting was still employed, transposition of scenes regarded as a natural operation. Yet, as the eighteenth century drew on, audiences had the opportunity to hear more and more of Shakespeare's own words. The ideal of original [illegible]speare, however, came from outside the theatre with the new veneration [illegible] "the Bard" in the Romantic critics of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Shakespearean criticism underwent a change from 1660 to 1800 from the early judicial standpoint which measured the dramatist by standards of "rules" which, though judging him a genius, found him deficient in learning, correctness, decorum, and especially in the unity of action or plot, to a later appreciative attitude which abandoned such standards by erecting a new dramatic focus centered upon character delineation. This new focus, in treating Shakespeare's characters as living beings acting on valid motives, emphasized that the dramatist not only chronicled all stages of life, but was also the profoundest of moral philosophers.

Powerful allies existed who, although they were not directly connected with the theatre, had a great love for it and particularly for Shakespeare. Their status was influential. Samuel Coleridge, greatest of the English Romantic critics, argued in his lectures and critical writings that Shakespeare's judgment was equal to his genius. The true ground of the mistake that Shakespeare wanted art, the power to create a perfect whole, he explained, lay in confusing mechanical regularity with organic form. Shakespeare's plays were not shaped by any mechanical force impressed from without, but, like the forms of nature herself, were shaped as they developed by the principle within. The misconception that had been generally held for 150 years of the plays as a disorderly heap of treasure, to be plundered and refashioned according to neoclassical canons, was shattered, and there was no longer any excuse for producing in the theatre anything but the work that Shakespeare had written.

On the stage, however, where traditions die hard, the staple diet in Shakespearean production until 1840 was well represented by an 1820 Drury Lane production of Macbeth, with Edmund Kean, which still had twelve "principle singing witches," "a chorus of Witches and Spirits of twenty-two men and women," in addition to the three speaking witches, making a grand total of thirty-seven witches, many of whom flew as they sang. But, beneath such activity, attempts to restore Shakespeare's texts to the stage were going forward, a little tentatively, but with relentless effect. Robert Elliston managed Drury Lane from 1819-1826 and, in that time, although he turned Macbeth into an opera, he did some meritorious work toward the restoration of Shakespeare's texts, including, for example, the reinstitution of the dramatist's language and tragic ending in King Lear. William Macready, influenced by the Romantic critics, fought his inclinations as a star actor and set himself a goal of restoring pure Shakespeare to the stage. Macready's efforts to restore the true text were not in fact very substantial but they were well advertised, and they seem to have won him as much fame as did his "fit illustrations." His versions of such plays as *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Henry V*, *The Tempest*, and *Coriolanus*, though heavily cut, finally removed non-Shakespearean encrustrations. In 1839 Charles Matthews and his wife Madame Vestris brought back *Love's Labours Lost* to the stage from which it had been banished for some two centuries and in 1840 brought out a version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that was nearer to Shakespeare's than any seen for over one hundred years. The Haymarket, responding to the urging of renowned antiquarian James Planché, gave in 1844 a revival of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, the first in two centuries, in which not only was the text of Shakespeare used, but the play was performed in what current opinion held to be Elizabethan style. These examples are testimony to the growing sensitivity about a return to Shakespeare's own lines which was characteristic of the whole of the nineteenth century.

It was Samuel Phelps, however, who did more than any single manager to restore the original versions of Shakespeare's plays to the stage; indeed, from a twentieth-century perspective, we must acknowledge Phelps as the major restorer of Shakespeare's plays in performance before William Poel made his influential restorations at the end of the nineteenth century. Phelps' principle in his productions at Sadler's Wells was to use folio readings in preference to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century acting versions, and "merely to list his Shakespearean restorations," as Charles Shattuck has discovered in his scholarship on Shakespearean promptbooks, "is to acknowledge his courage and egrity."[46] He was the first actor-manager to displace Cibber's *hard III* with a purely Shakespearean version. His *King Lear*, some e hundred lines longer than Macready's, restored most of the Fool's es. Phelps was the first actor-manager since the Restoration to sent a totally Shakespearean *Macbeth*, cancelling the chorus of singing ches, and reintroducing the drunken Porter, the assassin's attack upon y Macduff, and the bringing in of Macbeth's head. He staged *Timon of ens* purged of "improvements." Madame Vestris had anticipated him in ivals of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Love's Labours Lost*, but his sions were far superior to hers. Phelps' treatment of Shakespeare was ly remarkable: he restored to a great extent the original texts of e plays seen since the Restoration only in adapted form; from two ys he removed the last remnants of adaptation; in seven plays he carded acting texts for the originals; and he brought to the stage in kespeare's text four other plays seldom acted since the closing of the atre in 1642. In fourteen other plays he used the customary acting s but in a number of them he reintroduced lines or characters from kespeare's texts.

The result of Phelps' efforts toward the restoration of kespeare's texts on the stage was that within a few years of his eover of Sadler's Wells, the *Theatrical Journal* was justly calling s theatre "the only legitimate theatre in the metropolis" (Jan. 25, 9). By the time that *Romeo and Juliet* was presented, only two years er Phelps had assumed management of the theatre, he had already firmly ablished his policy of using Shakespeare's folio texts and both iences and critics had come to expect Shakespeare in his integrity. its review of Phelps' presentation of *Romeo and Juliet* the *Theatrical* being "grossly injured by Garrick's alterations" and that it was impossible "both to alter and amend" Shakespeare (III, 1791). The Monthly Mirror in 1797 corroborated this statement and questioned "whether Romeo and Juliet has gained much by the amendments of Mr. Garrick" (IV, 1797). Critics became increasingly aware that Garrick's famous interpolations overlaid the interest, stopped the progress of the action and, distracting the attention, destroyed the whole perspective and proportion of the drama.

On the stage, however, it was not until the 1830's that a return to Shakespeare's text of Romeo and Juliet was even initiated. Madame Vestris is credited as the first actor-manager to replace Garrick's ending with the original ending but with many omissions. According to George Vandenhoff, Shakespeare's text was presented by Madame Vestris during her second season at Covent Garden but so inadequately that it had perished almost at birth; thereafter the Garrick adaptation had once again held undisputed possession of the boards.[48] "The introduction of 'Romeo and Juliet' in its true Shakespearean form" on the stage, as the Theatrical Journal termed it (Dec. 5, 1846, 388), occurred at the Haymarket on December 29, 1845, when, under Benjamin Webster's management, Charlotte and Susan Cushman appeared as Romeo and Juliet in a version closer to the original than any before. The restoration is accredited to Charlotte Cushman who wished to discard the Garrick version.[49] G. C. D. Odell believes that the version of the play in Lacy's acting edition was undoubtedly that in use at the time: the printed cast of Webster's revival is a criterion. In the Cushman version Lady Montague was restored; Rosaline was reinstated; Mercutio's Queen Mab speech was given by night, not by day; Juliet gave her "banished" scene;

not a single instance in Phelps' production in which the restorations did not give probability to the motive and aid development of the characters.

It was Phelps' intention in his presentation of Romeo and Juliet to present faithfully the story which he felt "in the hands of Shakespeare" had become "the love story of the whole world." The dramatist, said Phelps in the introduction to the play in his 1853 edition of Shakespeare's works, had taken a familiar legend, had embalmed the subject with "its present imperishable beauty," and had coupled incidents in the story "with lofty flights of beauty and rich philosophical truths" that would last as long as the language in which they were conveyed.[51] Phelps quoted the German Romantic critic Schlegel, who eloquently described Romeo and Juliet as "a glorious song of praise in that inexpressible feeling which ennobles the soul and gives to it the highest sublimity, . . . while at the same time it is a melancholy elegy on its inherent and imparted frailty."[52] Phelps agreed with Schlegel, who, "with truth and force" in his Lectures, described the play as one which hurries on from the first timidly-bold declaration of love and modest return, to the most unlimited passion, to an irrevocable union; then, amidst alternating storms of rapture and despair, it hastens to the fate of the young lovers, who yet appear enviable in their hard lot, for their love survives them, and by their deaths they have obtained an endless triumph over every separating power. The sweetest and the bitterest, love and hatred, festivity and dark forebodings, tender embraces and sepulchres, the fullness of life and self-annihilation are all brought close to each other by Shakespeare, and all these contrasts are blended in this harmonious and wonderful work into a unity of impression.

Today, of course, one recognizes a tone of bardolatry in such an analysis which presents Shakespeare not only as an inspired creator of characters, but also as a fully conscious artist who wrote plays which are "perfect" in form. The assumption behind the "organic" approach to Shakespeare is that Shakespeare's work transcends his time and place and is self-sustained, the poet creating an organic whole. Poetry has a logic of its own and by virtue of that logic a work of art becomes a self-consistent entity, a complete organism.

One major restoration effected by Phelps was the reinstating to Act 1 of Rosaline as Romeo's first love. In the introduction to the play in the popular acting edition Oxberry's New English Drama, Hazlitt justified the tradition of leaving out Rosaline as a wise omission on the stage "to narrow the canvass, and assist in the concentration of the interest."[53] Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine pointed out in 1830 that in the play as it was currently acted Romeo's love for Rosaline was still omitted and the neoclassical critical stance against showing the inconstancy of Romeo was still in effect. "So we know, it seems, more of the human heart than Shakespear," commented the magazine sarcastically (27, 1830). Samuel Phelps and Charlotte Cushman, in restoring Rosaline to the stage, clearly agreed with the vindication of the part presented by Blackwood's that Shakespeare was the supreme portrayer of human passions. Was it probable or possible, asked the magazine, that such a character as that of Romeo could have never felt the passion of love, until he saw Juliet? Had not every imagination and passionate nature, whether male or female, been compelled by "the strong necessity of loving to some dark idol in the niches of its own creation, before the true deity of its worship" had appeared? The journal pronounced that "no one ever fell truly in love at three-and-twenty who had not many loves since he was fifteen" (p. 56).

Praising the restoration of Shakespeare's endings in Phelps' productions, critics gave tribute to the soundness of the principle "which permits Shakespeare to work up his catastrophe in his own way" (Athenaeum, Oct. 2, 1847). In producing Romeo and Juliet from the folio text rather than Garrick's acting version, Phelps took a fresh look at the problems of staging and evidently felt that the customary practice left much to be desired, especially the presentation of the final scene of the play.

In Garrick's acting text of Romeo and Juliet the action of the play concludes in "a Church-yard; in it, a Monument belonging to the Capulets."[54] From the various accounts of this scene and from Benjamin Wilson's 1753 painting of David Garrick and Anne Bellamy in the tomb, now found in the Theatre Museum in London, one can deduce the precise manner of staging in Garrick's production.[55] Backscene shutters placed in some advantageous groove position separated the graveyard from the interior of the monument. In the centre were the double doors in a profile flat. When these doors sprung open, Juliet was revealed on her bier. Another backscene, drop or flat, formed the definitive background of the inner tomb.

After breaking open the tomb with "sudden whirl, stretch'd leg, and lifted Staff," Romeo enters the tomb, drinks the poison just as Juliet awakens.[56] In the love duet that follows, Romeo, according to the acting text, "brings her from the tomb" out to the graveyard, close to the audience.[57] After a striking rendition of death's agonies, which Garrick prolonged in order to exhibit his famous skill at "writhing, straining and agonizing," Romeo expires and Juliet faints over his body. Upon her revival she stabs herself.[58]

The essential manner of staging the tomb scene had not changed by 1826 when James Boaden complained that Juliet should not be discovered on the ground level of the monument. "Our stage Romeo," he wrote in The Life Of Mrs. Siddons, "batters a couple of doors fiercely with the crow in his grasp, which very unnaturally fly open outwards; and there, in all her supposed maiden strewments, lies Juliet, above ground, ingeniously obvious to the audience." Romeo's ferocious battering of the doors, the wheeling of the crowbar, Romeo's start of surprise, Juliet's attitude as she was lifted from the ground were all managed with large-scale and overly-picturesque effects. "Surely all this is absurd," concluded Boaden.[59]

For almost a century actors and actresses in this final scene had indulged in a system of traditional moves. In Phelps' production of the last scene from the original text, finally "the natural and the true triumphed," declared the Observer (Sept. 20, 1846). Phelps rejected the century-long stage tradition established by Garrick and with careful study produced a number of changes which were commended for their simplicity and smoothness. "With such care and originality has the whole of the mise en scène been disposed," wrote the Athenaeum, "that there is scarcely a situation in which there is not some novelty and felicity of arrangement to admire." The most striking example of Phelps' break with the traditional manner of presenting Romeo and Juliet came in this last scene in which, believed the Athenaeum, Phelps "strictly obeys the implied stage directions" in Shakespeare's original text. Romeo carried the body of Paris upstage into the vault and stayed there after his discovery of Juliet, not returning to the footlights for his final speech and action. When Juliet awoke, she, too, played her final part upstage in the vault and died beside the tomb on which she had been lying. The centre of the stage remained empty. There was a moment of silence before the stage was suddenly filled by the hurried entrances of the watchmen and servants and all who arrive to comment upon the scene framed by the opening to the vault. The "picturesque effect" of all this fully justified the poet's conception, declared the Athenaeum, showing how much wiser Shakespeare was "than the players have hitherto been" (Sept. 19, 1846).

The Athenaeum, however, had one point of contention. It found that one of the grandest psychological expressions of the play was lost to the house when Phelps threw the tomb of the Capulets into the background, "and the whole of the scenes which include the catastrophe of the piece were played, consequently, in dumb show." To complete that effect of unnecessary distance, the hum of the gathering multitude in the far-off streets was made to reach, and grow upon, the ear--in itself an excellent effect. The Athenaeum, however, found the hum provoking in the case in question because it interfered with effects "that are yet more important" (Oct. 2, 1847).

The effectiveness of Phelps' arrangement, its symbolic value, and what critics felt was faithfulness to the text might have recommended it to managers before Phelps, except that this arrangement denies the two leading actors the opportunity to make their last speeches close to the footlights and the audience. Phelps, characteristically, had avoided drawing attention to histrionic effects.

V

Although some critics claimed that Phelps completely restored Shakespeare's play to the integrity of the original text and presented an "entirely perfect version of the text for the first time,"[60] examination of Phelps' promptbook for the play, made from an 1815 Thomas Tegg edition of Shakespeare and now held in the Folger Library, reveals that he did not present a completely restored text. In his Shakespearean productions Phelps did not attempt to present an uncut version of the dramatist, for a perfectly restored text was an ideal which would not be realized on the English stage until the twentieth century; instead, he tried to present as much of the original as could be fitted into nineteenth-century theatre practice. The Athenaeum, long a champion for the restoration of Shakespeare's texts on the nineteenth-century stage, nonetheless felt justified in explaining that complete restoration of the texts of Shakespeare for stage purposes would be injudicious and was not demanded even by a veneration for the poet. Using a line of reasoning that would often be presented by critics and producers in future productions of Shakespeare in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the journal provided the following justification:

> Were it a question of the preservation of text, then no line should be surrendered by us to any place or appeal whatever; but the text being safe, its use for a particular purpose is subject to such reasonable modification as that purpose may require. No play is produced among us, from whatever hand, which does not undergo such suppressions as the exigencies of the performance may require--and Shakspeare, were he with us today, would himself assist in each stage arrangement. (Oct. 2, 1847)

On the nineteenth-century stage the restoration of the "true text" meant simply the deletion of all language inserted by earlier "improvers" and performance of as much of the original as time and propriety permitted. A producer was privileged to give as much or as little as he chose of the folio text, but whatever he gave must be genuine. "But the utmost relaxation of the principle of adherence to which we will consent," explained the Athenaeum, "does not admit of a line of interpolation. What we have must be Shakspeare's, if we have not him all. Out of no materials but his own will we hear of arrangement."

In restoring an original Shakespearean text to the stage a mid-nineteenth-century manager faced a considerable task. First, he had to present the play in the customary three hours' performing time including time for intermissions between acts. It was still common to present Shakespeare together with other fare for the evening's entertainment although these features were no longer presented as entr'-actes. At Sadler's Wells, for example, where performances started at seven in the evening, a five-act piece was always preceded or followed by a farce, or even a two- or three-act comedy (Leader, Sept., 1910). A producer also had to divide the play into scenes to accommodate it to a stage less flexible than Shakespeare's, and in effecting his divisions he followed the traditions established by eighteenth-century editors of the dramatist. Lastly, he had to remove or replace expressions which the censor's office would not permit on grounds of indecency or blasphemy. The word "God" could not be spoken on the stage, even in prayer; all words referring to the reproductive process were forbidden; illicit social practices were unmentionable.

Samuel Phelps, aiming to present the bard in his integrity, restored Shakespeare's texts "according to a discretion" (Athenaeum, Oct. 2, 1846). Unlike other actor-managers since the Restoration who manipulated Shakespeare in order to impose a conception of their own creation upon

Shakespeare's plays, Phelps sought to maintain the harmonious and unified whole of Romeo and Juliet and carefully made his excisions. Examination of Phelps' promptbooks for his productions reveals that his usual practice in reducing Shakespeare's plays to the customary three hours' performance was to remove short passages, varying from one to twenty lines, from individual speeches throughout the play, thereby shortening many scenes. Individual words and phrases were removed for the most part to avoid difficulty with the censor; puns were removed as unnecessary or indecorous. Some small scenes and a number of minor characters were occasionally omitted, most of their lines being devoted to explanation or comment, but the bulk of the reduction was achieved by a careful and ubiquitous cutting that left few scenes intact. Phelps' policy, in sum, was to omit those minor passages that he felt could be excised without losing continuity in the play. Phelps used this method in some of his earliest productions such as Richard III and then, much less drastically, for Romeo and Juliet.

The economy of Phelps' cutting of Romeo and Juliet is shown by the fact that the total of all omissions in Phelps' promptbook is about five hundred lines, a modest number indeed in nineteenth-century theatre practice, especially when one considers that in 1882 Henry Irving, who saw himself as a restorer, excised more than a thousand lines.[61] Chief cuts to the play are the Chorus to the second act and the clowning of Peter with the musicians at the end of the fourth act. The shortening of Romeo and Juliet also allowed Phelps to include on the evening's bill other fare attractive to a mid-century audience: a musical overture, "Preciosa," by Webster, previous to the play; and, previous to the farce, a performance of the quadrille "Royal Scotch" by G. Glover. The evening concluded with The Petite Comedy of Matrimony.[62]

The first act of Romeo and Juliet received the greatest pruning by Phelps, 143 lines being cut from the text. In scene i, Phelps carefully expurged all obscenities; as a result, the ribald exchange between Sampson and Gregory at the beginning of the play was deleted. It was obviously Phelps' intention to effect speed in this first scene: a large alarum bell was sounded as Tybalt and Benvolio drew swords; seven citizens entered exclaiming, "Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!" (I.ii.72); three servants emerged from the house, three Montague servants appeared, and a general fight was sustained until the Prince appeared in the centre of the stage. The exchange between Capulet, Lady Capulet and Montague was "spoken quickly through the noise." Phelps cut the most extravagant lines from the Prince's speech, including his descriptive passage of his rebellious subjects as "Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel" (I.i.82). The actor-manager then excised from Romeo's speeches the puns starting with "Bid a sick man in sadness make his will" (I.i.202-03) and his description of Rosaline as "she is fair, too wise, wisely too fair" (I.i.220-21) as well as Capulet's puns in his discussion with Paris in the second scene.

In I.iii the Nurse's speech was kept complete except for those expressions deemed offensive, such as her exhortation "Now by my maidenhood" (I.iii.2) and her declaration that "women grow by men" (I.iii.96). Phrases here and there were softened in the name of decency. The wormwood "on the nipple/ Of my dug" (I.iii.30-31) became the wormwood "upon my breast," and "God be with his soul!" was altered to "Heaven be with his soul!" (I.iii.40). Like Garrick, Phelps considered Shakespeare's fourteen-year-old heroine unrealistically mature, so in

Phelps' revival she was given two more years, the Nurse now proclaiming that "On Lammas Eve at night shall she be sixteen" (I.iii.22) and, accordingly, explaining that "tis since the earthquake now some thirteen years" (I.iii.24). Deleted entirely was the descriptive passage by Lady Capulet in which she eloquently delineates to Juliet "the volume of young Paris' face" (I.iii.80-95).

In I.iv Phelps kept integral Mercutio's important Queen Mab speech except for the last seven lines, considered too obscene to be spoken on the stage. Two passages in this scene the actor-manager thought inessential to the major intent of the story, so these were also omitted: the fifteen-line passage of the four servingmen preparing for Capulet's feast and the fourteen-line discussion between the two elder Capulets at the feast who consider how long it was since they were masked at such a ball. He then pruned Capulet's angry outburst at Tybalt and Tybalt's impassioned reply. The entire lyrical sonnet duet between Romeo and Juliet at the ball in I.v Phelps considered vital to the play and so no lines were deleted from the lovely initial encounter of the young lovers. Excised from the end of the scene, however, was Juliet's pun as she hears the name of her suitor: "Prodigious birth of love it is to me/ That I must love a loathed enemy" (I.v.142-43).

Fewer lines were cut from Act II. The Chorus to the act was entirely omitted, an excision typical of Phelps' practice of cutting some of the passages of comment from Shakespeare's texts. From Mercutio's speeches in II.i Phelps removed the most obscene lines in the play, those on Romeo's love for Rosaline. Such excisions many of Phelps' critics found praiseworthy. Expressing a view similar to that of critics in Garrick's day, the conservative editor of the Weekly Dispatch remarked that few, if any, of the Elizabethans' plays could be acted as they were written, "the coarseness of expression, suited to their age, being intolerable at the present day" (Nov. 3, 1844). In the balcony scene (II.ii) Phelps made a few deletions to the speeches between the lovers, including Romeo's indecorous comment that the moon's "vestal livery is but sick and green," and Juliet's four-line questioning of Romeo's name, "Thou art thyself, though not a Montague" (II.ii.39-42). Phelps also shortened Romeo's lengthy lyrical description of the fair Juliet by a third.

The Friar's speech in II.iii on the medicinal power of herbs is an essential comment on the action of the play and Phelps retained most of the Friar's lines except the lines about the womb of nature's mother, and mankind "sucking on her natural bosom" (II.iii.5-10). Potentially offensive to the Church was the Friar's comment that "riddling confession finds but riddling shrift" (II.iii.52) and therefore this line was also excised. In II.iv Phelps again played down Mercutio's propensity for bawdy repartee, and in suppressing the ribald exchanges between Mercutio and Romeo, he consequently minimized the coarser side of the character. Although The Spectator in its review of the production found Phelps "a clever but hard Mercutio," there was no gall in this Mercutio: he was a man of irrepressible wit (Sept. 19, 1846). The end result of Phelps' excisions was that Mercutio was presented as a gallant and courtly humourist who avoided giving any impression of cruelty in his jesting; omitted were the harsher jibes against the Nurse as she seeks Romeo and also the cruder witticisms at her expense.

At the end of II.iv Phelps deleted some of the comic lines of the Nurse as she prattles about Juliet, including her allusion to Paris as "the properer man" (II.iv.200) and her naïve question "Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin with a letter?" (II.v.202). Juliet's charming scene in which she impatiently awaits news from the Nurse of her beloved was preserved except for the deletion of the Nurse's naughty comment, "I am the drudge, and toil in your delight/ But you shall bear the burden soon at night" (II.v.75-76). All of the short II.iv was retained in which the Friar determines that "For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone/ Till holy Church incorporate two in one" (II.vi.36-37).

Only minor changes were made to the important first scene of Act III in which Mercutio is slain and Romeo is banished; Benvolio's narrative to the Prince of the circumstances of Mercutio's death, for example, was tightened by eight lines, and the Prince's edict against Romeo was curtailed by four lines. From III.ii, in which Juliet eagerly awaits her husband on her wedding night, Phelps carefully deleted those lines that expressed the frank sexual longings of the young Juliet. Pruned in the second half of this poignant scene were some of the young bride's most convoluted expressions of torment as she hears of Romeo's banishment. In a similar vein, Phelps, in the scene in the Friar's cell, shortened the lengthy expression of Romeo's most passionate grief on his banishment, the Nurse's tearful lamentation, and the Friar's vehement tirade against Romeo.

Recognizing the contrast inherent in Shakespeare's dramatic structure, Phelps, unlike other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century actor-managers, retained the short ironical III.iv in which Capulet and Paris make wedding preparations for the marriage of Juliet and Paris. The subsequent farewell between Romeo and Juliet on their wedding night was kept in all its lyric splendour, with only a minor excision. In the second half of III.v a number of cuts were effected. The long exchange between Juliet and her mother on Juliet's grief for Tybalt was entirely excised (III.v.70-103), the exchange now starting with Lady Capulet's "But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl" (III.v.104). Because of this lengthy excision, however, Lady Capulet was robbed of most of her anger against "That same villain Romeo" (III.v.80) and Juliet was denied the ironical exclamation

O, how my heart abhors
To hear him named and cannot come to him,
To break the love I bore my cousin
Upon his body that hath slaughtered him!
(III.v.99-102)

On the other hand, although abridging Capulet's surprise at the continued tears of his daughter on Tybalt's death, Phelps preserved almost the entire passage of Capulet's thunderous anger against his daughter's disobedience. From Juliet's impassioned speech to her Nurse on her father's command to marry Paris, the actor-manager cut only those lines that might be considered sacrilegious:

My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven.
How shall that faith return again to earth
Unless that husband send it me from heaven
By leaving earth?
(III.v.207-10)

No excisions were made to Juliet's horrid imaginings, in IV.i, that so vividly describe her mental condition: "O bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,/ From off the battlements of any tower . . ." (IV.i.77-88). From IV.ii Phelps deleted the short comic discussion between Capulet and the Servingman to "hire me twenty cunning cooks"; what remained was merely Capulet's cryptic comment "So many guests as here are writ" (IV.ii.1), "spoken without," according to the stage directions. Juliet's subsequent potion scene, spoken quickly and stripped of all the conventional business of the past hundred years, was kept uncut as a decisive scene within the drama. Phelps' stage directions here reveal that the manager aimed for speed in this scene, wishing to lose no time in presenting Shakespeare's ironic contrast in the ensuing hurried preparations for the wedding feast. The stage directions read that Juliet, having drunk the potion, "throws herself on the bed and the moment her hand touches the bed" the shutters are "to close in" and the lights are to be raised. Without pause the hasty wedding preparations by Capulet, Lady Capulet and the Nurse were then presented, Phelps, however, cutting also the second short comic passage between Capulet and the Servingmen.

Act IV ends with the lamentations of the Capulets upon the discovery of the seemingly dead Juliet, followed by a short comic scene between Peter and the musicians. Phelps pruned sixteen lines of the most extravagant expressions of grief from the speeches of the Nurse, Paris, Capulet, and the Friar. For the end of this act Phelps made the only concession to a grand effect in his production: like Garrick, the actor-manager ended the act with an imposing tableau in which, the stage directions read, the mourners of Juliet "gather around the bed." In effecting this tableau to end the act, however, Phelps excised entirely the musicians' scene, a cut of forty-nine lines, which was his largest single cut to the play.

In his desire to present as fully as possible the last act of Romeo and Juliet as Shakespeare conceived it, Phelps presented Act V with few major omissions, a careful pruning being carried out within individual speeches. No deletions were made until the third scene, from which Phelps cut several of Paris' lines as he "strews" flowers on the tomb of

Juliet (IV.iii.11-16) and comments on the identity of the intruder in the tomb (V.iii.49-52). From Romeo's long soliloquy as he stands in the tomb by the body of Juliet Phelps deleted several lines of comment on the merriness of men before death, lines that asked for Tybalt's forgiveness, and the two indelicate lines in which Romeo expresses his intent to remain "With worms that are my chambermaids" (V.iii.108-09).

In the remainder of the final scene of the play, Phelps cut a few lines from most of the speeches, especially from those passages that give explanation of the circumstances of the death of the young lovers: from the Friar, the entreaty to Balthasar to tell "What torch is yond that vainly lends his light/ To grubs and eyeless skulls?" (V.iii.125-26); from the First Watchman, the explanation to the Prince of Juliet "Warm and newly dead" (V.iii.175-76); from Capulet, the exclamation "O wife, look how our daughter bleeds" (V.iii.202-05); and from Lady Capulet, her horrified reaction, "O me! This sight of death is as a bell/ That warns my old age to a sepulchre" (V.iii.206-07). As well, Phelps cut the passage of explanation by Montague that his wife was dead, grief of Romeo's exile having "stopped her breath" (V.iii.210-11). The actor-manager then pruned fourteen lines from the Friar's loquacious explanation of the circumstances surrounding Juliet's death; as a result, in Phelps' production the Friar, true to his word, was "brief" and gave his narrative succinctly.

To the speeches of each of the five spokesmen in the last thirty lines of the play Phelps also made cuts. Deleted was the Prince's question to the Page of Romeo's reason for coming to the tomb and the Page's explanation of Romeo's actions there. From the Prince's stern rebuke to Montague and Capulet Phelps cut the last three lines, the speech therefore ending with an emphatic "See what a scourge is laid upon your hate" (V.iii.293-95). In omitting the final lines of this speech, however, the actor-manager neglected the Prince's pronouncement that not only had heaven found means to kill the parents' joys with love, but the Prince, too, had lost a brace of kinsmen. Omitted in Phelps' production, therefore, was Shakespeare's emphasis that "All are punished" (V.iii.293-95), the Prince himself, in pronouncing judgment, including his own name among the guilty.

The reconciliation of the two families in Phelps' presentation was effected simply, with only one line by Capulet: "O brother Montague, give me thy hand" (V.iii.296), and the stage directions in the promptbook here read that "Capulet leads Montague to Lady Capulet at Right Centre." Gone from Shakespeare's text was Montague's promise to raise Juliet's statue in pure gold and Capulet's rejoinder that such tokens would be "Poor sacrifices of our enmity" (V.iii.304). From the final speech of the play, spoken by the Prince, the lines "Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things/ Some shall be pardoned and some punished" (V.iii.307-08) were excised, and no voice was given to the responsibility of all concerned. The play ended with the Prince's simple pronouncement:

> A glooming peace this morning with it brings.
>   The sun for sorrow will not show his head.
> For never was a story of more woe
> Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

Samuel Phelps ended his production, as the stage directions in the promptbook indicate, with "slow music to take down the curtain."

VI

Praising the fact that Phelps had rejected "the mangled acting edition generally in use" and had presented Shakespeare's text in a representation more faithful than any seen for centuries, the Theatrical Journal in its review cordially and earnestly recommended its readers if they had any ambition "to behold what is good and excellent," to go and see Romeo and Juliet at Sadler's Wells (Oct. 3, 1846). The play, declared John Bull, had been produced in a "highly creditable" manner (Sept. 19, 1846), and the Observer stated that the "honourable ambition" which urged the management to its production was amply rewarded by a "thronged and delighted" audience (Sept. 20, 1846).

Despite many minor cuts, Samuel Phelps' production of Romeo and Juliet in 1846 restored Shakespeare's plays in many important respects to the integrity of the first folio text. The production stands out as truly remarkable for its time as the most faithful representation of Romeo and Juliet on the nineteenth-century stage. The restoration of this play would not be superseded until the beginning of the twentieth century with the presentation in 1905 by William Poel, whose production theories for the play, though more consciously aiming to correct performance traditions, would bear in many significant respects a remarkable similarity to the practices initiated by Phelps. Garrick's interpolated death scene, dirge and music and the many emendations to Shakespeare's language were all swept away by Samuel Phelps, while scenes, characters and speeches which belong to the original and had been omitted from or altered in the representation for almost two centuries were finally reinstated in their rightful place. Garrick's alterations had given opportunity for increased spectacle in music, dancing and procession and had converted the plays into an excellent vehicle for the leading actors to use all their greatest acting skills in provoking tears in their audience. "At Sadler's Wells," however, said William A. Stanley many years later, "we got the real Shakespeare" (Leader, Sept. 6, 1910). Godfrey Turner in 1884, looking back upon Phelps' career after the actor-manager's death, judged him to be "a reformer, undoubtedly, and the chief of all in the whole range of theatrical history; for, in producing more plays of the highest order than any other manager, he reformed more vicious customs in restoring the integrity of texts and in banishing unwarrantable interpolations."[63]

The Victorian enthusiast for Shakespeare, G. C. D. Odell, in his history of Shakespeare in performance, Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving, declared in 1920 that as a producer Samuel Phelps had also probably done more to popularize Shakespeare in the course of eighteen years at Sadler's Wells than had done any other actor-manager at "any other theatre in the whole domain of English theatrical history."[64] The success of Phelps' management at Sadler's Wells from 1844 to 1862 demonstrated for the first time since the Restoration that the classic repertory of the English stage could attract and hold a popular audience. "The rise and steady prosperity of this truly national theatre in such a neighbourhood," asserted the Times only three years after Phelps' take-over of Sadler's Wells, "is one of the most remarkable facts in the dramatic history of the day" (Aug. 25, 1847). For many years Phelps was forced to contend with extraordinary competition at the West End, unparalleled for lavish expenditure and the enjoyment of royal patronage, and yet he managed to stand his ground and so contrived that the more modest establishment under his direction should survive its more ambitious rivals in the production of the classic drama.

It was not because of anything peculiar in the air of Islington or because an audience at Pentonville was made of men differing in nature from those who would form an audience in the Strand, that Shakespeare was listened to at Sadler's Wells with a reverence not shown elsewhere. In Henry Morley's view what had been done at Islington could, if the same means were employed, be done at Drury Lane. "But," the critic declared, "Shakespeare is not fairly heard when he is made to speak from behind masses of theatrical upholstery or when it is assumed that there is but one character in any of his plays, and that the others may be acted as incompetent performers please" (Examiner, Oct. 18, 1856; JLP 131). Morley noted the sensible subservience of the scene-painter and the mechanist to the poetry in Phelps' productions and pointed out that the actor-manager had followed the course necessary for reviving interest in serious drama:

> He acts national plays in a house small enough for all to see . . . the subtlest and most delicate shades of expression proper to the art of the actor; he has a company of performers trained and accustomed to suport each other steadily, and peculiarly able to present each play as an effective whole. When the curtain falls upon a play at Sadler's Wells, the audience has not only seen a sight and heard much sound, but it has felt an entire poem. (Examiner, Sept. 22, 1860; JLP 214)

The Times, on Phelps' retirement from Sadler's Wells, gave praise to his work, pointing out that his company, though not for the most part composed of actors celebrated at the West End, were drilled with consummate tact into a high degree of efficiency and individuals were skillfully made subservient to the general effect.[65] The success of Phelps' productions was achieved in part by the vigorous drilling of the company into a concern for subduing excesses of expression that would destroy the balance of the whole, blending the work carefully to produce everywhere the right emphasis, taking heed that every part should have in the acting as much prominence as Shakespeare gave it in his plan--in short, by something we recognize today as approaching intelligent and disciplined ensemble playing. Phelps' company at Sadler's Wells did indeed come close to being the first real ensemble group in the English theatre. It was because of this most conscientious care in the production accorded acting and elocution, concluded Henry Morley, "that with actors, many of whom are anything but 'stars,' the result most to be desired is really obtained. Shakespeare appears in his integrity" (Examiner, Oct. 18, 1856; JLP 130). No higher compliment oculd have been paid any management than the one addressed to Phelps in 1856 by William Macready when, having retired after a career as actor-manager at both Covent Garden and Drury Lane, he confessed in a letter to the Lord Chief Justice Pollock, "I believe we must look for the drama, if we really wish to find it, in that remote suburb of Islington."[66]

Of recent years we have become aware of the extent to which the reforms initiated by the Meiningen Company had been anticipated by a number of English companies in the middle of the nineteenth century, and it is worth noting that when Phelps took his Sadler's Wells company to Germany in 1859 one of the most enthusiastic members of his audience was the young Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, who dated his own appreciation of the need of ensemble work and meticulous staging on the German stage to his experience of Phelps' production of King Lear and whose direction of his court players from 1874 to 1890 ushered in modern theatre practice in that country.[67]

Phelps himself was not a flamboyant actor and this helped considerably in maintaining the consistent level of acting found throughout the Sadler's Wells company. One of Phelps' most incisive critics said of his acting that he "never electrified by any flash of genius," and that to see him in one of Shakespeare's tragic parts was "an intellectual pleasure, satisfying the judgment though seldom appealing to the imagination."[68] Phelps had not that wonderful power that was possessed by such actors as Edmund Kean or, later, Laurence Olivier, of vivifying certain words or phrases with a thrill of genius that surprised suddenly the hearts of all who hear. Instead, as Henry Morley explained, he relied chiefly on "study, taste, and a right sense of poetry" (Examiner, May 1860). Ironically, one of his chief strengths in the context of his age was to be damaging to his future reputation. It is precisely because one of Phelps' chief merits was avoiding all temptation to mere personal display, directing attention to the poet whom he was illustrating rather than to himself as illustrator, that he was not remembered as much as other actor-managers were by those who came after him. Moreover, it is for this same reason that Phelps today is not accorded the same acknowledgment by theatre historians as other leading actor-managers of the nineteenth century are, and that has led, consequently, to such admissions as the one made in the recent Revels History of English Drama that he displayed "an excellence of production and mise en scene which deserves far more scholarly attention than it has yet received."[69]

Phelps' contribution to the restoration of such plays as Romeo and Juliet on the nineteenth-century stage was indeed a major one and the influence on the acting and stage work in the Shakespearean productions of many of his contemporaries a prodigious one. "To have played with Phelps at Sadler's Wells is yet the proudest boast of those who survive from his old company," remarked Michael Williams in 1883, pointing out that many of London's best actors and actresses owed their fame to the training which they received in early life at "The Theatre."[70] Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, the most famous of Phelps' pupils, points out that when cast as Prince Hal in Henry IV, Part II, in the later years of Phelps' acting career, his eyes were opened by Phelps to many things, the main one being that though the young actor had worked much at the part, he knew precious little about it. Forbes-Robertson says that Phelps left a lasting impression which remained with him throughout his stage career: "The attainments of that career, such as they have been, are due to his influence and teaching."[71] Percy Fitzgerald in 1895 lamented that there was no one now on the stage Phelps' equal "for giving weight and point to a sentence, which came out clean and emphatic, firm as from a mold."[72] An echo of the elocutionary art which was the basis of Phelps' style, however, was still heard in the acting of his pupil Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, of whom Sir George Arthur wrote in 1936: "for purity of tone and perfection of phrasing . . . one has yet to look for his peer."[73]

Speaking of Phelps' prodigious work in producing thirty-one of Shakespeare's plays on the stage, Sir Henry Irving later remarked at one of his memorable suppers at the Lyceum, "Gentlemen, the work I have done in this theatre is nothing to the work that was done by Samuel Phelps at Sadler's Wells."[74] Dating his own resolve to go on the stage from witnessing a performance of Hamlet by Samuel Phelps, Irving expressed the influence that Phelps had had upon his acting and declared that Phelps "was the greatest actor I ever saw--or ever shall see . . . whatever is best in my work at the Lyceum--not only in playing but also in production . . . well, that is all Phelps."[75]

NOTES

[1] Quoted in Cecil A. Moore, ed., Introd. to *Twelve Famous Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century* (New York: Random House, 1933), p. viii.

[2] Prologue to Mrs. Inchbald, *To Marry or Not to Marry*. In *The British Theatre; or a Collection of Plays* (London: Longman, Hurst et al., 1808), p. B3.

[3] Related by John Hollingshead, quoted in Henry Salerno, *English Drama in Transition: 1880-1920* (New York: Western, 1968), p. 14.

[4] Johnston Forbes-Robertson, *A Player under Three Reigns* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1925), p. 67.

[5] John Towse, *Sixty Years of the Theatre: An Old Critic's Memories* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1916), pp. 37 and 39.

[6] Towse, p. 37.

[7] Shirley Allen, *Samuel Phelps and Sadler's Wells Theatre* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Press, 1971), p. xiii.

[8] Henry Irving, citation unknown, as quoted in Shirley Allen, "A Successful People's Theatre: Samuel Phelps at Sadler's Wells," *Theatre Arts*, 28 (1944), p. 604.

[9] William Toynbee, ed., *The Diaries of William Charles Macready* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1912), II.

[10] Sadler's Wells held 2600 without crowding. Designed to accommodate a lower-class audience, it had fewer boxes than theatres of the West End, reserving most of its space for pit benches and gallery, at a shilling or sixpence a seat. The extraordinary length of the pit was much greater than that of any other theatre in London. (Stage to centre box at Drury Lane, for example, was 50 feet. At Sadler's Wells it was 115 feet.) Its large pit was the dominant characteristic of Sadler's Wells and the thousand occupants of its benches determined the character of the audience.

[11] From playbill for May 27, 1844, for a performance of *Macbeth*, "Playbills 1844-1845," Sadler's Wells Collection, Finsbury Park Library, London.

[12] Charles Dickens, "Shakespeare and Newgate," *Household Words*, October 4, 1851, p. 25. In this vivid essay Dickens describes the theatrical conditions at Sadler's Wells prior to Phelps' takeover.

[13] Occasionally minor theatres risked a penalty by presenting Shakespeare, and in the 1830's at Sadler's Wells actor George Almar was well known for his flamboyant acting of the dramatist's plays. In 1833, for example, Sadler's Wells presented Cibber's version of Richard III which, with Cibber's theatricalized additional lines, such as "Off with his head! So much for Buckingham," was highly popular. An apt description of the average professional actor of the time in that part was given three years later by the twenty-four-year-old Dickens in his Sketches by Boz:

> It's very easy to do--"Orf with his ed" (very quick and loud; then slow and sneeringly)--"So much for Bu-u-uckingham!" Lay the emphasis on the "uck," get yourself gradually into a corner, and work with your right hand, whilst you're saying it, as if you were feeling your way, and it's sure to do. The tent scene is confessedly worth half-a-sovereign, and so you have the fit in, gratis, and everyone knows what an effect may be produced by a good combat. One-two-three-four-over; then, one-two-three-four-under; then thrust; then dodge and slide about; then fall down on one knee; then fight upon it, and then get up again and stagger. You may keep on doing this, as long as it seems to take--say ten minutes--and then fall down (backwards, if you can manage it without hurting yourself), and die game; nothing like it for producing an effect. They always do it at Astley's and Sadler's Wells, and if they don't know how to do this sort of thing, who in the world does? (Charles Dickens, "Private Theatres," Sketches by Boz, Introd. Thea Holme, London: Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 119)

[14] Richard Lee, "Samuel Phelps: A Biographical Sketch," The Theatre, Sept. 1, 1886, 135.

[15] Critic quoted in W. May Phelps and John Forbes-Robertson, The Life and Life-Work of Samuel Phelps (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1886), pp. 71-72.

[16] Henry Morley, for example, registered his astonishment at the aspect and behavior of the pit and gallery at Sadler's Wells during perfomances of Shakespeare's plays: "There sit our working classes in a happy crowd, as orderly and reverend as if they were at church, and yet as unrestrained in their enjoyment as if listening to stories told them by their own firesides" (Examiner, Jan. 24, 1857; repeated in Henry Morley, Journal of a London Playgoer from 1851 to 1866, London: Routledge, 1891, p. 58).

[17] Henry Irving, address at Parry Bar Institute, March 6, 1878, quoted in Brander Matthews and Laurence Hutton, eds., Actors and Actresses of Great Britain and United States, New York, 1886, IV, 82.

It is noteworthy that when Phelps made a rare excursion into the field of melodrama by presenting Lewis' gothic Castle Spectre in 1849, the Theatrical Journal reported that the audience was unimpressed and that the actors "failed to create the least interest throughout the evening" (May 31, 1849).

[18] Examiner, Oct. 15, 1853; rpt. Journal of a London Playgoer, p. 58. Henceforth references to the Journal of a London Playgoer will appear in the text and the title will be abbreviated to JLP.

[19] A number of reviewers mention that spectators in pit and boxes brought texts to the theatre on the occasion of an unusual revival so that they could check the acting against printed copies of the play. Illustrated London News pointed out that "more than one of our contemporaries have remarked on the number of books in the hands of the audience" (Aug. 28, 1847, 137).

[20] Charles Dickens, quoted in Phelps and Forbes-Robertson, Life and Life-Work, p. 389.

[21] John Hill, The Actor: A Treatise on the Art of Playing (London, 1750, 2nd ed. with changes, 1755), p. 254.

[22] Richard Cumberland, Memoirs of Richard Cumberland Written by Himself (1806; rpt. Philadelphia: Parry and Macmillan, 1856), p. 587.

[23] Charles Lamb, "On the Tragedies of Shakspeare Considered with Reference to Their Fitness for Stage-Representation," On Shakspeare's Stage Productions, 1811, in John Gassner, Theatre and Drama in the Making (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 1964), p. 508.

[24] William Macready, Diaries, ed. Toynbee, II, 17-18.

[25] The Theatrical Journal, July 17, 1841, furnishes a comparison of the measurements of the important London theatres. Sadler's Wells' smaller stage area becomes apparent:

	Width of Proscenium	Width of Stage	Depth of Stage
Drury Lane	40-3/4	78	60
Covent Garden	38-3/4	81-1/2	67-1/2
Sadler's Wells	27	50	50

[26] Playbill for Romeo and Juliet, Sept. 16, 1846, Sadler's Wells Collection, Finsbury Library.

[27] Phelps, quoted in Godfrey Turner, "Screens, Dresses, and Decoration," The Theatre, n.s., 1844, 126-37.

[28] Clipping from May 8, 1875, "Theatre Thirteen Years Ago: Sadler's Wells," in "Scenes, Criticisms 1844-1862," Sadler's Wells Collection, Finsbury Library.

[29] Richard Lee, "Samuel Phelps," 135.

[30] Quoted in Lee, p. 140.

[31] Unsigned essay on Garrick's Romeo, 1757. From Memoirs of Sir Thomas Hughson and Mr. Joseph Williams, with the Remarkable History, Travels, and Distresses of Telemachus Lovet. Qtd. in Vickers, Shakespeare: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), IV, 308.

[32] John Cole, The Life and Theatrical Times of Charles Kemble. 2 vols. (London: Bentley, 1859), I, 185.

[33] Henry Siddons, Illustrations of Gesture and Action, London, 1811, qtd. in Gamini Salgado, Eyewitnesses of Shakespeare (London: Sussex UP, 1975), p. 195.

[34] Joseph Knight, Theatrical Notes (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1893), p. 77.

[35] Edward Stirling, Old Drury Lane, 2 vols. (London, 1881), II, 199.

[36] John Coleman, Players and Playwrights I Have Known, 2 vols. (London, 1880), I, 199.

[37] Lee, "Samuel Phelps," p. 150.

[38] Coleridge, quoted in Phelps, ed., Complete Works of Shakespeare, p. 538.

[39] Vandenhoff, p. 60.

[40] Charles Rice, London Theatre in the 1830s, ed. A. C. Sprayne and Bertram Shuttleworth (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1950), p. 178.

[41] Westland Marston, Our Recent Actors (Boston: 1888), p. 81.

[42] Western Times, 1836, qtd. in Bernard Grebanier, Then Came Each Actor (New York: David McKay, 1975), p. 264.

[43] Plymouth Herald, 1837, qtd. in Grebanier, p. 264.

[44] William Macready, quoted in Alan S. Downer, The Eminent Tragedian: William Charles Macready, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1966, p. 241.

[45] Unknown critic, quoted in Shirley Allen, Samuel Phelps, p. 204.

[46] Charles Shattuck, "Shakespeare's Plays in Performance from 1660 to the Present," The Riverside Shakespeare (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974), p. 1806.

[47] William Hazlitt, Introd. to Romeo and Juliet, in Oxberry's New English Drama (London, 1818-1825), IX, 81.

[48] George Vandenhoff, Leaves from an Actor's Note-book (New York: Appleton, 1860), p. 60.

[49] Cushman's desire to use a Shakespearean text, instead of the familiar Garrick alteration, was unusual and conflicted with the wishes of some members of the Haymarket company who expressed the opinion that "it was all stuff and nonsense doing it in the way proposed." Webster supported his star and overruled the objections so that a more faithful Shakespearean text was used (Charlotte Cushman, letter to Benjamin Webster, n.d., in an extra-illustrated edition of Matthews and Hutton, Actors and Actresses, 1886, vol. 4, No. 6, Harvard Theatre Collection).

[50] G. C. D. Odell, Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving (London: Constable, 1920), II, 271.

[51] Samuel Phelps, ed., Introd. to Romeo and Juliet. The Complete Works of Shakespeare, Illust. T. H. Nicholson (London: Willoughby [1853]), 6.

It became quite common for actor-managers in the second half of the nineteenth century to put out editions of Shakespeare under their names. Henry Irving, for example, later issued The Henry Irving Shakespeare.

[52] Schlegal, quoted in Phelps, ed., Complete Works of Shakespeare, 538.

[53] Hazlitt, Introd. to Romeo and Juliet, in Oxberry's New English Drama, IX, 82.

[54] In David Garrick, Romeo and Juliet, 1748. The Plays of David Garrick, eds. Pedicord and Bergman, III, 139.

[55] This painting has been reproduced in a number of books, including Kalman Burnim, David Garrick, Director.

[56] Many references were made to Garrick's tragic strut, the exaggerated start. Although immensely popular with audiences, these pieces of stage business were increasingly condemned by critics, including the critic who penned the following poem:

> When Romeo sorrowing at his Juliet's Doom,
> With eager madness bursts the canvas Tomb,
> The sudden Whirl, stretch'd Leg, and lifted Staff,
> Which please the Vulgar, make the Critic laugh.
> (Robert Lloyd, The Actor: A Poetical Epistle,
> London, 1760, pp. 6-7)

[57] In David Garrick, Romeo and Juliet, 1748, The Plays of David Garrick, III, 143.

[58] James Kirkman, Memoirs of the Life of Charles Macklin (London: Lackington, Allen and Co., 2 vols., 1799), II, 260. Charles Macklin wrote of his displeasure with Garrick's "strange manner of dying and griping [sic] the carpet; his writhing, straining, and agonizing."

[59] James Boaden, ed., Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons (London, 1826), II, 396.

[60] Quoted in Shirley Allen, Samuel Phelps, p. 217.

[61] In some of his other Shakespearean productions the sum of cuts was even less. In Macbeth, for example, Phelps omitted only 192 lines to reduce it to an acting time of two hours and fifty minutes.

Samuel Phelps' promptbook for Romeo and Juliet bears the following information on its title page: "London, Theatre Royal Sadler's Wells, Sept. 15, 1846." The title page also furnishes information regarding the edition used: "The Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare, vol. 12. London: Thomas Tegg, 1815." The promptbook is now housed at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington and is catalogued there under promptbooks as Rom. 25.

[62] Playbill for Romeo and Juliet, Sept. 16, 1846, "Playbills 1846," Sadler's Wells Collection, Finsbury Public Library, London.

[63] Godfrey Turner, "Show and Its Value," The Theatre, May 1, 1884, 236.

[64] Odell, II, 247.

[65] Times critic, quoted in Clement Scott, The Drama of Yesterday and To-day (London: Macmillan, 1899), I, 611.

[66] William Macready, letter to Lord Chief Justice Pollock, qtd. in Michael Williams, Some London Theatres Past and Present (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1883), p. 19.

[67] Ernst L. Stahl, Shakespeare und das Deutsche Theater (Stuttgart, 1947), p. 486.

[68] H. Barton Baker, History of the London Stage (London, 1904), p. 373.

[69] Fredrick and Lise-Lowe Marker, in The Revels History of Drama in English, gen. ed., T. W. Craik (London: Methuen, 1978), VI, 134.

[70] Williams, p. 22.

[71] Forbes-Robertson, p. 70.

[72] Percy Fitzgerald, Memoirs of an Actor (London, 1895), I, 347.

[73] Sir George Arthur, From Phelps to Gielgud (1936; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1972), p. 164.

[74] Irving, as related by Fred Plowman, in H. Chance Newton, Cues and Curtain Calls (London: John Lane, 1927), 100.

[75] Irving, as related to Chance Newton, p. 25.

CHAPTER III

HENRY IRVING: SHAKESPEARE IN SUMPTUOUS GARMENTS

From 1850 to 1859, while Samuel Phelps in remote Islington was continuing to present his thirty-one productions of "Shakespeare in his integrity" to largely local audiences that were so enthused that often hundreds had to be turned away, the theatrical cynosure of fashionable London was the Princess's Theatre in Oxford Steet. Here Charles Kean was continuing the tradition of mainstream Shakespearean production established by William Macready, mounting heavily-cut Shakespearean texts with scenic splendour. In 1857, the Theatrical Journal, comparing the ideals of the managements of Sadler's Wells and the Princess's, noted that at Sadler's Wells although every attention was paid to the minutest detail both in scenery and appointments, the manager's primary consideration was a faithful adherence to the author's text; such, however, was far from the case at the Princess's where lavishness in scenery and the most brilliant of decorations formed the leading attraction, "being rather amusement for the eye than an address to the understanding" (March 11, 1857). Phelps's methods derived from an actor's concern to solve problems posed by the play, not, as in much Victorian staging, from a pleasure in decoration as an end in itself. In 1884, Godfrey Turner, in comparing Kean and Phelps, said that "economy was imperative in the management of Sadler's Wells, yet by tact and taste, by judgment and ingenuity, I have seen things done that were so striking as to be remembered for years afterwards, and indeed to be remembered now" (Theatre, 3 [1884]). In a production of Henry V in 1853, for example, Phelps showed great ingenuity in staging: in the march-past before Agincourt, his forty supers filed behind a breast-high "set piece," each having two wicker-work dummies in armour lashed to his waist with heads modelled by Madame Tussaud, so that it seemed that they were marching three abreast. "As they tramped past," relates John Coleman, "banners streaming, drums beating, trumpets braying, the stage seemed crowded with soldiers, and the illusion was so perfect that the audience never once discovered the artifice."[1] In Charles Kean's 1859 production of Henry V, by contrast, 212 supernumeraries thronged the stage for the Siege of Harfleur. The major difference between the two theatres, said the Morning Advertiser, was that at the head of one theatre was an artist who, while aptly illustrating his author, "never forgot that better were bare boards and immovable scenery and who with fervour and genius delineated human character and passion"; at the head of the other, however, was "a showman whose overwhelming spectacle dwarfed the meagre actor to an homunculus" (Oct. 13, 1856).

Although Samuel Phelps won the approval of discerning critics who found his harmonious productions more tasteful than the overbearing scenic presentations of Charles Kean, for the fashionable theatre-goers in West-end London it was the beguiling spectacular methods of Kean which drew far greater approval. So successful and prestigious did Kean become that not only did Her Majesty patronize him by attendance at his theatre, an honour never accorded Phelps, but she made Kean director of the Windsor Theatricals. An editorial in the Times in 1858 revealed the attitude of stylish theatre-goers towards the relative position of Phelps and Kean:

> by a splendid style of stage management, that has made the production of each succeeding season eclipse its predecessor, Mr. Charles Kean has made the Princess's Theatre the acknowledged home of the Shakespearean drama . . . . No one would, indeed, ignore the unquestionable merits of Mr. Phelps in raising the character of Sadlers-wel's, and implanting a veneration for Shakespeare in a public previously accustomed to lower forms of the drama. But, setting all other considerations aside, it is still impossible to regard the Pentonville district as the focus of the metropolitan drama. (Jan. 20, 1858)

Emphasis on the pictorial representation of reality and on the visual realization of poetic beauty had become a cardinal aesthetic principle of mainstream Victorian stage production, and although it was relevant to all areas of theatre it was especially applied to Shakespeare. The Victorians generally believed that since Shakespeare's plays were full of "beauty," in the widest possible sense of the word, therefore the visual potential they discerned there must be made actual and appropriately rich in order to do Shakespeare any kind of justice. The Victorian age saw theatre, in part, as a series of beautiful pictures, and by 1859 J. W. Cole was declaring, in his biography of Charles Kean, that "the days had long passed when audiences would believe themselves transported from Italy to Athens by the power of poetical enchantment without the aid of scenic appliances."[2] There is little doubt, however, that pictorial beauty on a grand scale distracted attention from the actor, the text, and the dramatic action. In the light of Samuel Phelps's considerable achievement in achieving harmony in all aspects of production, we today see the irony in a favourable review of Kean's A Midsummer Night's Dream in 1856 in which the reviewer stated that "having commenced with the accessories, which on this occasion are the most important part of the play, and which we pronounce to be perfect, it remains for us briefly to notice the dramatis personae" (Era, 9 Oct., 1856).

Significant developments in society and culture in the first half of the nineteenth century had strongly influenced the emphasis on the spectacular in the theatres and were all related to the multiplicity of visual stimuli that bombarded nineteenth-century man. Michael Booth in his important study The Victorian Spectacular Theatre points out that the Victorian era was a world saturated in pictures--gaslight, plate glass, elaborate urban architecture, the kaleidoscope, the improved peep show and magic lantern, the panorama, the diorama, the cosmorama, the stereoscope, the camera, the steel engraving, the illustrated newspaper and magazine--and the dissemination of the pictorial image to a mass audience became and remained the most popular form of public entertainment.

The late nineteenth century was rich in visual arts in England as well as on the continent. There was a huge interest in the pictorial, the picturesque, the decorative. Never could scene painters have had such opportunities, and the reasons are not difficult to find. The activities of the pre-Raphaelite movement, and particularly of painters and designers like William Morris, pushed the visual arts to the very forefront of public attention. As well, the emphasis on beauty of line and colour were strongly appealing. The public craved images of historical and contemporary reality in book and magazine illustrations, prints, panoramas, and paintings they saw; legend and history had to be actualized and made visually familiar and accessible. Since it was part of the pictorial movement in entertainment and also a social and cultural activity, the theatre disseminated the same kind of image.

Moreover, the introduction of the use of gas for illumination in the

1820's in Covent Garden and Drury Lane was an event whose implications were immense; improvements in stage lighting meant that for the first time the area behind the proscenium arch could be adequately lit. The actor could now retreat behind the proscenium and be illuminated properly; the scene could have sufficient light thrown on it to show colours and details clearly, and the amount of colour and detail possible was therefore enormously increased. From the 1850's on gas was commonly used in most theatres and capable of great flexibility of effect, but it was not until the use of limelight that really spectacular displays became feasible. The introduction of the focused lime, in Kean's Henry VIII in 1855, made it possible for beams of concentrated and resplendent light to create wonderful effects as well as to bathe the face, costume and body of the individual actor in a powerful light. Increasingly, limelight was used to spotlight the actor--almost invariably the star--across the stage. In an 1863 article entitled "A New Stage Stride" Charles Dickens pointed out that many Victorians were now expressing the desire to "render the illusion of the stage more complete." The idea of complete illusion as a purpose of scenery was a new conception; before the advent of improved lighting it had not been demanded of scenery that it should supply a "complete illusion" (All the Year Round, Oct. 31, 1863). "All the great triumphs of modern stage effect," declared Percy Fitzgerald in 1881, "date from the introduction of a strong light. When gas was introduced it was found that a more gaudy display of colours could be effected; but it was the application of the limelight that really threw open the realm of glittering fairyland to the scenic artist."[3]

A demand therefore arose for the increased pictorial realization of the word and the scenic recreation of the dramatist's setting. "To look at the stage as if it were a picture was by 1850 an automatic response in audiences," notes Michael Booth, "and to make performance resemble painting became a habit of managers and technical staff."[4] The actor was now no longer performing far in front of a pictorial background of wings and backshutters but had retreated behind the proscenium arch and was therefore integrated within a scenic unit, a part of a pictorial composition in three dimensions as well as a dramatic event. Acting made great use of eye-catching, stylized and sometimes stereotypical gesture, attitude and facial expression, thus pictorializing character and emotional response.

By 1880 one step remained to complete the illusionistic phase of scenic history. It was taken by Sir Squire Bancroft at the renovated Haymarket, and it amounted to the final withdrawing of the forestage, the complete discarding of entrance doors, and the confining of the action entirely within the scene. That process of completely isolating the actors from the spectators, which began at the close of the seventeenth century and gradually cut away the old Restoration stage and its attendant stage doors, had now attained its culmination in that the apron stage had vanished entirely and the picture-frame stage, apt for realistic and spectacular experiments, had been established. Percy Fitzgerald, commenting on the new Haymarket, drew attention to the "novel arrangement" introduced by Bancroft:

> A rich and elaborate gold border, about two feet broad, after the pattern of a picture frame, is continued all round the proscenium, and carried even below the actor's feet--there can be no doubt the sense of illusion is increased, and for the reason just given; the actors seem cut off from the domain of

> prose; there is no borderland or platform in front; and stranger still, the whole has the air of a picture projected on a surface.[5]

Here the picture frame is not only recognized but full awareness of its function and significance is clearly realized. The new proscenium, a writer in the Graphic concurred, "seems to reduce what is going on upon the stage to a mere picture overpowered by a heavy and elaborate setting" (Feb. 7, 1880).

The pictorial aesthetic was not the sole governing principle of mainstream Shakespearean production in the Victorian period. What one might call the historical aesthetic, which was also pictorial in expression and also concerned with poetic beauty, was of equal importance. New developments in historical and archaeological research as well as the popularity of historical fiction prompted a striving after "historical accuracy" on stage. Early in the century audiences were already attracted to such presentations as:

> A grand Naval Spectacle at Sadler's Wells Theatre, presenting that memorable monument of British Glory, the Siege of Gibraltar; with exact representation of the armament both by Land and Sea, of the combined forces of France and Spain, with real Men of War and Floating Batteries, built and staged by professional men from His Majesty's Dock Yards, and which float in a receptacle containing nearly 8000 cubic feet of real water.[6]

This interest in the recreation of history also affected the presentation of Shakespeare's plays. Why, asked "an Artist and an Antiquary" in Gentleman's Magazine in 1800, had the decoration of Shakespeare's plays been disgraced by "habitual captivity." Surely the dramas should "be brought out in all the elegance and grandeur that the stage in its various departments can bestow, and conformable to the strictest manner of former ages." Shakespeare's plays, he urged, would become a "captivating source of information and instruction to the patriot, the historian, and the artist" (70 [1800]). This interest in the past and the recreation of history in painting, poetry, the novel, scholarship, and theatre became one of the most important features of nineteenth-century thought and creative art, and by 1850 this movement was fully fledged in both theory and practice. Social history and antiquarian scholarship proliferated, and medievalism and archaeology were part of a growing emphasis in the popular mind to find out about history.

At the end of the eighteenth century John Philip Kemble, aided by his designer William Capon, began at Drury Lane a process which the nineteenth century was to build upon and exaggerate. For Richard III in 1794 Kemble went to the trouble of depicting the Tower of London as it would have been in Richard's time; his King Lear of 1809 was studiously "Saxon" in dress and set in an attempt to make it pre-Christian. Charles Kemble, at Covent Garden, commissioned James Robinson Planché, a founder of the British Archaeological Association, to "dress" King John in an authentic manner. When, during the 1823-24 season at Covent Garden, the curtain rose and discovered King John "dressed as his effigy appears in Worcester Cathedral, surrounded by his barons sheathed in mail, with cylindrical helmets and correct armorial shields," based on the evidence of thirteenth-century tomb effigies, royal seals and illuminated manuscripts, there was a roar of approbation from the audience.[7] This archaeological style in Shakespearean production was in part continued by William Macready who launched a campaign to present the plays of Shakespeare "fitfully" illustrated. Between 1837 and 1839 at Covent Garden and between 1841 and 1843 at Drury Lane Macready mounted special productions of nearly a dozen of them; the scenery for his Coriolanus production, for example, recreated Rome of fifth century B.C., and the Times on this occasion congratulated him: "Fifty years ago no manager would have thought of distinguishing different periods of ancient history."[8]

Antiquarianism, the accurate recreation of historical moments, reached its height on the stage at the Princess's Theatre where Charles Kean from 1851 to 1859 combined such spectacles as superbly painted dioramas with historical and geographical accuracy, providing what Richard Southern aptly describes as "a feast of spectacle, sentiment, scholarship, education, and some Shakespeare."[9] Learning through history was important for the Victorians, as apparent in their response to the Shakespearean productions of Charles Kean as in their appreciation of historical painting. The requirements of historical realism, archaeological accuracy and pictorialization necessitated full and elaborate scenic treatment for Shakespeare's plays. Kean went so far as to turn his playbills into miniature essays in which he gave the historical background of each play and the details of his archaeological research. Authorities of all kinds were used to ensure a faithful reproduction of what were often inessential details in elaborating the pictures of past ages. Praised for his "archaeological exactness," Kean far outdid his predecessors with the fruits of historical research, overwhelming his plays and players with splendid mounting and multitudinous period pieces, and using the fragments of the Shakespeare texts that were allowed to be spoken more like a running commentary upon the spectacles exhibited, than the scenic arrangements an illustration of the texts. In 1857 Kean was named a Fellow of the Society of

Antiquaries, a rare honour for a leading stage personality.

Kean's 1856 production of The Winter's Tale aptly exemplifies his approach, the public being instructed by "tableaux vivants of the private and public life of the Greeks at a time when the arts flourished to . . . perfection," meticulous attention being paid to every detail from musical instruments to furniture. Spectacle was introduced into the production at every opportunity: not only was the pastoral scene a bacchanalian orgy, but a Pyrrhic dance was given at Leontes' banquet, and Time's speech was accompanied by an allegorical show of classical gods ascending and descending on chariots, and clouds dispersing. It was said to be the greatest triumph of art ever exhibited on the stage. The production ran for 102 days, thus initiating the long run which led to new scenery for each new play and the gradual disappearance of stock scenery.

In 1859 Kean delivered his farewell managerial speech at the Princess's Theatre in which he gave a justification of his principles of Shakespearean production. It is a remarkable document. Three short excerpts emphasize the earnestness of the speaker, the nature of his principles, and the difference between the important--yet little acknowledged--movement in Shakespearean production initiated by Phelps and the second, mainstream, one brought to its highest point by Kean. The actor-manager, first of all, had never "permitted historical truth to be sacrificed to theatrical effect" and instanced the Siege of Harfleur in his production of Henry V: "it was no ideal battle, no imaginary fight; it was a correct representation of what actually had taken place . . . all taken from the account left to us by a priest who accompanied the army." Secondly, the actor-manager had always entertained the conviction that "historical accuracy might be so blended with pictorial effect, that instruction and amusement would go hand in hand; . . . In fact, I was anxious to make the theatre a school as well as a recreation." Lastly, obviously replying to charges that in such plays as Henry V over forty percent of Shakespeare's text was cut, Kean declared with some acidity that "if, as is sometimes affirmed, my system is injurious to the poet, it must be equally so to the actor; and surely my most determined opponents will admit that at least I have pursued a very disinterested policy in thus incurring for many years so much labour and expense for the purpose of professional suicide."[10]

In Kean's productions the Victorian desire for amplitude and the growing determination to be historically accurate had joined with a passion to do good by education. Kean appeared oblivious of the fact that Shakespeare busied himself but little with petty accuracy of detail, choosing picturesque locales for his dramas and then concerning himself only with the development of the dramatic essentials of his themes and the human nature of his characters. That it was Shakespeare's purpose in many of his plays to present as complete a picture as possible of a bygone age was hardly questioned by mainstream Victorian theatrical opinion. Kean's spectacles determined the main trend in English Shakespearean production for sixty years: this was the tradition inherited by Henry Irving at the Lyceum.

II

In 1882 William Archer, one of the leading theatre critics of the period, made the following evaluation of Shakespeare's reputation:

> Shakespeare is unquestionably the popular dramatist of the day. What other playwright can boast of two five-act plays running simultaneously at the two leading theatres at London?[11] What other playwright is studied so scrupulously or mounted so sumptuously? If he now "spells ruin" to anyone, it is not to the managers who act him, but to the modern dramatists who have to compete with him.[12]

Charles Kean had died in 1868 and Henry Irving now dominated the English theatrical world. In 1878 Irving became manager of the Lyceum theatre in London and in more than twenty years of association with that theatre as manager and principal actor, he presented thirty-seven plays, of which twelve were Shakespeare's and the others were melodramas. Although Irving did not produce a large number of Shakespearean plays, those that he did produce he mounted with an increasing splendour which culminated in the 1892 pageantry of his Henry VIII production with its sensational fourth act in which the audience was ravished by a presentation of a genuine Tudor street, every casement in its three-storied timbered houses thronged with citizens as the royal procession went by. In Irving's famous church scene in his 1882 production of Much Ado about Nothing, the massive modelled columns thirty feet high, the stained glass, the elaborate and costly altar, the carved oak benches, the perfume of incense all combined to render this a scene of great richness and grandeur. In his 1888 production of Macbeth Irving used seventeen striking tableaux, one of which featured a gratuitous host of singing witches revelling by moonlight in an almost impenetrable gloom. All Irving's Shakespearean productions enjoyed long and successful runs, becoming famous for both their increasing use of lavish spectacle and his controversial interpretations of such leading figures as Shylock, Richard III and Romeo.

Henry Irving presented Romeo and Juliet in 1882. His first elaborate production, it enjoyed a run of 161 performances. Irving's professed ideals as a producer can be found in this concise statement, which, although it concerns his 1879 production of The Merchant of Venice, is also of great relevance to his Romeo and Juliet presentation:

> I have endeavoured to avoid hampering the natural action of the piece with any unnecessary embellishment; but have tried not to omit any accessory which might heighten the effects. I have availed myself of every resource at my command to present the play in a manner acceptable to our audiences.[13]

Irving knew his audience when he remarked that Shakespeare well acted on a bare stage could afford intellectual pleasure, but the enjoyment of the audience listening to the poetry of Shakespeare would be greater if their eyes were charmed as well: "Many are thus brought to listen with pleasure to the noblest works of dramatic art, who might otherwise turn away from them as dull and unattractive."[14] In the short preface to his acting edition of Romeo and Juliet, which was published for his audience as the play was being performed, Irving repeated his ideals for this particular play: "In producing this tragedy, I have availed myself of every resource at my command to illustrate without intrusion the Italian warmth, life, and romance of this enthralling love story."[15]

One of Irving's pronouncements, often reiterated to the press, was that for him the most vital critical requirement for theatrical success was the immediate response of the general public. Irving, unlike Phelps before him, was not an idealist who sought to elevate the public taste or, like William Poel after him, one who attempted to lead taste and who appealed to the aesthetically discriminating few; instead, Irving was a manager like Garrick or Charles Kean, dependent upon the immediate favourable response of the audience as he found it. That response would be both a stimulus and a guide whose authority was unquestioned.

"However successful art may be," he stated in an interview during an American tour in 1883, "its true value as applied to the drama can only be determined by public appreciation" (Star, New York, Oct. 22, 1883).

In an essay entitled "Shakespeare as a Playwright," published in The Henry Irving Shakespeare, his acting edition of the plays, as well as in various interviews given to the press during tours of America, Irving elaborated on his ideas for the presentation of Shakespeare. Much critical objection, he said, had been made to the employment of the sister arts of music and painting for the stage representation of Shakespeare, and to the elaborate illustrations of the countries in which the various scenes were laid, or of the dress and surroundings of the different characters. It was not his contention, he pointed out, that a play, fairly acted, could not be fully effective without any of these aids and adjuncts, "but practically," he declared, "their value has ceased to be a matter of opinion; they have become necessary. They are dictated by the public taste of the day--not for the desire for mere scenic display, but that demand for finish in details which has grown with the development of art in all its phases."[16] Dismissing the notion that Shakespeare should be played much as he was in his own time, Irving asked rhetorically if the stage were to "repudiate all the arts of painting and music and to disdain the fruits of historical, archaeological, or antiquarian research" (Times-Star, Cincinnati, Jan. 28, 1884). Would his readers like to banish pictures from their books, he queried? The pictorialism of Shakespeare's imagination thus had to be made concrete in performance and here, of course, for Irving the platform stage that William Poel was starting to use for his Shakespearean productions was of no use and could be rejected for this reason alone.

To all these effects, Irving continued, there were clear limits, noting that it was not always possible to reproduce an historic period with exactness. Macbeth, Lear and Hamlet belonged to history too remote for fidelity of costume, but a period had, in such cases, to be chosen and followed with conscientious thoroughness, tempered by discrimination. Above all, he warned, the resources of the picturesque were to be kept subordinate to the play. Mere pageant apart from the story had no place in Shakespeare, although Irving admitted that he found acceptable a succession of truthful and harmonious pictures which would neither hamper the natural action nor distract the judgment from the actor's art. In fine, concluded the actor-manager, there was no occasion to apologize for the system of decoration. Irving saw his era as one in which theatrical practitioners were employing all possible resources to heighten the picturesque effects of the drama, and it was his view that harmony of colour and grace of outline had a legitimate sphere in the theatre as adjuncts to the drama. "True criticism begins," he cautioned, "when the manager carries ornament to excess, for then he sins against the laws of beauty as well as against the poet."[17] The abuse of scenic decoration, therefore, was foreign to the artistic purpose which should dominate dramatic work.

Irving thus took a more balanced view than Charles Kean towards entertaining and educating his audience. In the course of his twenty-five years as manager of the Lyceum, he refined and reconciled the guiding principle which had informed mainstream Shakespearean production throughout the nineteenth century, the staging of plays as a sequence of striking pictures. Like Kean, Irving recognized the theatrical significance of scholarship: before mounting The Merchant of Venice, for example, he took his production team to Venice; the architect E. W. Godwin was consulted on the designs for Tennyson's The Cup; and Alma Tadema, famous for classical paintings, was consulted for Henry VIII, Cymbeline and Coriolanus. Irving's acting editions of the plays, published for his audiences as the dramas were produced, demonstrated the seriousness of his study, if not always its thoroughness. But scholarship was never an end in itself for Irving, as it could be with Charles Kean. Irving saw accuracy in production as an aid to effect and that "the first duty of any one who mounts a piece is to provide a beautiful and pleasing effect"; to this end a strict adherence to archaeology "must give way to beauty" (Pall Mall Gazette, Sept. 13, 1886). To Irving each scene was like his picture to a painter in having to combine colours, group figures, and arrange the mounting. "Even the best scene-painters sometimes think more of their pictures than of scenic effects," asserted Ellen Terry, Irving's leading lady for more than twenty years. Irving, she claimed, "could never accept anything that was not right theatrically as well as pictorially beautiful. His instinct in this was unerring and incomparable."[18]

When the curtain opened for the first time on Irving's production of Romeo and Juliet in 1882, the audience was delighted to see this play presented on the stage more lavishly than ever before. The play unfolded in a majestic progression of twenty-two different scenes and acts created by Hawes Crawen, W. Cuthbert, William Telbin, and Walter Hann, who numbered among the best scene painters of the day, and there was plenty of room on the big Lyceum stage for broad movement, fluid crowds and massive sets.[19] Tyrone Guthrie, in summarizing Irving's techniques for scenic presentation, points out that the manager's productions were based on a realistic formula: there would be three or four splendid "stage pictures" using built-up scenery, including platforms and steps, and into these scenes would be fitted as much of the action as possible; the other scenes would be played as "front scenes" before an elaborately painted cloth.[20] Clement Scott in his review marvelled at the pictorial effect of the production:

> Such scenes as these--the outside of old Capulet's house lighted for the ball, the sunny pictures of Verona in the summer, the marriage chant to Juliet changed into a death dirge, the old lonely street in Mantua, where the Apothecary dwells, the wondrous solid tomb of the Capulets--are as worthy of close and renewed study as are the pictures in a gallery of paintings. (The Theatre, 5, 1882)

The opening scene revealed the market place in Verona, realistically complete with donkeys and children walking over a sloping bridge. To create the proper atmosphere for the first meeting of Romeo and Juliet, Irving presented the opulence of the Capulet house. The curtain lifted on an elaborate banquet in which Rosaline was seated on a throne of blue and silver flanked by silver draperies and surrounded by scarlet oleanders. Serving men were seen removing peacocks from the table while in the foreground moved richly clad pages. Alfred Thompson had designed the costumes and, as the Daily News pointed out, had seemingly made use for his purpose of old Italian portraits from the early part of the fifteenth century; while acknowledging that these designs were beautiful, the Daily News was quick to note that costumes from the thirteenth century would probably have been more correct in time for this play (March 9, 1882).[21] The prominent English musician Sir Julius Benedict had been asked to compose music for this production, to reflect "a good deal of Southern joy," and as the minuet during the banquet began Irving exercised to the utmost his mastery of crowds.[22] It is difficult to believe Walter Pollock's statement that, for this scene, five hundred supernumeraries had been drilled for months, but certainly there was a great crowd in Capulet's loggia as clusters of young people moved slowly and rhythmicaly around the stage, displaying by torchlight their rich Renaissance brocades and satins and accompanied by unseen singers who made their own melodious contribution to the dance melodies.[23] At the centre was Juliet, the premiere danseuse among "all the admired beauties of Verona." Bram Stoker, Irving's business manager and biographer, felt that Irving had approached Romeo and Juliet in the correct manner: "The story . . . demands picturesque setting. For its tragic basis the audience must understand the power and antiquity of the surroundings of each of those unhappy lovers."[24]

Much of Irving's scenic success was due to his inventive artistry in lighting as he exploited to the full the refinement and flexibility of gas lighting, blending colours, diffusing light and creating shadows. Throughout Romeo and Juliet, said Edward Russell, the management of the lighting was a thing "wholly new in its accurate gradation" and in the creation of "an atmosphere" (The Theatre, V). The advances in the control and colouring of gas and limelight, which were made by the Lyceum technicians at Irving's instigation, transformed stage lighting from a primitive instrument for simple illumination into an art which was capable of making subtle thematic statements as well as emphasizing mood or atmosphere. It is Alan Hughes' conclusion that Irving alone understood the full potential of the standard equipment of his day. Most other managers regarded light simply as a means of making visible their performance and scene, or as a crude refinement of spectacular effect.

"Only Irving thought of light as an integral part of the stage-manager's art," declares Hughes.[25] According to Bram Stoker, Irving used coloured lights "as a painter uses his palette" (Nineteenth Century and After, LXIX, 1911). Scenes lit by Irving always had the effect of oil paintings, the boundaries lost in shade, highlights focussing on a point of greatest interest. That point was often Irving's own face which was followed everywhere by a pin light of steel blue. At the Lyceum as early as 1879 Irving had the stage darkened for scene changes which had hitherto been carried out in view of the audience. This new practice Percy Fitzgerald found "truly conducive to stage illusion . . . . The result is a kind of charming, pleasing mystery and surprise as each new vision opens."[26] Moreover, Irving was the first stage manager regularly to darken the auditorium during performance and the stage itself was often, as William Telbin describes it, "barely and vaguely lighted" to establish a mood that complemented the romantic and mysterious quality characteristic of Irving's performances (Magazine of Art, Nov. 1888-Oct. 1889).

In the balcony scene of Romeo and Juliet Capulet's daughter was presented on the marble terrace of an ancient palace whose solid pillars towered above her, while below her Romeo stood on the lip of a raised stone flower bed in a garden covered in the dense foliage of real lilies and trees which quivered in the evening wind and through which shafts of moonlight shimmered. To emphasize the contrast in mood that Irving felt was so important in the interpretation of Shakespeare, innovative use was made of the modern technological advances in lighting. Juliet's bedroom, for example, was displayed in three different lights at different times of day, including a dawn that gathered and changed as the lovers parted.

The scene in which Mercutio was killed showed the market square and emphasized the glaring white heat of the city. In this scene, when Mercutio described his wound as being "not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a churchdoor" (III.ii.90), he could gesture to either side of him where a fountain and a church had actually been constructed on the stage. Nothing was left out of the picture of Renaissance Italy: an old street in Verona, a street in Mantua, and the ancient apothecary's shop were all there. Ellen Terry remarks in her memoirs that Irving believed very much in "front" scenes, to alternate with the cumbersome sets, seeing how necessary these scenes were to the swift progress of Shakespeare's diverging plots. These cloths were sometimes so wonderfully painted and lighted that they constituted scenes of remarkable beauty. One of the very best, she found, was the Apothecary Scene in Romeo and Juliet.[27]

The final tomb scene in Romeo and Juliet is one of the most difficult scenes in Shakespeare to adapt to the realistic stage because the action begins outside the tomb but ends inside. Ellen Terry maintains that it was still usual in contemporary performances, as it had been in Garrick's day, for Romeo to go in to the dead body of Juliet lying in Capulet's monument through a gate on the level. Irving, however, remembered Romeo's words, "I descend into the bed of death" (V.iii.28). At rehearsals the actor-manager kept saying, "I must go down to the vault." After a great deal of consideration he had an inspiration and divided the scene in two. In a "front scene" he had the exterior of the vault, eerily lit, the entrance to it showing a flight of steps down which Romeo presumably descended when he disappeared, having slain Paris. The picture subsequently faded from view and the theatre was shrouded in darkness. Then, as the darkness became luminous, the audience could see that the scene had changed to the interior of the vault, and here the set was a masterpiece of solid construction, with a long flight of stairs leading from a height above the stage.[28] The tomb scene gave great satisfaction to the audience as Romeo, barely illuminated by pale moonlight from the open door above him and by the lurid flicker of the torch he carried, melodramatically dragged the body of Paris down the steep, dark gloomy staircase at the back of the stage and along a gallery to the ultimate dank gloom of Juliet's vaulted tomb. The moonlight streamed and fell upon the form of Juliet lying upon a silken-covered bier in the foreground. Vanity Fair judged the "gloom and awfulness of the vault" seemingly sunk many hundred feet below the earth a "triumph of stage illusion" (March 18, 1882). Austin Brereton concurred, writing that the "dim light and the general effect of distance were most weird and impressive."[29]

In the preface to his acting edition of the play, Irving defended his extensive use of lavish accessories, employing a similar method of reasoning to that of Garrick who, more than a century earlier, had argued for a final farewell by the lovers. Garrick had stated that Shakespeare did not know the original ending to his source and surely would have used it had he been aware of it. Likewise, Irving argued that Shakespeare would have used lavish accessories if stage conditions had been different:

> Such changes as have been made from the ordinary manner of presentation are, I think, justified by the fuller development of our present stage, of the advantages of which the Poet would, doubtless, have fully availed himself had his own opportunities been brought up to the level of our time.[30]

Irving's production moved in a series of separate pictures whose aim it was to pay tribute to the dramatist by providing for him a beautiful series of settings, fine in themselves but also expressive of the play in complementing action and portraying contrasting moods. Ellen Terry notes that Irving once told her his reason for creating a pictorial effect in this play:

> *Hamlet* could be played anywhere on its acting merits. It marches from situation to situation. But *Romeo and Juliet* proceeds from picture to picture. Every line suggests a picture. It is a dramatic poem rather than a drama, and I mean to treat it from that point of view.[31]

Owen Meredith, a contemporary poet and scholar, agreed with Irving's evaluation of the play, seeing *Romeo and Juliet* as one of the most poetic but one of the least dramatic of Shakespeare's tragedies. "To us," he said, "its main charm and interest must always be poetic rather than dramatic." The essential poetry of *Romeo and Juliet*, declared Meredith, could never be expressed by the mere action of the play, however well it might be acted, and this poetry Mr. Irving had, to a great extent, succeeded in expressing, "by investing the action of the play with a scenic atmosphere appropriate to it" (*Fortnightly Review*, 34 [1883]).

Michael Williams found that the revival of *Romeo and Juliet* lingered in his memory like the recollection of some beautiful dream. It was not that the pictures, exquisite as they were, by Irving's scene painters, had not already been equalled by themselves or other artists, he maintained, but that the various scenes, by the adroit manner in which the lights were lowered during their removal, "seemed actually to melt into each other, whereby their dreamy nature was sensibly heightened and consistently maintained throughout." The dresses, too, Williams found were not only of the richest materials, but so admirable was the mingling and contrast of colour "that the effect of each stage-picture proved absolutely faultless" Rare skill was also observable in the drilling of the supernumeraries, notably in the Market-Place, with its ever-shifting stream of nobles and citizens; in the glittering ballroom, with its crowds of courtiers and its lovely torch dance, with the dancers in white and gold; and in the grouping of the populace, at the end of the play, on the staircase of the Capulets' tomb. "It is scarcely too much to say," concluded Williams, "that the entire representation of Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum was . . . simply the perfection of High Art."[32]

Certainly, Irving was a master of the mise en scène as he welded the material given by the dramatist, the company of players, the scene-painters, the costumiers, and the music makers into a unified whole. Irving's methods of stage management were not a difference in kind from those of other Victorian actor-managers but a difference in degree. The actor-manager developed few innovations, for he doubted that his audience would accept them; his success lay in his ability to polish already accepted principles and his chief contribution lay in the harmony and discipline he brought to the diverse elements of a production under his management. Irving's credo of stage management appears in this characteristic statement:

> What is necessary on the stage is a harmony of all its features --a unison of all its refinements. It is not enough to give an individual performance of consummate interest, for, in a double sense, the whole is greater than the part. Let everything have its due proportion; let thoroughness and completeness be the manager's aim; let him never forget that a perfect illusion is his highest achievement. (New York, Daily Tribune, March 16, 1888)

Ellen Terry has described Irving's working methods: the manager studied a play in depth for some three months, read it entire to the company, analyzed individual parts and character relationships, and in rehearsal explored the integration of interpretation, grouping and performance.[33] As one of his eminent scene painters, Joseph Harker, noted, "every gesture had to be just right; every word and every inflection perfect."[34] Sets and costumes had to be appropriate to the characters in colours, shapes, and quality; equally important were spacial relationships within the proscenium frame. The finest stage presentations at the Lyceum advanced a series of beautifully composed stage pictures to which spectacular decor and the movement and grouping of the actors all contributed. Specially composed music and careful lighting completed the effects.

As the single authority over his productions, Irving sought to achieve a harmony of effect not only between the theatrical elements of the production but, most importantly, between those elements and the script. All his theatrical ilusions, he stressed, were created to reinforce the meaning of the play. "I aim not at the spectacular, but at harmonious effect," he declared (New York, Daily Tribune, Oct. 25, 1883). Speaking of Romeo and Juliet a year later, while he was on tour in America, he pointed out that the production was one in which "the mise en scène was truly remarkable"; every element was intended to complement the playwright's intent. "Every scene I have done adds to the poetry of the play; it is not done for the sake of effect only" (New York Herald, Oct. 22, 1883).

Although the general public flocked to see Irving's production and many critics marvelled at the treatment of the play, providing detailed descriptions of the beautiful scenic effects, some critics were appalled by the importance that Irving had assigned to spectacle. Henry James reviewed the play in The Atlantic Monthly in 1882 and condemned Irving for putting "the cart before the horse." His conclusion about the production was that "the play is not acted; it's costumed." James had never thought of Romeo and Juliet as a dull drama, but in his view Irving had succeeded in making it so as the play moved cumbersomely through a succession of glowing pictures. He found that the play was obstructed, interrupted, and its passionate rapidity chopped up into little tableaus. "In a word," concluded James, "it is slow--mortally slow." Irving, in his view, had reached the pinnacle of a negative trend found throughout nineteenth-century English drama in attaching too much importance to scenery and decoration; the sublimities of dialogue and characterization had been suffocated by the luxurious scenery and massed crowds (Atlantic Monthly, 50 [1882]).

Irving had often claimed that the only true principle in Shakespearean production was that "the scenery and properties should be strictly subordinated to the presentation of the drama" (Pall Mall Gazette, Sept. 13, 1886), but even Clement Scott, who enthusiastically described Irving's scenery for several pages in his review, was forced to admit that in certain scenes of Irving's production the immortal lovers of Verona had indeed been made subordinate and ineffectual figures. The Capulet ball, for example, was an especially splendid scene but "it seemed impossible to get action with all this magnificence. The play was forced to stop, whilst the eye travelled from one detail to another." The very beauty of the stage pictures dulled the action itself, and Scott singled out Romeo's farewell in Juliet's chamber as an example of what he meant. "Here we have, if anything, an excess of colour. The golden lattice, the sumptuous surroundings, the foliage in the garden, the sky showing the pinks and orange, and purples of sunrise, and, at last, the golden sun itself, are all beautiful enough, but they are a trying background for the central figures" (The Theatre, 5, April 1, 1882).

It was Henry Irving more than anyone else who helped transform Shakespearean productions into such lavish spectacles; the pictorial trend of the realistic-romantic theatre of the nineteenth century had found in Irving its most significant British exponent. His use of a magnificent series of pictures represents a level in nineteenth-century pictorial realism beyond which progress without the motion picture would hardly seem possible. George Augustus Sala declared that not at any period, perhaps, in the history of the modern English stage, had there occurred so entirely magnificent a Shakespearean revival as that of Irving's production of Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum (Illustrated London News, March 1882). Even as late as 1939, moreover, Henry Pettitt was still able to say that he had seen many beautiful productions at Drury Lane, the Princess's, the Adelphi; the late nineteenth century was a time of most elaborate scenic display and theatres rivalled each other, but, said Pettitt, he had never before, or after, seen such exquisite scenery as that in Irving's production.[35]

III

Not only did Irving's version of Romeo and Juliet gain fame for its use of lavish spectacle, but it also revived recognition for his unusual interpretation of the play. From the Restoration onwards, Romeo and Juliet had been seen as idealized symbols of young, immortal love. Irving, however, rejected the traditions established by such actor-writers as Cibber and Garrick, and still followed in most nineteenth-century productions, and wished his version of Shakespeare to stand on its own merits. Originality became his goal and he took Shakespeare's text and bent it to his own purposes. "No two people form the same conceptions of character, and therefore it is always advantageous to see an independent and courageous exposition of an original idea," he stated in an address entitled "The Art of Acting."[36] Irving's emphasis upon individuality, coupled with a plea for liberty of interpretation, appears also in this characteristic declaration: "If a conception is not part of a man's own brain--if it is not the impulse of his own creative faculty--then it cannot bear the stamp of individuality without which there can be no true art."[37] Because Irving was a romantic actor, his tragic heroes were frequently eccentrically individual; indeed the dramatic interest largely derived from what the Victorian critics called their "idiosyncrasy." A romantic actor sought the "picturesque," a term that implied singularity, irregularity, and asymmetry rather than balance and proportion. Alan Hughes calls it "tragedy of the uncommon man."[38] In his insistence on personal interpretation, Irving magnified the value of personality, maintaining, "There are only two ways of portraying a character on the stage. Either you can try to turn yourself into that person--which is impossible--or, and this is the way to act--you can take that person and turn him into yourself. That is how I do it."[39]

Both Henry Irving and Ellen Terry had always wanted to appear in Romeo and Juliet. Since the time of Garrick, although there had been a number of famous Juliets, almost all the great actor-managers had had little success with the part of Romeo. John Philip Kemble, whom William Winter describes as one of the most intellectual of actors, a man of "philosophic, meditative habit of mind," played the part a number of times in the 1780's at Drury Lane, but proved too massive for Romeo.[40] "Youthful love," says his biographer James Boaden, "was never well expressed by Kemble: the thoughtful strength of his features was at variance with juvenile passion."[41] The critic William Hazlitt, who generally enthused about Edmund Kean's romantic Shakespearean performances, found that Kean as Romeo was no more fortunate. Kean did not like sentimental roles and his appearance in the play at Drury Lane in 1815, made against his inclination, was one of his least successful Shakespearean roles. While he expressed all the "violence, the extravagance, and fierceness of the passions" and was therefore generally considered successful in the passionate scenes and in Garrick's interpolated final death scene, Kean's Romeo sometimes reminded Hazlitt of Richard wooing the Lady Anne: "Mr. Kean's imagination appears not to have the principles of joy, or hope, or love in it. He seems chiefly sensible to pain, or to the passions that spring from it, and to the terrible energies of mind or body, which are necessary to grapple with, or to avert it." In Hazlitt's view Kean's Romeo had nothing of the lover in it: "We never saw anything less ardent or less voluptuous. In the Balcony-scene in particular, he was cold, tame, and unimpressive . . . . He stood like a statue of lead. There was neither glowing animation, nor melting softness in his manner."[42]

It was as Romeo that William Macready made his debut on the stage in 1810 at Birmingham, and he long retained the part in his repertory. His performance was also comparatively little admired. "It is difficult to believe," says William Winter, that a man of Macready's "austere visage, stalwart figure, dominant mentality, and sternly authoritative manner ever really caused the effect of being identified with Romeo or with any other juvenile lover."[43] Charles Kean, playing Romeo in 1841, also lacked the romance or chivalrous tenderness of the lover, but showed great energy in the scene of passionate grief with the friar and in the scene where Romeo kills Tybalt. His physical energies, related the Spectator, burst forth with redoubled fury when there was any fighting to do. His ardour and impetuosity, however, resembled "the fizzing and fussing of a firework, that explodes and leaves an empty case behind" (July 14, 1841).

Ellen Terry relates that in 1882 Henry Irving had in view the eventual production of all Shakespeare's actable plays "and naturally Romeo and Juliet would come as early as possible in the programme."[44] In 1882, however, Irving was forty-four years old and Terry was thirty-five; both were uncomfortably aware that they were more than double the ages of the characters they were portraying. Irving, moreover, with his lean ascetic face, angular gestures, crooked gait, and high nasal voice lacking in flexibility did not fit the traditional conception of a young Italian lover. His style of acting also did not lend itself to the spontaneity of youth, being characterized by slow deliberate speech accompanied by many pauses and extensive byplay which had been developed in many years of playing parts in melodrama.

In 1875 Samuel Phelps, at the end of his stage career, had been compared with Henry Irving, the ascending star. Moy Thomas, of the Academy, at that time declared that "in the sovereign quality of sincerity of utterance Phelps is not even approached by a living rival" and predicted that Irving's admirers would come to see "how greatly deficient he is in the quality of tone and emphasis so managed as to touch the heart and imagination of his hearers." The emotions of the characters which Phelps played were conveyed almost entirely through the spoken words which Phelps' imagination and skill in delivery interpreted with full meaning, nobility and pathos. Moreover, Thomas pointed out, Phelps had "command of attitude and gesture, soberly and moderately used" (Academy, viii, 1875). Throughout his career Irving was a controversial figure and criticism of his acting often attacked his stage movement and diction. "In moments of high excitement," charged Edward Russell, "Irving rapidly plods across the stage with a gait peculiar to him--a walk somewhat resembling that of a fretful man trying to get very quickly over a ploughed field."[45] Dutton Cook stated that it was not given to Irving to be graceful; that there was always restlessness of expression and gesture; that his voice lacked sonority; that longer passages were without the music of sustained elocution, and that to secure variety of tone he seemed compelled to resort to rapid changes of key, as it were, high falsetto alternating with notes of bass quality.[46] Irving's voice, said the less kind George Bernard Shaw, had "occasional relapse into whinnying."[47] For theatrical practitioners like William Poel, Irving's physical and vocal limitations made it impossible for him to do justice to many parts, a view shared by William Archer and Henry James.[48] Archer, speaking of Irving's voice, said that it had not the flexible variety, the vibrating tenderness, the subtly penetrating quality "to which, as to music, our inmost fibres respond."[49]

But for many commentators, Irving's various idiosyncrasies were assets rather than defects. Edward Russell noted, in 1875, with Irving's Hamlet, that the interpretation was helped by "little ineffaceable peculiarities which, while not inconsistent with the character, gave the representation of it a stamp of personal individuality."[50] Edward Gordon

Craig, writing much later, thought Irving's mannerisms an integral part of his performing technique: "measured, rhythmic, planned," his walk was "'a whole language,'" his movement and speech a calculated histrionic dance and song fundamental to his stage persona.[51]

Irving compensated for his physical defects by attempting to create through a myriad of realistic details a subtle and complex character. The authority of theatrical tradition and the power of the classical repertory were blended with the psychological interpretation of a new school to produce a completely personal and individualized style of acting. Already by 1875 critics were intrigued with Irving's innovative acting. The Daily News declared that the secret of the spell which this actor exercised over the imaginations of audiences lay in the imaginative power with which he was able to depict the most terrible passions of the human soul in a great crisis of action, and in the wonderful expressiveness of countenance which on these occasions never deserted him. To the playgoer whose memory was haunted with the interpretation of roles of the past, declared the newspaper, "there is a peculiar pleasure in the total absence in all of Mr. Irving's performances of mere conventional details" (Sept. 27, 1875). In 1882, J. Comyns Carr, reminiscing about English actors of the past, remarked that Samuel Phelps had been "an actor of fine endowment. But the exercise of his talent took a shape that lacked fascination." It was Carr's belief that the sterling merits of Phelps' art were overlaid by a veil of tradition that chilled the sympathies of his audience and that there was an accent of convention in the actor's style, even when he was at his best, that struck strangely upon ears in the 1870's. Phelps' art, he predicted, was obviously not destined to serve as a powerful agent, either for good or for evil, in a period of revolution and revival" (Fortnightly Review, 33, 1883). What distinguished Irving from all other actors, agreed many critics, was the extraordinary intellectuality and intensity he could impose on every character. Irving's most uncompromising detractors could not deny that his acting exhibited a [illegible] intellectual quality which rendered his appearance as an [illegible] poetic drama, in the words of Lord Lytton, "by far the most important and interesting event of the British stage in recent times" (Fortnightly Review, 34, 1883).

Henry Austin Clapp in Reminiscences of a Dramatic Critic judged that the sum of Irving's powers was much less than that of many other great players but said that he had never seen an actor whose absorption in his work was so nearly complete and unintermittent as his. Irving never trifled, never forgot himself, never wearied, never relaxed his grip which he at once took upon his part. The dramatic consequence of such a high intensity was obviously great, stated Clapp, but the value of the quality in holding the attention of audiences was inestimable.[52] Irving's success as an actor was partly due to his intensity with which he conceived and projected his not always sound but invariably fascinating characterizations; partly to his striking, almost demonic personality; and partly to his very faults which so beguiled the majority of beholders that they came to be accepted almost as trademarks of his excellence.

Plays that suited the romantic Lyceum style were a mixture, in various proportions, of flamboyant ingredients: picturesque historical and exotic settings, spectacle, the supernatural, pathos, crime, and the psychology of guilt. W. G. Wills' Charles I and Victorien Sardou's Robespierre derived their interest primarily from history, but the former was intensely pathetic and the latter had a spectacular ghost scene. Leopold Lewis' The Bells, which contained Irving's most successful melodramatic part, probed the conscience of a tormented murderer whose nightmare of exposure at the hands of a mesmerist was in the best terror-Gothic tradition; Dion Boucicault's Louis XI studied a senile criminal in a romantic and colourful setting. It was natural that Irving should choose those roles to which his sombre character would give most force, and he excelled in parts which gave scope for the sinister and grotesque.

In Shakespeare Irving's past successes had been with Hamlet and Richard III and he was at his best in melancholy scenes. The actor played Hamlet as a complex, mysterious but believable human being, a fundamentally sane man whose sensitive imagination excites a kind of hysteria at moments of stress. Irving's portrayal of Richard III showed more the remorse and terror of a hysterical murderer than a Plantagenet playing for a crown. Macbeth he saw as a moral coward, a hypocritical villain, and he placed great responsibility on Macbeth for his actions, depicting his torment as he wrestles with the darkness in his soul. Similarly, Irving saw no dignity and repose in Othello and emphasized in him a melancholy predisposition to jealousy. When he acted Iago, he played him much more subtly than actors before and revealed him as a man with a conscious devotion to evil, a wide-ranging intellect and great ambition as a destroyer, hidden beneath an alternating surface personality which offered each victim a deceiver fashioned to exploit his individual weaknesses.

In every part that Irving played, found James Agate, there was a hint of Mephistopheles.[53] His voice, face, figure, were not transformable, concluded Max Beerbohm, although Beerbohm termed the actor "multi-radiant."[54] Irving had in acting a keen sense of humour, of a sardonic, grotesque, fantastic kind. He had an incomparable power for eeriness, for stirring a dim sense of mystery; and was not less masterly in evoking a sharp sense of horror. His dignity was magnificent in purely philosophic or priestly gentleness, or in the gaunt aloofness of philosopher or king. He could be benign with a tinge of benevolence and arrogant with an undercurrent of sweetness. All these qualities, however, were far removed from those necessary for the playing of the young, spontaneous lover Romeo.

Laurence Irving, the actor-manager's grandson and biographer, states that both Henry Irving and Ellen Terry knew the disparity between physical reality and their artistic dreams would be accentuated in their performance of Romeo and Juliet. The biographer remarks that so ardent was Irving's love for Shakespeare, however, that he could not resign himself to the renunciation of the most exquisite and lyrical of Shakespeare's plays. Irving was well aware, nonetheless, of his own physical handicaps and of the censure which, without any doubt, he would incur for attempting to play Romeo. Having read to friends some of Romeo's scenes and been told by them that his Romeo would be a tremendous success, Irving quietly replied, "No it won't . . . No--that is what I want to make of Romeo. Unluckily I know that on the stage I cannot come anywhere near it--I should like to--but I can't."[55]

Understandably, Irving's interpretation of Romeo and Juliet took into account his own acting strengths and weaknesses, and his planning, both of his own performance and of the whole production, brought out those features he could best express. Like Samuel Phelps, Irving stage managed with great patience, energy and care, and imposed upon his productions a distinct unity of tone, but unlike Phelps, he did so, as Edward Gordon Craig later remarked, "for the sake of one actor, himself."[56] As the main Lyceum attraction the "personality" actor needed to be seen to the best advantage, hence the importance of presentational details. It was not to be expected at the Lyceum that the leading roles would be played by any but the two leading actors. Irving imposed his own conception of the role on each member of his company and, except for other principals such as Ellen Terry whom he never instructed, coached them in the details he had already planned before the rehearsal. In all cases except that of Terry these roles were merely in support of his own and she allowed her role to fall in with his conception of each play. Irving's methods thus, in a very different way from those of Samuel Phelps, helped to establish the unity in conception and execution that was the hallmark of his productions. In Romeo and Juliet Romeo was not presented from the outset as light-hearted, young and spontaneous, but rather as earnest, despairing, tragic, and star-fated. He was not the love-stricken boy but a tragic fool of fortune. Clement Scott, in the Theatre, summarized the lovers as Irving presented them:

> We see Romeo and Juliet as the "pair of star-crossed lovers," the victims of adverse destiny, the subjects of our pity . . . not the lad physically beautiful but mentally incomplete, or the silly girl of fifteen of Coleridge . . . but the youth matured and the maiden strengthened into action, the pivots of a tremendous tragedy . . . the fate-haunted examples of vengeance and vindictiveness, who live to suffer for the faults of others and who die "poor sacrifices of our enmity." (5, 1882)

It was Irving's belief that Shakespeare's play had been wilfully perverted in the eighteenth century, by either the waywardness of David Garrick or the bad taste of the age in which Garrick had lived.

Acknowledging in his acting edition his indebtedness to the 1871 Variorium edition of the play and the editions of the play by Singer (1826) and Dyce (1857),[57] Irving was concerned to restore a more Elizabethan text of Shakespeare's play to the stage, and to undo what Clement Scott referred to as "the mischief of the eighteenth century under the false guidance of David Garrick" (The Theatre, 5, 1882). Samuel Phelps' considerable achievement towards the restoration of Romeo and Juliet on the stage in 1846 had been an isolated effort, largely ignored and forgotten by mainstream Shakespearean production. While most productions had restored Shakespeare's language by the middle of the nineteenth century, Garrick's interpolated funeral procession and dirge, and even on occasion his farewell scene between the lovers, were still seen in heavily abridged presentations of the play; indeed, as we have seen in the previous chapter, there were still actors using Garrick's stage version who thought that they were using the original text.

It was Irving's view that most past productions had failed to emphasize properly the tragic setting of the story. Garrick had omitted the Prologue and this omission had been made by almost every English theatrical producer except Phelps between 1749 and 1882. Because people had been seeing Garrick's acting version on the stage for over a hundred years and had not been reading Shakespeare, they had been misinterpreting the tragic pattern so plainly put forward in the Prologue. Clement Scott described Irving's desire to restore the story of Romeo and Juliet as Shakespeare had written it: "It has been Mr. Irving's ambition to do something of great moment in restoring the fabric destroyed by mutilated versions and corrupted texts . . . . He has striven . . . to get . . . at the soul of Shakes [illegible] (The Theatre, 5, 1882). Scott did not claim for

Irving an isolated veneration for Shakespeare's text but explained that in Irving's presentation "at last we see Romeo and Juliet as star-crossed lovers" (The Theatre, 5, 1882). Shakespeare in the Prologue had stressed the feud between the two great families resulting in civil strife and had therefore provided the setting for the tragic jewel: the "piteous overthrows" of the "star-crossed lovers" who "with their death bury their parents' strife." Because this milieu had generally been neglected on the stage, pointed out Edward Russell, the reviewer from Macmillan's, the story had been exalted "into a region of supernal elevation above common life," a result at variance with the dramatist's intention (Macmillan's Magazine, 46, 1882).

Irving took away the usual romantic prettiness and stressed an ambiance of warfare and revenge. In his view the play was no light love poem and no tale springing from the quarrels of two neighbours, but a tragedy stemming from the hatred of two virile races.[58] The blood-feud, the ruthless vendetta declared between Montague and Capulet through the generations had infected all Verona. In the first scene of the play a picturesque crowd of citizens and nobles, children and donkeys went peacefully about their business around a fountain in the foreground, while upstage a sloping bridge crossed a walled stream. But peace was an illusion. The city of Verona had chosen evil and under the pretty surface the city was, as Alan Hughes aptly describes it, a "hell of vendetta and sordid murder" where tempers boiled over in the hot Mediterranean sun and order had disintegrated.[59] Members of the Capulet faction entered, at first slowly, but coming quicker and quicker until a crowd of them had gathered on one side of the bridge. Then over the bridge came a rush of the Montagues armed with sticks and swords. Bram

Stoker relates that "they used to pour in on the scene . . . like a released torrent, and for a few minutes such a scene of fighting was enacted as I have never elsewhere seen on the stage." The fight was no aesthetic sword-dance, but a deadly war. Justifying Irving's approach Stoker said that it was necessary to portray the luxury as well as the hereditary feud of the two dominant factions represented by the chiefs, and to give something of the ingrained bloodthirstiness of the age of the Italian petty states. Irving with his superlative stage instinct had grasped the picturesque possibilities; "the Capulets and the Montagues must be made not only forces but typal."[60]

The lovers, as star-crossed, were predestined to calamity and were the pathetic innocent victims of a malign, inevitable fate as the order to which they were committed disintegrated. Ellen Terry points out that in this production Irving used a "fate tree" to symbolize the grim destiny hanging over the lovers.[61] The dark overhanging branch of the great cedar, like a cruel outstretched hand of fate, gloomed over the street along which Romeo went to the ball, reinforcing his dark exit speech:

> my mind misgives
> Some consequence, yet hanging in the stars
> Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
> With this night's revels. (I.iv.106-09)

It loomed again over the "dismal heart-chilling street" in Mantua where he heard of Juliet's supposed death and bought poison from the Apothecary. Terry attributed Juliet's swift surrender to a sense of urgency prompted by a "presentiment of sorrow":

> O God, I have an ill-divining soul!
> Methinks I see thee now, thou art so low,
> As one dead in the bottom of a tomb. (III.v.54-56)

Past productions, said Henry Pettitt, had made the play charming, effective or pretty, and sometimes dramatic, "but only Irving made it tragic."[62]

In his acting edition Irving announced that the most important of his restorations was "that of Romeo's unrequited love for Rosaline."[63] Following the example set by Garrick, most subsequent producers had omitted any reference to Rosaline and it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century, in productions by Cushman and Phelps, that she was restored to the play. Managers now saw Rosaline as being essential to the proper understanding of Romeo's temperament, believing that Shakespeare had carefully worked out the first boyish love of Romeo as "a palpable evidence of the subjective nature of the man and his passion."[64] As Alan Hughes rightly points out, nineteenth-century critics viewed Shakespeare as the dramatist of the individual, the supreme observer of human nature, whose creations were as complex as they were true to life.[65] "To play Shakespeare with any measure of success, it is necessary that the actor, above all, be a student of character," declared Irving. "The end and aim of acting," he further maintained, is "to lay bare to an audience the heart and soul of the character which the actor may attempt to portray."[66]

During the eighteenth century actors had been concerned primarily with the external aspects of characterization: such consistency of speech, movement and pose that it gave an impression of truthfulness. Romanticism, by contrast, stressed the importance of individual details because each detail could lead to an apprehension of truth, and an understanding of any part of creation could lead to an improved understanding of the whole. As the nineteenth century progressed, Shakespearean productions responded to the rising spirit of realism, to the pursuit of truth conceived as fact. The actors, beginning with Edmund Kean, and his lightning flashes of psychological revelation, sought to discover hitherto unrecognized facts about the motivations of the characters they played. Macready and Phelps modified the traditions they had inherited in the theatre to make them relevant to the thought of a new age; they sought to preserve on the stage the internal characterization of a man--not with the intuitive insight of Kean's flashes, but with a consistency and perfection of detail. This attempt to present a thoroughly consistent psychological portrait of a character was a new approach to dramatic art.

To Irving the interpretation of Romeo and Juliet was mainly a matter of determining the character and motives of the hero, whom he treated as a real person with a past as well as a present, and who had psychological causes for his actions. Irving arrived at his interpretation by constructing Romeo's life before the play, ignoring the fact that an audience is shown nothing of Romeo's character before the play begins. The central basis of Irving's interpretation was found in the psychological state of the central characters. Victorian criticism and stage tradition, with their concentration upon character, generally assumed that this was the true interpretation and that only perfect illusion could make it work. Romeo, therefore, ought to be played as a believable case history, and his symptoms delineated as realistically as possible.

In his address "The Art of Acting" Irving asserted that he agreed with Macready who saw the art of acting as follows: "to fathom the depths of character, to trace its latent motives, to feel its finest quiverings of emotion, to comprehend the thoughts that are hidden under words, and thus possess one's self of the actual mind of the individual man."[67] In Irving's initial portrayal of Romeo, Bram Stoker said that the actor managed to convey that "though his mind was to a measure set on love with a definite object, there was still a sterner possibility of a deeper passion." Irving seemed to show the heart of a young man, melancholy and moody, who yearned for all-compelling love, even at the time when "the pale phantom of such a love claimed his errant fancy."[68]

In the scene of the Capulet ball Irving's aim was to place in the strongest possible light Romeo's sudden transition of affection from Rosaline to Juliet. Edward Russell described it as a transition "from disconsolate yearning and love-famine to the instinctive appropriation and assumption of glowing, mutually responsive passion" (Macmillan's, 46, 1882). Instead of incontinently dropping all thought of Rosaline, as the invariable stage usage had been, Irving ventured to display in dumb show to the audience the sudden transference of thought and emotion which must have taken place. Outstanding in pantomimic roles, Irving's genius for expressive face play here dominated his performance. Irving's Romeo first sought out Rosaline and, once found, she was the cynosure of his rapt gaze. Presently, when Rosaline repelled him with a look, he sighed as if in fatigue, turned listlessly from this wistful melancholy contemplation and, gazing from Rosaline around the room, he was suddenly struck statuelike by the beauty and charm of an unknown girl. As he stood spell-bound the love of Rosaline fell unconsciously from him and it was changed into "the glory and glamour" of his new adoration. "Can I ever forget his face when suddenly in pursuit of her he saw me," says Ellen Terry in her memoirs, adding to her reflection that "a face is the chieftest equipment of the actor."[69]

Irving found it difficult to portray the impulsive, yet bashful and delicate ardour that tradition had decreed to the young lover. Instead, he sought to portray the extreme intensity of Romeo's sudden passion as he boldly courted Juliet at the Capulet ball and in the balcony scene. Ellen Terry, a frank and receptive Juliet, returned his ardour. The keynote of Irving's Romeo was yearning tremulous worship. Romeo made it clear that he adored his love and only slowly came to realize that he could be adored by her; and when he knew it he almost "sank in the sweetness of it" (Macmillan's, 46, 1882). In Shakespeare there is a definite contrast between Romeo's boyish character at the beginning of the play and his more mature attitude towards love in later scenes. In Irving's production this contrast was not stressed. Russell, however, agreed with Irving's unusual interpretation of an aggressive Romeo from the outset of the play, stating that "the explanation lies in the sudden excitement of a new passion" (Macmillan's, 46, 1882).

In Act III the young lovers react to Romeo's banishment. Garrick had excised those lines from scenes ii and iii which might portray a "blemish" on the idealized characters that his audience desired. Irving, however, aimed for much more realism. In this act he wished to show that Romeo's fibre had been weakened through love, and that this momentary weakness had been the cause of Mercutio's death. Likewise, he felt that it was important for the audience to see Romeo sobbing his anguish to the Friar. The scene in the Friar's cell Clement Scott described as the "delirium of despair," and Irving played it "if anything with an excess of desperation peculiar to his realistic style" (The Theatre, 5, 1882). Garrick had eliminated Romeo's faults; it was now Irving's purpose to emphasize them. The Macmillan's reviewer defended this emphasis, believing that "Shakespeare fully intends us to behold the seamy side of this beautiful love story, and to know that there is a seamy side to it in character as well as in misfortune" (Macmillan's, 46, 1882). In an intriguing modern analysis of Irving's acting style, Peter Thomson goes beyond Alan Hughes' cool assertion that Irving presented characters which were "complex, introspective and individual to the point of eccentricity."[70] Thompson notes the lack of idealization in Irving's impersonations and states that in many of Irving's productions the actor based his creations on the idea of the "divided self," referring his audiences to the insecurity of the self. Irving sought in his performances to realize dualities, believing that the actor's business was to expose what was conventionally concealed: himself.[71]

George Augustus Sala found Irving's impersonation of Romeo "most powerful and soulful" in the second half of the play as the tragedy deepens and Romeo matures. The fiery patrician who spared none in his wrath when his Montague blood was up, the slayer of Tybalt, the half distraught inmate of Friar Lawrence's cell, the banished Romeo, the despairing client of the Apothecary, the unwilling homicide of the County Paris were all delineated by the actor "with surprising originality, truth and grandeur" (Illustrated London News, March 18, 1882). The highest mark of Irving's performance, agreed critics, came in Romeo's hearing of Juliet's supposed death, at the opening of the Apothecary Scene (V.i). Here, Irving used understatement, receiving Balthasar's news in silence. "His face grew whiter and whiter," relates Ellen Terry. It was during the silence after Balthasar's lines "that Henry Irving as Romeo had one of those sublime moments which an actor only achieves once or twice in his life." There was absolutely no movement but the audience knew what was going on in his soul. "His reply 'Then I defy you stars,' was quiet: his fate was settled there, beneath the symbolic tree, and he accepted it."[72] The order for post horses was given quietly, his face rigid, not a muscle moving, eyes far away. Paying Irving tribute for this scene, George Augustus Sala announced that he had seen few finer things on the stage than the impression of "complete self-mastery, of inexorably concentrated volition engendered by irremediable despair, conveyed to the mind of the spectator." The paleness and wildness of Romeo's looks did not alter by one whit his calmness and brevity of speech nor his unalterable determination. His defiance of the stars was simply a "cool and collected recognition of the Ananké--of the inevitable, of their being 'no armour against Fate'" (Illustrated London News, March 18, 1882).

Like Samuel Phelps and Charlotte Cushman, Irving aimed in his production for a return to Shakespeare's own conclusion to the tragedy, deleting Garrick's funeral dirge at the end of Act IV and the seventy-five-line farewell between the two lovers in Act V. It was Irving's view that Garrick had contrived a climax and denouement totally at variance with the dramatist's expressed injunction and his position in deleting such interpolations was that "truth should remain unalterable, and the true words of Shakespeare be allowed to speak to the human soul."[73]

IV

Although it was Irving's aim to restore Shakespeare's play, he did not produce a completely restored text. Restoration of the "true text" in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as in the earlier part, did not mean faithful presentation of the first folio text but only meant reprieve from the indignity of additional or replacement dialogue by other hands. The audience had to hear Shakespeare's own words, but it was still a prerogative of an actor-manager to decide not only how much of Shakespeare was to be included in a performance, but also where it was to be put. The history of the steady improvement of nineteenth-century acting texts is besmirched by cuts and often bizarre resetting of speeches and scenes. It had not yet occurred to the majority of producers that probably Shakespeare, as author, was the best judge of what should be acted and that his plays, as written, might be allowed to speak for themselves.

Victorian acting texts were at the mercy of many things: the star system, for the actor-manager was, both administratively and artistically, in the spotlight; Victorian sensibilities, especially in matters salacious; Victorian sentimentality which, to a degree, was a product of material success. Moreover, Shakespeare's plays were usually felt to be too long to be crowded--with heavy, unwieldy scenery--into an evening in the theatres, and besides, many of the scenes and speeches seemed uninteresting or unnecessary. Hence, naturally, there were as many acting versions of Shakespeare as there were individual managers to produce his plays; each manager had his own acting version according to his particular fancy. Henry Irving, for example, co-edited with Frank Marshall a handsome multi-volume edition of the plays, with introduction and notes by eminent critics and with his own special marking of possible cuts which, while not always corresponding to those words and passages omitted in Irving's Lyceum productions, could be used by anyone as a guide "to prepare an acting version of the plays suitable either for private or public representation."[74] It is noteworthy to see what Irving cut and he has obliged posterity by indicating, with a wavy margin line, "those lines, passages, and scenes which could best be dispensed with--if such limitation were desired--without doing unnecessary injury to the thoughts and work of the poet or to the dramatic bearings of the story of the play."[75]

As with almost all Shakespearean producers before him and after him, Irving felt justified in making a number of cuts. In his essay "Shakespeare as Playwright" Irving explained that "in many plays of Shakespeare the omission of passages, the modification of certain words or phrases, and the transposition of some scenes, are all absolutely necessary before they can be acted," but that popular taste in his day would not permit an actor to take such liberties, especially with Shakespeare's language, as were once thought commendable.[76] A study of Irving's acting edition of Romeo and Juliet published for his audience by Chiswick Press as he produced the play in 1882, as well as an examination of the promptbook for early rehearsals of the play, reveals, nonetheless, that Irving cut more than a thousand lines from Shakespeare's folio text, in roughly similar proportions for each act.[77] In the preface to his acting edition Irving referred to his arrangement of the text of Romeo and Juliet, claiming that he had "endeavoured to retain all that was compatible with the presentation of the play within a reasonable time."[78] In Irving's production the "two hours' traffic of our stage" was spun out to four and a quarter, and it was midnight before audiences, dazed with the incomparable pageantry they had witnessed, found their way to their carriages. "Such is the necessary price we must pay, not to speak of some considerable curtailment of the text, for the gratification of the modern passion for scenic illustration," remarked the Daily News (March 9, 1882).

Time became a major concern for Irving because the nature of his spectacular production did not allow for the quick shifting of scenery. Shakespeare had merely used dialogue to indicate a change to a new location and his versatile methods of staging had allowed his plays to be performed continuously. The Elizabethan public stage was extremely flexible as regards acting. Action was unlocalized unless the dramatist required a specific location, which was then established by the convention of language. The late Victorian stage, however, was much less flexible, realism and naturalism requiring that every scene be localized in terms of time and place, the changes often interrupting the flow of action. The addition of lavish spectacle to Shakespearean production, especially the use of built-up scenery, as well as the getting on and off stage of hosts of supernumeraries took some time; and the interruption of scenes that could be beautifully illustrated by a panorama, a tableau, or a processional entry, but only existed in the text as descriptions, lengthened proceedings still further. Something had to give way and it was usually Shakespeare's lines. Charles Kean, for example, had cut a third of the text of The Tempest and nearly half of A Midsummer Night's Dream; yet, The Tempest performance lasted five and a half hours with long act intervals. Macready had omitted all the words of the first scene of The Tempest in order to show a realistic shipwreck on stage;

Charles Kean's shipwreck was so much more elaborate that it took a twenty-minute intermission to clear the stage for the next scene and the first spoken words of the play (cf. Theatrical Journal, Aug. 19, 1857). In a production of Antony and Cleopatra in 1875 by Andrew Halliday, Shakespeare's text was cut approximately in half; added, however, were a realization of Cleopatra's barge, a "Grand Roman Festival" in honour of Antony and Octavia, and the sea battle of Actium.

The fact that the practice of historical realism and lavish antiquarian display meant long wearisome intervals while heavy sets were changed, and that Shakespeare's text had to be cut and rearranged to make room for all this did not matter, as Victorian audiences were generally quite prepared to accept the penalties for the sake of the benefits, provided there were sufficient pomp and splendour attached to the latter. The playbill for Irving's Romeo and Juliet prepared the audience for the following intervals: after Act I, ten minutes; after Act II, seven minutes; after Act III, six minutes; after Act IV, ten minutes.[79] Frederick Wedmore admitted in his review that the surroundings were now and then a "splendid encumbrance." The preparation of them involved long waits "in which the interest of the story must necessarily seem to wane" (Academy, March 18, 1882).

Because much time was needed in Irving's production for scenery and set changes, musical interpolations such as a wedding carol to awaken Juliet at the end of Act IV were therefore added. These insertions, common throughout nineteenth-century drama, could be justified to extend the atmosphere between scenes and to heighten the mood of the play. The production time was also lengthened by added bits of spectacular business, exemplified by the procession of fair bridesmaids to awaken

Juliet at the end of Act IV and the melodramatic dragging of Paris' body down the stairs into the Capulet tomb in Act V.[80] Irving's slow ponderous speech with its lengthening of every syllable, and his emphasis on posture and pantomime to heighten scenes consumed even further time. As a result of Irving's acting style and various interpolations, the subtlety of Shakespeare's intention disappeared and the quick rhythm and music of the poet's words became lost.

Irving's policy was to omit those passages that he felt could be excised without losing continuity in the play and he fell into many of the same cuts as Samuel Phelps, in excising lines of minor characters, especially comic passages; deleting all obscenities; removing lines considered sacrilegious on the stage; and pruning sustained extravagant descriptions and commentary. Irving's procedure, however, lacked the systematic careful pruning that marked Phelps' approach and he was much more drastic in his cutting, omitting entire scenes, effecting tableaus, and excising over five hundred lines more than Phelps had cut thirty-six years earlier.

In the first two acts of Romeo and Juliet Irving condensed much of the dialogue. Careful not to offend the sensibilities of his audience, he continued the tradition established already in the eighteenth century and omitted passages considered obscene. Much was therefore cut from the ribald comic exchange bewteen the Capulet servants at the beginning of the play and from Romeo's and Benvolio's discussion of the fair Rosaline who "will not stay the siege of loving terms" (I.i.215). In I.iv and II.i Romeo's and Mercutio's discussion of love similarly was carefully pruned of all obscenities. Irving kept most of Mercutio's important Queen Mab speech but, like managers before him, excised, as indelicate, Mercutio's reference to ladies whose "breath with sweetmeats tainted are" (I.iv.74) and cut, as obscene, the last seven lines of Mercutio's soliloquy (I.iv.89-95). In II.iv Irving, like Phelps, played down Mercutio's propensity for bawdy repartee, pruning extensively the ribald exchanges between Mercutio and Romeo and Mercutio's harsher jibes against the Nurse.

The actor-manager cut extensively the speeches of the minor characters. Shortened, for example, were the opening speeches between the Capulets and Montagues, the Prince and Benvolio. In Act I.ii Irving deleted from a servant's comic speech the reference about the shoemaker and his yard (ii.38-43), believing, as did most managers of the nineteenth century, that comic parts could easily be cut because they were minor parts, and their excision or abridgment would give more time for the major actors to demonstrate their skills on the stage. By the late nineteenth century the star system was firmly entrenched and star actors still demanded that their roles be heightened in importance as much as possible.[81] In I.iii Irving excised the majority of lines from the Nurse's delightful comic rambling about the young Juliet; moreover he pared to half Lady Capulet's lengthy description of young Paris' face. Irving started Shakespeare's Act I.v with Capulet's welcoming of guests for the banquet; omitted therefore were the first fourteen lines, a minor comic passage of the servingmen preparing for the banquet. The actor-manager kept almost all of the lyrical initial exchange between the two young lovers, cutting only two of the rhymed couplets that ended their speeches, including Juliet's exclamation "Prodigious birth of love it is to me/ That I must love a loathed enemy" (I.v.142-43). Cut extensively, however, was the intervening angry discussion between the thunderous Capulet and the hot-headed young Tybalt. Careful not to emphasize the disparity between the physical reality of the leading actors and Shakespeare's imaginative conception of the young lovers, Irving omitted from the play all reference to Juliet's age, including Capulet's remark that his child "hath not seen the change of fourteen years" (I.ii.9).

The only major difference between Irving's acting edition of Romeo and Juliet and his promptbook occurs at the beginning of Act II. In his promptbook the actor-manager kept the Chorus to Act II but by the time of the final rehearsals had apparently decided to delete it, obviously judging it to be not as vital as the first prologue in establishing the tragic basis for the play. In the balcony scene Irving made some excisions to the speeches between the lovers, shortening Romeo's description of the fair Juliet by cutting nine of the twenty-five lines appearing at the beginning of the scene. Omitted were the lines "'tis not to me she speaks" (II.ii.14) in which Romeo describes Juliet's eyes and wishes to be "a glove upon that hand,/ That I might touch that cheek!" (II.ii.24-25). Pruned as well by four lines was Juliet's musing on Romeo's name: "Thou art thyself, though not a Montague" (II.ii.39-42).

The Friar's speech on the medicinal power of herbs in II.iii.1-30 had often been entirely omitted in earlier productions, being deemed unnecessary to the central action of the play. Irving, however, like Phelps in cutting only eight of the thirty lines, retained the majority of the speech and excised those lines that talked indelicately of the womb of nature's mother (II.i.9-14). From the discussion between Romeo and the Friar in this scene Irving omitted almost entirely the Friar's speeches on Romeo's former passion for Rosaline. From the end of this scene the servant Peter's speech was cut from four lines to one, and most of the comic lines of the Nurse were deleted as she seeks Romeo's intentions towards Juliet, including her allusion to Paris as "the properer man" (II.iv.210) and her naïve question, "Doth not/ rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?" (II.iv.212-13).

Irving excised few lines in Act II.v and vi. He kept entire Juliet's charming speech on her impatience of waiting for news of her beloved, deleting only the rhyming couplet at the end, "But old folks, may feign as they were dead/ Unwieldly, slow, heavy and pale as lead" (II.v.14-15). The Nurse's six-line description of Romeo's body as "past compare" was omitted entirely; obviously the actor-manager again wished to avoid drawing attention to the disparity between Shakespeare's ideal of the young lover and the physical reality of his own inferior and aging body. From the Nurse's last speech in this scene Irving pruned five lines, including the Nurse's ribald "I am the drudge, and toil in your delight;/ But you shall bear the burden soon at night" (II.v.73-77).

Larger sustained cuts were made in Act III, IV and V. The largest number of line deletions occurred in Act III. Some of the good-natured banter between Benvolio and Mercutio at the beginning of Act III was pruned and a large excision was made at the end of this first scene, in which Mercutio dies and Romeo is banished. Irving omitted the whole latter part of the scene, cutting sixty consecutive lines so that the curtain could effectively be brought down on Romeo's cry "O, I am fortune's fool" (III.i.137), giving the main character a splendid exit, but at the expense of the rest of the characters. The Prince was denied a second entrance to exile Romeo, Benvolio therefore was unable to recount the skirmish to the Prince, and the Capulets and Montagues were denied the opportunity to show their rage and grief.

In III.ii, in which Juliet on her wedding night eagerly awaits Romeo, Irving, like his predecessors, was careful to remove all lines that displayed sexual longing in the young bride. Like Phelps, Irving felt that Juliet's convoluted expressions of grief as she hears of Romeo's banishment, later in this scene, should be pruned and the actor-manager, in cutting thirty-seven lines, shortened her torment considerably. Irving kept entire, on the other hand, Romeo's impassioned soliloquy in Act III.iii as he expresses to the Friar his own grief of his banishment; from the end of the scene, however, as Romeo offers to stab himself, Irving shortened by seventeen lines the Friar's lengthy tirade against the young Montague. Deleted were those lines starting with "Why railest thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth?" (III.iii.119-34). The next scene, the short III.iv, in which Capulet and Paris set the date for the wedding of Paris and Juliet, was retained almost completely, Irving cutting only four of the thirty-six lines.

Most of the beautifully lyric farewell scene between Romeo and Juliet on their wedding night at the beginning of III.v was kept, Irving, however, excising in his acting edition, but not in the promptbook, Juliet's speech "O Fortune, Fortune, All men call thee fickle" (III.v.60-65). In the second half of this scene Irving cut extensively. Most of the speeches between Juliet and Lady Capulet on Juliet's grief for Tybalt, Lady Capulet's rage against Romeo, and Juliet's ironical desire to seek vengeance on Tybalt's death were pruned in Irving's acting text, although these were kept entire in the promptbook. What remained in the acting edition was merely Lady Capulet's "joyful tidings" of the forthcoming marriage of Juliet to Paris. Irving also greatly pared Capulet's speeches in this scene, thereby softening the thunderous anger of Capulet against his disobedient daughter. Shortened, too, was Juliet's anguished plea to the Nurse of how this marriage could be prevented. Excised was the five-line passage starting with "My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven" (III.v.207-10), such lines considered sacrilegious on the stage.

At the beginning of Act IV.i Irving considerably condensed the light exchange between Juliet and Paris in the Friar's cell. In this scene the vital moment where the Friar gives Juliet the poison was robbed of its significance by the omission of the very passages that express the fervour of Juliet's resolve: "O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,/ From off the battlements of any tower," etc. (IV.i.77-88). Clement Scott explained that Irving had omitted these lines as anticipating the tomb scene but it was his own belief that the speech was an important forewarning of the oncoming evil, a necessary note in "the harmony so skillfully devised" (Theatre, 5, 1882). This passage marks a turning point in the tragedy at which the girl Juliet becomes a woman. Merely retaining the simple line "Give me, give me! O, tell me not of fear" (IV.i.121) and omitting the other twelve lines describing Juliet's horrid imaginings, was not enough to describe her mental condition at this juncture.

In Act IV Irving considered unimportant the two short ironical scenes in which hasty preparations are made for Juliet's wedding and he omitted entirely therefore both IV.ii in which Capulet orders a servingman to "hire me twenty cunning cooks" and scene iv in which Lady Capulet orders the Nurse to "take these keys and fetch more/ Spices"

(IV.iv.1-2). Juliet's important potion scene Irving kept virtually complete, excising only a few words, and he ended the scene, as the stage directions in his promptbook indicate, on a picturesque "tableau." Shakespeare's Act IV ends with the lamentations of the Capulets upon the discovery of the supposedly dead Juliet, followed by a short comic passage between Peter and the musicians. Irving pruned extensively the grief of the Capulets, Nurse and Paris, and cut the majority of the Friar's speech. Then, he interpolated a procession of bridesmaids and a wedding carol and omitted entirely the forty-nine-line musicians' scene; this enabled him to end the act with a grand tableau in which the Friar urges the Capulets and Paris "To follow this fair corse unto her grave" (IV.v.93).

Act V.i was kept essentially entire, the short scene in which Romeo hears from Balthasar of Juliet's supposed death and then, griefstricken, buys poison from the Apothecary. Also kept intact was the short V.ii in which Friar Lawrence hears of his misguided letter. Bram Stoker relates that the pathos of the play's last scene, V.iii, touched Irving to his heart's core and that in speaking the words he wept.[82] Irving's intention, however, noted Russell, was to purge the final scene of all the sentimentality of previous productions and effect an ending of simplicity and power (Macmillan's, 46, 1882). It was to this very last scene of the play that Irving made his most drastic cuts, excising extensively from the speeches of Romeo, Paris, the Friar and Balthasar as they come to the tomb, and then omitting 133 consecutive lines after Juliet's death. When Juliet had expired, the curtain closed while behind it the sound of an approaching crowd was heard. The curtain opened once more to reveal the lovers imperishably united in a final splendid tableau. Surrounding the bodies of the two lovers were the Capulets, Montagues, Paris, Prince, and Friar Lawrence; while a great multitude of silent awestruck citizens carrying blazing red torches thronged the staircase, occupying every point of vantage and from the churchyard, offstage, came voices of friars chanting prayers for the dead. Irving was clearly more interested in the lovers than in the restoration of order in Verona. The really significant compensation which the tragedy offered lay in the growth and self-fulfilment of the lovers, and their love was crystalized imperishably in death. The Prince solemnly joined the hands of the two kneeling fathers and, above the distant requiem, closed the play with only a fragment taken from his final speech:

> For never was a story of more woe
> Than this of Juliet and her Romeo. (V.iii.308-09)

Clement Scott praised Irving's conclusion, judging that the play "ends as Shakespeare intended it to end" (Theatre, 5, 1882). Omitted, however, in Irving's production, was most of what follows on the death of the two lovers including the discovery of the two bodies, the agitated utterances of Capulet and Lady Capulet, the explanation of the circumstances surrounding the deaths, the long speech of the Friar, the arrest of the Friar and Balthasar, the effecting of peace between the fathers. William Poel condemned these omissions, calling the conclusion a "mutilation" which he attributed to "the despotism of the actor on the English stage, and consequently to the star system." Irving, in his view, had made cuts to the text in order to emphasize his and Ellen Terry's roles, had neglected the importance of the minor characters and had not stressed enough the reconciliation of the two families. He ended his condemnation by asking, "Why open your play with the quarrel of the two houses if you do not intend to show them reconciled?"[83] Bram Stoker, on the other hand, defended Irving's ending by merely commenting, "So much can now be expressed by pictorial effect . . . which in Shakespeare's time had to be expressed in words."[84]

V

Austin Brereton wrote that the final tableau brought to a close one of the grandest spectacular representations of a Shakespearean play that had ever been presented.[85] Those in favour of spectacle argued that the pictorial recreation of bygone times, together with the beautiful and ornamental additions of fine paintings, rich costumes, and lavishly executed properties replaced inevitable deficiencies in the imagination of a modern audience no longer content with simplicity of staging, the voice of the actor, and the spoken word. Henry Irving had brought the historic illusion and dramatic unity pursued by William Macready and Charles Kean to its most tasteful and balanced expression. As George Rowell rightly points out, Irving's aim and to a large extent his achievement were distinct from the architectural precision of his rivals and consisted essentially "in a quality of illusion characterized by the mystery and magic in which he excelled as an actor."[86] H. A. Saintsbury in the conclusion to his Symposium on the art of Henry Irving declared that the actor-manager possessed "in the highest degree the gift of the superlative stage manager, the gift of co-ordinating, single-handed, all the various entities that make a stage production; the actors, the scenery, the lighting, the music, the effects." Pointing out that comparisons were made between Irving's settings and those of Herbert

Beerbohm Tree, his Edwardian successor, Saintsbury's explanation was that there was no comparison: "Tree put on some striking scenes; Irving never. His were not striking, they were inevitably right." Whereas Irving gave richness, Tree, in Saintsbury's view, was gaudy: "Irving decorated Shakespeare as a priest his altar; Tree as a trader his shop window."[87]

Irving shared with Charles Kean, before him, and Herbert Beerbohm Tree, after him, the educational objectives of historical recreation in Shakespearean production although not with the ardour of these two, being commended, on the whole, for his restraint of spectacle and its harmonious relation to both place and acting performance. He had integrated the actor into the scenic environment by compositionally subordinating the intensity of the picture to the visual prominence of the actor, each composition therefore having its focal point on the principal actor. In doing so, Irving was able to place the character amidst his scenic milieu without sacrificing the human values of the drama or the histrionic values of the performance. Martin-Harvey, a lifelong admirer of Irving's scenic style, contrasted Irving's technique with that of productions which were excessively archaeological:

> This archaeological method of production . . . has a serious drawback--a play itself is sometimes buried beneath a mountain of antiquarian detail. This was never the case with the Irving productions, for he was a master of "tone" (painters will know what I mean), and though he would sometimes spend months of research over correct historical detail, he could, with his feelings for "tone," reduce all this detail to a mere background--a subtle gift denied to those who followed or imitated his method.[88]

Although Henry Irving, in the opinion of some of his reviewers, achieved his goal of heightening the imagination of the audience, his production of Romeo and Juliet was not termed a success by most critics.

"Despite all the scenery," noted Vanity Fair, "the play is disappointingly unsatisfactory" (March 18, 1882). Punch concurred: "If the presence of the picturesque could compensate for the absence of the passion that moves, this revival would indeed be a distinguished and unqualified success." It was Punch's judgment that the play had closed as it had proceeded, "picturesquely, impressively--everything but movingly" (March 18, 1882). Arthur Goddard in 1891 remembered the revival as a managerial rather than a histrionic success.[89]

Irving had followed a nineteenth-century trend in partially restoring the text of Shakespeare and had brought in this production scenic artistry to its highest point, but had somehow missed the essence of the mercurial Romeo. Irving was too intelligent and had too many qualities of a fine actor to fail entirely in any part which he assumed, but there is no doubt that he failed to convey the appearance of youthful impetuosity and it is hard to imagine a successful Romeo in whom this is lacking. As the play deepened into tragedy and Romeo matured, the actor became more comfortable with the part. "The Romeo of the Lyceum is most satisfactory of all when he is least a lover," declared Henry James. "He is best as a philosopher--best when he is most 'subjective,' and best in the . . . scene with the Apothecary" (Atlantic Monthly, 50, 1882). Even Irving's leading lady acknowledged that Irving as Romeo "couldn't catch the youthful pose of melancholy with its extravagant expression" in the earlier scenes. "It was in the repressed scenes, where the melancholy was sincere, the feeling deeper, and the expression slighter, that he was at his best," remarked Ellen Terry.[90] In choosing to play Romeo, Irving had attempted a part for which he was eminently unsuited, the critics agreed. The actor's peculiar gifts had not the lover in them. "He is the best actor we have of crime, remorse, villainy, sin, and low comedy of the eccentric sort," declared Vanity Fair, "but the nobler emotions he is not so fitted to pourtray [sic], and passionate sentiment he seems to sink under" (March 18, 1882). Henry Nevinson relates that when he saw Irving's Romeo he knew that this was never the headstrong, handsome boy that Shakespeare meant. This stern and adult man, "fate-ridden, haggard, smouldering-eyed, would never have made a hopeless mess of his young life for love." It was impossible to suppose, noted Nevinson, "that he stood before us young and green, just as it was absurd to imagine that his Juliet still went in awe of her nurse." "I never saw such a mature Romeo and Juliet before--or since," pronounced Nevinson.[91]

The criticism that Irving at forty-four and Ellen Terry at thirty-five were both too old for the parts is only partly relevant; much more serious was Irving's lack of youthful feeling, not only in his voice but in his whole approach. All the vocal peculiarities critics noted in him handicapped him as a young lover. Henry Arthur Jones' comment applied with especial force to this performance: "He could not untwist the chains that tie the hidden soul of harmony . . . . It would be difficult to recall any one sustained passage of Shakespeare's verse that was spoken by Irving in such a way as to delight or even to satisfy the ear as well as the mind."[92] It was Irving's voice, primary among his physical defects, that rendered Irving unsuitable as Romeo, for as George Foss rightly claims, "a beautiful voice is more essential for Romeo than a handsome face."[93] There were "no deep, ringing, and sonorous tones in that voice of his," confirmed Arthur Machen, declaring that Irving could never hope to emulate the magisterial utterance with which Samuel Phelps' pupil Johnston Forbes-Robertson, early in his career, was gracing

Shakespeare on the contemporary stage.[94] Under Phelps' management elocution had been considered the basis of the art of acting. Careful development of vocal tone, range and volume, and the constant practice in enunciation, emphasis and phrasing were of major importance in his actors' training. Of the art of delivery, charged Henry James, Irving had apparently "not a suspicion." This art, insisted James, claimed three-fourths of an actor's obligations and therefore in Irving's acting these three-fourths were simply cancelled. What was left to him with the remaining fourth was to be "picturesque," depending for his effects upon the art with which he presented the figure to the eye, rather than upon the manner in which he spoke his part, and "you cannot play Shakespeare by being simply picturesque."[95]

Irving himself knew that his portrayal of Romeo was not successful and that he could not capture the youthful exuberance of Shakespeare's character. As he himself later put it, "The most elaborate scenery I ever had was for Romeo and Juliet, but as I was not the man to play Romeo the scenery could not make it a success. It never does--it only helps the actor."[96] Gordon Crosse, who greatly admired Irving's scenic splendours and his eccentric acting, admitted that the actor was "always Irving," in the sense that his strong personality could be seen in every character.[97] George Bernard Shaw, Irving's greatest detractor, conducted a long war against the actor-manager, claiming in a similar vein that Irving couldn't play Shakespeare's characters but only versions of himself and that he used Shakespeare's texts as mere quarries for the makings of original romantic dramas in which to exhibit characters of his own creation. Reviewing a Lyceum production of Cymbeline Shaw observed, "A prodigious deal of nonsense has been written about Sir Henry's conception of this, that and the other Shakespearean character. The truth is that he has never in his life conceived or interpreted the characters of any author except himself."[98] Mowbray Morris, who found that it was not possible to conceive "anything more lamentably, more hopelessly bad, than Mr. Irving's Romeo," declared that the real defect of the performance was the total want of self-judgment and self-restraint and the total want of respect for his audience which would allow an actor to select a role from which nature and his own ideas of his own art had alike so insuperably barred him. "For it is this, this lamentable want of balance, . . . this lamentable exaltation of the individual at the expense of his work, which is the characteristic defect of our modern theatre," he charged, and it was with the exposure of this "fatal object of monomania" that every contemporary critic should concern himself.[99]

Reviewers largely concentrated on Henry Irving's acting, few saying much about Ellen Terry's performance, but she received a share of criticism, too. Critics found that a similar comparative maturity of feeling seemed to permeate Terry's impersonation of Juliet, to a lesser degree, perhaps, but still unmistakably. Her deliberate intensity, noted Punch, had "little of the warm impulsiveness which we naturally look for in the youthful daughter of the Capulets" (March 18, 1882). Surely the love of Juliet would not be "so deliberately and almost monotonously 'intense' either in action or rhetoric, but more radiant, swift, and shifting in mood and tone," he complained. In the balcony scene the actress was subdued. "Seldom have Shakespeare's words roused less attention," noted All the Year Round. "There was no variety. Each speech was delivered in the same manner; the mind did not dictate the tongue's utterance" (April 1, 1882). The whole potion scene, said Vanity

Fair, Terry took too slowly and her movements were too evidently studied (March 18, 1882). Henry James found that the actress had great charm, was almost always interesting, and was often a delightful presence on the stage; "but she is not Juliet," he proclaimed; "on the contrary! She is too voluminous, too deliberate, too prosaic, too English, too unversed in the utterance of poetry" (Atlantic Monthly, Aug. 1882).

Ellen Terry was, however, a perfect complement to Irving. Although many critics complained that he confined her talent, she admirably suited his preference for the pictorial in staging. Critics generally found that Terry's Juliet lacked tragic force, that she was graceful in her lighter moods but incapable of emotional depth. Shaw, for example, saw Terry as a pictorial leading lady. She could work up her efforts to a climax but could not sustain them. J. Comyns Carr contended that there was no contemporary actress who could express with equal force or refinement the tenderness of a simple nature, the pathos that belonged to suffering that was [illegible] or the playful gaiety of a sensitive temperament where laughter might quickly change to tears. On the other hand, the inherent limitation of her art lay on the side of passion: the stronger moods of feeling that sprang out of a complex character deeply touched by suffering and experience lay clearly beyond the range of her power (Fortnightly Review, Feb. 1883). Vanity Fair, likewise, judged the actress to be a perfect mistress of light comedy and of the more delicate form of pathos, "but tragedy overwhelms her. She has not the power for it" (March 18, 1882). In the potion scene the critic found the actress' voice limited; once raised beyond a certain pitch, it became "strained and painful." It was Frederick Wedmore's conclusion that in the later scenes of the tragedy "nothing was called out from the depths: the actress deals with tragedy like an eighteenth-century portrait painter--like Romney, for instance. The first word is grace--but so is the last" (Academy, March 18, 1882).

Like Irving, however, Ellen Terry was not given to self-deception or blinded by vanity; she shared his misgivings about performing Romeo and Juliet, knowing full well that she was past the age of portraying girlish innocence. She had no harsher critic than herself. Romeo and Juliet, she acknowledged, was "one of our failures."[100] In a letter to Arthur Bright during the run of the play, she expressed her appreciation for the fact that he had clearly perceived her intentions and she thanked him for the comfort of his letter: "It comes well in such a needy time, overpowered as I feel by a sense of utter failure (and I meant so well!!)."[101] "I learned later," she said in an interview almost thirty years after the production, that "extreme youth can give better than the most accomplished art" (Windsor Magazine, Dec. 1910). In her memoirs, speaking of an unknown critic who wrote her during the run of Romeo and Juliet and offered suggestions for improvement, Terry said that she agreed with the views expressed that her dialogue at the ball should be lighter and quicker in the manner of a young girl, and that in the balcony scene she was too slow and studied. "She--I think it was a woman--was perfectly right."[102]

In his address "The Art of Acting" Henry Irving declared that all the members of the company should work toward a common end "with the nicest subordination of their individuality to the general purpose" and that the play should be "a harmonious whole like the fine performance of an orchestral symphony."[103] Such statements echoed the sentiments of Samuel Phelps; for Irving, however, their meaning was far different.

There was an absolute integrity about Irving's egotism. As Frances Donaldson points out correctly, "He saw the picture as a whole and in the middle of the picture he saw himself."[104] Certainly Irving in his approach to the text of Romeo and Juliet was eager to protect the integrity of his own part and that of Ellen Terry, while sacrificing so much else in the play. William Devereux relates that at the Lyceum Irving engaged the best actors and paid them well "and generally managed to keep them in the background." It was a tradition at the Lyceum, he claimed, that "no one should take a call but Irving and Ellen Terry."[105] One of the most consistent charges levelled against Irving, and one still current, argues that the entire resources of the Lyceum were deployed to enhance Irving's performance. In melodrama, as George Rowell points out, this is as it should be; in Shakespearean production it is more difficult to assess. Certainly the pains that Irving took to extend the prestige of the Lyceum resulted in an ensemble far removed from the efforts of Macready or Charles Kean, but, as Rowell explains, "there was never any doubt in the minds of Irving's staff that the 'Guvnor's' performance took precedence."[106]

Accusing Irving of "costly bardicide" in which Shakespeare's work was tailored to serve Irving and the Lyceum style, George Bernard Shaw said that Irving cut plays to measure, "like a roll of cloth."[107] Shaw charged that Irving composed his parts not only without the least consideration for the Shakespearean play as a whole, or even the characters portrayed by the author, but without any for the unfortunate actors whom he employed to support him. The actor manager, maintained Shaw, worked hard to make his company do what he wanted for his own effects but if they tried to make independent effects of their own, "he did not hesitate to spoil them by tricks of stage management. In this way he threw on himself the enormous burden of attracting the public singlehanded." At the Lyceum, contended Shaw, Irving's peculiarities were the first consideration and that to him, professionally, Ellen Terry was only the chief ornament of his theatre. Besides, he added, Irving's method was so slow that it was almost impossible to act with him: "She had to stop too often and wait too long to sustain her part continuously when he was on the stage."[108] Ellen Terry herself supports this view. Speaking of a performance at the Lyceum of Much Ado about Nothing late in 1882, she agreed with a critic who condemned the actors for taking the play too slowly: "That was often a fault there. Because Henry was slow, the others took their time from him, and the result was bad."[109]

In spite of the fact that very few critics praised Henry Irving's and Ellen Terry's acting in Romeo and Juliet, the production ran for 161 performances, a fact that amazed Henry James: "As it happens, the play has thriven mightily, and though people are sadly bewildered by what they see and hear in it, they appear to recommend the performance to their friends" (Atlantic Monthly, 50, 1882). The opening night of Irving's production was honoured by the presence of the Prince and Princess of Wales, accompanied by various members of the aristocracy, so the play could scarcely have been anything but a financial success, for Irving enjoyed the patronage and acquaintance of the cream of society. Moreover, it is not difficult to understand why Irving's lavish pictorial productions were popular: Shaw as well as James gave Irving credit for achieving great visual beauty in his productions, and audiences in the late nineteenth century craved such effects.

The popularity of Irving's approach to characterization may seem more difficult to comprehend but, as Edward Moore notes, Irving's success as an actor can be understood when one reflects on what the literary critics were doing with Shakespeare at this time. This was the great age of "character" analysis--volume after volume analyzing the characters of the plays as if they were real people, a tradition early climaxed in its absurdity by Mary Cowden Clarke's Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines (3 vols., 1851-52), and later brought to its height brilliantly by A. C. Bradley's Shakespearean Tragedy (1904). "The age of the great novel of character was the age of criticism by character analysis and was the great age of character acting," concludes Moore.[110] In a contemporary attempt at defining Victorian régime, William Archer in 1887 declared character acting to be the "distinguishing feature of this period." Explaining this type of acting as "mimetic realism, the minute and unconventional reproduction of observed idiosyncrasies," Archer listed Irving as an outstanding exponent of the new art. Character acting and a "luxury of scenic illustration," the critic felt, "met a demand and begot an increase of appetite."[111]

There is no question that as a renderer of idiosyncratic characters on stage Irving was superb. The actor had a greater power of compelling belief than any actor after Garrick, and he achieved it through the exceptional concentration his contemporaries called intensity. For all his inability to read verse, Irving was sensationally successful in certain Shakespearean parts and the reason certainly must be found in his meeting the taste of the age by giving his strong personality the real meat of great parts to work upon, by applying intellectualized character methods to traditional roles, and by filling in naturalistic by-play between the lines he could not read properly. Irving's great talent was a gift for melodramatic acting of a peculiar kind, with something in it of the eerie, grotesque and weird, a grim species of the romantic melodrama. This was the talent he showed again and again, however, in every tragic part, and which made him, as B. Brooksbank points out, "successful when melodrama has a chance, less successful when it has little, and a complete failure when it has none" (National Review, 1, Mar.-Aug. 1883). As Edward West rightly concludes, Irving was popular in those parts to which he could apply most surely his melodramatic and character acting technique: Richard III, Iago, Shylock; he failed most conspicuously in those where sound elocution and a heroic bearing were indispensible: Macbeth, Othello, Romeo.[112]

For two decades, although Irving's Shakespearean interpretations were much questioned and some, such as his Romeo and Juliet, were roundly condemned, few would seriously dispute that he was the greatest English actor-manager of his time. Even William Poel, who consistently condemned Irving's Shakespearean productions and whose production of Romeo and Juliet would aim to be a corrective to the actor-manager's, considered Irving a great actor and a great metteur en scène, although criticizing Irving's "personality" acting which endorsed the star system and licensed it among his younger contemporaries, just as his genius for stage management brought his tableau methods into favour and had so many imitators.[113] Irving's strongest detractors willingly conceded the actor-manager's genius for stage-management and his success, in the form of his knighthood in 1895, in securing for the theatre an acknowledgment of its undoubted social influence. By a combination of fascinating acting, good support, and beautiful artistic mounting, Irving made his Lyceum fashionable; indeed, declared Gordon Crosse in Sixty Years of

Shakespearean Playgoing, the Lyceum in Irving's time was "a national institution, a home of culture to which there is no modern parallel" and whose tradition lasted down to the first world war.[114]

"With a performer as hypnotic and individual as Irving, it was inevitable that his acting and his image should impress itself on the era to which he gave his name," says George Rowell, justifying his decision to entitle his study of the late nineteenth-century theatre Theatre in the Age of Irving.[115] The scale on which Irving worked; the dedication he gave to that work; the artistry he brought to the visual impact of all his productions; his insistence of the stage as "another world," illuminated by the magic combination of human insight and theatrical limelight were the essential features of the Irving era which its theatregoers experienced and its records preserve.

NOTES

[1] John Coleman, Plays and Playwrights, p. 180.

[2] J. W. Cole, The Life and Theatrical Times of Charles Kean (London: Bentley, 1859, II), p. 26.

[3] Percy Fitzgerald, The World behind the Scenes (London, 1881; rpt. New York: Blom, 1972), p. 41.

[4] Michael Booth, The Victorian Spectacular Theatre (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 10.

[5] Fitzgerald, The World behind the Scenes, pp. 20-21.

[6] Playbill, 1911, "Sadler's Wells Collection," Finsbury Public Library, London.

[7] Even plays like Cymbeline, vague in historical context, were subject to pertinacious attention and were advertised "with New Scenery, Dresses and Decorations, executed from the Best Authorities . . . displaying . . . the Habits, Weapons, and Buildings of the Gaulish and Belgic Colonists of the Southern Countries . . . ."

[8] Quoted in Charles Shattuck, "Shakespeare's Plays in Performance from 1660 to the Present," Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 1805.

[9] Richard Southern, The Victorian Theatre (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1970), p. 50.

[10] Quoted in Cole, The Life and Theatrical Times of Charles Kean, II, 379.

[11] Hamlet at the Princess's and Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum.

[12] William Archer, About the Theatre (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1886), p. 239.

[13] Preface to Irving's acting edition of The Merchant of Venice, "a Tragedy in Five Acts by William Shakespeare as Presented at the Lyceum Theatre Under the Management of Mr. Henry Irving on Saturday, November 1, 1879." London: Chiswick, 1879.

[14] Preface to Irving's acting edition of Hamlet "as Arranged for the Stage by Henry Irving and Presented at the Lyceum Theatre, December 30, 1878," revised ed. London: Chiswick, 1879.

[15] Preface to Irving's acting edition of Romeo and Juliet, "a Tragedy in five Acts by William Shakespeare as Arranged for the Stage by Henry Irving and Presented at the Lyceum Theatre on Wednesday, March 8, 1882." London: Chiswick Press, 1882. The purpose of these acting editions was to give the texts as they were performed by Irving.

[16] Henry Irving, "Shakespeare as a Playwright," The Henry Irving Shakespeare, ed. Sir Henry Irving and Frank Marshall (London: Gresham, 1922), I-II, xciv.

[17] Irving, "Shakespeare as Playwright," p. xciv.

[18] Ellen Terry, The Story of My Life, 1908 (London: Boydell, 1982), p. 110.

[19] Alan Hughes, who has done much work on the technical aspects of Irving's productions, gives in his Henry Irving, Shakespearean (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981, pp. 18 and 269) the Lyceum measurements: the proscenium opening was 33-1/2 feet wide and perspectives could be 68 feet deep. The stage was 41-1/2 feet deep, the extra depth being supplied by a scene dock. In 1881 the theatre held 1250 spectators, this number increasing to 1700 by 1903.

[20] Tyrone Guthrie, In Various Directions: A View of the Theatre (London, 1965), p. 621.

[21] A number of critics, while praising Irving's scenes, were quick to point out instances where they believed Irving's production was archaeologically incorrect. Edward Godwin in The Architect in 1874 had written a series of articles on the staging and costuming of Shakespeare's plays. The architect had given a detailed historical analysis of the architecture and costume style of each period represented in Shakespeare's plays and had provided useful instructions for managers to follow for stage presentation. On Nov. 14, 1874, he had presented an article, "The Architecture and Costume of Shakespeare's Plays: Romeo and Juliet," on how that play might be put on the stage in an archaeologically correct manner (pp. 252-54). Henry Hermen was one of the critics who used Godwin's scholarship to attack Irving's scenic and costume designs. In the Magazine of Art (Aug. 1888, p. 334) he took a lofty stance and attacked the production for not being archaeologically correct and therefore not pleasing to "the educated eye." The actors alas had worn "a mixture of dresses ranging over a period of a hundred years or so" (p. 335). He then made a plea, much in the spirit of Charles Kean, to managers for dedication and better directed work from those whose duty it was in his view to educate the public in history and art.

[22] Ellen Terry says that there was "no leitmotif in the music, no attempt to reflect the passionate emotion of the drama, but a good deal of Southern joy, of flutes and wood and wind" (Story of My Life, p. 134).

[23] Open letter to Century Magazine, 26 (1883), 954.

[24] Bram Stoker, Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving (London: William Heinemann, 1907), p. 59.

[25] Alan Hughes, "Henry Irving's Artistic Use of Stage Lighting," Theatre Notebook, 33 (1979), 101.

[26] Percy Fitzgerald, The World behind the Scenes, p. 19.

[27] Ellen Terry, Story of My Life, p. 110.

[28] Ellen Terry, Story of My Life, p. 138; and The Era, Dec. 7, 1907.

[29] Austin Brereton, The Life of Henry Irving (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1908), I, 356.

[30] Preface, Romeo and Juliet acting edition.

[31] Ellen Terry, Story of My Life, p. 133.

[32] Michael Williams, Some London Theatres Past and Present (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1883), pp. 213-14.

[33] Ellen Terry, Story of My Life, pp. 107-10.

[34] Joseph Harker, Studio and Stage (London: Nisbet, 1924), p. 125.

[35] Henry Pettitt, in H. A. Saintsbury and Cecil Palmer, eds., We Saw Him Act: A Symposium on the Art of Sir Henry Irving (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1939), p. 226.

[36] Henry Irving, "The Art of Acting," 1885, in The Drama: Addresses (1893; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), p. 50.

[37] Henry Irving, Speech to the 36th anniversary festival of the Royal General Theatrical Fund, 29 July 1881, quoted in Brereton, The Life of Henry Irving, p. 342.

[38] Alan Hughes, Henry Irving, Shakespearean, p. 141.

[39] Henry Irving, as quoted in James Agate, Ego: The Autobiography of James Agate (London, Hamilton, 1935), p. 143.

[40] William Winter, Shakespeare on the Stage, 2nd ser. (New York: Moffat, Yard and Co., 1915), p. 125.

[41] James Boaden, Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Reese, Orme, Brown and Green, 1825), I, 419.

[42] William Hazlitt, Works, eds. A. R. Waller and Arnold Glover (London: Dent, 1903), VIII, 209.

[43] William Winter, Shakespeare on the Stage, p. 128.

[44] Ellen Terry, Story of My Life, p. 134.

[45] Edward Russell, Irving as Hamlet (London: Henry King and Co., 1875), p. 4.

[46] Dutton Cook, Nights at the Play (London: Chatto and Windus, 1883), II, 200.

[47] Christopher St. John, ed., Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence (New York: Putnam's, 1931), p. xxiii.

[48] William Poel, Monthly Letters (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1929), p. 3.

[49] William Archer, Henry Irving, Actor and Manager: A Critical Study (London: Field and Tuer, n.d.), p. 86.

[50] Edward Russell, Irving as Hamlet, p. 78.

[51] Edward Gordon Craig, Henry Irving (London: Dent, 1930), pp. 78, 71.

[52] Henry Austin Clapp, Reminiscences of a Dramatic Critic (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1902), pp. 194-220.

[53] James Agate, The Amazing Theatre (1939; rpt. New York: Blom, 1969), p. 76.

[54] Max Beerbohm, as quoted in Agate, The Amazing Theatre, p. 76.

[55] In Laurence Irving, Henry Irving: The Actor and His World (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 385.

[56] Edward Gordon Craig, Henry Irving, p. 87.

[57] Preface, Romeo and Juliet acting edition.

[58] Saintsbury and Palmer, We Saw Him Act, p. 224.

[59] Alan Hughes, Henry Irving, Shakespearean, p. 162.

[60] Bram Stoker, Personal Reminiscences, pp. 62, 59.

[61] Ellen Terry, Story of My Life, p. 137.

[62] Pettitt, in Saintsbury and Palmer, We Saw Him Act, p. 224.

[63] Preface, Romeo and Juliet, acting edition.

[64] Preface, Romeo and Juliet, acting edition.

[65] Alan Hughes, Henry Irving, Shakespearean, p. 6.

[66] Irving, speech given in 1883 to the Edinburgh Pens and Pencils, quoted in Frederic Daly, _Henry Irving in England and America_ (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1884), pp. 99-100.

[67] "Art of Acting," _The Drama: Addresses_, p. 40.

[68] Stoker, p. 61.

[69] Terry, p. 136.

[70] Alan Hughes, _Henry Irving, Shakespearean_, p. 92.

[71] Peter Thomson, "The Secret Life of Henry Irving," _Shakespeare and the Victorian Stage_ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 103-05.

[72] Ellen Terry, p. 137.

[73] Preface to Irving's acting edition of _Richard III_ in which he emphasizes his restoration of the original texts of Shakespeare.

[74] Preface to _The Henry Irving Shakespeare_, I-II, viii. The cuts to _Romeo and Juliet_, for example, differ in at least 60 minor instances from those in the Chiswick Press acting edition of the play, published as the play was performed in 1882.

[75] Preface to _The Henry Irving Shakespeare_, I-II, vii.

[76] "Shakespeare as Playwright," _The Henry Irving Shakespeare_, p. xciv.

[77] The promptbook for this production is housed in the Folger Library in Washington, is catalogued under Rom 12, and is dated March 8, 1882. There are quite a few minor differences in cut lines between the acting edition and the promptbook. I have chosen to use the acting edition for analysis, believing that the promptbook was probably used for early rehearsals until the Chiswick Press edition was finished.

[78] Preface, acting edition of _Romeo and Juliet_.

[79] Playbill for _Romeo and Juliet_, Lyceum Theatre, 8 March 1882, Birmingham Shakespeare Library.

[80] The rise of melodrama affected many Shakespearean productions in the nineteenth century; as a result melodramatic stage business became common. In a mid-century production of _Romeo and Juliet_, for example, the dying Romeo fell down a flight of stairs and then lay positioned with his face turned toward the vault. Juliet could then gaze down at her dead lover when she awoke.

[81] Sir Frank Benson in _My Memoirs_ (London, 1930; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971, p. 173), for example, recounts his disappointment when, playing Paris to Irving's Romeo in this production, he was given no chance to display to the audience his excellent swordsmanship:

> With one hand [Romeo] seized my foil, hit me over the knuckles with his own, prodded me in the stomach with his knee, again dashed his blade against mine, said "Die, my boy, die, down, down," elbowed and kneed me into the mouth of the tomb, and stood in front of the dying Paris, brandishing a torch.

[82] Stoker, p. 61.

[83] William Poel, Shakespeare in the Theatre (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1913), p. 154.

[84] Stoker, p. 293.

[85] Brereton, in G. C. Odell, Shakespeare from Brereton to Irving, 2 vols. (1920; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1963), II, 427.

[86] George Rowell, Theatre in the Age of Irving (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 38.

[87] H. A. Saintsbury, p. 397.

[88] Sir John Martin-Harvey, The Autobiography of Sir John Martin-Harvey (London: Sampson, Low and Marston, n.d.), p. 309.

[89] Arthur Goddard, Players of the Period: A Series of Anecdotal, Biographical, and Critical Monographs of the Leading English Actors of the Day, 1st Ser. (London: Dean, 1891), p. 67.

[90] Terry, Story of My Life, pp. 136-37.

[91] Quoted in Saintsbury, p. 84.

[92] Henry Arthur Jones, The Shadow of Henry Irving (1931; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), pp. 48-49.

[93] George Foss, What the Author Meant (London: Oxford, 1932), p. 100.

[94] Quoted in Saintsbury, p. 342.

[95] Henry James, quoted in Frances Donaldson, The Actor Managers (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), p. 47.

[96] As quoted in Edward J. West, "Henry Irving," in Studies in Speech and Drama in Honour of Alexander M. Drummond, ed. Donald Bryant et al. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1944), p. 187.

[97] Gordon Crosse, Sixty Years of Shakespearean Playgoing: 1890-1952 (London: Mowbray, 1953), p. 12.

[98] George Bernard Shaw, Dramatic Opinions and Essays (New York: Brentano's, 1906), II, 55-56.

[99] Mowbray Morris, Essays in Theatrical Criticism (London, 1882; rpt. London: Garland, 1986), p. 14.

[100] Terry, Story of My Life, p. 135.

[101] Letter, Ellen Terry to Arthur Bright, Bristol University Theatre Collection, Eric Jones-Evans Collection, JET1.

[102] Terry, Story of My Life, p. 138.

[103] Irving, "The Art of Acting," 1885, in The Drama: Addresses, pp. 63-64.

[104] Frances Donaldson, The Actor Managers (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), p. 84.

[105] Quoted in Saintsbury, p. 136.

[106] Rowell, Theatre in the Age of Irving, p. 32.

[107] Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence, p. xxii.

[108] Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence, p. xxiv.

[109] Terry, Story of My Life, p. 150.

[110] Edward M. Moore, "Henry Irving's Shakespearean Productions," Theatre Survey, 17 (1976), 207-08.

[111] William Archer, "The Drama," in T. H. Ward, ed., The Reign of Queen Victoria, 2 vols. (London, 1887), II, 590.

[112] Edward J. West, "Henry Irving," p. 188.

[113] William Poel, Monthly Letters, p. 3.

[114] Crosse, p. 18.

[115] Rowell, Theatre in the Age of Irving, p. 179.

CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM POEL: THE BARD RESTORED

In 1902 Henry Irving retired from the English stage and the Kemble-Kean-Irving tradition of spectacle was continued by the Shakespearean producer Herbert Beerbohm Tree who, during the Edwardian period, tried to outdo his predecessors with a series of sumptuous realistic presentations. Although the richly upholstered versions of Shakespeare generally delighted the masses, there was a growing number of critics who expressed contempt for these elaborate productions and who recognized that Shakespeare was often concealed under a mountain of carefully conceived but essentially irrelevant effects. Shakespearean performance in the late Victorian period became a battleground between supporters and opponents of the spectacular style, a territory contested with particular bitterness toward the end of the nineteenth century and during the reign of Edward VII.

For Oscar Wilde there was strong justification for the legitimacy of archaeology on stage: "The stage," he said, "is not merely the meeting place of all the arts, but also the return of art to life." Beautiful scenery in Wilde's view was not just effective in displaying the environment and helping to reveal the nature of a character, but was dramatic also "in getting rid of the necessity of tedious descriptions." Archaeology on stage had "Truth for its aim, and Beauty for its result" (The Nineteenth Century, 17, 1885). For the great majority of Victorian and Edwardian managers, grandeur and magnificence were integral parts of poetic beauty, at least on the stage, and managers felt they needed to look no further than Shakespeare himself for justification. Speaking for his generation of actor-managers, Herbert Beerbohm Tree in 1901 declared that "worthily to represent Shakespeare, the scenic embellishment should be as beautiful and costly as the subject of the drama being performed seems to demand"[1] and, again, that "if ever there were an author whose plays do lend themselves to elaborate stage treatment, that author is assuredly Shakespeare. None, indeed, is so rich in scenic suggestion."[2] An argument common from the 1850's until the first World War was that Shakespeare, conscious of the inadequacy of his theatre in the physical representation of scenic variety and splendour, would have been delighted with the advanced technology of the Victorian stage. Did not Shakespeare in his chorus to Henry V complain of the smallness of his stage and the shabbiness of his properties when he spoke of "this unworthy scaffold to bring forth/ So great an object" (1. 10) and ask his audience to "Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts" (1. 23)? Similarly, did he not in A Midsummer Night's Dream provide a most amusing picture of the straits to which theatrical managers of his day were reduced by the want of proper scenery? In such passages, concluded Oscar Wilde, Shakespeare undoubtedly protested against the limitations of the English stage in his day and its lack of suitable scenery (Dramatic Review, March 14, 1885). For Henry Arthur Jones, too, it was clear "that if Shakespeare lived today he would rejoice in the beautiful illustration of his plays that is now always accorded to them by the better West-End theatres."[3] This view found a surprising number of supporters in the Victorian and Edwardian periods and the argument was a standard one for those who advocated and defended a system of Shakespearean production that gave at least as much, and often more, weight to pictorial and spectactular values as to dramatic. Moreover, the general consensus was that the prologue to Henry V suggested that Shakespeare would be very tolerant of making changes in the structure of his plays so that they could receive "superior" scenic mounting.

As early as 1869, however, Percy Fitzgerald in "The Limits of Scenic Effect" had recognized the problem of archaeological correctness. He argued carefully and thoughtfully for the suggestiveness of earlier scenic styles, such as those that characterized the productions of Samuel Phelps, and for the superiority as illustration of scene painting over built-up scenery:

> This mimicry, once begun, is endless; it becomes gigantic and insupportable . . . . Once we descend into archaeological minuteness, the eye is disturbed, criticism is challenged, or we become pledged to a minuteness of detail which the play does not require, and which is an insufferable burthen to those who get up the play. (The Graphic, Dec. 4, 1869)

Even earlier, in 1854, William Bodham Donne had found it necessary to warn his readers that "excess of decoration has indeed been, in all ages and nations possessing a national drama, a symptom and accompaniment of decadence in histrionic art."[4] "The conditions of scenic effect," he pointed out, "are the framework of the picture, not the picture itself."[5] Donne's warning and his definition, however, went largely unnoticed in the theatre. The question of the relation of the actor to Shakespearean spectacle came up from time to time in consideration of Irving's Shakespeare, as it did, for example, in his revival of Romeo and Juliet, but since Irving was on the whole commended in his productions for the restraint of his spectacle and its harmonious relation to both play and acting performance, less artistically controlled and more ostentatious productions with inferior acting attracted much more this kind of criticism.

A number of critics who had praised Irving's lavish scenery in his production of Romeo and Juliet found that subsequent producers were carrying the spectacular tradition too far. Criticizing an 1884 production of Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum with the American actress Mary Anderson as Juliet, William Terriss as Romeo, and with Lewis Wingfield as archaeological advisor, Clement Scott wrote that the spectator was overawed with a fight more turbulent and noisy than the last; with a ball more crowded and distracting than before; with Italian pictures more accurate and dresses more costly and superb; with rooms that whirled into the air and disappeared and catacombs that seemed built into the bowels of the earth. With all the wealth and confusion and luxury of modern stage appointments and wondrous mechanical contrivances whose use was so very well intended to honour the poet, the play was robbed of its meaning and the poet of his artistry. Scott complained that the actors and actresses whose every word should be heard had to talk through the clamour of carpenters and the audible shuffling of 180 supers; and that during the fight scene, admirable and effective as it was, he could not distinguish one character from another. Moreover, the entrance of Romeo, his moody dejection and depression, his unsatisfied love for Rosaline, the banter of Mercutio and his friends, Romeo's first introduction to Juliet at the ball--the very points that start the interest of the play--were lost in a maze of dancers and maskers and torches.

If a play were better understood by such pictures then Scott was all for them but when, as in this instance, the story was obscured by their obstruction; when scenes of vital importance were omitted from the play to make way for the work of carpenters and scene shifters; when the awakening of Juliet, the cry of the Nurse, the return of Juliet from confession, the prologue, the epilogue, and all the relief from David Garrick's "barbarous acting version" were sacrificed for scenery and adornment, it was high time in Scott's view "to ask the manager to hold his hand, and give place to the poet" (Daily Telegraph, Nov. 3, 1884). Condemning this Lyceum production, in which "silks and satins are preferred to interpretation," Scott gloomily summarized the defects of the pictorial-spectacular style and lamented that because producers were overdoing spectacle, Shakespeare's poetry was suffering. It seemed to him that the entire production was sacrificed to "the harvest of the eye" and that acting was currently being made more and more subordinate to mere scenic appeal:

> There are plenty of people to tell us . . . what kind of couch wooed [Juliet] to sleep; dozens of authorities as to where certain pines and orange trees grew in Verona . . . but apparently not one who can instruct the younger generation how to deliver the Queen Mab speech, not a human being who can persuade a popular actress that the love of Juliet is something superior to that of Mary Jane flirting over the garden wall.

That the play had superb mounting and technical excellence of stage machinery in its quick scenic changes effected by revolving scenery, Scott freely acknowledged; the production, however, was "a lovely panorama and little else" (The Theatre, Dec. 1884, 310). The Stage concurred; comparison had been challenged with Henry Irving's revival of the tragedy on these same boards two years earlier, and it "is impossible," said the Stage, "to imagine any thoughtful person being in favour of the present production." Whatever were the faults of Irving's revival, the journal found that its passion and tragic intensity had been retained, and that these vital qualities had not been accorded attention in the present case (Nov. 7, 1884).

The acting of both Mary Anderson and William Terriss was roundly condemned by most critics. Mary Anderson's speaking of blank verse, noted the _Saturday Review_, was "an art of which she has no knowledge" (Nov. 8, 1884), and her acting was later remembered by the _Dramatic Review_ as "a series of disconnected and conventional renderings of emotion, accompanied by a succession of beautiful posings" (Sept. 17, 1887). As far as William Terriss' playing of Romeo was concerned, the _Pall Mall Gazette_ merely noted that "he looks the part, and--'the rest is silence'" (Nov. 3, 1884). Ellen Terry relates in her memoirs that William Terriss attacked the part of Romeo with a good deal of fire; he was young, stamped his foot a great deal, was vehement and passionate. "But it was so obvious," she declared, "that there was no intelligence behind his reading." He did not know what the part was about, and all the finer shades of meaning in it he missed. Yet, said Terry tartly, "the majority . . . would always prefer a Terriss as Romeo to a Henry Irving."[6]

Mary Anderson in her memoirs blamed the archaeological advisor Wingfield for the poor critical reception accorded _Romeo and Juliet_ and for the fact that the production ran for only nine weeks, whereas Irving's had run eighteen. "My ambition was to have the stage in such good taste and balance with the play and epoch as to attract no particular notice to itself; like a well-dressed woman, whose clothes never catch the eye."[7] Wingfield, however, had aimed to give an accurate picture of old Verona with its thoroughfares, its manners and dresses in

1300 A.D. Evoking memories of David Garrick's production of the play over a century earlier, Wingfield indicated in an interview that he would also entertain the audience with such visual delights as an interpolated "pageant" or funeral procession through the streets of Verona in which the body of Juliet, richly clad, would be carried on a canopied bier, followed by a great crowd, weeping and throwing flowers over the corpse (Pall Mall Gazette, Oct. 24, 1884). Anderson relates that the planned funeral procession, indicated in the acting text, was cut from the beginning of Act V when it became apparent at the dress rehearsal that the play would last well beyond midnight even without it.[8] Relating her anxiety about the scene shifting problems during the dress rehearsal which at five in the morning had still not reached Act V, and that the lavish production which she had unwillingly been led into took up so much of her time that she had none left for restudying her own part, the actress wrote, "How I longed for the simple scenery of the old days when the characters were the chief consideration, and the upholsterer and scenic artist very minor adjuncts! But such are the necessary worries that Progress has brought even to the actor."[9]

"A noble play, nobly mounted, gives us double artistic pleasure," declared Oscar Wilde, explaining that the eye as well as the ear was gratified. Cautioning, however, that the quality of drama is action and that it was always dangerous to pause for picturesqueness, Wilde, too, by 1885 was lamenting that the scene painter was rapidly being displaced by the stage carpenter (The Dramatic Review, March 14, 1885). William Archer saw the miracles of modern mounting and stage-management as a result of an inevitable tendency and good in their own way: as the dramatic stage had learned from the lyric stage the secrets of movable scenery and mechanism, so the poetic drama was now borrowing from melodrama and pantomime the methods of realism and spectacle. Archer, however, also felt that producers were "overdoing it, indulging in expense for its own sake, and subordinating artistic effect to mere ostentation."[10] Shakespeare, he concluded, was being "horribly maltreated" on the modern commercial stage; he had scarcely seen a single production in which expense did not predominate over intelligence, while the reasonable integrity and logic of the narrative had to yield to the "convenience of the scene-painter and the machinist."[11] The Academy had long criticized the methods of such producers as Tree and in 1898 delivered the following attack upon one of Tree's most popular productions:

> Mr. Tree's Julius Caesar is a grievous insult to Shakespeare. . . . What do the playgoing public want? Do they go to Her Majesty's to see Shakespeare's Julius Caesar or to see Mr. Tree? If the former, then the present performance is an unqualified failure.[12]

All these condemnations were well justified at the end of the nineteenth century. To accommodate the public's taste for spectacle and its demand to see as much as possible of the star during a performance, producers were ruthless with Shakespeare's texts. Often more than a third of a play was dispensed with; what remained, however, took well over three hours to perform. Productions had become cluttered with interpolated silent business, often to bridge gaps left by cut lines. A typical presentation of Shakespeare included at least three intervals, the long waits between scenes being filled in by actors taking calls and by orchestral interludes. In his diary of Shakespearean performances which he had seen, Gordon Crosse complained about an 1898 production of Romeo and Juliet by Ben Greet's Company in which about forty to forty-five minutes out of the three hours were consumed by intervals; yet no passage usually omitted in representation was restored and there were cuts to such scenes as the dialogue between Romeo and Mercutio in II.iv; Juliet's return from shrift, IV.ii; the bustling preparations for the marriage of Juliet and Tybalt, IV.iv; the discovery of Juliet apparently dead, IV.v; Peter and the musicians, IV.v; and the reconciliation of Capulet and Montague in the last scene, V.iii.[13] Although Wingfield had publicized that the Lyceum Romeo and Juliet production of 1884 was based on the Q2 (1599) text, no remarkable differences occurred between the text of this acting version and that of Irving's.[14]

Perhaps the justification for cutting Shakespeare's plays was attempted best by Mary Anderson in her preface to the acting edition of The Winter's Tale which was performed at the Lyceum in 1887. The stage edition had aimed "at keeping as close to the original play as is compatible with the requirements of the theatre and the no less exacting demands of modern taste." Of the larger excisions, she said, it was unnecessary to speak; they were unavoidable: "no audience of these days would desire to have 'The Winter's Tale' produced in its entirety."[15] The Dramatic Review, however, in reviewing the production, judged that Shakespeare had been treated "in cruel fashion": the adapters of the play had bowdlerized it to an excessive degree, ruthlessly curtailed the speeches, and omitted one of the best comedy scenes--that when Autolycus, in the dress of Prince Florizel, plays the great courtier to the old shepherd and his son. Anderson ended the Shepherd's celebration with a speech by Florizel which, in the original text, comes at the beginning, and concluded the play with a couplet taken from All's Well That Ends Well (Sept. 17, 1887).

Still more damaging to Shakespeare's texts than the cuts and transpositions were the rearrangements of the texts made in order to minimize the number of times the scenery had to be changed. In versions of The Merchant of Venice, for example, it was not unusual to play all the early Venetian scenes consecutively; then the Belmont scenes were grouped together and played one after the other. In spite of the fact that much of the play was thus reduced to mere absurdity, this arrangement was for many years regarded as the standard acting text. In Augustin Daly's adaptation of Twelfth Night in 1894 at Daly's Theatre, the performance started with the first scene of the second act, combined with the second scene of the first act; this rearrangement allowed Daly to get the seacoast scene out of the way and gave him the added advantage of allowing the star to enter after the audience was seated. "Poor Shakespear," wrote George Bernard Shaw in his review of Daly's Two Gentlemen of Verona in 1895, pointing out Daly's usual principles of "altering, transposing, omitting, improving, correcting, and transferring speeches from one character to another" (Saturday Review, July 6, 1895). Daly made it a grand production, crowded with supernumeraries and overweighted with choruses. By 1895 a weary Shaw was lamenting that actor-managers lavished their money and worship on Shakespeare without in the least knowing why and were spending the rest of their lives declaring that "nothing like it had ever been done before" and so forth. "Every revival," he said, "helps to exhaust the number of possible ways of altering Shakespeare's plays unsuccessfully and so hastens the day when the mere desire for novelty will lead to the experiment of leaving them unaltered" (Saturday Review, Sept. 28, 1895).

II

Despite the fact that mainstream Shakespearean production was firmly set on a spectacular course and that textual travesties were the norm rather than the exception, a small group of thinkers throughout the nineteenth century persistently argued that plain ungarnished productions of Shakespeare should be presented on the stage. The first step in this direction was taken by the manager Benjamin Webster who in 1844, under the urging of antiquarian J. R. Planché, presented The Taming of the Shrew at the Haymarket in two hours with no vestige of scenery and no intervals. Recounting that he wanted to try the experiment of producing the piece as he thought it would have been done in Shakespeare's own time, Planché used Elizabethan costumes, a tapestry curtain upstage, a pair of screens, placards pinned to the curtain to indicate the place of action, and a stage audience, but not a platform stage. Although the Athenaeum declared that it was obvious that the opportunity "was seized upon by the manager for the sake of giving a feature of novelty to the representation" (March 23, 1844, 275-276), the revival, Planché later recalled, "was eminently successful, incontestably proving that a good play, well acted, will carry the audience along with it, unassisted by scenery . . . without the curtain falling once during its performance."[16]

Between 1844 and 1867 Samuel Phelps produced thirty-one of Shakespeare's plays at Sadler's Wells with simple settings and a concern to follow Shakespeare's texts, followed, in the latter part of the century, by Frank Benson, who formed a company to present Shakespeare with a minimum of scenery and accessories. Practical considerations were partly responsible for these simple productions: Phelps had no money for elaborate presentations and Benson had worked mainly with a touring company, thus necessitating simple, transportable settings. It was Benson who in 1900 produced Hamlet in its entirety for the first time since Shakespeare's day, playing the first half of his five-and-a-half-hour production at a matinée, the rest in the evening. Alarmed at the unnatural academicism of Benson, the Times commented that the theatrical practitioner had tried to undo the work of time: "He has put the clock back three centuries. He has walked, like a crab, backwards. He has reconverted the manufactured article into the raw material" (March 3, 1900). The fact that textual fidelity in Shakespeare's plays was still an unusual occurrence can also be seen by George Bernard Shaw's reaction to the 1897 Hamlet production of Forbes-Robertson, who brought Fortinbras back into the final scene of Hamlet instead of dropping the curtain on "Flights of angels sing thee to thy rest" as was customary:

> The Forbes-Robertson Hamlet at the Lyceum is, very unexpectedly at that address, not at all unlike Shakespeare's play of the same name. I am quite certain I saw Reynaldo in it for a moment; and possibly I may have seen Voltimand and Cornelius; but just as the time for their scene arrived, my eye fell on the word "Fortinbras" in the programme, which so amazed me that I hardly know what I saw for the next ten minutes. (Saturday Review, Oct. 2, 1897)

From the late 1870's onward, it was the rebellious voice of William Poel that provided the best sustained opposition to the spectacular presentations of such producers as Henry Irving and Beerbohm Tree. Poel's view of the standard Shakespeare productions of his time may be gauged from his sarcastic advice to any manager contemplating a Bardic revival:

> Choose your play and be sure to note closely in what country the incidents took place. Having done this, send artists to the locality to make sketches of the country, of its streets, its houses, its landscapes, of its people, and of their costumes. . . . Then, when you have collected at vast expense, labour and research, this interesting information about a

> country of which Shakespeare was possibly entirely ignorant, thrust all your extraneous knowledge into your representation, whether it fit the context or not; let it justify the rearrangement of the play, the crowding of your stage with supernumeraries, the addition of incidental songs and glees.[17]

Poel admired the rich pictorial effects achieved by Irving at the Lyceum and by Tree at His Majesty's, but maintained that they were irrelevant to the imagery of Shakespeare's plays and destructive of their rhythm. Shakespeare's poetry was obviously suffering in spectacular production. A change was needed in the attitudes of producers and actors who had to realize that their only business was to be loyal to the author and to interpret Shakespeare according to what were thought to be his intentions and not according to the theatrical fashions of the time. He stressed that if Shakespeare's plays were given on the stage in their entirety with the simplicity and rapidity with which they were acted in his own day, "it would limit the endless experiments, mutilations and profitless discussions that every revival of them occasions" (Fortnightly Review, 106, 1919).

Poel was to become the forerunner of a group of producers who reacted against the lavish spectacles that had characterized Shakespearean production from the late eighteenth century and attempted to return both to the simple style of production that Poel believed Shakespeare had used and to a restoration of the dramatist's text. In 1889 Poel presented a paper to the New Shakspere Society on his views on Irving's production of Romeo and Juliet and his beliefs on how the play should be acted. This paper was one of several presented to the Society that embodied Poel's criticisms of contempoary Shakespearean productions and his correctives to those presentations. In 1905, twenty-three years after Irving's production of Romeo and Juliet, Poel presented the play at the Royalty Theatre in London. It was the eleventh Shakespearean play that Poel had produced. Although only four performances of the play would be given to very small audiences in a non-commercial venture, the production included a number of innovations too startling to be ignored. These innovations were the practical outcome of more than twenty-five years of thought about and criticism of past Shakespearean productions.

That David Garrick and Henry Irving had been innovators in their Shakespearean productions is certain, yet it is equally true that their work largely found its basis in the efforts of their predecessors. William Poel can be sharply distinguished from these earlier producers in that his work took the form of a strong rebellion against the theatrical conventions that had largely come about because of Garrick's and Irving's influences. Far more self-aware and critically conscious than either Garrick or Irving or even Samuel Phelps who, while he can certainly be termed a reformer, in many ways refined rather than deliberately rebelled against the conventions of his day, Poel started with his own theoretical framework of well-conceived ideas and theories. He was much more theoretically based than most people in the theatre before him in that his practice was rooted in long-pondered background thought and production theories. As a young man, in the late 1870's, he wanted to find out what the theatre was really like, he wanted to discover all he could about acting and, above all, he wanted to study Shakespeare; he therefore tried every sort of odd job behind the curtain and acted a wide variety of parts. A general criticism about Irving's powers was already given by him in 1877 after he saw the actor-manager as Richard III at the Lyceum. To Poel Irving appeared unable to rise to greatness in a pathetic or passionate situation. "He appears to aim at creating an effect by working his scene up to a striking picture upon which the curtain may fall," recorded Poel in a diary that he kept at the time. "This is a modern practice that I much dislike as it is sensational and stagey."[18] A year later, having watched Ellen Terry in a Lyceum performance, Poel noted that "Miss Terry's acting is graceful, but she quite failed through lack of voice to make her part impressive."[19] Poel was disappointed in the acting of Miss Wallis as Juliet in an 1874 production of Romeo and Juliet at Drury Lane: "When an actress finds she cannot sufficiently rise to the importance of the character, she gives importance to many petty displays of business," which the upper galleries had learned to recognize as a sign for applause.[20] Looking back on this era Poel later recalled:

> As regards Shakespeare's plays, the traditions and the conventions of the eighteenth century were still in use. There were the same "readings," "business," and devisions of the dialogue into scenes, the same mutilation of the text and transposition of incidents although Garrick's and Colley Cibber's perversions of the text had been given up. The chief drawback lay in the English actor's want of imagination, and in his inability to appreciate the swiftness and ease with which the dialogue was spoken on the stage by Elizabethan actors.[21]

Poel's dissatisfaction with the "sensational and stagey" soon led him to question the whole contemporary method of staging Shakespeare. He was, especially at first, primarily interested in seeing Shakespeare's text put on the stage, and his early work did no more than attack the acting versions then current. In 1878 Poel went on tour in the provinces, picking up an audience wherever he could and giving recitals from Shakespeare, Sheridan and other classical playwrights. A year later, having familiarized himself with the plays he intended one day to produce, he proceeded to form a small company of "professional ladies and gentlemen" whose efforts in touring were specially directed towards creating a more general taste for the study of Shakespeare and who in rooms, small halls and schools gave scenes from such Shakespearean plays as Hamlet, Macbeth, King Lear, and Romeo and Juliet. The very simple conditions of these performances threw the actors back upon the text and Poel himself was forced to compare the acting editions then in use with the original quartos of the plays. He was made to realize how much had intervened since these had left the hands of the Elizabethan stage manager--or whoever had assumed such a role. It was not merely a question of cuts or traditional "business"; it was also a question of literary editors from the eighteenth century onward preparing a text for publication, setting up their own system of punctuation, and arranging their own division of the plays into acts and scenes. Shakespeare's plays, as they appeared in modern editions, were not Elizabethan plays at all, Poel found; in construction they were of a later date. Poel's conclusion was that contemporary Shakespearean production bore little resemblance to that he believed had been found in Elizabethan times. If a performance was to be given as Shakespeare might have seen it, it was essential, first, to establish an authentic text, to go back as close as possible to the original representation. It was also imperative to return to Elizabethan staging conditions.

Poel became a man with a vision whose tenets, often publicly stated, never changed throughout his working lifetime. He assisted regularly at the discussions of the New Shakspere Society, sometimes reading a paper himself; he wrote constantly to the newspapers; and he lectured whenever anyone would offer him a platform. Slowly, in the face of mounting incredulity, his views became known. His beliefs, applied to the Shakespearean plays he chose to interpret, are summarized in his two volumes of collected papers, Shakespeare in the Theatre (1913) and Monthly Letters (1929) and are elaborated in the thousands of pages of personal correspondence and journalistic activity of a lifetime.[22]

Poel's work, although based on theory, was far more than theoretical. Because he believed that the methods of Shakespearean production then triumphantly in vogue were totally and radically wrong, and because he was himself a radical, he decided to set about putting them right. "A decision of this kind," says Robert Speaight, Poel's biographer, "is always heroic. The artist must turn his back on the easy accommodations of compromise."[23] In May 1881 a heavily cut Othello was magnificently revived at the Lyceum, with Irving and Edwin Booth alternating Iago and the Moor, and Ellen Terry playing Desdemona. Critics spoke of the tumultuous applause which the actors received, of the throng at the pit door, of the many authors and artists who were present. By contrast, the single matinée of the first quarto of Hamlet at St. George's Hall the month before had attracted little attention. Poel had offered to give a talk to the New Shakspere Society on current acting editions of Hamlet and his concern was to show how radically wrong nineteenth-century acting versions were from a standpoint of text alone. Moreover, Poel had offered to stage Hamlet in the full 1603 version for the Society and on April 16, 1881, his first Elizabethan style production was given by amateurs in Elizabethan costume on a bare draped platform quite without scenery and without an intermission.[24] The attitude of the general audience, noted Dutton Cook, was one of apathy "tinctured by a disposition to deride." To the majority, the performance was wearisome and depressing, while a strong feeling prevailed that, upon the whole, "the experiment was of an absurd and reprehensible sort, involving as it did necessarily, some degradation of the poet in whose honour it purported to be undertaken."[25]

After the seminal Hamlet in 1881 Poel managed the Royal Victoria Coffee Hall (later the Old Vic) for two years, stage managed for F. R. Benson for a season and then returned to his consuming passion in 1887 when he became instructor for the Shakespeare Reading Society which had been founded by students at University College, London. Poel gave a directed reading of Hamlet that year and followed that by performances of a series of Elizabethan plays including works not only by Shakespeare but also by such playwrights as Marlowe, Webster, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ford and Jonson--truly a remarkable series of experiments. George Bernard Shaw several times interrupted his music columns for The Star and The World to call attention to the fact that these readings were more Shakespearean than anything else being done in London. Poel, he said, was an "important art propagandist": from these simple recitals, without acts, waits, or scenery Shaw found that he learned a great deal about the plays which he could learn in no other way, given the conventions of the modern theatre.[26] Indeed, a few years later Shaw noted that "the suburban amateurs" of the Shakespeare Reading Society "seated like Christy Minstrels" on the platform of the lecture hall at the London Institution, who played through Shakespeare's plays as nearly as possible under the conditions of representation for which they were designed, produced "about sixty-six times as much effect by reading straight through Much Ado about Nothing as Mr. Irving with his expensively mounted and superlatively dull Lyceum version" (Saturday Review, May 25, 1895).

In 1893 Poel produced Measure for Measure for the Shakespeare Reading Society at the Royalty which he converted for the occasion to reproduce as far as possible the Elizabethan Fortune Theatre. For a further ten years, from 1895 to 1905, Poel was able to test and express his various critical and production theories arising both from his studies and from his creative work more freely through the activities of the Elizabethan Stage Society whose productions, although given to very small audiences, gained a good deal of critical attention, favourable and unfavourable. In 1895 the Society initiated its performances with Twelfth Night and followed this play later that year with The Comedy of Errors in Gray's Inn Hall where it had been presented three centuries before. Among the more exciting of the Society's later productions were Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, whose sacred characters critics had long deemed unsuitable for theatrical presentation; The Merchant of Venice in 1898, with the Prince of Aragon episode restored and Shylock played as a comic character rather than as Irving's sympathetic character; Richard II with Granville Barker as the king in 1899; and a triumphant Everyman, unperformed and virtually unknown since the sixteenth century, which Poel in 1901 revived and which was his only commercial success. Later still, in 1912, he produced a memorable Troilus and Cressida with Edith Evans as Cressida.

When Poel presented Romeo and Juliet in May of 1905, Beerbohm Tree had produced, just one month earlier, his first Shakespearean Festival, an elaborately mounted and heavily abridged series of Shakespearean plays that delighted the masses. The general public hailed every new refinement of realism and every further elaboration of spectacle with almost unqualified delight. It was in tune with the visual temper of the age; opposing criticism was not. Poel and a small number of dissenting critics complained that an overdone emphasis on realism in production rendered audiences mentally passive and anaesthetized the imagination. Poel's intention was to force the audience's attention away from visual splendours; to fulfil that aim he presented Romeo and Juliet with no scenery, concentrating his efforts instead on making Shakespeare's poetry come alive to the audience. The public, unaccustomed to this radical change, stayed away.[27] Even the Academy, which had long urged a return to simplicity, cautiously termed the production "intelligent" and "adequate" but intimated that Poel had gone too far in a return to austerity. "Unless it be mounted," claimed the journal, "a play has no environment at all; only by careful mounting can that atmosphere and sense of locality without which no environment convinces be produced" (May 13, 1905). The Times concurred, finding the presentation "interesting," but claiming that the business of the stage was illusion in persuading the audience that what they saw before them was real. "We find it easier to believe that Romeo is knocking at the door of an apothecary's shop when we see the door of an apothecary's shop than when we see two curtains," complained the critic. Poel, however, was a true reformer and was undeterred; he knew that the conservative public would not immediately tolerate a new thing but maintained that "no public demands what is not offered to it. Before demand can create supply, a sample of the new ware must be shown" (p. 122).

It became Poel's aim in his productions to restore rather than to invent: accordingly, Romeo and Juliet was presented with the goals of a restored text, a simplified setting, quicker pace, and none of the cluttering business that disfigured contemporary presentations. The main thesis that underpinned Poel's practice was that every play was written by Shakespeare with a particular form of theatre and a particular style of production in mind. He was convinced that Shakespeare and his fellow-Elizabethans could not adequately be contained within the limits of the proscenium stage; that the intervals imposed by the accessories of realistic scenery completely destroyed the vital speed and continuity of the action, broke the tension when it was essential to preserve it, distorted the fundamental dramatic structure, and made savage mutilation of the text a necessity.

Encouraged by the activities and findings of those contemporary scholars who were beginning to examine the details of Shakespeare's stage and to appreciate the theatrical dimension of Shakespeare's play texts, and by the claims of these scholars that the study of Elizabethan drama demanded a study of the Elizabethan stage, a movement gathered support to perform Shakespeare on platforms either chosen for their likeness to the theatre of his day (as provided by the Inns of Court or Halls of the Livery Companies) or reconstructed within modern buildings for this purpose. The movement towards staging Shakespeare in a way approximating to the conditions for which his plays were written had already begun independently in Germany, with Goethe who had designed an adaptable and simple setting for A Midsummer Night's Dream at Weimar, and Ludwig Tieck who had staged four plays, 1821 to 1851, on a kind of Elizabethan stage with a permanent setting. In 1889 Jocza Savitz, who directed the Weimar and Mannheim theatres in Germany, used Elizabethan staging methods for a production of King Lear on the Munich stage as an alternative to the spectacular performances of the Meiningen Theatre.[25] The same tendency toward realism which encouraged the elaborately spectacular productions of Shakespeare's plays was responsible for experimentation in the highly conventional manner of Elizabethan staging. Producers such as Charles

Kean and Henry Irving had used the realistic method of making Lear look like an ancient British monarch. Others, employing an identical method, but with markedly different end results, demanded that Shakespeare's stage be reproduced in all its exactitude and his characters be costumed as they might have appeared in the original productions. This was the type of historical realism sponsored and guided by William Poel.

The Elizabethan Stage Society was founded in 1894 to give practical effect to the principle that Shakespeare should be accorded the stage architecture for which he designed his plays. When later asked why he had created the Society, Poel replied:

> I am really a modernist. My original aim was just to find out some means of acting Shakespeare naturally and appealingly from the full text as in a modern drama. I found that for this the platform stage was necessary and also some suggestions of the spirit and manners of the time. (Daily Chronicle, Sept. 3, 1913)

Poel carefully studied the work of W. J. Lawrence and the other scholars who were beginning to reveal the true nature of the Elizabethan playhouses and he examined the evidence afforded by the early Shakespearean texts. Having spent long hours of research in the British Museum and having exchanged many letters with Lawrence, Poel's judgment was that the Shakespearean plays which were presented to audiences in the nineteenth century bore little trace of the swift continuous rhythm found on the Elizabethan stage. Shakespeare, he concluded, could be played effectively only on the kind of stage for which he wrote.

Aided by a sketch of the Swan Theatre which had been found in 1888, Poel from 1893 on set out to reproduce as far as was physically possible all the conditions that contemporary scholarship believed to have governed the performances of Shakespeare's plays in his own theatre and time.[29] The programme for his Romeo and Juliet in 1905 announced the play as "now for the first time revived in the Elizabethan manner."[30] Such experiments could not have been conducted before this time, there having been earlier only a slight understanding of the main features of the Elizabethan theatre. In a paper read in 1893 Poel could say without risk of contradiction that the ordinary reader and the every-day critic were quite without historical knowledge of the Elizabethan theatre; and however full the Elizabethan dramas were of allusions to the contemporary stage, "the bias of modern dramatic students is so opposed to any belief in the superiority of past methods of acting Shakespeare over modern ones, as to effectively bar any serious inquiry." Few people, he felt, had so much as dipped into the subject of the interdependence of Shakespeare's dramatic art with the form of theatre for which he wrote. Elizabethan plays, he emphasized, were shaped to suit the theatre of Shakespeare's day.[31]

Not having the funds to rid himself of the proscenium, Poel put what he felt was as close as possible to an Elizabethan two-levelled architectural set with an inner stage behind the proscenium arch and created a wide and projecting platform stage over the orchestra pit in front of the proscenium. This platform Poel believed to be the most notable feature of the Elizabethan stage. Poel's replica of the Elizabethan playhouse on the stage of the proscenium theatre included not just the platform stage, the above, and the heaven, but the galleries and Lord's rooms to either side, extending across the line of the proscenium to merge with the rings of the modern theatre. The dimensions and the details of the ideal platform stage Poel said must come from the Fortune Theatre for which the builder's contract still existed. He also attempted to create what he believed to be several Elizabethan conventions: dressing the actors in Elizabethan-style garments to reflect Shakespeare's own day rather than the historical epoch of the dramatic action; using costumed pages to draw the curtains of the inner stage and to arrange properties and furniture; and employing an on-stage audience to emphasize the audience-actor relationship of the Elizabethans.[32] Poel thus placed on the stage not a neutral conventional playing space, but a verisimilar picture of the theatre in which the plays were originally performed.

Poel wished to recreate the bareness of that stage which had proved to be a challenge to the dramatist and spectator alike. It was not readily conceivable that Shakespeare would enjoy having his poetical descriptions superseded by the obtrusive art of the scene-painters; the poet, he stressed, was his own scene-painter and electrician. Citing with contempt Garrick's title page to Romeo and Juliet in which the eighteenth-century actor-manager had stated that his scenery was very "grand," the architectural arrangement of the interior of the church most "chaste and appropriate," and the tones of the choristers "heart-saddening," Poel declared that all these extraneous effects were a "direct interference with the poet's dramatic intentions" (p. 53). Philip Henslowe's diary and papers had been edited and published by W. W. Greg in 1908, and these Elizabethan theatrical records listed simple scenic devices and properties such as a tree, throne, rope, and bed. Such portable properties probably conveyed deftly a sense of locale: a grate for a prison, a tree for a forest, ropes thrown down for a ship. Poel's 1905 promptbook for Romeo and Juliet gives a few simple properties such as "napkin and dishes" for a servant (I.v); an "altar, basket and iron box" for the Friar's cell (II.ii); an "oak seat" in Capulet's garden for Juliet's scene with the Nurse (II.v); and "a bed with nightgown on it" for Juliet's bedroom (II.v).[33] Poel recognized that it was primarily on an uncluttered Elizabethan stage that the gifts of the poet were to be understood by the audience to the full and that the audience, therefore undistracted by "outward decorations and subordinate details," could give its full attention to the poetry (p. 8).

Poel, however, made his costumes and groupings of characters important. Believing that the wardrobe was the most costly possession of the Elizabethan companies, he dressed his productions as richly as he could and supplied stage decoration with a wide variety of colourful and very beautiful Elizabethan costumes copied from models in the art galleries. Lewis Casson states that if Poel had had the money, "he would have filled his stage with the splendours of cloth of gold, banners and heraldry, wherever it was justified." Poel, relates Casson, had a fine eye for colour and his grouping and movement owed much to his careful study of old pictures in the national galleries.[34]

Poel and a small number of critics argued that spectacle suffocated the imagination rather than nourished it, that it distracted attention from the actor and the spoken word, and that a gorgeous picture was an inadequate substitute for the skills of the actor and the dramatist. It was Poel's belief that a modern Shakespearean producer could not make the same demands on an audience to concentrate its attention on the players and their speech without there being a simple uncluttered Elizabethan stage which would ensure that th "attention of the audience should not be taken off the mental picture that the poet's words create" (Times Literary Supplement, April 6, 1922). Refuting the view of Tree and others who saw Shakespeare lamenting the deficiencies of his own stage, Poel said that to believe that Shakespeare would have approved of a scenic art that came into conflict with his own art, was to make him more than human: "Shakespeare would hardly have taken the trouble to write fine poetry, preach home truths, and create varied and virile characters, if he expected an audience to divide its sympathies between his own labours and those of the scenic artist."[35] The chorus in Henry V surely did not bear the interpretation that Mr. Tree put upon the words. The meaning of Shakespeare's lines, maintained Poel, could only be summed up thus: "'Since we cannot in the small compass of a theatre reproduce the actual conditions which existed at the time that the events of our drama took place, let us, with the help of our poet's descriptions, try to imagine them'" (Fortnightly Review, 68, 1900).

In the old playhouse, Poel believed, the playgoer went first to hear and then to see; in the modern playhouse he went first to see and secondarily to hear (The Times, Oct. 25, 1905). Although Shakespeare "had indeed written for all time, he had not written out of time, that as Shakespeare had seen the world through Elizabethan eyes, so modern producers must recover that vision if they wished to do him justice."[36] Instead of endeavouring to adapt him, Poel urged producers to bring "our own minds within reach of those influences from which the Elizabethan playgoer undoubtedly obtained the greatest enjoyment."[37]

Initial reaction to Poel's innovative method of staging Shakespeare was generally severe. The Times criticized him for isolating Shakespeare from ever-lasting life and depriving him of his classic virtue of adaptability to changing conditions; Mr. Poel apparently wished to keep Shakespeare dispossessed of all advantages (Times Literary Supplement, June 2, 1905). The newspaper dismissed Romeo and Juliet produced in the Elizabethan manner on a model Fortune stage as "a quaint and amusing piece of archaism" (Times, May 11, 1905). William Archer became Poel's most formidable critic; he had fought to get Ibsen played in London and hailed the new wave of theatrical realism. From Archer's point of view, Poel's approach to Shakespeare seemed a step backward in time and therefore quality. Archer contemptuously discredited the work of the Elizabethan Stage Society: "Because scenery is stupidly overdone, because archaeology in costume, arms, etc., is apt to run to pedantry and ostentation, we are forcibly to put back the clock, and, instead of refining a living art, make hopeless efforts to revive a dead one." The true end to be aimed at, he declared, was to make Shakespeare really live for the modern playgoer, and this end could never be attained "by a form of representation which appeals only to the dilettante and the enthusiast." Archer also condemned Poel's insistence that only Elizabethan dress should be used for Shakespearean productions. Appropriate scenery and costume helped to stimulate the imagination of the theatrical audience; on the other hand, glaring anachronism of costume and the absence of any sort of pictorial background tended in Archer's view to disconcert and hamper the imagination.[38]

Other critics and theatrical practitioners added fuel to Archer's criticisms. Twelfth Night by the Elizabethan Stage Society in 1903 greatly depressed Max Beerbohm who found the productions of this group more instructive than delightful. It was his view that for modern theatregoers there had to be scenery for drama to be a living art and, whereas an Elizabethan audience might accept defects and limitations, a modern audience could not project itself into their state of receptivity.

"We cannot forget what we have learned," maintained Beerbohm. Cautioning that the Elizabethan Stage Society should not be held up as examples, as illustrators of how Shakespeare should be performed, Beerbohm declared, "They love darkness, . . . But don't let us be awed into admitting that they, not we, are the children of light" (Saturday Review, June 20, 1903). It is rarely recognized today that even W. J. Lawrence, whose scholarship on the Elizabethan theatre provided the impetus for much of Poel's theory in staging his productions, viewed the attempts of the Elizabethan Stage Society as putting "back the clock of time fully three centuries" and termed them "mere midsummer madness" (The Magazine of Art, 19, 1896). Similarly, today it seems ironical that E. K. Chambers' encouraging study of Shakespeare's stage by no means advocated its use in modern productions.

Poel, however, had a powerful public spokesman in George Bernard Shaw who often criticized Shakespeare but concluded from observation that only on such an Elizabethan platform stage should Shakespeare be given. It was the playwright's contention that every play should be performed as its author intended it to be performed, and he never ceased trying to goad producers such as Irving, Tree, and Daly into presenting the plays as "the wily William planned them." It was not a valid argument, said Shaw, that Shakespeare would have written for scenery if he could have. The fact remained that he did not, and that the stage for which Shakespeare wrote his plays "is the only one to which they are adapted and on which they make the effects he planned."[39] In his review of Poel's production of Twelfth Night in 1895, Shaw welcomed the advent of the Elizabethan Stage Society and remarked that it was only by such performances that people could be convinced that Shakespeare's plays lost more than they gained by modern staging. Shaw admitted that the acting in the production was for the most part done by actors who were acutely conscious of themselves; nevertheless, he insisted that the play came across as it never had before, that the dramatic illusion was more vivid and enjoyable than was possible with footlights and scenery, and, especially, that the relation between actor and audience was such that the difficulty in trying to get a delicate poetic drama across footlights "all but vanishes" (Saturday Review, July 20, 1895). One of the earliest of the Elizabethan Stage Society's productions, The Comedy of Errors, in the Hall of Gray's Inn in December 1895, was hailed by Shaw as "delectable entertainment which defies all description by the pen," surely a unique tribute from that formidable pen (Saturday Review, Dec. 14, 1895). Sharing Poel's belief that, stimulated by Shakespeare's poetry, the imagination can accomplish wonders, Shaw praised Poel's efforts and stated that the only Shakespearean performances by which he had been really moved were those of the Elizabethan Stage Society.[40]

Other critics more quietly registered support. While Archer derided Poel's first use of Elizabethan staging in his Measure for Measure production at the Royalty in 1893, the Academy provided a friendlier account: "While we are far from urging the abandonment at the ordinary theatre of so much that draws the general public to a Shakespearean play . . . we must chronicle the fact that the extremely intelligent audiences gathered to see Measure for Measure scarcely seem to have missed the absence of scenery, so closely with the prompt and rapid action now inculcated, has it been possible to follow the story of the play" (Nov. 18, 1893). Gordon Crosse, having seen Poel's production of The Merchant of Venice in 1897, wrote in his diary that "I was surprised to find that I not only did not regret but in fact hardly noticed the absence of the pomp and circumstance to which I was accustomed." Crosse found it a joy to be delivered from the long and frequent waits which transformed Shakespeare's plays into a series of selections; instead, he could enjoy the play as Shakespeare wrote it, "a complete and artistic whole."[41]

In his presentation of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Royalty, Poel accomplished his desire to create as far as possible what scholars believed were the Elizabethan staging conditions that Shakespeare had used and to return to the intimacy, continuity and swift pace found in Shakespeare's own production. Harold Child in a letter praised the self-evident suitability of the stage in Poel's production.[42] Gordon Crosse, but a week before, had complained about a presentation of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Imperial, querying why *Romeo and Juliet*, which was far from dull in reading, should be so dull on the stage. Although enormous tracts of the text had been cut in the three-hour production, especially in the latter half of the play, "thanks to the long waits, one had no appetite for more."[43] It was Poel's goal in his production to be faithful to the dramatist's words in the Prologue and present the restored play to the audience in "the two hours' traffic of our stage," a playing time which he contended meant less than three hours. By using flexible methods of production believed to approximate to Elizabethan practice, he showed that it was possible to present all the scenes in the right order and in unbroken sequence, except for a single ten-minute interval for audience convenience, after Act III, i, the brawl scene. The dramatist, he believed, had merely used dialogue to change scenery and Poel therefore followed suit.

Poel's contention was that among all innovations on the stage perhaps the most far-reaching in its effect on dramatic construction was the act-drop. Elizabethan dramatists had had to round off a scene to a conclusion for there was no kindly curtain to come down upon a deadlock. Using the example of the nineteenth-century "well-made play," Poel pointed out that the art of modern playwriting was to arrest the attention suddenly upon a thrilling situation and leave the characters in the midst of a dilemma; when the curtain came up the characters were out of their predicament. Poel conceded that this type of drama was an art and plays could indeed be well written after this form. But apart from the question as to theatrical gain of such a crude device as a "curtain," Shakespeare, he said, wrote with consummate art to show the tide of human affairs, its flow and its ebb, and his construction plan was particularly unsuited to the act-drop: "Upon one of Shakespeare's plays the curtain falls like a guillotine, and the effect is similar to ending a piece of music abruptly at its highest point, simply for the sake of creating some startling impression" (p. 120).

Poel thus recognized that the contemporary inability of the traditionalist stage to provide sufficient continuity was the result of fundamental differences in the understanding of dramatic form. In traditional productions during the Victorian and Edwardian period, Shakespeare's texts were edited in such a way as to make them conform to contemporary notions of dramatic form, to make up for their "ill-made" features. The contemporary version of the well-made play was as strongly based on the one-act-one-scene principle and the tableau scene ending of the modern stage as the Elizabethan play was based upon the physical the Elizabethan playhouse concluded that the entire notion of "well-made construction" could only be invented once the theatre had moved from the platform into the picture frame; the major difference, Lawrence perceived, was that the picture stage allowed for the tableau scene ending, from which evolved the sequence of climaxes behind the structure of the well-made play.[44]

It was Poel's belief that so different was the Elizabethan from the Edwardian stage, and the stagecraft that went with each, that it was impossible to criticize Shakespeare's plays according to the rules of "construction" followed so meticulously by Victorian and Edwardian dramatists: "Pinero would no more know how to set about writing a play for the Elizabethan stage, in which the characters appear in the course of the story in twenty-six different localities during twenty-six years, than Shakespeare would know how to make twenty-six persons live their lives through a whole play in one room or on one day."[45] Poel called upon his contemporaries to admire the Elizabethan peculiarities of Shakespeare's dramatic construction as they already admired his poetry and characters, and he called for the publication of the texts of the plays which did not, like the ones currently available, alter the very construction of the plays by the addition of locality and act divisions (Times Literary Supplement, Feb. 3, 1921). The "unity of fable" which he considered of great importance could be preserved only through "continuity of action" and "variety of movement" (Times Literary Supplement, Aug. 4, 1921). Noting the absence of scene headings in the Quartos, Poel deduced an uninterrupted flow of action; "Shakespeare," he wrote, "abhorred the vacuum of an empty stage." A stage for Shakespeare thus had to allow for the type of continuity that Poel perceived in the early printed texts (Times Literary Supplement, Aug. 18, 1921).

If producers could only free Shakespeare's plays from "those ridiculous interruptions of acts and scenes and pseudo stage directions which now appear in every popular edition, and which the author never wrote or sanctioned," audiences would begin to see the plays in their right perspective and realize how unsuited they were for representation within the picture frame of the modern stage.[46] In the programme for his Romeo and Juliet production, Poel pointed out to his audience that "the plays of Shakespeare that were published during his lifetime, and which are known as the quartos, are not divided into scenes and acts; and it is possible that in Shakespeare's time no pause was made in acting of his play from beginning to end."[47] Swiftness of movement and continuity of design he firmly believed were Shakespeare's aims, and he was particularly irritated at a Stratford production of Romeo and Juliet which had twenty-two curtains. Producers, he charged, must get rid of the fallacy that the visual representation of a scene, in which the action of an Elizabethan play was supposed to take place, was a help and not a hindrance to the proper understanding of that play. In Romeo and Juliet, he maintained, Shakespeare clearly indicated with the convention of language the varying conditions of the environment. In the balcony scene, for example, the most casual listener could not fail to gather from the dialogue that the action takes place between night and early morning. "This is because the word night is spoken eleven times, besides frequent illusions to the moon, and the stars, with a reference besides to the dawn," explained Poel.[48] The point of interest in Shakespeare's play, however, centers not on where the characters are, but on what they are doing and what is going to happen to them.

Poel charged that no scholar or actor had thought it necessary to study the art of Shakespeare's dramatic construction and that while some scholars had written intelligently about Shakespeare's characters and his philosophy, it was doubtful if any of them had seriously given thought to the way Shakespeare conducts his story and brings his characters on and off the stage, a matter of the highest moment, since the very life of the play depended upon the skill with which this was done. Poel's theory was that as one group of characters left talking by one door, another group should enter speaking at the other. Continuity of action, he argued, was apparent in the construction of the plays themselves, which were written "to allow the opening of every scene to be spoken by characters who had not appeared in the close of the preceding one, this being done, presumably, to avoid unnecessary delay." Moreover, Shakespeare used juxtaposition as a basic method in dramatic structure. It was also for the reason of continuity, he maintained, that so many Elizabethan plays had a double plot--to avoid, even for a moment, an empty stage.

Reacting to the distortions of the modern theatre, Poel sought to establish a model of the Elizabethan stage which most strongly removed Shakespeare from the formal structures of the well-made play. The platform stage he believed was necessary for a sense of intimacy between actors and audience, and he insisted upon at least two stage doors so that entrances and exits would overlap. With overlapping dialogue and no scenery, the principle of continuity of action would be achieved. Poel, however, imposed Edwardian notions of flexible staging onto his conception of Elizabethan playing by visually changing locale through the use of curtains. Poel's stage in his productions had four basic playng areas: the forestage of the platform in front of an initial set of curtains; an area just inside the large front pillars and curtains; an inner space under the balcony and behind the smaller pillars and curtains; the upper platform of the balcony. With three sets of curtains covering the second, third, and fourth areas, Poel could alter the space and change set pieces without interrupting the stage action. By shifting the location of the action he could achieve visual variety while still maintaining a sense of continuity. In the balcony scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, Juliet was stationed in the lofty gallery at the back of the inner booth; the street scenes and those in the Friar's cell took place before the curtains and between the booth and the actual proscenium (*The Stage*, May 11, 1905). In the staging of the potion scene, a curtain was drawn upon Juliet lying on her bed; then, in front, an ironic contrast was shown as Capulet, the cook and servants prepared busily for her wedding, Sampson appearing first with a "tankard" and then with "logs" (IV.v).[49]

III

Poel recognized that it was not only the use of scenery and interpolated business that had greatly lengthened Shakespearean production in the past two centuries, but also the slow declamatory style of speaking that had accompanied such changes: "The two and a half hours in which a play in Shakespeare's time was often acted would not be possible today, even without delays for acts and scenes, with the methods of elocution now in vogue" (p. 59). The heavy stressing of a more recent time--Mrs. Siddons' "Give *ME* the daggers"--could scarcely have been used at the Globe. In a contempoary production of *Hamlet*, for example, Edwin

Forrest took six full minutes to get through "To be or not to be" and was praised for his deliberation.[50] In his preface to the *Leopold Shakespeare* (1877), F. J. Furnivall estimated an average verse-speaking speed of eight hundred lines to the hour, a truly funereal pace at which the driving power of the lines would be completely lost. Henry Irving's idiosyncratic delivery of Shakespeare's verse with his slow pronunciation and elongation of syllables had caused one of his reviewers, Joseph Knight, to comment that in Irving's production the dramatist's poetry was relegated to music without melody: "It is impossible to preserve the music if words of one syllable are to be stretched out to the length of five or six."[51] William Archer, too, had long condemned actors for stressing every monosyllable when speaking Shakespeare's verse and lamented that contemporary actors had no understanding of the art of musical delivery" while the public were content "to have exquisite poetry spoken as bad prose." Since the time of Samuel Phelps the speaking of blank verse had become almost a lost art. It was necessary, Archer stressed, for both actors and audiences to have some conception of the swiftness and musicality of Shakespearean verse: without these, he reasoned, "how can anyone have more than the faintest glimmering of the true beauty of such a poem as *Romeo and Juliet*"?[52]

In 1906 Sidney Lee, enquiring in *Shakespeare and the Modern Stage* why Phelps' production methods should not be used again, noted that it was important to realize fully the precise demands which a system like that of Phelps made on the character, ability and energy of the actors and actresses. "If scenery in Shakespearean production be relegated to its proper place in the background of the stage," he declared, "it is necessary that the acting, from top to bottom of the cast, shall be more efficient and better harmonised than that which is commonly associated with spectacular representations." The non-spectacular method of producing Shakespeare focussed the interest of the audience on the actor and actress; it gave them a dignity and importance which were unknown to the scenic method. Acting on the contemporary stage, charged Lee, commonly tended to be the most mechanical of physical exercises. The actor was often a mere automaton who repeated night after night the same unimpressive trick of voice, eye and gesture. His defects of understanding could be comparatively unobtrusive in a spectacular display, where he was liable to escape censure by escaping observation, or at best be regarded as a showman. Furthermore, the long runs which scenic excess brought in its train accentuated the mechanical actor's imperfections and diminished his opportunities of remedying them.

The great actor, however, explained Lee, relied for genuine success on no mere gesticulatory mechanism. Imaginative insight, passion, the gift of oratory, grace and dignity of movement and bearing, perfect command of the voice in the whole gamut of its inflections were the constitute qualities of true histrionic capacity. In no drama were these qualities more necessary than in the plays of Shakespeare. Lee saw that the worst of the evils inherent in scenic excess, with its accompaniment of long runs, was its tendency to sanction the maintenance of the level of acting at something below the highest.[53]

From 1870 on a new kind of acting had been instituted under the influence of T. W. Robertson and the Bancrofts, developed specifically for the interpretation of Robertson's plays. The interest aroused by the novelty of seeing people behave and speak on the stage as they did in real life, using what we today call "throw-away lines," and the pleasure aroused by the careful finish in all details of mounting to make the stage resemble the surroundings of normal living, combined to discredit in large part the players who acted the traditional repertory by traditional methods. A new idea of realism had been set up and audiences had been given new standards by which to judge dramatic productions. Robertson's plays demanded a quiet naturalism. The ideal of playwright and actors was to study life at first hand, not to proceed from the knowledge derived from stage training and conventions. The new school, however, complained Henry Neville in 1871, was emphasizing scenery, costume and accessories of various kinds at the expense of acting. With the lessened importance of acting, he found, there was "no longer the same knowledge exacted, nor the same preparatory discipline required of the actor." The dramatic revolution brought about by Robertson's plays was taking acting from a regularized craft, whose practitioners worked from apprenticeship to a possible eventual master-workmanship, into a trade which admitted members "without training, without fitness, without any specialty of aim, without even a general knowledge of the Art, its principles or its history."[54]

In a review of an 1879 production of Romeo and Juliet Joseph Knight lamented that to teach a company to speak blank verse was a vastly difficult matter, seeing that there were no teachers and no contemporary material on which to work. "Each successive representation witnesses, therefore, a further declension, and the very meaning of a blank verse play seems, so far as the majority of the actors is concerned, to be lost."[55] By 1895 Knight was stating that the death of tragedy "is real and there will be no recovery." Since the days of Fechter's Hamlet, this movement had been in progress, he felt, and slowly and unassertively it had worked its way until now there was not an actor left who dared to do what a generation and a half ago was done constantly by such actors as Samuel Phelps. Realism had conquered convention, even in tragedy. In this movement, declared Knight, was both gain as well as loss. It was delightful, in a presentation of Romeo and Juliet, to see banished from the stage the "indecencies and irreverences" introduced by Garrick; yet, against these Knight placed one counterbalancing loss: "in the present limpid, quasi-realistic method of delivery there is a complete loss of electricity." Deploring the poor verse speaking of Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the 1895 production of Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum, Knight judged that "the sufferings of Juliet are more tearful to us in the book than on the stage" (Athenaeum, Sept. 28, 1895, 427).

In a similar vein, The Era described in 1890 a Romeo and Juliet production at the Globe with its "gorgeous and very effective procession," its "well-trained crowd" and its "big and imposing gathering" for the last scene, yet noted that neither fine dresses, nor picturesque scenes, nor well-drilled crowds would make acceptable a representation of Romeo and Juliet in which "the Juliet is almost altogether wanting in emotional power" and whose voice was "positively irritating in its harshness" (June 21, 1890, 14). The Times, too, found a serious flaw in the 1904 Romeo and Juliet production at the Court, commenting that nothing in the production would atone "for the slipshod diction of some of the players" (Feb. 18, 1904, 8).

Agreeing with Joseph Knight that England had virtually no tragic actors and that there was no school in which to develop them, William Poel declared that there was a need to set apart a theatre for the exclusive use of classical drama and its interpreters. A tragedy in verse, he stated, "is the severest test of the artist's power, of his physical flexibility in voice and face, of his training and sensibility" (p. 177). Poel agreed with Hamlet that Elizabethan dramatists expected their blank verse to be spoken "trippingly on the tongue"; moreover, unless there was an easy and fairly rapid delivery of Shakespeare's dialogue it was impossible, he felt, to get through much more than half of a Shakespearean play in the course of an evening. The tendency of British actors in speaking Shakespeare, he charged, was to make use of an elocution that no human being was ever known to indulge in; moreover, they employed a redundancy of emphasis which destroyed all meaning of the words and all resemblance to natural speech.

When Poel presented Romeo and Juliet it became his objective to restore the style of speaking that he felt Elizabethan actors had used on the stage. From 1887 to 1897 much of Poel's work had taken the form of directed readings of poetic drama, as instructor of the Shakespeare Reading Society, rehearsing the students for three months before each annual performance. It was during the early years of this work that Poel became convinced that in the proper speaking of Shakespeare's verse must reside the essence of any production of his plays. When he later produced for the Elizabethan Stage Society, the first three weeks of the four-week rehearsals were spent around a table reading the parts. Teaching his actors that when dramatic dialogue was written in verse, there were more words put into a sentence than was needed to convey the actual thought that was uppermost in the speaker's mind, Poel explained that for the actor to give his delivery an appearance of spontaneity, he should arrest the attention of the listener by the accentuation of those key words which conveyed the central idea or thought of the speech, and should keep in the background, by means of modulation and deflection of voice, the words with which that thought was ornamented. In his writings Poel invariably used the following example from *Macbeth* to show what he meant:

> Or *whý*
> *Upón* this *blásted* heath you *stóp* our *wáy*
> With *súch* prophetic *gréeting*?

It was normal, he pointed out, for the actor to inflect the accented words as if they were all equally important. But as the witches are delaying Macbeth's return to the King's camp, the actor should speak the chieftain's words thus:

> Or *why*
> Upon this blasted heath, you *STOP* our way
> With such *prophétic* greeting?

Poel found that modern actors, if they inflected the right words, inflected the wrong ones, too, until it became impossible for the listener to identify the sense by the sound. The audience should never be made to feel that the tones were unusual. The radical fault, then, of actors' speaking Shakespeare's verse on the stage was due to the notion that because the accent of the verse came at regular intervals, the emphasis must also come at regular intervals. "Yet all conversation would be impossible if a rule of this kind were adhered to," explained Poel. When teaching his actors proper elocution for *Romeo and Juliet*, Poel used the following to illustrate correct emphasis:

> *EYES*, look your last

or

> Eyes, look your *LAST*

but it was not correct for Romeo to say

> *EYES*, look your *LAST*

which virtually every contemporary Romeo persisted in saying. Because this method of duplicating emphasis was being used by all the actors throughout the whole play, the time taken up in speaking it was at once doubled. Hence, said Poel, came the need for excessive prunings (pp. 57-59).[56]

Poel also approached the voices in the play musically, pointing out that Shakespeare uses a varied phraseology for his characters and contrasts the voices of his speakers, so as to get a sort of orchestral effect of vocal sounds.[57] If, when the words were spoken on the stage, the audience remained unmoved, said Poel, it was not the author but the actor who was at fault, "because his vocal instrument has not been tuned to give both meaning and music to the words" (_Shakespeare Journal_, 10, 1925). Poel stipulated that his actors should speak quickly and clearly and without oratorical effect in a highly coloured, musically inflected speech of great range and suppleness. Poel's methods for accomplishing the proper elocution helped to earn his reputation as an eccentric. In rehearsal he gave the actors what he called "the tunes"; in other words, he laid down the relative pitch at which each successive word was to be spoken and the actors learned these precise intonations along with the words to which they applied. Robert Speaight, who acted for Poel, relates that Poel's method was much simpler than he made it appear, and that it could be defended in two of his own phrases: "exaggerated naturalness" and "tuned tones." By the former he meant that just as Shakespeare's characters themselves talked with "exaggerated naturalness," so the actor should do likewise; and by the latter he merely meant that any speech which was to carry and have significance must be inflected. Whereas the normal English conversation in modern times he felt was characterized by flat tones, Poel believed that the Elizabethans must have spoken with a variety of rhythm and emphasis.[58] He decided which characters represented the double-bass, the cello, the woodwind, so to speak, and chose his actors by the timbre, pitch and flexibility of their voices, far more than from their experience or even their acting skill.[59] He then worked out the eventual sound of the whole play, the melody, stress, rhythm, and phrasing of every sentence. Dramatic emphasis, pauses, facial expressiveness, anything that interfered with "the music of the verse" was actively discouraged. Action was to be used only when the words by themselves were not sufficient to explain what was happening; it was the actor's task to make manifest the meaning, the emotion and the beauty of the verse by the audible means of melody, phrasing and stress. The cast would spend two or three weeks learning his "tunes," by endless repetition in a strongly marked and exaggerated form, while he lay back with his eyes closed. Sometimes he would lock an actor in a room all night until his speech had the desired musical sound. Understandably, many actors refused to work with him.[60] What Poel achieved, however, as G. Wilson Knight points out, was "fluent verse speaking dependent on a close regard to the natural emphases of rational speech and the avoidance of irrelevant and laboured stresses elsewhere."[61] Gordon Crosse found that whereas the elocution of actors of the older school was often marred by "too great deliberation and too many and too long pauses," in Poel's productions "it was a joy to hear the lines rapidly spoken yet without slurring or gabbling."[62] The general effect in Poel's productions was one of swiftness and lightness, with a minimum of heavy stresses even in strong dramatic passages.[63]

IV

In his production of Romeo and Juliet it was Poel's objective not only to restore as many as possible of the staging conditions that he thought would have governed the dramatist's own presentation of the play, but to be faithful to the author's intentions in the interpretation of the text. Since Shakespeare's time a number of stage practices had become established and these conventions had increasingly distanced productions of the play from the intentions clearly indicated by the author. Giving an anecdote about Mrs. Siddons who, after her retirement from the stage, was rereading Macbeth and was surprised to find some new points in the character which had never struck her before, Poel said such illustrations showed how apt English actors were to base the study of their parts not on the text but on stage traditions (p. 46). Acting versions, interpretation and actors' "readings," he said, had altered little in two hundred years as actor-managers mutilated the text so that the star shone brilliantly. If an actor wished to interpret the play intelligently, declared Poel, "he must shut his eyes to all that has taken place on the stage since the poet's time, turning to Shakespeare's text and trusting to that alone for inspiration" (p. 60). The Elizabethan Stage Society, he said, had been founded with the express purpose of going "straight to the Shakespearean text" (Observer, Oct. 20, 1929).

Instead of using acting editions of previous productions Poel examined the original quartos, and in each one of his productions it became his claim to "have corrected a wrong tradition about a character or characters" (Observer, Oct. 20, 1929, 13). Allan Gomme relates that in preparation for each stage production Poel would spend weeks at the British Museum studying the various editions of the play and the atmosphere of the period in which the play was written. The copious notes of these and of contemporary criticisms and comments would be well assimilated before the first steps of the production were taken.[64] Poel felt that in Romeo and Juliet Shakespeare had purposely emphasized the youth of the lovers. Most productions of the play had counted on seasoned performers to capture an aura of youthful innocence: Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, for example, had both been middle-aged when they performed the roles, as were Johnston Forbes-Robertson and Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Mrs. Campbell in 1895 was a "melancholy" Juliet, lamented The Stage, who displayed "none of the abandon of youth, only the calm consideration of maturity" (Sept. 26, 1895, 12). Even Forbes-Robertson, whose Romeo and verse-speaking were widely acclaimed, received the comment from William Archer that "his voice, in itself his most precious gift, is not the fresh young voice of Romeo."[65]

A week before Poel's production of Romeo and Juliet, the forty-four-year-old Lewis Waller and the thirty-four-year-old Evelyn Millard had played the young lovers at the Imperial Theatre, and the Athenaeum had commented that this production, too, suffered the defect from which no presentation of Romeo and Juliet by the present generation had been wholly free: "It lacks those all-important elements of youth and imagination--more indispensable, perhaps, in this piece than in any other." The Athenaeum found that a performance in which Romeo, Juliet, Tybalt, and Mercutio all approached middle age lost necessarily a portion --perhaps the greater portion--of its charms. If the actor failed to reveal the Romeo of the audience's dreams--the passionate, poetic, inconstant youth--his shortcomings, remarked the journal, were those of almost all his predecessors (April 29, 1905). There could never be even a satisfactory production of an English play whose theme was the fierce passion of love in extreme youth, lamented Max Beerbohm in his review of the Imperial production; mature lovers could only show the first awakening of love in a mature bosom, not love's first awakening in adolescence (Saturday Review, April 29, 1905).

George Bernard Shaw explained Poel's innovative approach: "Mr. Poel had the ridiculous habit of going to see what Shakespear said . . . . He said 'I will get a child of fourteen' and accordingly he performed 'Romeo and Juliet' in that way" (Pall Mall Gazette, Dec. 2, 1912). For the roles of the lovers Poel found his ideals in two teenagers, Esmé Percy and Dorothy Minto. Both had the charming looks and youthful temperament, if not the experience, for their parts. Robert Speaight rightly points out that the difficulty of acting Romeo and Juliet is not necessarily solved by casting a Romeo and a Juliet in their teens because both parts "are intensely difficult and require players of considerable technique." Either you must have a boy and girl of precocious accomplishment, or mature actors who have the power to suggest extreme youth. Neither of these combinations is easy to get.[66] The Stage, nonetheless, found that Percy made "a boyishly impetuous and spirited Romeo," that Minto's assumption of Juliet was "charmingly naive and pretty" and that the two young actors played "very pleasingly" the balcony scene (May 11, 1905). Even William Archer, no friend to Poel's productions, conceded that these young performers acted "with a good deal of charm" and Esmé Percy with "abundant spirit" (The World, May 9, 1905). The Era commented that the most striking feature of Poel's Romeo and Juliet was their youth, and it commended Esmé Percy for his "earnestness and his intelligent and natural reading of the text" (May 13, 1905). The Times singled out the "very natural and engaging performance" of Dorothy Minto (May 11, 1905). Critics also pointed out the competent playing of the minor characters. Poel preferred in all his productions to work with inexperienced actors, finding them more malleable to his ideas and discovering that experienced actors were usually too steeped in Irving's ideas to accept his own innovations. Instead of cold technique the lovers brought the ardour of extreme youth. Shaw praised the realistic casting and said that "for the first time" Romeo and Juliet "became endurable" (Pall Mall Gazette, Dec. 2, 1912).[67] Harold Child went further in his praise and, finding that the youth of the lovers conferred on them a pathos they might never have obtained by histrionic means, described Poel's Romeo and Juliet as the only performance of the play he had ever been able to believe in.[68]

It was also Poel's contention that far too many productions of Shakespeare's plays concentrated their efforts on the major charac
and consequently conventionalized the roles or omitted some of the
of the minor characters. Because Poel always began his production work by studying the authentic quarto texts and contemporary scholarly editions with a view to discovering the author's intentions, his interpretations took into account the acting of all the characters, not just the stars. Comparing, for example, the Globe edition of Hamlet with Irving's acting edition, Poel found Irving's shorter by almost twelve hundred lines. The actor manager had omitted the minor characters Voltemand, Cornelius, Reynaldo, a Gentleman, and Fortinbras. All of these characters, said Poel, are necessary to the play which presents a

whole world of people, "not the career of one individual" (p. 175). Moreover, Poel found that the last lines of scenes were often cut from Shakespeare's texts so that the star actors could leave the stage with applause. This tradition in turn had created the bad habit of actors trying to make "points" at the end of scenes. Dr. Furnivall, president of the London Shakespeare League, which had been founded in 1902 in support of Poel's ideas, agreed with Poel's condemnations of those actor-managers who "mutilated Shakespeare" to suit their own caprice or egotism and who seemed to think that the productions were for displaying them and not Shakespeare (The Times, Oct. 25, 1905).[69]

Gordon Crosse complained that in an 1898 production o Romeo and Juliet by Ben Greet's company, the scene with Friar John had been cut entirely from V.ii so that there was nothing to show why the plan for the safe escape of the lovers failed.[70] Because of the cult of the star actor, minor characters were not allowed to upstage principals. Moreover, there had been a facile readiness on the stage to identify secondary characters with stock theatrical types and this practice had falsified their relationships and their dramatic functions. In the interpretation of the minor characters little or no individuality had been allowed. Eveline Godley in an article entitled "A Plea for the Protection of Shakespeare" in The National Review talked of the failings of contemporary English drama and noted that custom did not require the manager of a Shakespearean company to give more than the most cursory reflection to the original arrangement of the scenes, or the true nature of the persons in the play. In almost every instance, the critic found the same order of things prevailing: "one or two of the principal parts more or less ably played, and a crowd of lesser personages, all reduced to the dead level of monotony; sometimes by the fault of the actors, and sometimes because their speeches have been carefully shorn of individuality by other hands" (National Review, 42, 1903-1904, 584).

It became Poel's goal to restore both the individuality and the importance of each character to the play. In a paper read to the New Shakspere Society in 1889 entitled "The Stage-Version of Romeo and Juliet," Poel criticized the presentation of the play on the contemporary stage, focussing his displeasure primarily on Henry Irving's production, and thereupon gave as prescription his own ideas on stage representation for Romeo and Juliet.[71] These ideas he was then able to put into effect in his production at the Royalty in 1905. Theory and practice, Poel insisted, should be closely related and production was the best means of testing theories about Shakespeare's texts. A production should function as criticism; it should fully explicate the text.

In the first scene of the play Poel pointed out that Shakespeare, in less than thirty lines, quickly introduces seven persons, all of whom indicate their characters by the attitude they assume towards the quarrel. He summed them up as "peace-loving Benvolio," "fiery Tybalt," "imperious and vigorous Capulet and his characterless wife," and the "calm dignified" Lady Montague (p. 135). The Prince especially was to be stressed as a central figure speaking with a precision that throws every other character on the stage into insignificance. Accuracy in costume, Poel believed, was helpful to the understanding of a play, not in regard to any particular historical period, as to putting the characters into costumes which showed their disposition and station in life. The nobleman and the servant, the fop and the braggart should be as easily recognized by their dress as by their speech. The three groups in the play, Poel maintained, should also be clearly defined. Besides the partisans of the two Houses, there was the neutral group consisting of the Prince, Paris, Mercutio, the two friars, the apothecary, and the citizens who shout "Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues," and who clamoured for the suppression of both houses. By priority of rank, Escalus was the pivot of the play and should always appear with a royal escort, explained Poel. Paris came next in rank; he should be very richly dressed, and being related to Escalus should appear with at least six of the Prince's liveried servants in his train. Mercutio, also related to the royal house, should be finely apparelled, with three of the royal attendants following him. In this way, maintained Poel, significance was given to the story.

One interpretation that Poel set out to correct was that of Capulet. In scene ii of the first act "the assumed dignity and good breeding of Capulet . . . are to be noted"; it is in the fifth scene, however, that Capulet's rebuke of Tybalt gives an insight into his real character (p. 137). Poel criticized a recent production of the play in which Frank Marshall followed a stage tradition and interpreted Capulet as "a meddlesome mollycoddle," somewhat like Polonius (p. 139). Poel disagreed with this facile correlation, believing the fussiness of Polonius to proceed from his vanity and from his mental and physical impotence. He saw Capulet's activity, on the other hand, as the outcome of a love of domineering, springing from his pride of birth and his consciousness of his physical superiority. This view could be defended by observing Capulet's thunderous anger at Tybalt:

> He shall be endured:
> What, goodman boy! I say, he shall: go to;
> Am I the master here, or you? go to. (I.v.74-76)

Beside such a man Lady Capulet would appear as a "mere cipher," having lost much of her individuality in her marriage with Capulet (p. 139).

In Poel's conception the Nurse had been introduced into the play as its principal comic character and her excellent comedy with its "unseemly sentences," in I.iii, for example, was designed to please the "rude multitude" (p. 138). He criticized Irving's production for cutting minor comic speeches such as the servant's speech in I.ii about the shoemaker and his "yard." This particular omission had prompted Poel to ask, "Why are virtuous tragedians always anxious to rob the low comedians of their cakes and ale?" (pp. 137-38).

Poel also saw that far too many productions since Shakespeare's time had curtailed the scenes of hatred between the rival Montagues and Capulets and had concentrated disproportionately on the love element in the story. As a result, the playwright's ever-present contrast of love and hatred had often not been given enough emphasis on the stage. In the quarrels of the two great houses "most playgoers take only the slightest interest," remarked the Era in its review of Poel's production, pointing out the producer's unusual approach (May 13, 1905). Poel recognized, as had Henry Irving, that Shakespeare, who was not partial to prologues, had used one here to guide the action of his play, thus striking the keynote to the tone of the entire drama. The dramatist had used the hatred of the two houses and the parents' strife as a lurid background against which to portray with greater vividness the "fearful passage" of the "star-crossed lovers" (Prologue). In I.v where Romeo and Juliet meet for the first time, Shakespeare had ensured that his audience not forget the hostility that would keep the two lovers forever "star-crossed." Here the charm of their tender utterances is contrasted by an undercurrent of hatred, as Tybalt's recognition of a Montague gives warning of a fresh outbreak of hostilities: "but this intrusion shall,/ Now seeming sweet, convert to bitter gall" (I.v.89-90). Poel found it incomprehensible that a tradition had grown in which stage Juliets in the balcony scene "go through their billing and cooing as deliberately as they do their toilets" (p. 140-41), never for a moment thinking that the place is "death" to R[illegible] [illegible].64), and that "love's sweet bait" must be stolen from "fearful hooks" (I.v.150). To emphasize only the love episode was to make that episode far less tragic and therefore less poignant.

The scene in which Romeo and Juliet meet to be married at the Friar's cell ends the second act on the stage. Most productions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including those of Garrick, Irving, Mary Anderson, and Forbes-Robertson, had created a grand tableau at this point, interpolating such business as the Friar joining the hands of the couple to the accompaniment of blissful wedding music. Poel, however, explained that dropping the curtain at this point was contrary to Shakespeare's purpose, since it interrupted the dramatic moment just as it was striving for the climax of Tybalt's death and the banishment of Romeo. The following incidents "require action that is all hurry and excitement, and are therefore out of place at the beginning of an act, unless it be the opening act of a play" (p. 142). Although Poel urged continuity in the presentation of Shakespeare's plays on the stage in all his writings, he occasionally allowed his audience a single short interval during his stage presentations, in Romeo and Juliet taking a ten-minute break after III.i, the brawl scene. Explaining his reason for effecting a pause at this unconventional point, Poel pointed out that the serious consequences arising out of Mercutio's death are Tybalt's death and Romeo's banishment, incidents causing the tragic death of the lovers. Thus the crisis occurs in what might be called the producer's eleventh scene, and here a producer should, if need be, make his halfway pause, because his twelfth scene begins the episode connected with Romeo's flight.[72]

Poel abhorred the Victorian [illegible] creating tableaux, processions and scenes without d[illegible] Forbes-Robertson's 1895 production of Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum, for example, while more quickly paced than many, carried on the spectacular tradition firmly established on the nineteenth-century stage and had an interval after each act: after Act I, nine minutes; after Act II, eight minutes; after Act III, four minutes; and after Act IV, eight minutes. As well, the programme announced that the tableau curtains would fall "for a few minutes" after the balcony scene.[73] In a play such as Romeo and Juliet, Poel, however, found the electrifying speed of the action to be vital and any attempt to chop the play into tableaux debased the play into sensationalism. The action of the play as conceived by Shakespeare was at once complicated and swift, the scenes often so short and so closely dovetailed that each episode must be allowed its natural rhythm. Any interruption for the sake of creating a beautiful scene was disastrous to the total effect. Poel discovered that the platform stage and Elizabethan set that he had recreated were eminently practical for the quick changes necessitated by the text.

Poel particularly condemned Henry Irving's excision of a large section at the end of III.i, an omission made so that the curtain could fall on a tableau in which Romeo reacts to Tybalt's death with a heart-rending "O, I am fortune's fool" (III.i.128). Escalus was thus not given an opportunity to make his important second appearance to upbraid the rival families again, the proclamation of the formal sentence of banishment being omitted. This excision had been made by subsequent producers of the play and was still effected in the Romeo and Juliet production at the Imperial only a week before Poel's presentation. Conceiving the latter part of this scene to be brilliant in the variety and rapidity of its action, Poel felt that Irving had completely disregarded the dramatist's construction of the play:

> To take out the second renewal of hostilities between the two houses; not to show, in action on the stage, the rage of the Capulets at the death of Tybalt, and the grief of the Montagues at the banishment of Romeo, is to weaken the tragic significance of the scenes that follow. (pp. 143-44)

Without these reactions of the two families the audience would not vividly realize that the hatred of the two houses had reached its peak of intensity and that all hope of reconciliation seemed futile. Poel blamed the rise of actor-managers and star-actors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for the creation of tableaux and for the cutting of many minor parts. These actors, he charged, showed a ruthless disregard for the fact that their business was "to interpret the author, not to rewrite his plays the better to set off their own talents," and thereby to increase the importance of their own parts.[74]

Poel held Capulet's role in the last two scenes of the third act to be very important. In III.iv Capulet is shown fixing a date for the marriage of Juliet to Paris and the father's words "I think she will be ruled/ In all respects by me; naymore, I doubt it not" (III.iv.13-14) have a significance and render the parting of the lovers in the next scene highly dramatic. In III.v Juliet has just spent her wedding night with Romeo when the news of her betrothal and marriage to Paris is sprung upon her with terrible abruptness. She hardly has time to protest before her father enters to complete her distress with his torrents of abuse. Poel said that it was at this point that the audience should realize that "Capulet's varnish of good manners has entirely disappeared and that his coarse nature now stands out in its full nakedness" (p. 147). In this emergency Juliet leaps into womanhood and realizes her position and responsibilities as a wife. It is in the following lines that Poel saw Shakespeare touching the "first note of highest tragedy in the play, that of the mind's suffering as opposed to the mere tragedy of incident" (p. 147):

> O God!--O nurse, how shall this be prevented?
> My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven;
> How shall that faith return again to earth,
> Unless that husband send it me from heaven
> By leaving earth?--comfort me, counsel me.
> (III.v.204-208)

These lines Poel considered to be the climax of the scene and of the play so far as it had progressed. They also marked the turning-point in Juliet's moral nature. From this point on all is calm in Juliet's breast, because there is no infirmity of purpose: "If all else fail, myself have power to die" (III.v.240).

Act IV.iii is the scene that Poel conceived as the most dramatic episode in the entire play, and his major criticism of previous productions was that Juliet's terrible ordeal was usually dragged out too long and was often overacted on the stage: "Our Juliets," he said, "do too much strumping and frumping about" (p. 148). Having praised Samuel Phelps' conception of the scene in 1844, Henry Morley found that this reformer's interpretation was virtually unique on the nineteenth-century stage and that subsequent productions carried on the tradition established by Miss O'Neill in 1814. Morley wrote of Stella Colas at the Princess in 1864 that "she spends so much force upon the shrieking at and cowering by the bedside from Tybalt's ghost, that she can only add as an insignificant tag to that clap-trap stage-effect the line in which a greater actress would have found the true climax, 'Romeo I come! This do I drink to thee.'" The text shows, Morley said, that Juliet drinks the potion with her mind full not of Tybalt but of Romeo. Instead of screaming "stay, Tybalt, stay," Juliet more probably whispered it, explained Morley. "She drinks as from a festive bridal cup" (Examiner, May 14, 1864).[75]

Later Victorian performers, however, disregarded Morley's advice. Critics found Mary Anderson's acting of the scene in 1884 loud and melodramatic. Noting that Anderson had staged the traditional prolonged shriek of terror, the Daily News remarked that this cry "has been objected to in vain, while it has ever becor more shrill and more prolonged. Audiences unquestionably expect it." The newspaper observed that the actress' final fall backwards upon the bed, with her head toward the spectators and her abundant tresses hanging to the ground, had the nature of an "acrobatic feat" (Nov. 3, 1884). When at last restraint had been tried by Ellen Terry in Irving's production, Clement Scott was much dissatisfied: "The 'horrible conceit of death and night' was never presented" (Theatre, April 1, 1882). Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the 1895 Lyceum production, however, was sharply criticized by Lord Lytton who found that her acting degenerated as the soliloquy advanced: "she rises, rushes about the stage, rants, screams, loses all dignity, all pathos, becomes theatrical, conventionally tragic, wholly ineffective, and ruins the sentiment of the scene by a painful relapse under the tyranny of the worst traditions of the English stage" (Nineteenth Century, 16, 1884).

Rebelling against this firmly entrenched tradition of melodramatic acting in Shakespeare's scenes of crisis, William Poel, like Samuel Phelps, based his interpretation on the text. He envisioned Juliet laying her dagger on the table, standing motionless in the centre of the stage, speaking her lines in a hurried low whisper, conveying the impression of reflection as well as the need for discretion. At the words "O look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost" (IV.iii.55) Juliet was to sink on one knee and with a quick movement point her arm into space. The words "stay, Tybalt, stay!" (IV.iii.57) were not, as commonly performed, to be given with a scream but in a tone of alarm and entreaty, followed immediately by the drinking of the potion, as if to suggest Juliet's desire to come to Romeo's rescue. The entire scene was to be acted in less than two minutes (pp. 148-49).

Poel believed that Shakespeare had purposely quickened the pace in the last four scenes of Act IV, and therefore any interruption such as an interval for changing scenery was contrary to his intention. Poel's realization that Shakespeare's dramaturgy was based on the juxtaposition of contrasts coincided with a recognition that such a structure was especially ill suited to the conventions of pictorial staging: "Shakespeare's method of dramatic composition, that of uniting a series of short scenes in one dramatic movement, will not bear the elaboration of heavy stage sets, and with the demand for carpentry comes the inducement for mutilation." This important realization stemmed directly from Poel's use of production to test his theories. In these scenes the audience could [illegible]s the dramatist's skillful use of contrast:

Capulet's fury, Juliet's drinking of the potion, the rising and bustle of the household, the bridal march in the background, the Nurse's fearful discovery, the entrance of the parents and bridal party, the wailing and wringing of hands, and the change of wedding music to solemn dirges. It was through contrast that the "Capulet scenes" before and after the potion scene heightened the tragedy of the potion scene. The accentuation of Capulet's character, of his brutal frankness, his indifference to everyone's interests but his own, and his delight in exacting a cringing obedience from others were designed by the dramatist "to move us with divine pity for Juliet's suffering" and through emphasis "to save the potion scene from the danger of appearing grotesque" (p. 150). Poel was convinced of the necessity to perform the four scenes without delay or interruption, having first witnessed his audience's reaction to his presentation in an 1888 reading of the play by the Shakespeare Reading Society: "the breathless attention that the episode excited convinced me that my conception of its dramatic treatment was the right one" (p. 150).

Poel also urged a restoration of the comic scene between Peter and the musicians at the end of IV.v. In the programme for his production at the Royalty, Poel quoted the view of the German critic Wieland who acknowledged that Shakespeare had often been blamed since his day for his badly devised plots, for throwing together the comic and the tragic. "People blame this," said Wieland, "and do not consider that just on this account his plays are such natural representations of human life."[76] This scene and the first part of IV.ii in which Capulet prepares busily for the marriage feast had usually been excised in productions of the play. Poel, however, justified the comic scene as a welcome relief after the intensity of the previous scenes and as a connecting link with the comic scenes in the earlier part of the play. In revealing Shakespeare's purpose for these scenes, Poel exposed the inadequacy of old acting editions. Poel also pointed out that the earliest acting version of Romeo and Juliet (Q_1, 1597) had some eight hundred lines less than the longer version (Q_2, 1599) and yet there was no entire scene omitted in the shorter version, nor any of the characters; and those scenes which on the modern stage were usually dropped from the play were least curtailed in the 1597 version (p. 53). Arthur Sprague and J. C. Trewin, two modern critics, believe that one of Poel's greatest contributions to the restoration of Shakespeare's texts on the stage was his acknowledgement of the importance of seemingly minor passages. In their view Poel proved that "the cutting of Shakespeare's text is a delicate and dangerous business. Even in passages which have little bearing on the immediate concerns of the play there may be meaning and purpose."[77]

Poel was convinced that Shakespeare wished the last act of Romeo and Juliet to be dealt with briefly and [illegible]al catastrophe to be carried out effectively but simply. He condemned a contemporary edition of the play in common use which still retained Garrick's alterations to the last act. Garrick's version, he asserted, had "no right to be called Shakespeare's tragedy at all."[78] Most productions on the Victorian and Edwardian stage, while having rejected Garrick's ending, added their own lengthy melodramatic touches to the final scene. In the 1905 production at the Imperial, the steps of the tomb served as the last resting place of the poisoned Romeo; down these the self-stabbed Juliet painfully dragged herself so as to repose side by side with her husband. It was "a picturesque close," conceded The Stage (April 27, 1905). George Bernard

Shaw, reminiscing about Irving's staging of the tomb scene after the death of Paris, remembered Irving as a dim figure dragging a horrible burden down through the gloom "into the rotten jaws of death" (Saturday Review, Sept. 28, 1895).

To discover Shakespeare's tragic vision in the last act of the play, Poel compared the dramatist's ending with that of Arthur Brooke, his immediate source. In Brooke's poem the children die for their defiance of their parents' wishes and Romeo, before death, prays to Heaven for mercy and forgiveness. Poel saw Shakespeare, however, striking only one note in Romeo's character, that of love. Early in the play Romeo feels that by touching Juliet's hand he will make blessed his own rude hand, and when he dies he will "the doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss" (V.iii.114). His is a love-devouring death but the agony of death does not countervail the exchange of joy that one short minute gives him in her sight. Shakespeare's treatment of the love episode differs from Brooke's, said Poel, "in his recognition that love, so long as it be strong as death, has an ennobling and not a debasing influence on character: we are made to feel that it is better for Romeo to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all" (p. 152). Shakespeare also meant Juliet's death to be carried out with the greatest simplicity and within a few moments of her awakening. The text shows time for neither reflection nor lamentation; she has hardly spoken eight lines after the friar's exit and kissed the poison from her dead husband's lips before the watch enters the churchyard. It is the presence of the watch that goads her to lift the knife.

In Irving's conclusion to Romeo and Juliet the curtain fell as Juliet died and then reopened to a final grand tableau in which the

Prince, surrounded by the corpses and the hastily gathered families, merely joined the hands of the two fathers and solemnly spoke the last two lines of the play. Poel was horrified at Irving's excision of 137 consecutive lines and his neglect of the importance of the minor characters: the crowd hurrying anxiously to the tomb, its horror at the sight of the dead couple, its amazement at finding they are man and wife, the Prince's stern rebuke, the bowed grief and shame of the two families, and the final reconciliation. He denounced Irving for failing to emphasize Shakespeare's more comprehensive point of view. It was his own contention that any production of the play must convey that Shakespeare "shows no tolerance" for the hatred of the two houses; the Prince's speeches were therefore necessary to emphasize the shame and grief of the two fathers (p. 153). Most important, however, was the reconciliation of the two families; Shakespeare's story, starting with a quarrel, must end with reconciliation, with the two heads of the opposing factions, Capulet and Montague, mourning with joined hands over the dead lovers whom their strife has slain. Poel saw the death of the young couple as a "senseless sacrifice unless we have been allowed to feel the ferocity of the feud which is healed over their bodies."[79] In Forbes-Robertson's production of the play in 1895 there was not even the final tableau of the Prince and crowd; the actor-manager brought down the curtain on the lovers dying, thus cutting short the story at its climax.[80]

It was Poel's position that no stage version of Romeo and Juliet was consistent with Shakespeare's intentions that did not give prominence to the hatred of the two houses and retain intact the three crowd scenes: the one at the opening of the play, the second in the middle, and the third at the end. In omitting up to one third of the play, as had become stage fashion, much of Shakespeare's design had become lost. Shakespeare the dramatist could not be understood and appreciated to the full unless his play was performed in its entirety; if that condition were fulfilled, the author's point of view could not fail to declare itself. Poel praised Shakespeare's dramatic skills which had resulted in centuries of popularity for the play: "vigorous characterization, a vital and varied movement, and the skilful handling of scenes well calculated to stir the emotions of an audience, make Romeo and Juliet an acting play of enduring interest" (pp. 155-56). The audience, said Poel, could not fail to be impressed by it. Shakespeare's play "is the most perfect imitation of a love-tragedy, because it has lasted longest in the memory of playgoers and is regarded by them as something apart from all other love-tragedies" (Contemporary Review, 104, 1913).

V

Although the Times in its review of Poel's presentation of Romeo and Juliet at the Royalty commented that it would be "ungracious" to ask exactly how much a modern audience with modern views on wit had gained by some of Poel's pieces of salvage, the newspaper acknowledged that "a great thing" had been gained in Poel's production and it praised the "much fuller" performance of the text: "We have the scene of Juliet waiting for Romeo, and the Nurse's gallimaufry about Romeo and Tybalt; we have Peter and the musicians with their jests about 'silver sound,' and Romeo and Mercutio hammering it out about courtesy and single-soled" (May 11, 1905). George Bernard Shaw's contention was that the simple thing to do with a Shakespeare play was to perform it; the alternative was to let it alone. If Shakespeare made "a mess of it," claimed Shaw, it was not likely that modern producers would succeed where he had failed:

> The moment you admit that the producer's business is to improve Shakespear by cutting out everything that he himself would not have written, and thinks Shakespear ought not to have written, and everything that he thinks the audience will either not like or not understand, and everything that does not make prosaic sense, you are launched on a slope on which there is no stopping until you reach the abyss where Irving's Lear lies forgotten. (Fortnightly Review, n.s. 106, 1919)

Although Shaw praised William Poel as "sticking to the text, the whole text and nothing but the text," an examination of Poel's promptbooks leads to the conclusion that his practices in matters of text at times seem contradictory to his theories.[81] In his first production with the Elizabethan Stage Society in 1895, for example, Poel cut 250 lines from the text of Twelfth Night, thirty for reasons of supposed obscenity, the remainder ostensibly to keep the performance within the "two hours' traffic of our stage," a factor Poel wished to demonstrate. In a second revival of the play in 1897, however, the text was left virtually intact. To any stage manager who wished to mend or improve a Shakespearean play, Poel, like Shaw, gave the following advice: "Hands off. Produce it as it is written or leave it alone" (p. 180). Giving an example of mutilation of Shakespeare's texts on the contemporary stage, Poel compared Irving's acting edition of Hamlet with the scholarly Globe edition and found 1,191 lines left out. There was but one rule to follow when it became necessary to shorten one of Shakespeare's plays, he declared, and that was "to omit lines, but never an entire scene." Justifying Shakespeare's dramatic construction, Poel pointed out that Shakespeare gave unity of design to his dramas, so that each scene had a relation to the whole play (p. 181). Poel advocated the study of facsimiles of the quartos and the first folio and urged theatrical practitioners to examine current acting editions to see how far they were consistent with the author's intentions. "The time has now come when our acting editions could be profitably revised," he maintained. Standard stage versions of the most popular plays he felt should be made as the joint work of professional actors and Shakespearean scholars, and if it was necessary to cut any text, deletions should be the outcome of collaboration between a board of actors and scholars (p. 175). Moreover, Poel advocated playbooks with carefully written introductions describing minutely the plays as it was believed the author conceived them, and with notes on obscure passages, unfamiliar expressions and variant readings. The utmost precaution was to be taken in making any revision to Shakespeare's texts, he maintained, adding that the Elizabethan Stage Society always read the work through in its entirety before making any emendations and Poel himself, in preparation for each production, studied the editions in the British Museum.[82]

Poel therefore did not insist upon textual purity in his productions but on textual integrity, a fine point of distinction perhaps, but one that is crucial to an understanding of Poel's methods. He therefore did not condemn all editing but merely bad editing. Poel always began with a full text and the cuts that he made were not to suit the vanities of the star system; rather, the acting text, rehearsal process and financial arrangements of the group were geared toward an ensemble process under his direction. Even though Poel's texts were not complete restorations and his practice did not--and in some instances, could not--entirely conform to his theories, his acting versions were so much closer to

Shakespeare's texts than were those of the popular producers of his time as to appear radical. When one compares, for example, acting versions of The Merchant of Venice of Irving, Poel and Tree, Poel's incomplete promptbook goes through Act III.i and in this first half of the play Poel cuts no lines, Irving 275.5 and Tree 206.[83]

Poel's promptbook for his Romeo and Juliet production at the Royalty in 1905 reveals about 380 lines cut, certainly a very modest number by Victorian and Edwardian standards when compared with Irving's acting text in which about 1100 lines are excised and Forbes-Robertson's acting text in which about 1000 lines are deleted. Indeed, an examination of promptbooks and acting texts leads one to the important conclusion that Poel's text of Romeo and Juliet was most likely by far the most complete restoration of the play on the English stage since the Restoration. The promptbook, now housed in the Theatre Museum in London, is based on the Edwardian Cassell's National Library Edition of the play, edited by Henry Morley, whose introductory remarks are frequently performance oriented and whose interpretation reveals a similar basis to that of Poel.[84]

Robert Speaight, who acted for Poel, states in his biography of the latter that where the Shakespearean texts were concerned, Poel surrendered on every account to the Puritanism still in vogue.[85] Certainly, lines pencilled through the text in Poel's promptbooks do show numerous cuts to bawdry. Speaight's observation concerning Puritanism can be seen, for example, in Poel's 1893 promptbook for Measure for Measure in which this proper Victorian carefully cuts and substitutes words to avoid all mention of Claudio getting Juliet with child--and thus obscuring the point of the play. But in almost every play a reader can go almost directly to the lines he knows will be left out or in which words will be substituted. Much of Shakespeare's bawdry suffers from Poel's blue pencil. However, cuts are also made for other reasons. A number of speeches in *Romeo and Juliet* are shortened to reduce the playing time of the drama and much of the last scene of *Romeo and Juliet* is removed to focus attention on the final reconciliation. The promptbook, however, reveals less than a dozen cuts sustained for more than a few lines.

Commenting on Poel's presentation of what was traditionally the first act of *Romeo and Juliet*, the *Stage* complained that Poel's audience was not favoured with the complete restoration of all those scenes usually omitted on the stage. The *Stage* said that it was true that a second Capulet, described, presumably according to the Quarto, as "Cosen Capulet," took part in a short dialogue with Juliet's sire in the Ball scene, and some, though not all, of the Nurse's lubricious allusions to the girl's age and childhood were once more spoken; but on the other hand, the most piquant lines in Mercutio's references to Rosaline were cut, "as though Mr. Poel were afraid of Mrs. Grundy" (May 11, 1905). Poel also sharply curtailed the play's initial bawdy dialogue between Sampson and Gregory and in I.v condensed the encounter between the Servingmen. In Act I Poel also excised a few of the more extravagant lines from the long initial speech of the Prince, from Benvolio's inquiry about Romeo's love and Romeo's circumlocutious response. From Act II less was cut. Mercutio's conjuring of Rosaline was bereft of its obscenity, as was the conversation about a sweet goose (II.iv), and deleted was his reference to the Nurse as a bawd (II.iv.107-08). The euphemistic words "plague" and "wench" were substituted for the more ribald "pox" and "whore" (II.iv.25, 27). Moreover, like other producers before him, Poel bowed to censorship laws which prohibited Friar Lawrence speaking of Nature's womb and of her children sucking on her natural bosom (II.iii.10-14).

Poel made his first larger cut in III.i, excising sixteen lines from Benvolio's lengthy recapitulation to the Prince of the fray between Mercutio, Romeo and Tybalt which ended in the Capulet's death. The succeeding scene, III.ii, contains Juliet's famous "gallop apace" speech in which the young bride eagerly awaits her husband and her wedding night. This speech in nineteenth-century stage representation was usually bereft of its most sexually suggestive lines, but William Archer found that in Forbes-Robertson's production at the end of the century Mrs. Patrick Campbell dropped it entirely very early in the run.[56] The critic condemned the 1904 revival at the Court for also omitting this important rhetorical scene entirely, and he chastised its producer for insensitive cutting in order to reduce the lengthy production time on an inconvenient stage (The World, March 1, 1904). When Archer discovered that in the April 1905 presentation of Romeo and Juliet at the Imperial the scene was once again cut, he used the example to point out the "general acquiescence in thoughtless conventionalities" that ran through the production and charged that even in the textual cuts there was a suggestion of commonness. Why, asked Archer, should Juliet be entirely deprived of the "Gallop apace" soliloquy? Its entire omission, as well as that of the succeeding scene with the Nurse, he found an "audacious liberty" and indefensible (The World, April 25, 1905). Taking a fresh look at the text, William Poel in his presentation kept the majority of the soliloquy, cutting only those twelve lines in which Juliet speaks of amorous rites and longs for the black mantle of night (III.ii.5-16).

Poel retained, however, Juliet's poignant "O, I have bought the mansion of a love,/ But not possessed it, and though I am sold,/ Not yet enjoyed" (III.ii.26-28).

In her 1884 production at the Lyceum, Mary Anderson omitted entirely the scene which follows, Juliet's emotionally charged "banished" scene. Praising the actress for following the example set by Miss Neilson in 1814, William Winter pointed out that this decision had been made "wisely" because the scene in his view "conflicts with Romeo's kindred scene and it anticipates a dramatic effect which should not arrive so soon."[87] Poel, on the other hand, allowed his Juliet to reveal the full storm of her emotions at this juncture, cutting only nine of the most extravagant lines from the thirty-one lines in which Juliet expresses her agony at Romeo's banishment. Romeo's parallel scene, in III.ii, Poel kept entire. Condensed by sixteen lines, however, was Friar Lawrence's long soliloquy and curtailed was the passage in which the friar condemns Romeo's ranting and inquires why the young Montague reviles his birth, the heaven, and the earth (III.iii.119-33). To the remainder of Act III, Poel made few excisions. The poignant farewell scene between the young lovers at dawn (III.iv) was kept whole as were the speeches between Juliet and Lady Capulet in which Juliet exclaims

> O how my heart abhors
> To hear him named and cannot come to him,
> To wreak the love I bore my cousin
> Upon his body that hath slaughtered him.
> (III.v.99-102)

These speeches had been almost entirely deleted by Irving. Poel had condemned Irving for not giving enough importance to Capulet's character and for sharply curtailing Capulet's lines in the second half of III.v; in his own production Poel consequently restored almost all of Capulet's thunderous anger at his daughter's disobedience, excising only five lines.

In Act IV, scenes ii, iii and iv, which include Capulet's command to his servingmen to "hire me twenty cunning cooks" (IV.ii.2), Juliet's Potion scene, and the bustling preparations for her wedding to Paris, Poel wished the audience to witness Shakespeare's skillful use of contrast to heighten tension and thus these scenes were kept entire and played without pause. In IV.v he reduced the lamentations of Juliet's parents, the Nurse and Paris on the supposed death of Juliet, carefully cutting a few lines from the speeches of each character. Friar Lawrence's lengthy speech in which he attempts to console the family, however, was reduced by half (IV.v.65-90). The scene with Peter and the musicians had been consistently excised in previous productions but Poel brought this scene back to the stage, cutting eleven of its thirty-eight lines.

In Act V no lines were removed from the initial scene between Romeo and the Apothecary, nor were any lines excised from the succeeding scene in which Friar John explains the unfortunate circumstances preventing the delivery of the Friar's letter to Romeo. Poel kept the first half of V.iii, until the death of Romeo, virtually intact, but made his greatest cuts to the text in the second half of this concluding scene to the play. Almost all productions on the Victorian and Edwardian stage had presented only a small fraction of the final act of Romeo and Juliet. Irving, for example, had cut 184 lines from the final scene, giving only a four-line tag for the Prince to speak after the death of the lovers. Both Lewis Wingfield, responsible for the text in the 1884 production at the Lyceum with Mary Anderson, as well as Forbes-Robertson in his presentation of the play at the Lyceum in 1895, had brought the curtain down on the lovers dying, thus cutting short the play at its climax. Poel's approach, however, was to keep the integrity of the scene and to delete a few lines from individual speeches of the Friar, Balthasar, the Captain of the Watch, and watchmen as they hurry to the tomb and encounter the horrid spectacle of the dead lovers. Similarly, he cut a few lines from the individual reactions of the Prince, Lord and Lady Capulet, and Lord Montague.

In his notes to Romeo and Juliet in the Henry Irving Shakespeare, Frank Marshall acknowledged that the omission in Irving's production of some of what follows on the death of the two lovers might be regretted even from a dramatic point of view. The agitated utterances of Lady Capulet and Capulet, the discovery of the bodies, and the arrest of the Friar and Balthasar all tended to increase the effect of the scene. Justifying, however, Irving's removal of the Friar from the final scene as well as the recapitulation of all the circumstances leading to the death of the lovers, Marshall declared that "this long speech of the Friar's, and all that follows up to within a few lines of the end, is terribly dull and commonplace, and if retained in the acting version would weaken the end of the tragedy."[88] Commenting on Shakespeare's reference in his prologue to "the two hours' traffic of our stage," Marshall noted that "it is not easy to see how Romeo and Juliet could be played in the two hours without omitting a great deal."[89] Agreeing with the practice of actor-managers since the Restoration who had excised all or almost all of the second half of Shakespeare's final scene, William Archer took the position that a repetition in narrative of matters already seen in action was "the grossest of technical blunders."

Shakespeare, he claimed, had committed it in Romeo and Juliet when he made Friar Lawrence in the concluding scene re-tell the whole story of the tragedy. "Even in so early a play such a manifest redundancy seems unaccountable," said Archer.[90]

While not omitting the Friar entirely from the final scene of the play, Poel sharply curtailed the speeches of the Friar and in removing one hundred lines after the death of Romeo, made his largest sustained cuts to the play. Friar Lawrence, now true to his word, was brief, stating merely that Romeo was husband to Juliet, that the Friar had married them, that the Nurse was privy to the marriage, and that if the Friar was to blame for their deaths, his own life should be sacrificed. Excised were thirty-eight lines from the Friar's lengthy confessional narration of his involvement in the untimely death of the young lovers. Modern editors of the play, such as Brian Gibbons in the New Arden edition, recognize the importance of this long, virtually uninterrupted account, pointing out that the audience watches as successive revelations have their deep impact on the parents, the Prince and the populace. This narrative awakens pity, compassion and guilt in them, and as he delivers it the Friar begins his expiation in the act of confession. Moreover, his narrative has such cumulative effect that the Prince himself, in pronouncing judgment, includes his own name among the guilty, and in that confession prepares the way for full reconciliation.[91] It was the reconciliation, however, that Poel wished to stress and, having greatly reduced the narrative of the Friar and having omitted the subsequent accounts given by Balthasar and the Page, Poel consequently focussed attention on the Prince whom he saw, by virtue of rank, as the focal point of the play and had him start his speech with "Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague?/ See what a scourge is laid upon your hate" (V.iii.291-292). Agreeing with Henry Morley, who proclaimed in his introduction to the Cassell's edition that cutting out the reconcilia ic of the Capulets and Montagues "lets the soul out of the play," Poel emphasized the effecting of peace between the two families and the city itself, and ended his production with Capulet and Montague mourning wit joined hands over the dead lovers whom their strife has slain.[92] The play's true end, Poel stressed, was less in the death of the star-cross lovers than in the burying of their parents' strife.

VI

One of the first to assume the role of director as we know it toda William Poel in his *Romeo and Juliet* production showed that it was possible to defy established conventions. The major trend on the nineteenth-century stage was towards archaeological realism and in one sense Poel's insistence upon the Elizabethan context was a further step in this movement; but, in a far more important sense, it was a radical break with the trend. The historicism of Charles Kean, Henry Irving ar Beerbohm Tree was that of the period in which the play was set and thei emphasis on pictorial allusion drew the eye away from the action on the stage. Poel's approach placed Shakespeare back into the context of the era for which he had written and consequently through productions such *Romeo and Juliet* Poel rediscovered the aesthetics of a very different kind of staging. The conventions of the Elizabethan stage emphasized beauty of the language, continuity of the actions and clarity of the story line. Believing in the integrity of Shakespeare's plays, Poel, unlike other historical critics, was convinced of the artistic validity of Shakespeare's theatre. Using Ruskin's statement that it is a constant law that the greatest poets live entirely in their own age and the greatest fruits of their work are gathered out of their own age, Poel applied it to the staging of Shakespeare. Shakespeare and his contemporaries, he said, wrote about what they knew and about nothing else, and their plays were shaped to suit the theatre of the day and no other.

William Poel's production of Romeo and Juliet at the Royalty in 1905 met with little acclaim at the time. Critics had begun to complain of too much scenery, but it was going too far for them to have a Romeo and Juliet presentation with no scenery at all, no stars in the cast, and the strain of listening to a musical speaking of the poetry "with its consonantal swiftness, its gradations sudden or slow into vowelled liquidity, its comic rushes and stops."[93] Most theatre-goers agreed with the evaluation of one of Poel's critics, A. B. Walkley, who proclaimed that Poel's efforts had "place in an educational curriculum but none in the catalogue of pleasures."[94] The makeshift platform stage was often a bleak-looking affair, the hall was apt to be chilly, and the actors sometimes amateurish. No one could pretend, said Shaw, that the Elizabethan Stage Society had any advantage over Mr. Daly or Sir Henry Irving in the histrionic talent at its disposal. "But what it had," he declared, "went so much further under the Elizabethan conditions that everyone present took the acting to be much better than it was." At Daly's or the Lyceum, by contrast, only the most gifted players could make any considerable effort, the other parts invariably seeming colourless and more subordinate than Shakespeare intended (Saturday

Review, July 20, 1895). "What a gigantic reform Mr. Poel will make if his Elizabethan stage should lead to such a novelty as a theatre to which people go to see the play instead of to see the cast," commented Shaw ironically (Saturday Review, July 11, 1896).

Poel's practical staging fulfilled a much-needed revolution in Shakespearean production. In presenting a Romeo and Juliet that was closer to Shakespeare's second quarto text than any other on the stage since 1660, Poel proved that the play could be produced effectively without the many cuts, transpositions and lavish interpolated business that had marked its presentation for almost two and a half centuries, and he taught producers to examine closely Shakespeare's text to discover the dramatist's structuring of the play. Because of his efforts, minor scenes and characters were restored to their rightful importance. Neither Garrick nor Irving nor Phelps had been anything like so impelled, as was Poel, by a body of critical presuppositions and dramatic theories that were to be tried and tested by practical stage experimentation. In this respect Poel, although already formulating ideas more than two decades before the turn of the century, can very much be considered a twentieth-century figure. In Drama from Ibsen to Brecht Raymond Williams concludes his analysis of twentieth-century drama by stating that "this century of new drama is directly and indirectly self conscious; critically aware of its own problems and forms. Very few modern dramatists whose work has survived their immediate place and time, have failed to write critically about dramatic form and the theatre."[95] This can also be said about many of the more important modern theatre practitioners.

Poel's efforts were comparable to those of other late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century innovators who expressed dissatisfaction with existing theatrical conditions or dramatic forms and set out to change them. Constantin Stanislavski, for example, explains in My Life in Art his rebellion against existing conventions on the Russian stage in 1898:

> The founding of our new Moscow Art and Popular Theatre was in the nature of a revolution. We protested against the customary manner of acting, against theatricality, against bathos, against declamation, against the bad manner of production, against the habitual scenery, against the star system which spoiled the ensemble, against the light and farcical repertoire which was being cultivated on the Russian stage at that time. . . . Like all revolutionaries we broke the old and exaggerated the new . . . we sought for inner truth, for the truth of feeling and experience.[96]

Similarly, in Ireland, J. M. Synge and W. B. Yeats protested against the lack of poetic drama on the contemporary stage. Synge said that the naturalistic drama of Ibsen and Zola that had become influential dealt with "the reality of life in joyless and pallid words." It was his contention that "in a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or apple, and such speeches cannot be written by anyone who works among people who have shut their lips on poetry."[97] Synge then proceeded to base the language of his own plays on the idiom of a rural Irish people whose speech is naturally poetic, both in imagery and rhythm. It was the thesis of W. B. Yeats that "if one has not beautiful or powerful speech, one has not . . . great literature."[98] His goal, then, was to write poetic drama in which, like drama of centuries past, "there is much lyric feeling and at times a lyric measure . . . wrought into the dialogue."[99]

"As always, criticism has preceded and fostered creation," says Mrs. Q. D. Leavis of the efforts of the Brontës in the mid-nineteenth century to write novels which would not merely give a surface imitation of life, but which would be true to the whole woman and convey a sense of life's springs and undercurrents.[100] William Poel, in his approach to the theatre, was also, at first, critical rather than creative; archetypal of the twentieth-century reformer, Poel would declare the mode of his own creativity later on. Claiming that theory and practice should be closely related, Poel also asserted that production was the best means of testing theories about Shakespeare's texts. Perpetual distortion of Shakespeare the artist existed among Poel's contemporaries because of nineteenth-century staging conventions and this distortion affected the literary as well as the theatrical world. Poel's premise was that Shakespearean criticism and production are inseparable, that a production should function as criticism and it should fully explicate the text. A production should clearly tell the central action of a play, which must illuminate the actions of the characters; a considered analysis was therefore necessary that emphasized certain moments of the piece over others. "Poel," writes Harcourt Williams, "never abandoned his original conception of Shakespeare as a consummate craftsman of the practical theatre."[101] We are no longer startled by the conception but it was startling enough when Poel first defended it. On the stage Shakespeare had lent dignity to the art of the great actors, but he was not to be trusted. It was Poel's revolutionary discovery that he could be trusted.

Many of Poel's ideas concerning the presentation of Romeo and Juliet on the stage have now been adopted by theatrical custom as well as by dramatic critics; it is important, however, to see how he arrived at them. He attained them, not in the way that many actor-managers gained their novelties, not by saying, "What can we do with the scene that has never been done before?" He arrived at them by the simple expedient of reading the play. Instead of saying, "This is where we want a big effect," as Garrick and Irving had done, and as Beerbohm Tree would do in his production of the play, Poel tried to find out what a literal fidelity to Shakespeare would produce. Like Samuel Phelps, he was not interested in grand effects; he was only interested in effects that were significant.

The importance of Poel's work was little recognized by the critics of his own era, Shaw being an important exception. Poel unfortunately is still largely unknown, even to those who study and work in the theatre. Only one biography exists, commissioned by the Society for Theatre Research in 1952 and written by Robert Speaight, who acted for Poel, and who in his introduction found it necessary to pose the question for his readers, "Who was William Poel?" Much of Poel's work has been clouded by his reputation for eccentricity, "eccentric," "single-minded" and "crank" being terms often used by critics. The foundations for these charges are several. First, Poel's work remained marginal to the mainstream of professional theatre; he expressed a strong dislike for commercialism in the theatre which he felt would ultimately destroy the art form. Then, he always had difficulties obtaining sufficient funding for his productions and consequently his actors were usually amateurs. Nor did he ever manage to secure a permanent theatre structure in which to work. His productions had very short runs and were held in a variety of unconventional places, with only an occasional production at a recognized theatre.[102] Often after the most careful preparation there would only be one performance, and except for a few plays taken on tour, six performances was a long run. Poel's relationship with the commercial theatre was thus so tenuous as to be almost non-existent, and when he was thought of at all by management, he was evidently considered a theorist, almost a freak.

Edward Garnett in 1913 pointed out that from the average actor-manager's standpoint Mr. Poel was an enthusiastic fanatic endowed with the eccentricity of genius which, in Garnett's view, meant that "in his artistic and scholarly conscience Mr. Poel is miles ahead of his generation and leagues ahead of his newspaper critics" (English Review, 14, 1913). Poel, with the instinct of a medieval craftsman who, absorbed in his work, could accept no stultifying compromise, made his appeal to an intelligent elite. He preferred to come and go where he pleased, and so with his scanty means he was compelled to make a fresh start with each production in turn, and surmount as best he could the same recurring difficulties of presentation. Because he never established himself in a London theatre, his standards of skill, taste and originality were unable to flourish and perpetuate a school of fine traditions. One sees, however, what Poel could have accomplished if he had had a fine company to work with. Asked to produce Measure for Measure at the Stratford Festival in 1908, Poel used Miss Horniman's Company and the performance, reported the Birmingham Gazette, was "so splendidly simple and splendidly impressive that seeing it one felt inclined to say 'Away with all scenery.'" It was difficult to pick from a company "where all were so uniformly good," remarked the reviewer, and where all caught to such effectiveness the spirit of the performance. "One could gladly do with a whole festival of plays so acted and produced" (April 22, 1908).

Rinda Lundstrom, in her 1984 Mr. Poel's Hamlets: The Director as Critic, the only other major study of William Poel, rightly states that the little current critical work on William Poel has neglected to correlate directly his theories with his production work and that this has distorted his work in much the same way that separation of criticism and production in Poel's time had distorted the works of Shakespeare.[103] Nor, indeed, has there been any in-depth analysis of Poel's promptbooks. Lundstrom uses representative scenes from four Hamlet productions from 1881 to 1924 and shows how each production addressed certain critical problems, and how in turn the productions gave rise to further critical questions. Poel was neither an archaist nor a textual purist although he has been called both. Because of this misperception of his methods and his intentions, his work has been perceived as erratic and his creative contributions to the production of Shakespeare's plays have not been adequately recognized.

Poel even today is still a contentious figure and rather a difficult person to come to terms with. He was so radically right in the main things that he did and so persevering against the forces of the spectacular theatre that he opposed, that one hates to have to qualify one's praise. And yet, so eccentric and single-minded was Poel that there is a good deal of justification in Speaight's description of Poel's mission as "Elizabethan Methodism"[104] and that, in some ways, he was a "visionary crank."[105] Poel's idiosyncrasies, his insistence on using amateur actors, and what was commonly perceived to be his rigid antiquarianism all hindered his cause. Perhaps he was too dogmatic in some of his assertions and too extreme in his insistence on "the tunes" but a number of his performers later became England's leading players and producers and such notable actors and actresses as Granville-Barker, Lewis Casson, Esmé Percy, Robert Atkins, Nugent Monck, Ben Greet, and

Edith Evans all credit Poel for their excellent grounding in Shakespearean acting and verse-speaking.

In a circular letter sent to artists who worked under Poel, Sir Barry Jackson, director of the Stratford Memorial Theatre, wrote in 1948 that "The work of William Poel has a profound effect on present-day approach to Shakespearean production and I have long felt that the compilation of any facts or impressions concerning him and his methods should be attempted for reference." Poel's widow had destroyed his personal papers after his death in 1934, and in asking artists for their memoirs, Jackson made a concerted effort to obtain their accounts of his association before its records were lost. These memoirs, now held at the Shakespeare Memorial Library in Stratford-upon-Avon, have received little attention.[106] Jackson had seen Poel's production of Measure for Measure in 1908 with Miss Horniman's Company and later remarked that he had always felt that something was wrong with Irving's productions, that the audience spent as much time looking at the tableau curtains as at the play itself. Poel's Measure for Measure had a "tremendous impact" on him "with its directness, its impetus and simplicity."[107]

The majority of critics and playgoers may have been hostile to Poel's endeavours, but many performers recognized their value, especially with respect to his methods of revitalizing poetic speech. Granville-Barker, who played the lead in the Elizabethan Stage Society production of Richard II in 1899, declared in a letter to Poel, "You shook all my previous convictions by showing me how you wanted the first lines of Richard II spoken."[108] Robert Speaight found that Poel was primarily a teacher and "With the exception of Barker, of whom I had no experience, he was the greatest teacher the classical theatre in England has known during the present century." It was quite useless to come to rehearsal with preconceived ideas on how to speak a particular line, wrote Speaight: "you had to abdicate before you could act. But you were a fool if you did not realize how much Poel could teach you" (Drama Survey, 3, 1964). Lewis Casson relates that Poel himself always considered his work on the speaking of the plays by far his most important contribution to the problem of producing them. At the time it made little impression. "But it is noticeable," said Casson in 1952, "that many of our best speaking actors today either came under his direct influence in his productions . . . or under that of producers who worked under him, like Barker, or, may I say, myself" (Listener, 47, 1952). Casson found that Poel himself had both the vocal imagination and the vocal flexibility, together with immense knowledge and intuitive perception of the plays themselves. But because he had little money, and could afford neither a long period for rehearsals nor highly skilled expensive actors, he often got results which showed merely what he was trying to do.

Basil Dean, who spent long hours in solitary instruction with Poel on the incantation of the Shakespearean line, found that he learned from Poel "the secret of rhythmic speech, the value of the operative word, and the magic of Shakespeare when it is spoken both musically and intelligently. These lessons I have never forgotten . . . . he achieved a total effect of surge and sweep quite unlike anything I had heard before."[109] Edith Evans declared, "I first learned to play Shakespeare under a very great man, William Poel . . . [who] taught me how to look for life in the lines. He also showed me that blank verse was for pace, for speed" (Listener, Feb. 10, 1937). Lillah McCarthy admitted that "The discipline of William Poel's rehearsal sometimes wore me down. But I emerged from it knowing something." Through Poel, she acknowledged, she had come to understand "the essential of drama--harmonious movement." The more she came to know Poel the more clearly she saw that he could do so easily what others found impossible: to reconcile the poetic and the dramatic in Shakespeare's plays by showing that they are not contradictory but complementary to one another.[110] Poel's genius, she found, was as genius always is, of imagination, and an infinite capacity for taking pains in both small and big things. His stage groupings she discovered were "masterly" and once Poel had finished with groupings, he rehearsed each of the crowd separately, "aware that if the whole is to be harmonious, the fitting of each part of it must be perfect."[111] "To you, William Poel, pioneer of modern Shakespearean production," she declared in her autobiography, "I owe more than to all the many others who have taught me . . . . Before you, Shakespeare lived everywhere except on the stage. You, by opening the stage doors once again to him, brought Shakespeare at last to his natural home in the hearts of all who love poetry and drama."[112]

Poel's ideas and innovations thus had their strongest effect on the people with whom he worked, and it was through those men and women that Poel's influence made itself permanently felt. Dame Edith Evans was induced to try her fortune on the professional stage after playing Cressida for Poel; both B. Iden Payne and Sir Lewis Casson, who acted in Poel's memorable Measure for Measure at Manchester, became eminent actors and directors; Nugent Monck, who was his stage manager for many years, built and directed the Elizabethan-style Maddermarket Theatre at Norwich. Granville-Barker, who played Richard II for Poel, was to illustrate a great deal of Poel's teaching in the productions of A Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night and A Winter's Tale at the Savoy, 1912 to 1913, and his enormously influential Prefaces to Shakespeare are a brilliant application of Poel's principles. At a dinner in Poel's honour in 1912 Granville-Barker acknowledged the importance of the theatrical practitioner, telling the audience that Poel was "one of the greatest and finest influences in the English theatre." Beginning his work when the genius of Irving was supreme in Shakespearean matters and when it was blasphemy to say anything against it, Poel had had the courage to speak out, and it was now Granville-Barker's prediction that in time that heresy would become an accepted creed.[113] In 1913 Granville-Barker gave Poel an introduction to the German producer Max Reinhardt and wrote that Poel had "taught us all (by his great devotion) more about the staging of Shakespeare and the spirit of playing in it, I think, than anyone else in Europe."[114] Writing in 1927 and citing Poel's "profound influence in Elizabethan drama as we see it today," Granville-Barker said, "That Poel should think his work a failure is partly his modesty, partly his keenness to do more yet. It is, of course, no such thing . . . . But he chose to be free-lance--indeed he could have been nothing else--and such work, I suppose, never takes on endurance in concrete form."[115]

Elsie Fogarty, who played in Poel's Locrine in 1899, passed on many of Poel's techniques to several generations of English actors through her Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art. Laurence Olivier's Romeo in 1933, for example, owed a great deal to notes taken by Miss Fogarty while Poel was rehearsing Lillah McCarthy in the same part for a performance of the Shakespeare Reading Society. McCarthy wrote in a letter to Sir Barry Jackson that "Olivier was Romeo: youth in love."

The day after seeing him perform McCarthy met Fogarty and asked the instructor if she had seen the wonderful performance. "Yes, of course," came the answer. "I trained him. At every rehearsal Poel gave you in the part I was at the back of the hall writing down everything Poel said and when the time came I passed it on to Olivier and his genius perfected Poel's instructions."[116]

It is the definition of a radical, says Robert Speaight, that he goes down to the roots of things, not that he pulls them up.[117] Poel's work in the theatre may be compared with a drastic pruning. The rose bush was stripped bare and cut short in order that it might produce, in time, more splendid blooms. His influence took a number of years to be recognized by critics but by 1913 *The Times*, which had condemned Poel's *Romeo and Juliet* in 1905, praised "the healthy activity over the new way" of producing Shakespeare, and said that Poel's productions could be taken as a sure sign that once more the world's classic had taken on new youth and meaning (May 30, 1913). The same year in the *English Review* Edward Garnett proclaimed that it was Poel who single-handedly had reversed the traditional practice of bringing Shakespeare's art down to the level of the audience by mutilations, by guillotining it with drop scenes, cramping the swing and balance of its effects behind the proscenium arch (July 1913).

No critic, however, has left a more sensitive appreciation of Poel's art and influence than C. E. Montague, dramatic reviewer for the *Manchester Guardian*. Having viewed Poel's production of *Samson Agonistes* in 1908--and who else but Poel would have staged *Samson Agonistes* at that time--Montague praised the innovative staging and found Poel's effective groupings of characters to be a joy in themselves: it was as if Poel "had every one of his groupings painted to a finish in his mind and then transferred it, touch by touch, to its place on the purple background, all under the strong influence of Italian medieval and Renaissance theories of pictorial design." The essence of the Elizabethan theatre was the fusion or interpenetration of stage and audience. Poel did wonders, Montague acknowledged, but the critic pointed out that Poel could not get rid of the proscenium arch and what he therefore gave his audience was not an Elizabethan stage as it was to Elizabethan playgoers but a verisimilar picture of an Elizabethan stage seen through the frame of a modern proscenium. Because of lack of funds Poel could not recreate in a theatre of his own the Elizabethan sensation of having an actor come forward to the edge of the platform in the midst of the audience and deliver speeches. Nonetheless, Montague affirmed that Poel had accomplished a great deal with his attempts at recreating Elizabethan staging conditions: "We saw better than ever the needlessness, as well as the destructiveness of the quite modern method of taking Shakespeare's shortest scenes." Explaining that on the contemporary stage these scenes were usually scurried through by actors who maintained a precarious footing on a strip of boarding between the footlights in front and a bellying sail painted with landscape, which swelled at them from behind, Montague was struck by the fact that on Poel's stage "these short scenes and the long ones flow into one another without the slightest jolt or scrappiness." The use of the upper stage, too, was surprisingly effective and undisturbing: "it made you see why Shakespeare's stage directions so often bring in people 'above,' 'on the walls,' or otherwise aloft."[118]

"To no one other than William Poel should the members of the British

Drama League . . . desire to do honour," announced Allan Gomme on their behalf in 1933, "for none has made a greater contribution to the art of the theatre than he has." William Poel, maintained Gomme, was not a faddist, nor was he an antiquarian seeking to re-impose the out-of-date ideas of ancients into a society which they would not fit. Instead, "he is a great artist and a great master of stage technique endeavouring to restore vitality to the most poignant of the arts." His name, continued Gomme, was closely associated with the Elizabethan theatre but his main thesis, that the inspiration of the producer must be derived from the play as written by the author rather than from the science of the mechanic or the art of the painter, was as true of the modern drama as of the old, and no one who was willing to learn could afford not to hear what Poel had to teach him. It had been no easy task, acknowledged Gomme: "For over fifty years Poel has been preaching and producing, producing and preaching, with an intensity and singleness of purpose that no opposition has been able to deflect and no difficulties to deter" (Drama, 1933).

In one of a number of articles on Poel on the centennary of his birth, Sir Lewis Casson in 1952 stated that Poel's ideas and practice "have deeply affected our theatre, both directly in the production of Shakespeare, and indirectly in the matter of the mutual relations between the actor, the audience, and the building which houses them, by restoring freedom to the dramatist and producer, bound of late by the limitations of a too rigid naturalism on the proscenium stage" (Listener, January 10, 1952). W. A. Darlington, dramatic reviewer for the London Daily Telegraph, in writing Poel's obituary in 1934, perhaps best summarized his work: "Yet to this crank, this dreamer, this failure, belongs a place at the very head of that vast array of scholars and of men of the theatre whose names have been illuminated by a reflected glory from the name of Shakespeare. He stands above the rest because he destroyed so much of the evil that the rest had done." Quite simply, said Darlington, it was Poel's bold action, in cutting away from Shakespeare's texts the monstrous incrustations of three centuries of interpolation, emendation, and traditional stage business, that first made critics and managers realize that Shakespeare did not need assistance--that he was a practical playwright who, given a theatre something like his own, could hold the stage by his own virtuosity (Dec. 14, 1934). In a memoir written in 1936, Poel's wife said that Schiller's quotation had been a favourite of her late husband: "The assertion so commonly made that the public degrades Art, is not well founded. It is the Artist who brings the public to the level of his own conception."[119]

Poel's powerful prophetic genius acted as a catalyst for a revolution that was asking, obscurely, for expression. Even a critic as hostile as William Archer had felt the limitations of Lyceum Shakespeare and the simplicity which Poel exacted with so sharp a discipline was really a means to a greater freedom. It is as an example of single-mindedness, utterly devoid of personal ambition, that Poel is most remembered. The practice of his theory was often marred by eccentricity and there was some justice in William Archer's complaint that he was "a non-scenic Beerbohm Tree." At times he could be inconsistent with his own doctrine, but as the Times Literary Supplement pointed out in its tribute to him in 1952, "he performed the inestimable service of putting the Elizabethans back into their context, and of persuading us that they are all the more real for being allowed to speak for themselves"

(July 11, 1952).

"I tried to get him a knighthood," wrote George Bernard Shaw to Sir Barry Jackson, explaining that he had all but succeeded when Poel, whose consent was necessary, announced that he would accept nothing from the British government because it had not conferred a title on his musician father Reginald Pole [sic] for the light he had thrown on Mozart's Requiem." What could be done with such a man?" queried the exasperated Shaw, adding, "Personably he was likeable. Abstractly he was incurably cantankerous. Many reformers are like that."[120]

NOTES

[1] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, "The Living Shakespeare: A Defence of Modern Taste," 1901, in *Thoughts and After-thoughts* (London: Cassell, 1913), p. 56.

[2] Tree, "The Tempest in a Teacup," 1904, in *Thoughts and After-thoughts*, p. 213.

[3] Henry Arthur Jones, *The Renascence of the English Drama* (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 136.

[4] William Bodham Donne, *Essays on the Drama* (London, 1854), p. 142.

[5] Donne, *Essays on the Drama*, p. 77.

[6] Terry, *Story of My Life*, p. 136.

[7] Mary Anderson, *A Few Memories* (London: Osgood, McIlvaine, 1896), p. 175.

[8] Anderson, *A Few Memories*, p. 175.

[9] Anderson, *A Few Memories*, p. 182.

[10] William Archer, *About the Theatre* (London: Fisher, Unwin, 1886), p. 243.

[11] William Archer, *The Theatrical World of 1895* (London, 1896; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971), p. 222.

[12] Sir John Hankin, Letter, *Academy*, Feb. 5, 1898, 60.

[13] Gordon Crosse, diary, "Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen," MSS, Birmingham Reference Library, II, 33-36.

[14] Anderson acting version published 1884; New York prompt copy now in New York Public Library, catalogued under NCP1884/N181757B, has many additional cuts.

[15] Mary Anderson, as quoted in George Odell, *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1963), II, 396.

[16] J. R. Planché, *Recollections and Reflections*, 2 vols. (London: Tinsley, 1872), II, 83, 85.

See also Jan McDonald, "*The Taming of the Shrew* at the Haymarket Theatre, 1844 and 1847," *Nineteenth Century British Theatre*, eds. Kenneth Richards and Peter Thomson (London: Methuen, 1971), pp. 157-70.

[17] William Poel, Shakespeare in the Theatre (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1913), pp. 120-21. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[18] Entry made on Feb. 23, 1877. This observation was made by Poel at age twenty-two in a diary that he kept from 1874 to 1878. As quoted in Allan Gomme, compiler, "William Poel: 1852-1934: A Chronological Record of His Published Writings on the Theatre and Theatrical Subjects to Which are Added Abstracts from an Early Diary (1872-1878), and a few M.S. Papers." Enthoven Collection, Theatre Museum, London, Z8699.4.

[19] Entry made on Aug. 5, 1878, in Gomme, I, xcviii.

[20] Entry made on Dec. 18, 1874, in Gomme, I, lxviii.

[21] William Poel, Monthly Letters (London: T. Werner Laurie, 1929), pp. 2-3.

[22] Shakespeare in the Theatre, published in 1913, is a collection of more than thirty years of Poel's articles, reprinted from such sources as The National Review, The Westminster Review, Era, and New Age. Many of these articles were read, from 1881 onwards, before such groups as the New Shakspere Society.

Monthly Letters, his other full-length book, contains selections from the series of one-page leaflets which were distributed monthly between 1916 and 1924, first to members of the London Shakespeare League and then to selected papers. Poel wrote on a number of subjects, including contemporary and Elizabethan stage practice, Elizabethan history, Shakespeare biography, dramatic criticism, and the economics of the modern theatre.

Allan Gomme's compilation of Poel's published writings comprises four large volumes, now housed in the Theatre Museum, London. These thousand pages provide a fascinating insight into Poel's theories as well as his theatrical practice.

[23] Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival (London: Heinemann, 1954), p. 44.

[24] Poel's explanation for his unusual and controversial choice of staging Q_1 of Hamlet, probably a pirated version, rather than Q_2, was that "Q_1 represents more truly his dramatic conception than either Q_2 or our stage version" (Era, April 1881). For an actor the early quarto was the most important: however misrepresented the text might be the actor could not help recognizing that the editor had endeavoured [illegible] reproduce the play as he saw it represented.

[25] Dutton Cook, Nights at the Play (London: Chatto and Windus, 1883), II, 314-16.

[26] The Star, Feb. 28, 1890; as rpt. in Poel Dossier, "Extracts from Works with Reference to Poel," Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare Memorial Trust Library.

[27] Shaw says that only about six people were in the audience. He attended with Harley Granville-Barker (Pall Mall Gazette, Dec. 2, 1952, 5).

[28] For scholarship on nineteenth-century German productions which formed a rebellion to the spectacular traditon, see Simon Williams, "The 'Shakespeare-Stage' in Nineteenth-Century Germany," in Richard Foulkes, ed., Shakespeare and the Victorian Stage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 210-21.

[29] This drawing, by Arend Van Buchell, was a copy of an original drawing of the Swan made by Johannes Dewitt, a Dutchman travelling in England about 1596. The discovery of the sketch of the Swan Theatre was part of a new wave of Shakespearean scholarship, especially in the field of textual research. In the forefront of this movement were Dr. A. W. Pollard, with his emphasis on the value of the neglected Shakespearean Quartos as against the hitherto canonized Folio; and Dr. W. W. Greg whose bibliographical discoveries are of the greatest importance.

[30] Programme for Romeo and Juliet at the Royalty Theatre, May 1905, in "Programmes Romeo and Juliet," Birmingham Reference Library, S994.

[31] "The Elizabethan Stage," part of a paper read before the Elizabethan Society, Nov. 1, 1893; reprinted in The Theatre, Nov. 1893.

[32] Photographs of the stage in use by the Elizabethan Stage Society are held today in the Theatre Museum, London, and form part of the Gabrielle Enthoven Collection.

For detailed description of Poel's staging, see especially The Times, Nov. 11, 1893; and William Archer, The Theatrical World for 1893, pp. 266ff.

For a modern analysis of some of Poel's mistaken notions of Shakespearean conventions, see Cary Mazer's Shakespeare Refashioned: Elizabethan Plays on Edwardian Stages (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1981). Poel was influenced by Edwardian scholarship and its misconceptions about the Elizabethan stage. These Elizabethanists, says Mazer, clearly projected Edwardian notions of stagecraft and stage space onto their understanding of the Elizabethan stage. Poel, for example, used curtains extensively to change location.

[33] Promptbook for Romeo and Juliet production, Royalty Theatre, May 5, 1905, directed by William Poel. The promptbook is part of the Enthoven Collection, now housed in the Theatre Museum, London, and catalogued under S674-1982. This promptbook is disappointing: cuts to the text are shown but little is given of scenic devices and stage directions.

[34] Lewis Casson, "William Poel and the Modern Theatre," The Listener, 47 (1952), 57.

[35] William Poel, reply to a questionnaire Huntly Carter sent to scholars and producers in 1910 on the best way of presenting Shakespeare on the stage. Carter, Huntly, comp., "A Collection of Twenty-one Letters from Eminent Shakespearean Scholars, Critics and Producers on the Subject

of the Staging of Shakespeare in 1910." Shakespeare Memorial Library, Stratford-upon-Avon.

[36] Speaight, p. 43.

[37] Quoted in Arthur Sprague, "Shakespeare and William Poel," University of Toronto Quarterly, 17 (1947), 32.

[38] William Archer, "The Elizabethan Stage Society," The New Budget, June 27, 1895; rpt. in The Theatrical World of 1895 (1896; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971), pp. 219-26.

[39] George Bernard Shaw, letter, in Joseph Harker, Studio and Stage (London: Nisbet, 1924), 188.

[40] "Shakespeare on the Modern Stage; an Account of a Public Discussion at the Guildhall School of Music," The Times, Oct. 25, 1905. Shaw's comment was part of a symposium in 1905 at which Shakespearean critics and theatrical practitioners such as Tree, Poel, Shaw, Furnivall, Grein, and Gilbert gave their views on the best method of presenting Shakespeare on the modern stage.

[41] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing 1890 to 1952 (London: Mowbray, 1952), pp. 46-47.

[42] Harold Child, letter, 1933, in Speaight, p. 182.

[43] Gordon Crosse, diary, "Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen," III, 173-80.

[44] W. J. Lawrence, The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies (1913; London: Ro Russell, 1963), II, 151-52.

[45] William Poel, "A Symposium on the Representation of Shakespeare," ed. Huntly Carter, New Age, 8 (1911), 250.

[46] William Poel, "On Stage-Realism, Past and Present," June Supplement to the New Age, ed. Huntly Carter, June 20, 1910, 4-5.

[47] Programme, Romeo and Juliet, May 1905, Royalty Theatre.

[48] William Poel, "On Stage-Realism, Past and Present," p. 5.

[49] Promptbook, Romeo and Juliet, 1905, Royalty.

[50] Alfred Ayres, Acting and Actors; Elocution and Elocutionists (New York: Appleton, 1894), p. 101.

[51] Joseph Knight, Theatrical Notes (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1893), p. 68.

[56] Poel claimed that Shakespeare provided the actor with clues as to where the key word of his sentence was: "In the First Folio some words are presented with a capital for the first letter which not even in Elizabethan days were so spelt" (Monthly Letters, pp. 13-14).

[57] Poel, Monthly Letters, p. 94. The playwright, he said, had little else by which he could sustain the attention of his audience since scenery, costume and lighting varied but little. Even the interest aroused in the story was mainly dependent upon the skill with which the actors spoke the language and impersonated their parts. If there was not variety in the quality of the actors' voices, as well as skill of modulation in each voice, it was difficult, said Poel, to see how interest throughout a performance could be sustained. In the part of Shylock, for example, there was greed, malice, hatred, revenge, horror and desperation. All these moods had to be represented, and different notes in the voice were wanted for all of them.

[58] Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 62.

[59] Poel's method of casting his actors in a play such as Twelfth Night could also be compared with the casting of an opera with, for example, Viola as mezzosoprano, Olivia as contralto, Maria as high soprano, Orsino as tenor, Malvolio as baritone, Toby as bass, and Andrew as falsetto. A vocal range of two octaves would be required from each speaker.
This, of course, was Shavian pratice, too, in Shaw's playwriting and directing.

[60] Poel's reputation as a "crank" was also increased by his eccentricity in putting women in men's parts for some of his productions. This practice was not followed for his 1905 production of Romeo and Juliet but in an 1895 directed reading of the play at Steinway Hall, for example, both Romeo and Mercutio were actresses, Lillah McCarthy playing the part of Romeo. Poel explained that he was unable to use boy actors with their sweet musical voices, the church and school forbidding him. The mature Englishman, he charged, lacked the necessary quality of voice to give physical expression to words of love, but there were no similar drawbacks in the Englishwoman whose voice was capable of expressing delicate feeling, while at the same time it was flexible enough to delineate passion, and to indicate the masculine traits of emotion (Monthly Letters, pp. 28-29). No convincing explanation of Poel's disconcerting practice was ever given, but at least he never claimed it was Elizabethan.

[61] G. Wilson Knight, Shakespearean Production (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), p. 217.

[62] Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing 1890 to 1952, p. 47.

[63] It is noteworthy that Forbes-Robertson's marvellous voice had also been trained using musical methods. Gordon Bottomley in 1947 described the method by which the actor's voice was trained by Brewer, the historian:

> Seat yourself at a piano daily. Decide on a note in the middle of your voice, strike it on the piano, and speak some line of verse bit, firmly, vocalizing it without singing it. Then go forward, and do the same thing on the next higher note; and so on to the next octave, with the same line. Return then to the original medial note and take the line downward through another octave. Do this daily--of course varying always your line of verse. If you are diligent, and do not let unthinking habit in, you will find your voice benefiting, both in fineness of tone and expressive inflexion. (Theatre Notebook, 1947, I, viii, 116)

[64] Allan Gomme, "Biography of William Poel," Poel Dossier, Stratford-upon-Avon.

[65] William Archer, The Theatrical World of 1895, p. 285.

[66] Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 182.

[67] This was no faint praise from a man who disliked romance in drama; who, although professing to be unaffectedly fond of Shakespeare's plays, had called Shakespeare a "damned fool"; and who had repeatedly railed against Shakespeare's "monstrous rhetorical fustian," his unbearable platitudes, and his "sententious combination of ready reflections with complete intellectual sterility."

[68] Harold Child, Letter to Poel, Nov. 9, 1933. As summarized in Speaight, p. 182.

[69] The London Shakespeare League was founded in 1902 in support of Poel's ideas to produce annually a Shakespearean production or works of Shakespearean criticism, and to publish Shakespeare's plays without act or scene divisions.

[70] Crosse, diary, II, 33-36.

[71] William Poel, "The Stage-Version of Romeo and Juliet," Transactions of the New Shakspere Society, 1887-92; rpt. in Shakespeare in the Theatre.

[72] Poel, Monthly Letters, 46.

[73] Programme for Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum, Sept. 21, 1895, "Programmes of Shakespearean Performances," Vol. I: Romeo and Juliet, Birmingham Reference Library.

[74] William Poel, What is Wrong with the Stage (London: Allen and Unwin, 1920), p. 7.

[75] Blackwood's Magazine, Dec. 1879, reminiscing about this production, remarked that "we once saw Juliet in a London theatre--happily she was a foreigner, Mlle. Stella Colas--rise from her bed in the great potion-drinking scene to curtsy to a clamorous knot of admirers."

[76] Programme, Romeo and Juliet, 1905, at the Royalty.

[77] Arthur Colby Sprague and J. C. Trewin, Shakespeare's Plays Today (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1970), p. 51.

[78] William Poel, Letter to Dr. Furnivall, President of the New Shakspere Society, Oct. 22, 1880. As quoted in Speaight, p. 48.

[79] In Speaight, p. 181.

[80] Romeo and Juliet acting text, "as arranged for the stage" by Forbes-Robertson and presented at the Lyceum Theatre, Sept. 21, 1895.

[81] Shaw, letter to Sir Barry Jackson, 1948, Poel Collection, Startford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare Memorial Trust Library.

[82] William Poel, "An Account of the Elizabethan Stage Society," Private Printing, 1898.

[83] Claris Glick, "William Poel: His Theories and Influence," Shakespeare Quarterly, 15 (1964),

[84] Promptbook for Romeo and Juliet production at the Royalty, May 5, 1905. It was Morley, of course, who sixty years earlier had appreciated Samuel Phelps' unconventional interpretation of the play on the stage and had commented sensitively in his Examiner reviews on that reformer's stage practices.

[85] Speaight, p. 98.

[86] Archer, Theatrical World of 1895, p. 289.

[87] William Winter, The Wallet of Time, 2 vols. (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1913; rpt. 1969), p. 16.

[88] Frank Marshall, notes to Romeo and Juliet, The Henry Irving Shakespeare, p. 78.

[89] Marshall, p. 61.

[90] William Archer, Playmaking: A Manual of Craftsmanship (Boston: Small, Maynard, and Co., 1912), p. 96.

[91] Brian Gibbons, ed. Romeo and Juliet (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 76.

[92] Morley, Introd., Cassells Edition of Romeo and Juliet, p. 11.

[93] Poel's speaking of Shakespeare's poetry is thus described by Harold Child who was present at Poel's Romeo and Juliet. "Shakespeare in the Theatre from the Restoration to Present Times," in A Companion to Shakespeare Studies, ed. Harley Granville-Barker and G. B. Harrison (Cambridge: CUP, 1966), p. 345.

[94] A. B. Walkley, Drama and Life (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1908), p. 137.

[95] Raymond Williams, Drama from Ibsen to Brecht (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 381.

[96] Constantin Stanislavski, My Life in Art, trans. J. J. Robbins (n.p.: Robert M. MacGregor, 1948), p. 330.

[97] J. M. Synge, Preface to The Playboy of the Western World in Classic Irish Drama, introd. by W. A. Armstrong (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), p. 72.

[98] W. B. Yeats, Essays and Introductions (London: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 300-01.

[99] Yeats, p. 240.

[100] Q. D. Leavis, ed., Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Bronte (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 11.

[101] Harcourt Williams, in Harold Downs, ed., Theatre and Stage (London, 1934), pp. 541, 542.

[102] Allan Gomme's records in the Poel collection at Stratford-upon-Avon in the Shakespeare Trust Memorial Library show that Poel produced Henry V at Stratford in 1901, Measure for Measure at Stratford in 1908, Two Gentlemen of Verona for Herbert Beerbohm Tree at Her Majesty's in 1910, and Troilus and Cressida at Stratford in 1913.

[103] Rinda Lundstrom, Mr. Poel's Hamlets: The Director as Critic (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1984).

[104] Robert Speaight, Shakespeare on the Stage: An Illustrated History of Shakespearean Performance (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973), p. 132.

[105] Speaight, Shakespeare on the Stage, p. 138.

[106] Sir Barry Jackson, "Collections Towards a Monograph on William Poel," 1948. Looseleaf file containing letters, programs, etc., about Poel's work in the theatre. Poel dossier. Shakespeare Memorial Trust Library, Stratford-upon-Avon.

[107] Sir Barry Jackson, as quoted in Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 96.

[108] Quoted by Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 149.

[109] Basil Dean, letter, 1948, Poel dossier, Stratford.

[110] Lillah McCarthy, *Myself and My Friends* (New York: Dutton, 1933), pp. 28, 30.

[111] Lillah McCarthy, notes, 1948, Poel dossier, Stratford.

[112] McCarthy, *Myself and My Friends*, p. 28.

[113] Granville-Barker, host at dinner in Poel's honour in 1912. Summarized in Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival*, p. 190. Guests at the dinner included Lewis Casson, Edith Evans, Martin Harvey, Sidney Lee, Lillah McCarthy, Ben Iden Payne, Esmé Percy, Byam Shaw, Bernard Shaw, Ellen Terry.

[114] Granville-Barker, letter, 1913, as quoted in Speaight, p. 148.

[115] Granville-Barker, letter to Constance Smedley, Oct. 20, 1927, in Poel Collection, University of Kansas, Lawrence.

[116] McCarthy, letter, 1948, Poel dossier, Stratford. Not only Shakespearean actors saw the merits in Poel's methods. An interesting aside is that Poel's methods in elocutionary training were highly respected by the Irish playwright Synge who urged the Abbey directors in 1908 to ask Poel to instruct the players in verse-speaking, as a replacement for Frank Fay's tuition. Poel complied, praising Synge's plays as "having given me more pleasure than any others in this age." Poel, letter, July 5, 1907, in Ann Saddlemeyer, ed., *The Collected Letters of John Millington Synge* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), II, 82.

[117] Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival*, p. 46.

[118] C. E. Montague, "The Art of Mr. Poel," *Dramatic Values* (New York: Doubleday, 1925), pp. 227-42.

[119] Mrs. Poel, in Allan Gomme, comp., "William Poel," I, xii.

[120] George Bernard Shaw, letter, 1948, Poel dossier, Stratford-upon-Avon.

CHAPTER V

HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE: THE SUPREME TRIUMPH OF THE PRODUCER OVER THE ACTOR

"Poor Poel--an absolute crank--and an unsuccessful crank to boot," proclaimed Herbert Beerbohm Tree in a letter to his actress daughter Viola in 1912.[1] At the beginning of that year the Daily Telegraph, in summarizing the drama of the previous year, noted that no survey of the past year would be complete without allusion to the "splendid work done by Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree in his desire to keep the name of Shakespeare prominently before the playgoing public." Tree's playgoers, it declared, owed him a heavy debt of gratitude "for his constant endeavour to give them the products of Shakespeare's lofty imagination in a manner befitting their greatness." How thoroughly the actor-manager's effects were appreciated was amply attested by the fact that for eighteen months Shakespeare had reigned supreme at His Majesty's Theatre and no words but the bard's had been spoken there (Jan. 2, 1912).

It was Tree's conclusion that Poel and "learned amateur societies" presented Shakespeare in such a way as to "commend him to the few, while boring the many"; the business of the manager, he maintained, should rather be to present Shakespeare in such a way as to commend him to the many, even at the risk of agitating the few (Academy, Feb. 26, 1898). It was Herbert Beerbohm Tree who, during the Edwardian period, was generally regarded as Irving's heir and natural successor. Both actor-managers were knighted, Irving in 1895 and Tree in 1909; both took their place at the centre of fashionable and artistic life; and both were internationally famous as major exponents of the pictorial style, Tree in his maturity dominating his profession as Irving had done. Tree further developed Irving's techniques of pictorial romanticism, adherence to mass effects, archaeological and historical precepts and their execution in design, scene painting, costumes and properties; he was considered not as fine an actor as Irving, however, and in his attempt to outdo his predecessors in the sumptuousness of his realistic settings, he was frequently accused of excessive scenic elaboration, often concealing Shakespeare under a mountain of carefully conceived but essentially irrelevant effects. For Antony and Cleopatra Tree actually built "the barge she sat in" with its purple sails, golden poop and silver oars, and moved it onto the stage. He loved tricky business, tableaux and dumb shows. In King John he staged the signing of Magna Carta, which Shakespeare never thought of. In A Midsummer Night's Dream real rabbits nibbled the grass of the floorcloth. Tree also often "helped" Shakespeare with music. The actress who played Oberon, for example, not only spoke the passage beginning "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows" but then sang it. At Hamlet's death his soul was wafted upward by an angelic chorus singing him to his rest.

For these extraneous effects Tree exacted a higher price even than Irving or Charles Kean in long intervals and savage cutting. It was Tree's firm belief, nonetheless, that Shakespeare could "not be made tolerable to any large section of the play-going public without the plethora of scenic spectacle and gorgeous costumes which the student regards as superfluous and inappropriate."[2] Tree felt justified in drawing such a conclusion by looking at what he called the "brutal but unanswerable logic of figures": even relatively unpopular plays such as King John drew audiences of 170,000 when he produced them, he pointed out with pride in 1900 in an article entitled "The Living Shakespeare: A Defence of the Public Taste" (Fortnightly Review, n.s. 68, 1900).[3]

Tree's aesthetic of the theatre was composed of a number of basic concepts which he continually defended in such contemporary newspapers and periodicals as Fortnightly Review from 1895 to 1910 and which were reproduced and expanded upon in his book Thoughts and After-Thoughts in 1913. In an afterthought to "The Living Shakespeare: A Defence of Modern Taste," Tree in 1913 defiantly declared that "the new school of twelve years ago has become the old school of today" and "what is called the 'new movement' is only the passing of dead matter" (pp. 71, 72). There were those, said Tree, who contended that in order to appreciate Shakespeare's works "they must only be decked out with the threadbare wardrobe of a bygone time. Let us treat these antiquarians with the respect due to another age," he cautioned, "but do not let us be deluded . . . into the belief that we must regard these great plays as interesting specimens for the special delectation of epicures in antiques" (pp. 53-54). Disagreeing with Poel's firm contention that the producer's only job was to be faithful to the author's expressed intentions in his play, Tree, like Irving and Charles Kean, believed instead that the primary purpose of any play in production was "that it shall satisfy the artistic conscience of an audience" (p. 179).

From the earliest days of his administration, Tree therefore unabashedly aimed his Shakespearean productions at the mass market, believing that the theatre should be regarded as a benefactor of the community at large rather than a pastime for a small coterie. If the public would not go to see Shakespeare's plays unless beautifully staged and appropriately dressed, it was surely better that the bard's words should be so presented than left to languish on the shelf. And what man was there, asked Tree, whose appreciation was not quickened, whose imagination was not heightened by the treatment which these plays had received? (Fortnightly Review, 47, 1890). Indeed, not only was there no service rendered to Shakespeare by an "adequate" representation --a term which the Academy had used to describe Poel's productions--but such revivals were a disservice, in so far that a large proportion of the audience would receive from them an impression of dullness. "And in all modesty," concluded Tree, "it may be claimed that it is better to draw multitudes by doing Shakespeare in the way the public prefers than to keep the theatre empty by only presenting him 'adequately,' as these counsels of imperfection would have us do" (Fortnightly Review, 1900).

Criticism against spectacle on the Victorian--and increasingly so on the Edwardian--stage came from a thinking minority but was certainly not at all representative of the great mass of public, journalistic and theatrical opinion. The Academy, reviewing Tree's Shakespearean productions in 1905, found that the actor-manager's "vagaries" in the matter of interpolated tableaux could be pardoned: "the pictures are so good" (April 29, 1905). The Times, on a stronger note, the same year defended Tree against the charge of over-elaboration and took a few hits against the Elizabethan Stage Society: "Re-constitute the Elizabethan stage as you may; you cannot restore the Elizabethan frame of mind . . . . Mr. Tree . . . is not only justified in giving us a fresh treatment of Shakespeare; he simply cannot help himself if he would keep Shakespeare alive" (Feb. 17, 1905). Joseph Harker, one of the principal scene painters at the end of the Victorian era, still claimed in 1924 that Tree's Shakespearean productions had provided an effective rejoinder to those who clamoured for green-baize backgrounds and similar "uninspired" and "uninspiring" arrangements.[4] It was what Tree termed the "vast multitudes" that kept Victorian and Edwardian theatres in business and these audiences largely thought as Charles Kean, Henry Irving and Herbert Beerbohm Tree thought. This unity of taste between actor-manager and spectator was one of the most interesting and impressive phenomena of the Victorian theatre, and it kept the pictorial and spectacular style going long after the critical hostility of theatrical practitioners such as William Poel had been translated into reformist practice.

After only a few years as an amateur actor, Tree by 1878 had entered the profession and soon made a notable success in French plays in London. He was an astonishingly versatile character actor, his creative exuberance often showing in elaborate make-up and minutely observed physical detail. After only nine years on the stage in what can be termed a meteoric career, Tree was famous enough and had a public following sufficient to enable him to risk actor-management. Unlike Forbes-Robertson, who went into management because he felt it forced upon him, or Irving, who did so to produce the plays that gave him the greatest opportunity as an actor, Tree was attracted to management for its own sake, and, believing that "everything comes to him who doesn't wait," he seized the first opportunity to become manager of a small theatre, the first opportunity to become lessee and manager of a larger theatre, and the first opportunity to build and own a theatre spacious enough to fulfill his ambitions. In 1887 at the age of thirty-five and with the financial backing of a friend, he opened in management at the Comedy Theatre in Panton Street in a melodrama called The Red Lamp. Less than a year later, upon the success of this venture, he took the Haymarket Theatre for a long settled period of ten years where he succeeded in almost every venture that he undertook, the Haymarket under Tree becoming the centre of the social world of London.

In addition to regular offerings of spectacular melodrama, the enterprising young manager offered a range of productions wider than Irving's, his interest in experiment and the new drama infinitely greater.[5] It was the box-office takings from a theatrically powerful adaptation of a Du Maurier novel, Trilby, Tree's greatest Haymarket success, however, which enabled him to build Her Majesty's--in 1911 rechristened His Majesty's--the handsomest theatre in London. Escapist material presented with spectacular realism was the basis upon which Tree built Her Majesty's reputation in his non-Shakespearean productions, Tree's productions like Irving's being romantic in content and eminently suited to visually splendid mounting. The spectacular war-epic was epitomized by H. A. Jones' Carnac Sahib (1899), and lavishly costumed historical romance was represented by Gilbert Parker's dramatization of the novel The Seats of the Mighty and by Sidney Grundy's adaptation of Dumas' Musketeers (1898).

At Her Majesty's Tree was able to come into his full glory as a producer of Shakespeare, his commitment to Shakespeare becoming even more substantial than Irving's: twelve plays of Shakespeare were performed at the Lyceum under Irving's management; Tree did sixteen at the Haymarket and Her Majesty's, opening every season with a new Shakespearean revival.[6] From 1905 on the best of these productions were staged at the end of each season as part of Tree's ever-growing Shakespeare Festival, clearly intended by the actor-manager to be London's answer to the festivals honouring the bard at Stratford-upon-Avon. From 1905 to 1913 these annual Shakespeare Festivals, unique in London theatrical annals, were major events: sixty productions of twenty-three Shakespearean plays were given over nine years, including ten presentations by visiting companies. Tree presented six plays in six days in 1905, 1906, 1907, and 1908, and then increased the Festival to a fortnight in 1909. In this year guest appearances by F. R. Benson's and Arthur Bourchier's companies inaugurated a popular feature of the Festival, continued in 1910 when the Festival ran for five weeks and guest companies included Benson's, Bourchier's, H. B. Irving's, Lewis Waller's, the Haymarket production of King Lear designed by Charles Ricketts, and, most interestingly, even William Poel's Elizabethan Stage Society.

For all his addiction to spectacle, Tree had an impresario's nose for novelty and was willing to extend his experiments to totally different types of production from that of the sumptuous naturalism in vogue at the time, even giving house room to Poel whom he invited to stage The Two Gentlemen of Verona. Upon Poel's request Tree had an apron stage built over the orchestra pit and front lighting installed in the balconies.[7] Thus Poel had the opportunity to practise his ideas in a large commercial theatre. Tree may have smiled at the austerity of Poel's Elizabethan way, but the apron stage and the front lighting he retained for his own production of Henry VIII two years later. They have now, of course, become a commonplace of Shakespearean production. Tree himself also tried the experiment of a non-scenic Hamlet production in 1905, justifying this departure from his usual spectacles by stating that

"Hamlet is essentially a work of the imagination." Tree's tapestried Hamlet production was the first full-scale commercial venture in Elizabethanism in the West End. By no means converted to Elizabethanism, the actor-manager's motivations for producing Hamlet in the Elizabethan mode were probably largely financial and practical. Tree had never been popular in his impersonation of Hamlet, so perhaps he hoped that the novelty of Elizabethanism would add to the audience draw of the performance scheduled for the Shakespeare Festival.

It was with his lavish production of Julius Caesar at Her Majesty's in 1898, however, that Tree first impressed the theatrical world with his abilities as a producer of Shakespeare: the massive stage architecture; the designs, properties and costumes of Alma Tadema, the period's foremost painter of classical subjects; the well-disciplined and sizable Roman mob; the acting of a superior company with considerable strengths apart from those of its star--all this really initiated Shakespeare according to the gospel of Tree. "It was generally agreed," says Tree's biographer Hesketh Pearson, "that no play of Shakespeare's within living memory had been mounted with such magnificence or acted so well, and that no crowd like that in the forum scene had been so skilfully and realistically handled."[8]

Tree experimented with a three-dimensional setting, previously pioneered but not fully exploited by Irving. Gone was the traditional "arch of interlacing bows . . . affording peeps of distant country on a palpable back-cloth behind" (Daily Mail, June 4, 1898). In his A Midsummer Night's Dream in 1900 audiences found instead a completely built-up landscape with life-sized trees. Three-dimensional detail made the "wood near Athens" a veritable "playground" where "the turf seems really springing turf, you can see the leaves tremble and shiver on the slim trees, the brook murmurs, the sea shimmers in the distance--. . . and the birds twitter and sing" (The Star, Jan. 11, 1900). So magnificent and solidly built was Hawes Craven's 1901 set for Olivia's garden in Twelfth Night, copied from a picture in Country Life, that it could not be dismantled and had to remain incongruously for other scenes or to be covered in by front scenes. Gordon Crosse conceded, however, that the garden, with rows of grassy terraces stretching away into the distance, was as fine as anything ever seen on the stage.[9]

In an interview with the Daily Express in 1910, Tree told the newspaper that his aim for his Henry VIII production was "to give an absolute reproduction of the Renaissance," that every detail would be realistic, and that "we have ransacked every authority and obtained the most astonishing exactitude" (July 27, 1910).[10] Most impressive of all Tree's productions, this Henry VIII became "a model and masterpiece of its kind," in which he surpassed the show of earlier productions of even Charles Kean and Henry Irving. The first-act feasting and dancing at Wolsey's palace, and the wordless coronation procession at the end, with "music and the ringing of bells, the shouts of the crowd," were generally agreed by critics to be "two great scenes, which it is surely no exaggeration to describe as 'masterpieces' of the pictorial art of the theatre" (Nation, Sept. 10, 1910; Times, Sept. 2, 1910; Playgoer and Society, II, 238). Tree's most elaborate Festival was held in 1910, the year of George V's coronation, during which a gala performance of Henry VIII was given before the King and Queen. Max Beerbohm, Tree's younger half-brother, confided to S. N. Behrman after Tree's death that Herbert had a passion for the huge and monumental:

> 'Big' is a word that attaches itself in my mind to so much concerning Herbert. His body was big, and his nature big, and he did so love big things! Mountains, cathedrals, frescoes, Shakespeare, summer skies, Wagnerian opera . . . . Things on a small scale, however exquisite, did not satisfy him.[11]

To meet what he considered the taste of the general public and to insure its continued and profitable attendance at his unsubsidized theatre, Tree bent his efforts to establishing a performance pattern for Shakespeare that in its time represented the theatrical establishment in its security and splendour. By 1913 the tradition of pictorialized, historically recreative and increasingly spectacular production of Shakespeare had lasted for nearly a century, and it was under Tree's guidance that "spectacular" Shakespeare moved into its most opulent and final phase in the English stage. Modifying an existing language of scenography, Tree consequently explored that language's limits; except in the cinema, Shakespeare as historical fact or as pictorial illustration would hardly survive the 1914-1918 war.

II

The three most frequently presented plays at the Shakespeare Festivals were Twelfth Night, which appeared in every Festival, Julius Caesar, omitted only in 1908, and The Merry Wives of Windsor, played every year except the last. In 1913 Tree mounted his final Shakespearean Festival and tried the experiment of running four plays for a week each: The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, Julius Caesar, and Romeo and Juliet. While the first three were regular favourites with the Festival public, Romeo and Juliet was not in Tree's active repertoire and this perennially beloved play seems to have been offered as a novelty, since the theatre's programme that season had included no new Shakespearean presentation. The production was in various ways a revival of a lavish, successful presentation of the play by Fred Terry and Julia Neilson at the New Theatre two years earlier, and Tree borrowed such features as the acting text, sets and costumes. Nevertheless, with emphasis on Tree's non-titular role, with extensive by-play of the actors, extraneous stage business and innovative lighting effects, the production contained major points of treatment characteristic of Tree's methods at His Majesty's Theatre and exemplifies the ultimate spectacular presentation of Romeo and Juliet on the English stage before the Great War. Tree's revival featured a repeat performance by Terry and Neilson's teenaged daughter Phyllis Neilson-Terry, already a favourite at His Majesty's. The sixty-year-old Tree relegated himself to the role of Mercutio.

In the presentation of Romeo and Juliet William Poel's revolutionary ideas were to have only marginal influence on the English stage until after World War I. In a 1908 production of the play at the Kingsway with Harcourt Williams and Leah Bateman-Hunter, which received only passing notice from critics, the performance was given upon a draped stage, the curtains at the back of which, above a couple of steps, were drawn aside and pulled across to meet the requirements of the action (The Stage, July 2, 1908). Intervals were given only between the acts. A year later, at the Court, Gerald Lawrence and Fay Davies portrayed the lovers in a week-long production on a stage draped with tapestries and embellished occasionally by a few trees to give some indication of scene (The Era, April 24, 1909). It was a ten-week presentation of Romeo and Juliet at the Lyceum in 1908 whose scenery was termed "well worthy of the traditions of the Lyceum" which drew far more critical notice and audience enthusiasm (Era, March 21, 1908). Critics generally concurred that the production presented the best fighting scenes ever shown between a Romeo and a Tybalt in a modern revival. "There are at least four different kinds of fighting, all arranged by Captain Hutton and all carried out with thrilling energy," reported the Times, admitting that the love-making in the play was rather pushed into the background (March 16, 1908). At the end was a striking Irving-like tableau as the bodies of the hapless twain were lit by the torches of the would-be rescue party, headed by the Prince and the Capulets.

Herbert Beerbohm Tree for his revival of Romeo and Juliet in 1913 clearly attempted to cut the huge production costs and the time to do major production planning for this lavish final Shakespearean Festival. Having received Fred Terry's permission to recycle the scenery and costumes of the 1911 New Theatre revival for his own presentation which came at the end of a very busy Shakespearean Festival, Tree, however, in advertisements hastened to assure potential viewers that "in every other respect the production will be treated as a new one."[12] The actor-manager had found that the spectacular scenery by Joseph Harker and Percy Macquoid, the elaborate properties and rich costumes from the design of Macquoid, and the stirring incidental music by Sydney Ffoulkes all admirably suited his own style of production at His Majesty's.

"There is no hint of the casual or perfunctory about this production, which is in every way carefully thought-out and executed with costly elaboration, as for a well-deserved run," the Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News had proclaimed in 1911 when the production was first seen (Sept. 9, 1911). Two years later, in Tree's revival, the heavy setting, with its thirteen changes of scene, its crowds, combats, dances, and other riches of spectacle, presented a splendid series of pictures, and the production was as sumptuous as if the play had been designed for a long run. Its costumes, properties and scenery critics in 1911 had found "archaeologically correct" (the Stage, Sept. 7, 1911), based on details found in the works of Mantegna, Carpaccio, Ghirlandajo, Botticelli, Luca della Robbia and other artists of the Italian Renaissance when it had reached its culminating point of refinement and beauty (the Times, Sept, 4, 1911).

In the fights, arranged by M. Bertrand, the combatants--the Capulets in red with white facings and the Montagues in blues and purples--came quickly to close quarters and grappled and hacked at one another with a brutality and savagery in agreement with Mr. Macquoid's view of the customs of the period in Italy, the late fifteenth century according to his idea. One of the novelties advertised was the transference of the familiar market-square scene in Verona to a high-gabled, narrow street of the old Italian city. "When told of these things in a booklet accompanying the programme, one looks for them and finds them," noted one reviewer (Westminster Gazette, Sept. 4, 1911). Even the drop curtain was a copy of an old Italian tapestry. In the ballroom scene, a splendid golden set provided by Joseph Harker, the guests rapidly crowded in, using flower-adorned wands for the stately Pavane in which figured prominently Paris and Juliet (the Stage, Sept. 17, 1911). In his production Tree aimed for innovative staging in this scene and contrary to Shakespeare's text, had the Prince enter and all the characters go off with him so that Romeo and Juliet could be given the opportunity to speak half their dialogue while alone on the stage.[13] Act II opened with a splendid garden scene, the balcony on stage right being so lofty that the lovers' outstretched arms failed to reach by several inches. Here Juliet, sparkling in golden gown, with shimmering arms spread out, leaned over the high balcony of a palace set about with a pergola of vines while Romeo, hardly seen, stood below in a garden of roses and lilies, tall cypresses and beautifully formed box hedges providing a striking background. The bareness of Juliet's bedroom, by contrast, could be defended by an appeal to authority. Fred Terry used this setting for the farewell scene between Romeo and Juliet, "Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day" (III.v.i), and introduced new stage business. Juliet was shown lying in her bed, with Romeo leaning over her, "a change which does not (in our opinion) make for improvement," a disapproving reviewer wrote (Referee, Sept. 3, 1911). In the last act, after a picturesque view of the city of Mantua with hills at the back was shown behind the secluded retreat of the Apothecary, a final full set was given of the tomb of the Capulets. Juliet's imposing candle-lighted bier was presented to the right, reached by Paris and Romeo by a railing on top of some stairs far upon the other side of the stage.

To enhance the beauty of the sets and costumes and to heighten the atmosphere, Tree took great pains to light them effectively. The advertisements for the production, seeking to assure potential audiences of marked differences between Tree's presentation and the previous revival, referred to "special lighting effects of rare beauty being introduced" and pointed out that the actor-manager would make subtle and romantic use of them.[14] "The power to impart the right atmosphere to a play," Tree had once said, "is what divides the first-rate from the second-rate manager" (Cassell's Saturday Journal, Feb. 1, 1899). Tree's managerial primacy on the Edwardian stage was assured in part by the atmospheric power of his electric stage lighting, the chief glory of Her Majesty's, and which, when installed in 1897, was one of the most advanced in Europe. Tree had three lighting systems installed at his theatre, with electric lighting supplemented by at least twenty-eight limelights, and production surpassed both the gas-light spectacles of Irving and the black and white photography of the infant cinema. Much of Tree's attention was devoted to reproducing cycloramic outdoor effects, particularly skies.[15]

"The entire business of the stage is illusion," he declared in 1900, professing the foremost principle of his artistic credo. To gain this end all means were fair: "Illusion is the first and last word of the stage: all that aids illusion is good, all that destroys illusion is bad" (p. 57). For Tree a major means by which illusion was achieved in the theatre was in the visual effects of scenery and costumes, for "accuracy of detail, for the sake of perfect illusion, is necessary for us" (p. 65). When he declared that "not the least important mission" of the modern theatre was to give to the public representations of history which shoud be both "an education and a delight," Tree was speaking with the voice of Charles Kean and Henry Irving. A strong current of Victorian opinion had held that if man could understand history and the past, he could understand himself; it was a strain that had run through theatre and especially through Shakespearean production for many years.

Rejecting the beliefs of William Poel and claiming that worthily to represent Shakespeare the scenic embellishment should be as beautiful and costly as the subject of the drama being performed seemed to demand, Tree declared that the embellishment should "not be subordinate to, but harmonious with the dramatic interest," like every other element of art introduced into the representation, whether those arts were acting, painting, sculpture, music, or any other (p. 56). "Let us call Shakespeare himself as a witness on this issue, and show that he not only foresaw, but desired, the system of production in the public favour," said Tree, posing as a theatre idealist. Using a line of argument that William Poel condemned as "unconvincing, and to the uninformed, misleading,"[16] Tree maintained that the spectacular and munificent staging of Shakespeare was not only according to public taste but was also justified by the demands of the text and the probability that even in Shakespeare's time performances would have been lavishly dressed and often given against a rich background in the private houses and castles of the nobles. Contending confidently that nearly all the dramas were "crowded with scenic directions," Tree argued that an examination of Shakespeare's stage directions showed that Shakespeare not only counted upon the potentialities of his own theatre to give point and life to his text, but that he foresaw the time when a later stage would achieve for him, in the way of scenery, costumes and effects, what the playhouse of his own day was powerless to accomplish (pp. 304-305). "What we have to see," cautioned Tree, "is that the details are not allowed to overshadow the principal theme, and this they can never do while they are carefully and reasonably introduced" (pp. 65-66).

In Tree's view the modern artist who in his dramatic genius had made the nearest approach to Shakespeare was probably Richard Wagner, the parallel between Shakespearean production and the methods of Bayreuth being clearly a desirable one for Tree. Pointing out that Wagner did not regard his works as independent of the aids which his time gave him to complete the illusion of the spectator, Tree stressed that the German availed himself of all the effects with which modern art could help him. Wagner's works, he explained, were primarily dramas heightened by the aid of music, scenery, atmosphere, and costumes. The genius of Wagner disdained neither the art of the scene-painter nor the research of the archaeologist; indeed, he regarded them as necessary adjuncts to his music-dramas. "Yet," said Tree, referring to critics such as William Poel, "for the recognition of the more exacting artistic demands of the public our managers are denounced as Goths and Vandals" (Fortnightly Review, 1890). "Every man should avail himself of the aids which his generation affords him," he insisted, adding, "That painter is surely greater who sees nature--human or otherwise--with the clear eyes of his own time rather than through the blurred spectacles of a bygone age. Indeed, no man is great in any walk of life unless he is in the best sense of his time" (Fortnightly Review, 1900).

Although Tree claimed that the scenic embellishment should be harmonious with the dramatic interest, with his style of production it was inevitable that the subject of the painting became subservient to the style of presentation. The actor became less important for what he was than for what he wore; at Her Majesty's costumes for both major actors and supers were of great importance and if one may credit contemporary critics their accuracy, style, and lavishness surpassed anything the stage had seen before. The actor's compositional contribution also was frequently more remarked upon than his creation of character. As John Ripley points out, reading through scores of reviews, one finds that almost invariably criticism of acting attracts less attention than does criticism of stagecraft.[17] Somewhat shamefacedly, the Referee critic wrote of Julius Caesar in 1898: "We intend no disrespect of the actors--or to our author--in directing attention first to the mise-en-scène" (Jan. 23, 1898). The Observer review also rationalized, "It is doing little discredit to the players engaged in the revival to say that its most striking feature is supplied by the classical scenery in which they figure" (Jan. 23, 1898). A third writer concluded that "It is a magnificent, a glorious production. It is the supreme triumph of the producer over the actor" (Vanity Fair, Jan. 24, 1898).

In a Treasure Trove article in 1900 entitled "Public Taste and the Popular Stage," Tree noted that "Truth . . . has become a factor of primary importance in art . . . . The public demand absolute exactitude, they delight in photographic accuracy, and are satisfied if the thing produced exactly resembles the original without stopping to think whether the original was worth reproduction" (Oct. 29, 1900). From 1896 onwards Tree's exterior settings were judged by a more exacting standard than even the harshest critics had applied to Irving. Now, as Nicholas Vardac points out, the audience found its photographic ideal in the evolving motion picture.[18] John Ripley, in a perceptive article on Tree's use of cinematographic techniques in his early non-Shakespearean productions, finds that Tree answered the challenge posed by the cinema by devising exteriors which conformed as nearly as possible to the photographic ideal, and then, when no more could be done, adding colour and composition, both notably absent from early cinema, to compensate for any deficiencies in realism.[19] That he succeeded there can be no doubt; a reading of hundreds of reviews in the first decade of the twentieth century produces scarcely an instance of unfavourable comparison between Tree's stage world and the latest celluloid reproductions of the real. In a 1906 production of The Winter's Tale, for example, the actor-manager used a live donkey and a real stream in a woodland scene. Not content with merely displaying these live devices, Tree pointed out their liveness by integrating them into the action, the donkey quenching its thirst at the stream. In using a myriad of bucolic details, he succeeded in making this rustic cottage scene the "joy of the whole production" (Glasgow Herald, Sept. 3, 1906).

The elaborate sets used in Tree's productions were merely the static background to a picture the values of which were essentially kinetic. The manager wished his audience "to realise most exactly and completely the very form and fashion of times past." In his productions, wrote one critic, "We see not only the buildings and costumes of the time, we see them peopled with and worn by living, moving personages, and thus we come to a vivid--we may say, a cinematographic--perception of a period" (Era, Nov. 5, 1898). To animate the picture vast hordes of supernumeraries were necessary; more than two hundred, for example, appeared in Julius Caesar (Leader, Jan. 4, 1898) and upwards of three hundred and fifty ornamented A Midsummer Night's Dream (Cassell's Saturday Journal, Feb. 1, 1899). At times these extras were required merely to parade about the stage to create kaleidoscopic effects; more often, however, they served a documentary function. Writing of Julius Caesar the Times reviewer noted that "As Caesar's procession passes through the streets the workmen throng to see it, in their habits as they lived, and, in many cases, with the tools of their craft in their hands" (Jan. 24, 1898). Tree's carefully disciplined supers were also frequently employed to good effect in the dramatic action proper to underscore and intensify the mood. "This is an impressively real crowd," wrote the Times critic of the interpolation to the Forum scene. "Their excitement is contagious to the house; their execrations thrill; one feels the irresistible force of this seething and surging mass of humanity." Into Richard II Tree in 1903 interpolated a scene which translated into action the description given by York in V.ii of the entry of Richard and Bolingbroke into London. It was a living picture of medieval street-life, full of bustle and excitement well thought out and realized in action, the two principals on horseback being greeted, the one with obloquy, the other with acclamation. Tree hoped in his productions that his figures would be perceived as living a "real," individually characterized life, and he directed them accordingly. The imposing, static tableaux vivants were counterpointed with a sense of life and movement as Tree's stage was everywhere alive with movement, the focus shifting rapidly from the swift groupings and regroupings of the supporting cast to the large gestures of the chief actors. What the reviewers called "stage pictures" were in fact not static, but moving pictures.

By the time Tree produced Romeo and Juliet in 1913, the crowd had become a stock-in-trade device at His Majesty's. Audiences found that the crowd scenes and stage fights in Romeo and Juliet were organized by Tree with a meticulousness and ebullience that would have brought credit to the Meiningen. The opening dialogues in the streets of Verona were vivified by children tripping lightly across the stage, and Tybalt's death was intensified by citizens and their wives running on and shrieking. In the final scene, in the vault, the direction "a noise without" was interpreted at His Majesty's as the angry murmur of a distant mob, the sound thought to intensify most effectively sensations of awe in the audience.

In order to provide elaborate sets Fred Terry had had recourse to some twenty yards or so from the bier (Westminster Gazette, Sept. 4, 1911). Tree's audience later saw Paris, mortally wounded at the foot of Juliet's bier, imploring Romeo to "lay me with Juliet" (Pall Mall Gazette, July 1, 1913). Paris' cry became pointless when he had only to stagger a couple of steps to manage it for himself; and Romeo's cry, "I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave," became no less superfluous when the two were there already. In transferring setting in his production of Much Ado about Nothing in 1905, Tree had given justification for such methods, announcing to his audience that "there are no stage directions in the folio as to where these scenes take place, and therefore the license I have taken may be held justifiable."[21] Traditionalists such as Tree clung to their assumption that Shakespeare must be treated with concrete and specific locations and environments.

The late Victorian stage had inherited from the earlier nineteenth-century stage a feasible way of assuring some continuity in productions without sacrificing the illusion of solid reality. The solution was found in the "alternation" system. This system allowed for every other scene to be scenically solid, covering the full stage and employing three-dimensional set pieces. The intervening scenes were played downstage in front of a painted drop which would mask the activities of the stage carpenters upstage and would allow for sufficient time for them to change the set.[22] To a great extent this practice of alternation was in use in the late Victorian period for Shakespearean productions, but in many ways the practice was far from satisfactory. Tree had used this method for his first Shakespearean production in 1898 of Julius Caesar and a viewer complained that in spite of numerous cuts, Tree's production lasted three and one half hours "while the noise of 'setting' the heavy scenery behind (with a view to reducing the 'waits') spoiled some of the finest scenes, notably that in Brutus' orchard, which was given to the accompaniment of the muffled thunders of scene-shifting" (Academy, Feb. 5, 1898).

The increasing use of realistic built-up three-dimensional sets on the late Victorian and Edwardian stage, the result of developments made in the popular drawing-room repertoire of plays which were usually constructed so as to require only one scene per act, meant that in the quest for greater stage realism many sets on the Edwardian stage became so solid or technically complex that they could not be struck while another scene was in progress. Gordon Crosse relates that in Tree's productions it was not unusual for the audience to sit gazing at the curtain for forty-five minutes while elaborate sets were built up or taken down behind it.[23] For his 1910 production of Henry VIII, for example, Tree removed the whole of Act V and ended the play at Anne Boleyn's coronation, yet the play took four hours to perform. Stage staff, trained as it was, had to toil frantically to construct Wolsey's ostentatious palace, the hall in Blackfriars where Katharine was tried, and Westminster Abbey itself. Tree had noted that "the play must be played swiftly--the waits quite short," but this was an impossible idea at His Majesty's.

III

In Tree's Shakespearean Festivals each play was revived with the sumptuous detail of the original production. It meant, of course, rehearsals by day and by night for several weeks, and the strain was enormous on the actors, the scene-shifters, the lighting experts, and everyone concerned, especially the stage manager Cecil King, whose almost superhuman efforts were chiefly responsible for the smoothly running performances. The course of Tree's rehearsals ran far less smoothly than those in better ordered theatres like the Lyceum. They were, in fact, a byword in the profession for disorder and even anarchy, from which--somehow miraculously--competent, attractive, and even splendid productions emerged at the very last minute.[24] Although Tree's approach to rehearsal was often casual, Hesketh Pearson claims that the actor-manager had the genius of extracting whole-hearted service from others.[25]

One of Irving's chief contributions to the Victorian theatre lay in the harmony and discipline he brought to the diverse elements of a production under his management, integrating interpretation, grouping and performance. The acting in Tree's productions, by contrast, took its chances with the poet, related Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine: "The policy of the actors is 'go as you please.' Every one finds his own key and sticks to it, and the whole performance resembles a character hastily contrived in the drawing room . . . nothing is appropriate or harmonious" (Oct, 1904). Tree appears to have lacked Irving's monumental devotion to detail and, in his disregard of what he considered to be inessentials, he was inclined to leave his supporting cast to their own devices, although he never released his control of crowd effects, for which he was justly famous. Nonetheless, Tree's instinct was shrewd enough to retain the services of a highly accomplished supporting company. His first allegiance was to the theatre, not to himself, and unlike Irving, who in Frances Donaldson's words "required only 'table legs' to support the central figure," Tree engaged the best actors and actresses he could find and gave them the greatest opportunity, and many of them made their reputations while under him.[26] George Bernard Shaw in a letter to Ellen Terry wrote that Tree "surrounds himself with counter-attractions and lets them play him off the stage to their heart's content as long as he takes the money at the doors."[27]

J. T. Grein wrote of Tree's presentation of Romeo and Juliet that "the ensemble was most satisfactory" and that "the young have found a rare opportunity to shine" (Sunday Times, July 6, 1913). At the end of 1911 Tree had engaged Phyllis Neilson-Terry as the leading lady at His Majesty's Theatre and in Shakespearean roles presented her first as Rosamunde and then as Juliet, a role in which she had been very popular two years earlier under her father's management. Reviewers had commended the seventeen-year-old actress' performance at the New, saying that "for once we have a young girl in a girl-rôle--a girl, too, who has undoubted histrionic talent, and shows abundant promise" (Illustrated London News, Sept. 9, 1911).

William Poel's revival of Romeo and Juliet in 1905 had been viewed by very few, and west-end audiences therefore found the emphasis on youth in the productions at the New and at His Majesty's refreshing and innovative. Most of the presentations of the play after Poel's had once again featured middle-aged star actors and actresses seizing the roles of the young lovers. Writing of Julia Marlowe's portrayal of Juliet at the Waldorf in 1907, the Times noted that this actress had more of the science and art of love than did Juliet. "More bluntly," stated the critic, "Juliet is mere child and Miss Marlowe is not." When this Juliet leaned over the balcony the critic had the feeling that she had "been there" before. That was the perpetual difficulty for players of Juliet, he noted: to be at once a bud and full of expanded blossom, to be at once girlish and passionate (May 3, 1907).

Gentle girlishness and sweet tenderness found full and charming expression in Phyllis Neilson-Terry's Juliet. Two years later, in Tree's production, critics found that her performance had gained in ease yet held all its original girlish charm, her poses were still supremely beautiful, and in repose she was at her best. Neilson-Terry looked, especially in the ballroom and in the balcony scene, wonderfully sweet, "full of charm, young too, and tender and true--in short, a Juliet that was made to be loved" (Times, July 1, 1913). Despite the many pretty touches of girlishness which brightened her performance, however, her acting somehow lacked the warmth of spontaneous gaiety and youthful passion so vital to this role. Reiterating a comment that had been made about many nineteenth-century Juliets, reviewers lamented that there was more sentiment than southern consuming passion in this Juliet's love-making (Athenaeum, Sept. 9, 1911; Illustrated London News, Sept. 9, 1911). Almost demure in the tender sweetness of her balcony scene, Neilson-Terry seemed altogether too proper a young person to give herself away in love-at-first sight and murmured her speeches with almost devotional earnestness. The young actress had trouble with her voice: critics found her almost inaudible in the balcony scene (Illustrated London News, July 5, 1913) and maintained that she sounded an artificial note just when sincerity was required (Daily News and Letter, July 1, 1913). Her rendering of the balcony scene, fanciful rather than lyrical, exposed the artificiality of the conceits because they were never made to glow with the fervour of intense emotion (Athenaeum, Sept. 9, 1911).

Neilson-Terry's Juliet was in tone much like the cool, white-skirted heroine of Robertsonian comedy until the scene in which Juliet learns of her fixed wedding day and grows ever more terror-stricken as she finds her parents deaf to her entreaties. The actress, whose manner had been restrained and whose voice had been rather monotonous to this point, now dragged herself about the room clutching ineffectually at her father's hands, sobbing hysterically and with increasing violence at his continued abuse and threats (Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, Sept. 9, 1911; Era, Sept. 9, 1911). In the protracted potion scene she melodramatically and incongruously screamed and screamed in a manner to rouse the sleeping Capulet household. "Miss Neilson-Terry is never at her best when 'letting herself go,'" lamented the World; "she abandons herself too absolutely" (Sept. 5, 1911). Like most performers who had portrayed this role since the Restoration, the actress had stereotyped her habit of mistaking action, in the sense of restless movement and strange sighings and soughings, for emotion. Contrary to William Poel's and Samuel Phelps' exhortations to perform it simply and unaffectedly, the soliloquy was once again treated as an actress' "great moment," and so lasted a long time, the actress displaying violence of gesture and bodily movement, with heavy resounding falls about the stage.[25] In Tree's production all this held a rapturous pit and gallery, nonetheless, and the curtain brought forth abundant applause.

For J T. Grein, however, Miss Neilson-Terry, "despite the tears streaming from her eyes did not move us--she does not yet know the real conveyance of emotion" (Sunday Times, July 6, 1913). There were moments, moreover, when the actress did not quite seem to realize the resonance of the glorious lines she had to speak, her speech marred by frequent gaspings that interrupted the music of the verse (Sketch, July 9, 1913; Westminster Gazette, July 1, 1913). Overloading nearly all her scenes, Phyllis Neilson-Terry presented a Juliet that was radiantly young and highly forcible but not drawn from the depths. While approving whole-heartedly of Tree's selection of a teenaged Juliet, and preferring less experience and more freshness to the art of a middle-aged heroine, J. T. Grein, however, cautioned that "her future depends on guidance. . . . If she is willing to learn and listen . . .--she has a world before her" (Sunday Times, July 6, 1913).

To complement his picturesque teenaged Juliet, Tree found in Philip Merivale a romantic youthful Romeo. A gallant figure, this new Romeo showed boyish eagerness in the passages of courtship where, related the Academy approvingly, he was the young lover to the life, endowed with exuberant vigour and gaiety (July 5, 1913). Critics accorded most of their reviews to the performance of the beautiful young daughter of Julia Neilson but most noted that Merivale's impersonation, too, was touched "by the blemish of 'acting'" (Evening News, June 26, 1913). Merivale was evidently preoccupied with making Romeo young; as a result, some of the passion of the character and some of its idealism, too, were sacrificed to its youth (Manchester Guardian, July 2, 1913). J. T. Grein found that Merivale spared no pains to drive it home that Romeo was young, and in his impersonation he failed to harden as the tragedy closed its grip around him: "He paced about like a two-year-old. He swaggered. He seemed to make light of the tragic events in his short tragic career. He killed his two antagonists in swashbuckling mood. Even at the bier he did not seem to realise the terror of the situation" (Sunday Times and Special, July 6, 1913). Another reviewer complained that after Romeo had example, now sang as she approached the Friar's cell, "a most indiscreet proceeding," declared the Morning Post since her visit was clandestine (July 17, 1913). In the midst of the Friar's first speech, "The grey-eyed morn smiles on this frowning night" (II.iii.i), MacCarthy was dismayed to see a boy and girl enter, kneel for the Friar's blessing, and give him a flower so that the Friar when he moralizes "within this infant rind of this small flower" (II.iii.23) could actually smell the flower. Moreover, exalted passages were often helped out with a little low music. When Friar Lawrence, for example, in addressing Romeo and Juliet said, "For by your leaves, you shall not stay alone/ Till Holy Church incorporate two in one," they knelt down, one on each side of him, with folded palms, and an organ muttered soft sonorous groans. Juliet's soliloquy before she drank the drug was preceded by a clock incongruously striking solemnly six times. At the end of the play, Romeo even died to music:

> O here
> Will I set up my everlasting rest,
> And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
> From this world wearied flesh
> (V.iii.109-112)

was given to subterranean sighs from the orchestra (New Statesman, July 19, 1913).

"A younger generation of performers have more need of a Shakespearean training college than there is need of a Shakespearean theatre," concluded the Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News in its review. Finding Tree's production of Romeo and Juliet slow and unsatisfying, the journal said that to an actor and an actress a study of a week or two was not enough; "the subtlety, the delicacies, the diminuendos, the crescendos, the climaxes of the glorious word-music, are in some characters only to be mastered by months of thought and practice, if ever" (July 12, 1913).

Herbert Beerbohm Tree himself, however, lacked elocutionary prowess and the ability to teach his performers proper intonation. The actor-manager, complained Charles Nirdlinger in 1899, had "abominable elocution."[29] William Archer found that as Stockman in Ibsen's An Enemy of the People at the Haymarket in 1893 Tree was too emphatic, too pontifical, and above all, too slow; apt to rely for his effects upon solemn pauses.[30] Richard Dickens declared that in Tree's portrayal of Hamlet the realization of passion was entirely outside the actor's dramatic range and his voice had not sufficient range to convey great emotion; likewise, in Julius Caesar as Mark Antony, Tree in the delivery of the great speech over the body in the Capital displayed painful vocal monotony.[31]

Romeo and Juliet is not much of a piece for an actor-manager hardly young enough to play the romantic hero. The sixty-year-old Tree, therefore, appeared as the gay Mercutio. "It is not exactly the part that we should choose for him," wrote the Times (July 1, 1913), but Tree, unable to portray the young lover, obviously felt that Romeo's friend Mercutio was a role that he could execute satisfactorily even at this advanced age. The actor-manager confessed at the curtain's fall on the first night to great nervousness, and J. T. Grein noted that "it was obvious enough. Some of his speeches defied Shakespeare's text" (Sunday Times and Special, July 6, 1913). Tree, concurred the reviewers, was clearly handicapped by having imposed on himself the task of playing a new Shakespearean part at the end of a busy season and at the very end of a Shakespearean Festival in which he had already played the parts of

Shylock, Malvolio and Antony. Mercutio's role is a very complex one, not a long part, consisting mainly of the Queen Mab speech and the quarrel scene which ends in his death, but a very difficult character to carry off and few actors have made a great success of it. On the first night Tree seemed to be "feeling" for words in the Queen Mab speech and this uncertainty took from the fluency and whimsical vivacity of the lines. For the critic of the Manchester Courier the speech was therefore sadly disappointing (July 1, 1913), and for Gordon Crosse the slow deliberation with which he spoke the poetry was quite out of place.[32] The Queen Mab speech was given with many pauses and the humour of the wag rather too much taken for granted.

Even allowing for his unfamiliarity with the words and business, Tree's rendering seemed heavy and wooden, commented Gordon Crosse, concluding that Tree was simply not at home as Mercutio.[33] Too deliberate and hesitant, he did not stir his audience with any of that fine dialogue which has life in every word and which should be spoken trippingly on the tongue. The actor delivered the Queen Mab speech as if Mercutio had earlier composed the speech and now just orated it, related the Morning Post (July 17, 1913). The speech, given stiltingly as a piece of formal rhetoric, lacked the buoyancy and spontaneity of Samuel Phelps' stirring presentation in which the lines were uttered as quick whimsical thoughts springing from mere buoyancy of heart. One thought uttered, it then gave birth to another equally unpremeditated, in Phelps' interpretation; then came another sudden burst, born of the first, gaining fresh strength and impetus in its course until the speaker abandoned himself to the brilliant and thronging illustrations which, amidst all their fire, never lost their spontaneity in which they took rise. Tree had suggestions of the picturesque figure which he would make of Mercutio, but he had hardly acquired the volubility so frequently indicated by the text.

George Bernard Shaw found that what was mainly missing in Tree's acting was the Shakespearean music: "The conversation is metrical and emphatic in an elocutionary sort of way; but it makes no distinction between the arid prairies of blank verse . . . and the places where the morass suddenly piles itself into a mighty mountain" (Saturday Review, Jan. 20, 1898). Shaw declared that as an actor, however, Tree exploited every trick to draw attention from the verse-speaking. As Malvolio in Twelfth Night, for example, he came majestically down a flight of stairs and, in a contrived way, crashed to a sitting position. He then put on his eye-glasses and looked at the surroundings with disdain as if his fall were a divine plan. But, as Shaw says, when he came to speak the lines, Tree made nothing of them, not knowing a game which he had never studied. Shakespeare, said Shaw, assumed an executant who could perform and sustain certain physical feats of deportment, and build up vocal climaxes with his voice through a long crescendo of rhetoric, and who had a feeling for splendour of language and rhythm of verse. Tree, like so many contemporary actors who had picked up their profession on the stage without systematic training, could not produce these stock effects and, when they were demanded by the author, he had to find a way around them.[34]

Irving and Tree had both developed their own peculiar stage personalities, acquiring specialized methods which concealed their physical and vocal shortcomings and enhanced their merits. Irving, however, had studied to create his stage personality with a singleness of purpose that was foreign to Tree's temperament; and such was the mesmeric force of Irving's acting, the peculiar beauty of his halting delivery of his lines, that he could impose himself upon a part like Shylock or Iachimo and make it appear richer and more compelling than the original. Throughout his career Irving never ceased practising, working out movements and rehearsing them meticulously. Tree's stage personality was also arresting but was totally different from Irving's. Not taking his job with the other's deadly seriousness, and lacking the intensive training to which Irving had subjected himself, Tree was something of an improvisor and depended much on the impulse of the moment. Perhaps the two distinctive features of Tree's acting were romantic finesse and spontaneity. "His method on the stage was for 'flashes,'" said Mrs. Patrick Campbell who observed that "his slightly foreign manner, distinction and elegance, and fantastic grace, gave an arresting charm to his work."[35] Although the actor liked to be considered many sided, he delighted in all that was unconventional and paradoxical. According to W. L. Courtney, Tree was best in the representation of fantastic, bizarre characters, characters such as Caliban in The Tempest who had a twist in them which made them peculiar and original (Fortnightly Review, n.s. 102, 1917). Like Irving, Tree was unsurpassed in depicting characters of an evil and menacing disposition, like his Fagin in Oliver Twist and his Svengali in Trilby. The strong romantic vein in his acting fitted him for Shakespearean roles in which the note of pathos is prominent, such as Richard II and Wolsey. Tree could not speak the long speeches in Shakespeare as Phelps or his pupil Forbes-Robertson had done for he lacked the technique of sustained declamation, his peculiar faculty being for flashes of intuition and observation. With Fagin's asthmatic cough he sought to evoke the existence of a fog beyond the window; with the nervous glances and high quick speech of Richard II he aimed to reveal the character more clearly than actors who spoke the lines more effectively. But in the more physically and vocally taxing Shakespearean parts, like Macbeth and Othello, where character development has to be sustained through subtle, sustained performance, particular excellences in his playing could not conceal his basic shortcomings, and he persistently overacted Shakespeare's heroes and lovers.

Tree, however, was inclined to scant acquisition of technical skills. "I have not got technique," he once said; "it is a dull thing. It enslaves the imagination" (Fortnightly Review, n.s. 102, 1917). In an address delivered at the Royal Institution he declared that acting could not be taught. "There are those who would have us believe that technique is the end and aim of art," he said, adding that "all that is most essential, most luminous, in acting may be traced to the imaginative faculty" (pp. 95-96). In Tree's opinion the actor, of course, had to be capable of pronouncing his native language and of having a reasonable control over the movements of his limbs; but, thus equipped, his technical education was practically complete (p. 97).[36] Furthermore, he pointed out, he did no work away from the theatre; neither did he think things out beforehand, the simple reason being that he was unable to. "With me everything is done on the spur of the moment. I can only work under excitement. . . . My ideas come on the stage" (Cassell's Saturday Journal, Feb. 1, 1899).

The drawback to this inspirational form of acting, as Hesketh Pearson points out, is that it cannot be commanded at will.[37] Irving, for example, once having got his effects right, could consistently repeat them night after night. For Tree, however, the result was that he never gave a repetition of a set performance, and his acting of the parts was as versatile as his choice of them, improvising as he went along and always trusting to the right expression of the momentary emotion. Moreover, the long run of a play was death to his inspiration and he scarcely ever knew his lines in the early stages of a run. Shaw found that in Tree's impersonation of Antony in Julius Caesar not only was a good deal of the technical part of the actor's work "botched and haphazard" but that "Mr. Tree's memory failed him as usual" (Saturday Review, Jan. 29, 1898).

If Tree was pre-eminently a romantic, the next thing to note about him is that he was a character actor, one who did not excel chiefly in playing certain recurring situations, but in building up before the audience's eyes a definite human being. Tree made his audience believe in the reality of the character before them. Although his Macbeth, for example, lacked force, there was a vigorous subtlety in the way he contrived to delineate, often by looks alone, the character of a man overwhelmed with a horror of himself, of his own newly discovered potentialities, even as they are being realized. There was much that was good in Tree's Shakespearean revivals, said Gordon Crosse: his Malvolio was a success because Tree could build up a convincing likeness of the man by a multiplicity of small touches; his King John was built up the same way by means of subtle detail.[35]

His acting methods for Mercutio too slow for what is essentially a light comic part, Tree therefore aimed to minimize his verse-speaking deficiencies and presented a deliberate and sententious, rather than an airy and light-hearted, Mercutio. Certainly Tree had not studied his role in the usual meaning of the word. He had absorbed his part slowly, the actual lines coming to him with difficulty and suggesting something more than they said, which caused him to invent business often at variance with the author's meaning, so that in the end he created rather than interpreted his character. This Mercutio, said the Star, was especially to be commended for sparing the audience the traditional tomfoolery with the Nurse (July 1, 1913). The Stage found that he was no gay, mercurial young fellow but a stalwart man, an accomplished courtier with a keen sense of humour (July 3, 1913). Under all the vacillation of memory and mimicry, the audience discovered a real characterization. Sir Herbert read in Mercutio a kind of Gascon, noted J. T. Grein, a Cyrano full of brave words yet also very brave and human at heart (Sunday Times and Special, July 6, 1913). The role of Mercutio had traditionally been played on the nineteenth-century stage as a high comic part, the character bubbling over with humour and coming to a tragic end when Tybalt's sword slid easily through his side under Romeo's protecting arm. Tree made him a big swashbuckling poet, with a love for fighting, drinking and kissing, but a far bigger love--a love unto death--for his friend.

Describing Tree's interpretation of the Queen Mab speech, the Standard commented that the speech was given as it had surely never been given before: "Imagine a Mercutio who has enough of Hamlet in him to be able to prophesy something of the gigantic tragedy at the end of the play" (July 2, 1913). In the actor-manager's portrayal the brave Mercutio was a tragic figure who looked into Romeo's eyes and spoke the Queen Mab speech as though he were foretelling trouble instead of making fun (Evening Standard, July 1, 1913). Insisting on the melancholy side of Mercutio's character, Tree wove Mercutio's fairy wit into a sombre texture that held only a moment or two of pleasantry; the impression left in the audience's mind, concluded the *Standard*, was that "our leading actor-manager was trying to make a great tragic figure out of a light comedy figure." It had the unfortunate effect, said the reviewer, of making the death of Mercutio a climax of the play, and leaving the other characters to work up the audience to further transport (July 2, 1913).

In the scene of Mercutio's death, words came from him in floods until with lightning suddenness he raised himself in dignity as if a powerful light had been extinguished. The mortal hurt was so realistically suggested, noted the *Stage*, that it seemed that, with the sudden assuming of rigidity at his last words,

> A plague a' both your houses!
> They have made worms' meat of me. I have it,
> And soundly too. Your houses!
> (III.i.97-99),

the body that Benvolio bore off had no life in it (July 3, 1913). Mercutio's words "Help me into some house Benvolio" in Shakespeare's III.i.96, and the directions in the text to "Exit," indicate that Mercutio makes his own exit, supported by Benvolio. Shakespeare has Benvolio soon reappear and cry out, "O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio is dead" (III.i.107). So graphic, however, was Sir Herbert's treatment in showing the collapse of that gallant spirit, found the *Stage*, that Benvolio's statement seemed rather an anti-climax (July 3, 1913). For the *Academy*, however, Mercutio's death became him handsomely; the death scene in the writer's view was impressively and imaginatively treated, and Mercutio died bravely and realistically after a manner that held the hearts of the audience (July 5, 1913).

It was not only Romeo and Juliet in which Tree upset the balance of a play by according a character that he was acting far more prominence than Shakespeare's text warranted: this practice was inherent to his interpretation of Shakespeare from the very beginning at Her Majesty's. When Shaw remarked to Ellen Terry that Tree surrounded himself with counter-attractions and let them play him off the stage, Terry replied, "I'd like you to see what is written in his heart upon that subject."[39] Shaw was not wrong about his policy: though vain, Tree was not conceited and did not believe that the public paid merely to see him. Irving would never have produced a play such as Julius Caesar, for example, for it contains three or four leading characters each as good an acting vehicle as the others.

Nonetheless, Ellen Terry was also doubtless right that Tree did not enjoy being acted off his own stage. It is too much to claim, as Ralph Berry has done in a recent critical article, that Tree "showed a respect for the texts" and that Tree's unselfishness as an actor-manager made it possible for first-rate performances to flourish around him," and here we can see an anticipation of the modern ensemble."[40] As a contemporary viewer rightly pointed out, while Tree's production of Julius Caesar, for example, was "a triumph of actor-management," it was also a "grievous insult to Shakespeare." The performance he considered an unqualified failure "for the whole proportions of the play are spoiled by the present arrangement, a relatively minor character is thrust violently into the front place" (Academy, Feb. 5, 1898). Tree had arranged the three acts in his production so that at the fall of each of the three tableau curtains he, as Antony, was in possession of the house. The arrangement, in which scenes were vastly reduced, made Antony decidedly the leading part, which he assuredly is not in Shakespeare, and the audience, related Richard Dickens, consequently came away more impressed with the Forum Scene than with the murder in the Capitol or the quarrel in Brutus' tent.[41] Tree continued this practice in later productions. His acting version of The Tempest, again in three acts, managed to make Caliban the focus of the play. The actor-manager's final tableau was a beautiful picture of Prospero's ship sailing off and Tree as Caliban, alone on the island, waving to it. The promptbooks of his comic parts, such as Falstaff, show interpolated lines and business making his character's reaction the focus of attention.

IV

Though most Edwardians did not fully understand the rhythmic nature of Shakespeare's plays, generally they were aware of the special demands of Shakespeare's plays for flexibility of scenery and continuity of action. While the advocates of Elizabethanism such as Poel claimed that the current stagecraft was fundamentally ill equipped to deal with these demands, contemporary actor-managers, nevertheless, made their own handling of these problems part of their publicity. Matheson Lang described his acting version of Romeo and Juliet for the 1908 Lyceum production as having been "arranged for speed and continuity of action,"[42] and the Times reported that the "bustling hearty" production kept the audience enthralled for four full hours (March 16, 1908). Even Tree claimed that he was meeting the special demands of the plays. Professor George Odell, having viewed one of Tree's three-act productions, was in 1920 led to a portentous announcement:

> It was almost a stroke of genius that enabled Tree to see the three-part grouping in a Shakespearean play; not only did it solidify interest, but it enabled the scene-shifters to work most impressively. It literally, also, followed the Aristotelian dictum about a play having a beginning, a middle, and an end.[43]

In using the three-act division for Julius Caesar, his first Shakespearean production at Her Majesty's, Tree claimed, "a nearer approach is thus made to the Shakespearean ideal than could be given by presenting the plays with long waits, nowadays inseparable from a five-act tragedy." Not only was the swiftness of the action thus assured, he explained to his audience, but the new arrangement of scenes permitted the retention of certain essential passages which would inevitably have to be omitted, in order to bring the five acts within the limited time demanded by modern audiences.[44] Tree used a similar argument in defense of his arrangement of several other plays. By means of his division of King John, for example, he hoped that "swiftness of action is assured" and that the new sequence of scenes, together with the excisions made, would permit "the real story of the play to be told in quick, coherent, and logical manner."[45]

Tree certainly did not fully understand the type of continuity which Shakespeare required: he justified his cuts in Antony and Cleopatra on the grounds that "the loose construction of Act III, involving as it does the necessity of no fewer than eleven changes of scene, could hardly have fulfilled the ideal dramatic requirements even of those days" (p. 53). It was beyond Tree's comprehension that such an act on the Elizabethan stage would not have required any physical change of scene at all. Moreover, Tree's division of Shakespeare's plays did not necessarily alter the rhythmic structure as the scene waits within each act removed any advantages which may have accrued to one or two fewer act intervals. Tree very often in his performance programmes, souvenir booklets and interviews justified the rearrangements and excisions made to Shakespeare's texts for his own acting editions. His arrangement for Othello, he said, was more in accordance with the practice in Shakespeare's day, when it was certain his plays were subjected to a good deal of cutting. "There is a certain amount of repetition in 'Othello.' The same note is struck rather frequently, and I think personally that some condensing of the play adds to its impressiveness, especially in these days, when so much can be suggested by the modern art of the theatre."[46] Tree's usual practice was to cut about a third of the original text, although from Henry VIII he cut 1323 lines or forty-seven percent, an unusually high number even for the Victorians and Edwardians.[47] The cuts meant the elimination of a great deal of political intrigue, several minor characters, and subplot. Those portions dealing with the Reformation he deleted also, "being as they are practically devoid of dramatic interest and calculated as they are to weary an audience." Tree removed, in addition to extensive cuts in the first four acts, the whole of Act V and ended at Anne Boleyn's coronation; yet the play with all its spectacle and pageantry took four hours to perform.[48]

Because Romeo and Juliet was not in his active repertoire and came at the end of his last Shakespearean Festival, Tree was content to use

Although producers varied the number of scenes in each act, according to the elaborateness of the production and the difficulties in shifting scenery, the play was conventionally presented with four tableau curtains, each closing on an impressive picture. Matheson Lang's 1908 presentation at the Lyceum used a typical acting version: Act I ended with Romeo and Juliet in the ballroom scene; Act II closed with Romeo's impassioned "O' I am fortune's fool" after the death of Mercutio (III.i.138); Act III finished with Juliet's potion scene (IV.iii); and the fourth act concluded with the death of the lovers.[49] This arrangement, put together by Lang and the Lyceum manager Carpenter, was called by the Stage a "workman-like" acting version (March 19, 1908) although many passages were cut, notably some for the Nurse and sexual references to Rosaline, and although, as was usual on the Edwardian stage, there were numerous transpositions and amalgamations of scenes. On the other hand, for popular appeal the production added such features as a Garrick-like interpolation at the end of Shakespeare's Act IV of a procession of bridesmaids to wake Juliet on her wedding day (Stage, March 19, 1908).

An examination of Tree's promptbooks for various Shakespearean productions reveals that the actor-manager made his excisions for four major reasons, similar in justification to the cuts made by Irving and other Victorian and Edwardian actor-managers, Tree, however, generally being even more savage in his excisions than Irving. First of all, Tree eliminated many of the lines of characters whose importance he chose to reduce in his presentation of the play. Some lost more than half their lines, therefore depriving them of their dramatic complexity; others, often minor characters, were deleted entirely from the action. Secondly, Tree cut lines and scenes which to him did not seem essential to the forward movement of the narrative; on the other hand, he provided time for the complex pantomime and extraneous business which often began and ended scenes, for music to heighten atmosphere, and for dances. Tree's third basis for alteration of the text was formed by the moral sensibilities of his audience. He replaced Elizabethan directness of speech with Victorian euphemisms, but far more extensively he made cuts to those speeches where indelicate references to sexuality occur. Tree was also motivated by a fourth consideration. Because of the addition of elaborate pantomimic business, the necessity for complex set changes, and a style of verse-speaking that was cumbersome, an uncut Shakespearean text would often have resulted in productions of five hours, unacceptable to the audiences which kept him in business.

Tree found that Terry's acting text for Romeo and Juliet generally fulfilled the conditions of his own approach to the cutting of Shakespeare's texts and that the heavily excised text, in which over a thousand lines of the original were deleted, allowed the actor-manager to perform the play with all the extraneous business, pantomime and dancing that he considered vital to make this play come alive for a modern audience. Tree's revival, said the Stage, was presented "with all the usual cuts" (July 3, 1913). No promptbook exists for Terry's revival and no single promptbook is extant for Tree's production but six rehearsal copies, showing cuts, today exist in the Tree collection at the Bristol University Theatre Collection. These copies, each marked for a different role, are incompletely marked; the copy for Mercutio, Tree's own part, for example, reveals the most detailed cutting, but excisions are made to the text only to the end of his role, III.i, when Mercutio dies.[50] The

Friar's copy, on the other hand, shows most clearly cuts to the final act. One has therefore to consult also contemporary reviews for comments on excisions.

The only change that Tree made to Terry's text was that he removed the prologue to the play, a speech which in 1911 had been made by Julia Neilson at the New Theatre. This excision allowed Tree to start his production with a stirring and picturesque mêlée between the Capulets and Montagues. Fred Terry's cuts to the first act were extensive: The World complained that the initial thumb-biting dialogue, "so necessary at the outset to a proper grasp of the Montague-Capulet feud, "was eliminated and that the minor characters Sampson and Gregory, Abram and Balthasar therefore all disappeared from the play (Sept. 5, 1911). So did many lines of the Prince who is the pin keeping the whole setting of the story together. Tree's interpolation of tripping children and shrieking citizens, commented Desmond MacCarthy, "could hardly replace them in creating the atmosphere of the play" (New Statesman, July 19, 1913). Benvolio, Montague and Capulet also suffered greatly from curtailment of their parts, and Romeo's first speeches were shorn not only of obscenity but of most of his rhetorical professions of love for Rosaline. Because emphasis in Terry's version was placed upon the role of Juliet, acted by his daughter, Romeo suffered greatly from the cuts, and his role, noted the Athenaeum, "was reduced to one of secondary importance" (Sept. 9, 1911). The text for Mercutio's part, on the other hand, was kept quite full, the only sustained cuts being to Mercutio's bawdiness. More minor characters such as the servingmen in I.iv who make preparations for the ball disappeared completely from the play, and Capulet's role was reduced significantly so that the character's speeches were emptied of almost all their thunder.

In Act II Terry deleted the prologue to the act as unnecessary to furthering the action and then made the usual cuts to the bawdy speeches of Mercutio, Benvolio and Romeo. Romeo and Juliet's balcony scene was kept essentially whole although some of Romeo's extravagant images were condensed, notably his comparison of Juliet's eyes to stars and his desire to be a glove upon her hand (II.ii.15-21; 23-25).

In III.i, the scene in which Tybalt is killed and Romeo is banished, the presentation was kept essentially faithful to Shakespeare's text until Romeo's "O, I am fortune's fool" (III.i.138) brought down the usual curtain, to the exclusion of the Prince's banishment of Romeo and the second entrance of the Capulets and the Montagues. This first half of Tree's production, remarked the Theatre, went with "rapid ease" (July 4, 1913).

Shakespeare's III.ii shows Juliet's impatience for the night:

> Spread thy close curtain, love-performing Night,
> That runaways' eyes may wink, and [illegible]
> Leap to these arms, untalked of an[illegible]n.
> (III.ii.5-[illegible]

That speech, which is the burning focus of Juliet's passionate impatience, was once again excised, as it had been in most Victorian and Edwardian productions. Perhaps her soliloquy was still thought too unmaidenly for the contemporary stage? queried Desmond MacCarthy. Such an idea would never have occurred to him, he said, had not her Nurse been emptied of her fundamental character. In Tree's production "she hobbled and whined, and whined and hobbled, and bobbed and sighed," but of the midwife, wet nurse, and priestess of propagation there was nothing left. When she was asked Juliet's age, for example, and started running over the sort of incidents which enabled her to date an event, her reminiscences stopped before she recalled how she weaned Juliet and described how the child grew tetchy "when it did taste the wormwood on the nipple" (I.iii.31) (New Statesman, July 19, 1913). Because Terry's text cut Juliet's learning from the Nurse that Tybalt had been killed and Romeo sentenced to banishment, the narrative advanced directly from Romeo's exclamation that he was "fortune's fool," in III.i, to his passionate scene in the Friar's cell, Shakespeare's III.iii (The Stage, July 3, 1913). In this scene Tree's young Romeo was able to storm his grief at length, at the expense of most of the Friar's lines.

In IV.i Terry had excised most of the lines of the encounter between Juliet and Paris so that the story could progress more directly to the protracted potion scene upon which the curtain for his Act III fell. The cuts to Shakespeare's last act of Romeo and Juliet were severe. Scene ii, in which Friar Lawrence learns from Friar John that his letter was not delivered, was deleted entirely so that the scene could shift directly from the Apothecary to the elaborate final setting of the tomb. Many of the initial speeches in the tomb by Paris, Romeo, Balthasar, and the Friar were shortened. Even Romeo's great speech in the tomb scene was "mercilessly handled," pointed out the Athenaeum, noting that as a result of the cuts Romeo's part was once again reduced to one of secondary importance to Juliet's (Sept. 9, 1911). Prolonged death throes were then acted out by both lovers and the final curtain fell on Juliet's suicide, the final 140 lines being deleted and the remainder, in Tree's production, being represented only by a confused noise within.[51]

V

Romeo and Juliet, as produced by Sir Herbert Tree, was "radiantly beautiful in the love scenes, ferociously human later on, and splendidly tragic in the end," declared the Standard (July 2, 1913). A succession of brilliant scenes and elaborate effects made Tree's presentation "worthy of the traditions of the theatre" and his revival was received with vast applause (Era, July 5, 1913; Pall Mall Gazette, July 1, 1913). The final tableau curtain brought to a close the most lavish production of Romeo and Juliet on the English stage since the Restoration. The heavy setting, with its thirteen changes of scene, its crowds, combats, dances, and other riches of spectacle, "worked without a hitch," commented the Stage, "a further tribute to the producing capacity of His Majesty's" (July 3, 1913). The Academy found that the tragedy formed a fitting finale to Sir Herbert's last Festival, commenting that "each year he makes better than the last, but the present season will be difficult to improve upon" (July 5, 1913).

For a number of critics, however, Tree's production of Romeo and Juliet was a most disappointing revival of Shakespeare's lyrical love story. For the reviewer from Reynolds, the costs of spectacle were too high; the pruning hook, which had lopped off more than a thousand lines, had been used too ruthlessly and many of the most beautiful lines of the play had been cut (July 6, 1913). Although periodicals such as the Athenaeum had commented approvingly in 1911 that "necessarily the long harangues of the Friar have come under the knife" and had applauded Fred Terry's decision to end the play on the traditional note (Sept. 9, 1911), for the reviewer from the World a serious omission was that of the final reconciliation between the two houses: "It was a grave error of judgment that everything should be subordinated to the lovers instead of to love. For in Romeo and Juliet the triumph of love is the rout of hate" (Sept. 5, 1911). Critics in 1911 had pointed out that the magnificence of the presentation would make the production popular (Daily Telegraph, Sept. 4, 1911; Daily News, Sept. 4, 1911), but that the revival was largely characterized by that "painful unimaginativeness which has of late marred so many Shakespearean revivals in this city" (Pall Mall Gazette, Sept. 4, 1911). "When all is said," commented the Evening News, "one wonders how much longer the play will hold the boards in its present form" (Sept. 4, 1911).

By 1913 Tree's methods had been in force for fifteen years and many critics were now tired of the producer's extraneous effects such as his supernumeraries frolicking in and out of the dialogue of Shakespeare's plays. The Star, condemning Tree's revival, complained of the "frequent interruptions of irrelevant supers, supposed to figure the street life of Verona, but in fact only taking up valuable time without producing the smallest effect of verisimilitude." This fashion of dragging in miscellaneous specimens of populace to stroll, skip, or gambol across the stage and obligingly disappear the moment any business of importance had to be transacted, the Star found to be "one of the least valuable of Sir Henry Irving's legacies to his successors." It was rather disappointing, said the critic, to find Tree so resolute in his adherence to the highly illustrated Lyceum methods:

> In a play not hitherto acted at this theatre and now produced for only a week, it seemed possible that he would essay a lighter, rapider, more modern method, and would not allow the movement to be broken up by a dozen interacts, rendered necessary by heavy changes of scene.

It was soon evident, however, that Sir Herbert was standing firmly on the ancient ways while the play, on the other hand, was staggering laboriously along under tons of scenery, which necessitated slashing cuts and high-handed rearrangements. Thus the resuscitation of the New Theatre production was a revival with everything handsome in it but innocent of all originality (The Star, July 1, 1913).

As far as Tree's acting of Mercutio was concerned, critics expressed the hope that Sir Herbert would quicken and brighten his impersonation when he became more certain of his lines (Pall Mall Gazette, July 1, 1913; Standard, July 2, 1913). Tree, however, like Henry Irving, was well aware of his deficiencies and knew that his portrayal of Mercutio could not match his conception of the role. In a memoir years later, Tree's wife related that it had pleased the actor to play Mercutio to the beautiful young Phyllis Neilson-Terry's Juliet, "but he and I had seen an incomparable Mercutio in Charles Coghlan, and though he may have satisfied the public, I know he did not satisfy himself."[52]

On Tree's death his half-brother Max Beerbohm, who had grown to dislike biographies of actors, decided against this form of memorial and, saying that Tree was "many sided, impressing different people in different ways," he collected together instead a book of short pieces by those who knew him best. Desmond MacCarthy's account of Tree's acting is by far the most perceptive account left to us. It was because Tree possessed the power of conceiving character to a very high degree, without the same power to embody it in voice and gesture, claimed MacCarthy, that Tree was tempted so often to play roles outside his range; and his really outstanding skill in making up, in which he was unmatched, added to the strength of his temptation. Even more than

Irving, said MacCarthy, Tree tended to create a character rather than perform the author's. He could make himself look like a Falstaff, for example, said MacCarthy; he understood and revelled in the character of Falstaff, but his performance lacked fundamental force. Hence the contradiction in his acting: his performance as a whole often fell short of high excellence, yet those same impersonations were lit by insight and masterly strokes of interpretation.[53]

John Ranken Towse after sixty years as a theatre critic assessed Tree as an ambitious, artistic and extraordinarily adroit manager, and an accomplished performer, thoroughly expert in all the tricks of his trade, but an actor who had never established his right to a place in the ranks of great actors. Although by the force of circumstances and of his own tact and energy Tree had, as the leading actor-manager in Great Britain, succeeded temporarily to the position occupied by Henry Irving, Towse declared that not for an instant could Tree be classed in the same category with that remarkable actor-manager whose histrionic power to electrify the house was unquestioned. In some respects, claimed Towse, Tree could be compared with Charles Kean; in the splendour of his professional accoutrements, beauty of scenery, richness of costume, and spectacular groupings he had excelled all his contemporaries. To a player of such calibre as Samuel Phelps he was immeasurably inferior. Towse found that Tree's talents were of the inconspicuous kind that might be adapted readily to meet a great variety of conditions, but not conditions of the most exacting kind; they were impotent to aid the actor-manager in characters whose attributes--humorous, imaginative, or emotional--transcended the ordinary. As an eccentric comedian Herbert Tree had few if any rivals, concluded Towse, but the great masterpieces of tragedy and comedy lay far beyond his artistic reach. "The mimetic faculty in him is strongly developed, but between mimicry and dramatic expression there is very little in common."[54]

Shakespeare's imagination and fancy could not be expressed by the stage-carpenter, and no intelligent actor would ever bring the poet's masterpieces under a mass of irrelevant scenery, proclaimed the dismayed critic from Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine in 1904 after viewing one of Tree's product[illegible] Shakespeare made a great demand upon the imagination, M[illegible] no demand at all. Worse still, continued the critic, was that at the rare moments when Shakespeare's lines emerged from the prevailing racket, they dragged, they limped, they halted. The actors in Tree's productions he found put a false emphasis on every syllable which they uttered, and as they always spoke to musical accompaniment, generally slow, it was surprising, said the critic, if they made a single speech intelligible. "Carpenters and scene-painters," he charged, "are the real masters of the modern drama" (Oct., 1904). The major problem, as George Bernard Shaw saw it in an article entitled "The Dying Tongue of Great Elizabeth," was that to Mr. Tree Shakespeare's language was more or less a dead one and that to the actor-manager and his company it was a continual embarrassment. "How much of Shakespeare's magic is created by the beauty and fancy of his word-music," insisted Shaw; when Shakespeare's dialogue was paraphrased in mere utilitarian prose, the critic found that speech after speech became awkward, superfluous, dragged in by the ears, and consequently irritating and tedious, fatal to the crispness of the action (Saturday Review, Feb. 11, 1905).

Tree, said Shaw bluntly in Max Beerbohm's collection of memoirs, was the despair of authors. "His attitude towards a play was one of whole-hearted anxiety to solve the problem of how to make it please and interest the audience," a matter which Shaw insisted was the author's business, not the actor's. With his restless imagination Tree felt that he needed nothing from an author but a literary scaffold on which to exhibit his creations. Like Irving, he turned to Shakespeare as a forest out of which such scaffolding could be hewn without remonstrance from the landlord, and, as far as Shaw could discover, the notion that a play could succeed without any further help than a simple impersonation on his part never occurred to Tree. The author was "a lame dog to be helped over the stile by the ingenuity and inventiveness of the actor-producer. How to add and subtract, to interpolate and prune, until an effective result was arrived at, was the problem of production as he saw it." What Tree could do was always entertaining, in some way or other, acknowledged Shaw; but, for better or worse, it was hardly ever what the author meant him to do. The cure for the disease of actor-managership, concluded Shaw, was actor-author-managership: Tree should have written his own plays. He would then have taken a parental pride in other parts besides his own; he would have come to care for a play as a play.[55]

William Poel in a footnote to Shaw's article "The Dying Tongue of Great Elizabeth," which was later printed by the London Shakespeare League, concurred with Shaw's criticisms. Herbert Beerbohm Tree, he declared, never came within measurable distance of doing justice to the parts he played, "for a man who is taking unheard-of-pains to manufacture stage business is utterly unqualified for the work he undertakes." Tree's pageantry in his productions could not be accepted by way of compensation, insisted Poel. Shakespeare could only have been made acceptable by appropriate delivery of the text and accurate characterization, and to neither of these vital matters did Tree give proper consideration.[56]

Nonetheless, despite mounting criticism of his methods, Herbert Beerbohm Tree at the turn of the century and in the decade following was generally esteemed as Irving's successor, the pre-eminent Shakespeare actor and producer in Great Britain. One of Tree's contemporaries, reviewing a production at Her Majesty's, assessed his achievements thus:

> To judge the play by the ordinary canons of dramatic criticism would be an extremely gratuitous form of error . . . one ought rather to ask whether it fulfils the conditions of the highest spectacular drama. To that interrogation only one reply is possible--an emphatic and unreserved affirmative.[57]

Tree's reputation rested largely on his great "revivals" of Shakespeare at Her Majesty's Theatre. Alfred Darbyshire in his contemporary study of the stage judged the Shakespearean productions of Herbert Beerbohm Tree to have played an important part in the art of the later Victorian stage. Some of them, he stated, stood unrivalled and had to be regarded as "cultural and courageous efforts to display the works of England's greatest dramatist to the best and highest advantage." Tree in his view had been a worthy contemporary of Sir Henry Irving in the great work of elevating and ennobling the art of the stage. He deserved, therefore, "the highest regards and the grateful thanks of those who believe in the stage as a medium of expression for the highest art of the drama."[58]

Highly regarded by most critics in his day and by t[illegible] who patronized his theatre, Tree today is generally remembered [illegible] old-style actor-manager whose excesses far outweighed his artistic merit and is commonly thought of as a somewhat ludicrous impresario. Tree's productions are remembered chiefly for their "tricky business, tableaux and dumbshows," says Charles Shattuck.[59] The intrinsic value of Tree's work has always been questioned: his more discerning contemporaries saw him as a successful flâneur, obsessively addicted to overelaboration, a view which has not been much challenged since. Gordon Crosse, looking back after sixty years of Shakespearean playgoing, remembered that Tree's succession of spectacles, each more splendid than the last, became a burden rather than a delight. "Intending to praise Shakespeare, he came near to burying him under a mountain of magnificence."[60] For modern critics such as Bernard Grebanier, nobody in the history of Shakespearean production carried the element of spectacle to the extravagant extremes which were to make Tree's productions "so well liked by the undiscriminating" and "no one knew better how to lose the play in a welter of scenic effects and interpolated tricks."[61] John Ripley, concurring, has stated that "surely no theatre in the whole of dramatic history ever allowed its audience's imagination less scope. The only imagination exercised was that of the manager."[62]

Of modern critics perhaps George Rowell has given the greatest acknowledgment of Tree's contributions to the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century stage. As Rowell points out in his survey of the Victorian theatre, it scarcely seems just to Tree's achievement that the elaborate scale on which he mounted his productions should now be remembered for his partiality for real livestock in Shakespeare.[63] Rowell points out that Tree's Festivals have received nodding recognition from historians but that the extent of his achievement in this respect has failed to be assessed. Certainly, Tree's work on the Festivals was productive. Indeed, claims Rowell, Tree's contribution to the appreciation of Shakespeare in performance during these years, 1905 to

1913, could be considered more valuable than the efforts at Stratford-upon-Avon of F. R. Benson's company, undercast, uncapitalized, and exposed to the hazards of touring.[64] Although, of course, the cumulative effort of Benson's visits to Stratford-upon-Avon over more than thirty years was far greater, Tree's Festivals also had lasting results. The "non-scenic" *Hamlet*, the hospitality given to prophets of a counterfaith like William Poel and Harley Granville-Barker, the whole concept of Shakespeare played by a resident London company in rotation rather than for an extended run, were all pointers to the function which the Old Vic Company was soon to serve. Moreover, like Irving, Tree was largely contemptuous of financial reward and regularly withdrew productions which were still playing to capacity. From 1905 his annual summer season of Shakespeare provided London with a repertory of full-scale Shakespearean productions offered in a quite uneconomic variety and splendour.

It is unfair, when discussing Tree's Shakespeare, to dwell exclusively on the grosser distortions and scenic over-elaborations, for the productions were supremely of their age and may be seen as classic examples of the art of dressing the plays with heavy sets and busy stage action. It would be unjust to conclude that Tree was merely a great showman. Impresario he was, but he was also a pioneer with his Festivals. Furthermore, it is rarely acknowledged today that Tree at the Haymarket from 1888 to 1898 championed new, serious drama, like Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, by running matinée performances supported by his reputation and financed by the profits of his evening repertoire. His later ostentatiously upholstered productions of Shakespeare are what are most frequently remembered of Tree's work. It is a useful counterbalance of that view to recall Shaw's tribute in 1895, his critical campaign against the actor-manager mitigated by Tree's occasional work at the Haymarket, to Tree's "repeated and honourable attempts to cater for people with some brains" (Saturday Review, Nov. 9, 1895), and, a year later, his comment that "Mr. Tree's notion of feeding the popular drama with ideas and gradually educating the public, by classical matinées, financed by the spoils of the popular plays in the evening bill, seems to have been the right one" (Saturday Review, Jan. 30, 1897).

No one can doubt Tree's love for Shakespeare, however ill-advised that love was. Tree managed to produce sixteen of Shakespeare's plays, more than any other West-end manager attempted on the late Victorian and Edwardian stage. Tree's strongest argument was that he had been enabled to give Shakespeare a wider appeal and a larger franchise, surely no mean achievement. Although he occasionally posed as a theatre idealist, Tree's practice belied his claims; he was, as John Ripley aptly terms him, "a hard-headed purveyor of popular culture."[65] Disdaining the enthusiasms of William Poel's coterie, Tree from the earliest days of his administration aimed his Shakespearean productions at the mass market. His major aim, and it was no unworthy one in spite of objections to his methods, was to make Shakespeare popular and accessible. In this he succeeded admirably.

Because of Tree's productions, many thousands had witnessed Shakespeare instead of hundreds, a fact the actor-manager pointed to with pride, believing that Shakespeare's works were not only for the literary student but were for the world at large. "Indeed," he proclaimed, condemning the approach of William Poel, "there should be more joy over ninety-nine Philistines that are gained than over one elect that is preserved" (Fortnightly Review, n.s. 68, 1900). Presenting his own defense against his critics in 1904, Tree acknowledged that it had been freely stated that he had but pandered to a vulgar public, incapable of appreciating the works of the poet, and that, in order to attract the public, he was driven to overload the play with lavish expenditure of money. To this charge he replied by the simple statement of fact that its cost was half that expended on a modern play recently presented at Her Majesty's Theatre; "and I fail to see why Shakespeare should be treated with less care, with less reverence, and with less lavishness of resource than is demanded by modern authors" (p. 222).

The spectacular tradition in Shakespearean production, however, carried to its extreme in Tree's revivals, was coming to an end. The last three or four years before the outbreak of the Great War witnessed the final sybaritic glories of the spectacle stage. The apogee was reached, not in a production like Tree's Henry VIII, lavish though that was, but in the immense recreation of a Gothic cathedral in the vastness of Olympia offered by Max Reinhardt with the mime-play The Miracle in 1911. Production running costs for eight weeks amounted to 70,000 pounds, with over 12,500 pounds in costumes alone, and a cast of 2,000, a choir of 500 voices, an orchestra of 200, 175 in the ballet, and enormously elaborate lighting installations (Playgoer and Society Illustrated, v. [illegible], 1912). The writing, however, was also on the wall. New concepts in theatre meant a sharp reaction against the spectacle style, and increasingly imperative economic considerations eventually made it prohibitively expensive.

Charles Kean had already presented, a half century earlier, the truth of the view that lavish productions rarely justify themselves in terms of box-office receipts. Kean wrote at the end of his decade at the Princess's:

> the vast sums expended . . . make it advisable that I should now retire from the self-imposed responsibility of management, involving such a perilous outlay; and the more especially, as a building so restricted in size as the Princess's, renders any adequate returns utterly hopeless.[66]

In a series of strictures at the end of the century, condemning the actor-managers for their lavish productions, Sidney Lee explained that spectacular embellishments were so costly that, according to the system in vogue, the performance of a play of Shakespeare involved heavy financial risks. In London, he noted, Shakespearean revivals were comparatively rare; they took place at uncertain intervals and only those plays viewed with favour by the London manager which lent themselves in his opinion to more or less ostentatious spectacle, and the interpolation of music and dancing, were played. Lee refuted the commonly held belief that by spectacular methods alone could Shakespeare be made to "pay" in the theatre. Kean's mantle, he pointed out, was subsequently assumed by Henry Irving who gave the spectacular and scenic system in the production of Shakespeare every advantage that it could derive from munificent expenditure and the cooperation of highly endowed artists. Yet Irving announced not long before his death that he had lost on his Shakespearean productions a hundred thousand pounds, and the actor-manager was then led to the following pronouncement:

> The enormous costs of a Shakespearean production on the liberal and elaborate scale which the public is now accustomed to expect makes it almost impossible for any manager--I don't care who it is--to a continuous policy of Shakespeare for many years with any hope of profit in the long run.[67]

In the face of this authoritative pronouncement, declared Lee, it was necessary to conclude that the spectacular system had been given, within recent memory, every chance of succeeding, and, as far as recorded testimony was available, had been, from the commercial point of view, a failure.[68]

Even the economic fortunes of Herbert Beerbohm Tree, who valiantly attempted upholstered Shakespeare in repertory and whose lavish productions catered to every possible desire of the masses, came to a similar fate. George Rowell has examined the financial books of Her Majesty's Theatre during the years of the Shakespeare Festivals and has come to the conclusion that the shape of Tree's later Festivals, with consecutive performances of the same play, did not draw as well as the earlier "six plays in six days" had done. Even the play Romeo and Juliet in 1913--new to his Majesty's but a revival in sets, costumes, music and leading lady of the 1911 New Theatre production--earned only twelve hundred pounds. Evidently there was a loyal audience which would pay to see Tree and his company in a round of Shakespeare plays, but the general public was not drawn by a week's run of a familiar production.[69] Rowell has discovered that in the early years the account books of Her Majesty's show that the Festivals were self-supporting and that they had great appeal at the box office. The most successful year was in 1910, the year in which a gala performance of Henry VIII was shown to the new King and Queen. By 1911, a loss was shown--much had probably been spent on the Gala performance--and in 1912 and 1913 there were also big losses. Tree never again played Shakespeare at His Majesty's.

It could be argued that Tree's reputation as the last exponent of a "picture-book" Shakespeare was as much due to changing economic conditions as the public's mounting rejection of his ideas. Tree's death in 1917 coincided with the revolution in theatrical management brought about by the Great War. The stringent financial conditions after 1918 meant that, at least in London, actor-managers could no longer pay for unprofitable ventures by reviving established favourites. A desire came for a less dictatorial and expensive theatre. Unionized labour, allied to high general inflation, made the workings of pictorial spectacle, requiring vast resources of money and manpower, quite beyond the economy-conscious theatre of the post-war era and made the type of production Tree offered all but an extinct species.[70] Its place was taken by the film, the natural vehicle for two of Tree's greatest features: special effects and large casts.

It was also the development of the film, at the turn of the century, which caused the demise of the spectacular theatre. The ne plus ultra in spectacular staging was reached in The Whip at Drury Lane in 1909, in which Bruce Smith mounted a horserace on a treadmill and a train wreck. A chariot race had already been seen in Ben Hur in 1902. These productions were enormously admired and were the result of great technological skill, but they were literally on the wrong tracks. The cinema ensured that for the theatre this kind of realism was a dead end: the moving camera could so far surpass it. The opportunities that the medium offered for massive spectacle, as first demonstrated by Quo Vadis in 1912, were to prove the final death blow to the actor-managers' spectacular productions.

In exploiting a realistic and pictorial approach, Irving's and Tree's offerings fulfilled the taste for a cinematic kind of theatre. Their success, marking a theatrical need for the motion picture, reached its peak simultaneously with the arrival and early development of the film. Their rise to popularity coincided with the final phase in the development of the motion picture, and, upon its appearance and progress, fell into a decline. This would suggest that the success of Irving's and Tree's examples, offering a certain stimulation to the promotion of the process, was subsequently undermined by its capacities and, as the motion picture brought the pictorial cycle of realism and romance into a higher level of perfection, was eventually deprived of its audience.

There was little critics like George Bernard Shaw or innovators like William Poel could do as long as the taste of audiences was satisfied by lavish display in Shakespeare, accompanied, of course, by the star performance of the actor-manager. When the cinema developed its own form of realistic pictorial spectacle at much lower prices, the theatre, with its artistic direction already being changed by the reformers and revolutionaries, could no longer compete on the same terms. Only three years after the British public was made aware of the cinema, the first filmed attempt with Shakespeare was made, and, appropriately, it was Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, always eager for experiment and enjoying the excitement of taking chances, who was the pioneer and explored this new medium for spectacle, in 1898 photographed in motion in a scene from King John.[71]

Most important, however, was that by 1913 theatregoers in greatly increasing numbers were realizing that the whole spectacular tradition of presenting Shakespeare in the theatre was a wrong-headed one. The full-scale scenic treatment of Shakespeare initiated by Kemble had reached its apogee and now audiences were perceiving that in the hands of Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree at His Majesty's, "it was lapsing into an even more magnificent decline," as William Bridges-Adams appropriately termed it.[72] Tree's productions, said Sidney Dark, "left you with the conviction that the trimmings were the things which he cared about most" (English Review, 25, 1917). Popular taste, which Sir Herbert had served loyally, was beginning to question strongly whether his conjectural reconstruction of Cleopatra's barge was quite as impressive as Enobarbus' description of it, and whether that notoriously ill-used play The Tempest gained much by excising made in the interests of the scenic artist and a star Caliban. The prime instigator of this revolt, of course, was William Poel who for decades had unrelentingly advertised his beliefs and to whom Tree, the most chivalrous of men, more than once offered a share of his Shakespeare Festivals. An ever greater number of Shakespeare lovers were coming to perceive that Shakespeare the playwright knew his business and that on the stage the dramatic essence of his plays should be realized, not diluted or smothered. In certain theatrical, literary and academic circles Tree's methods were denounced. Yet it is easier for critics to attack bad methods than for artists to create good methods and win acceptance for them. No one in Tree's lifetime managed to break his hold upon the general public.

In a reply to Tree's "The Living Shakespeare: A Defence of Public Taste," W. Hughes Hallet pointed out that the greatest evil under the present system was that the actor knew the attention of the audience was not concentrated on him, but to a greater or lesser extent directed to scenery and costume. His art consequently suffered; moreover, he was always in danger of becoming subordinate to his surroundings. When David Garrick and Spranger Barry in 1750 were performing Romeo and Juliet at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, respectively, reminded Hallet, the opinion of the viewers was divided. One lady on being appealed to replied that had she been Juliet to Garrick's Romeo, so ardent and impassioned was he, she should have expected that he would have come up to her in the balcony; but had she been Juliet to Barry's lover, so tender and eloquent and so seductive was he, that she should certainly have gone down to him. The actor of those days, insisted Hallet, monopolized the ears and eyes of the spectator, and knowing this, he ran up and down the gamut of the passions that many at least would feel with him, producing effects not attempted on the contemporary stage.

In refuting Tree's defence in Fortnightly Review, Hallet queried whether Tree in his lavish productions did not fall into the common mistake of applying to poetic drama the principles of realistic drama. In modern drama, for example, he explained, in the plays of Pinero, Jones and Grundy, it was the triumph of the authors to create men and women, to invent incidents, to compose dialogue, which should be as exact a reproduction as possible of what the audience saw and heard, or might see and hear in the world around them. Their plays were a sort of essence of everyday life. In a word, said Hallet, with realistic drama everything animate and inanimate had to be set forth, clearly visible, and nothing was left to the imagination. With poetic drama, on the other hand, it was not so, and here much had to be left to the imagination. Convention met the audience at every turn. The language was rhetorical to a degree, unknown in any age, and it was cast in a form which, viewed as ordinary speech, was absurd. Moreover, the characters comported themselves and expressed themselves after certain conventions. The pettiness of modern acting was out of place in the poetic drama, the fidgetiness, the breaking up of speeches, the constant sitting down and getting up, the lack of repose, the mortal terror lest the fact should peep out that the author wrote in verse (Fortnightly Review, n.s. 68, 1900).

H. Hamilton Fyfe, concurring with this view, stated that gradually the theatre had been converted--or, in his view, perverted--from Poetry to Realism. The first things, he said, that were impressed upon the contemporary young dramatist was that he must cultivate natural dialogue and cut out everything which did not advance the action of the play. "Apply that text to any poetical dramas that you like, ancient or modern," he stated, "and you will see that they are hopelessly antiquated" (The World, March 18, 1908).

Tree's faith in his method, however, was never shaken. When about 1912 the idea of a National Theatre was being seriously considered, Tree confidently expected to be appointed to the directorship. Younger rivals, like Harley Granville-Barker, who espoused more "modern methods," were in his eyes nothing but "humbug." "What one wants," he declared, sublimely indifferent to the theatrical revolution that would soon discredit all he had stood for, "is sincerity, directness, and a reverence for Shakespeare."[73] Tree, reminisced W. L. Courtney, had little sympathy with the movement spearheaded by Poel; "he took a great interest in it, of course, . . . he preferred older methods." With regard to Granville-Barker's productions, inspired by Poel's teachings, "he seemed to feel that they were bizarre freakish experiments which would only appeal to a section of the public and not to the great mass of theatregoers. For himself . . . he had the vast auditorium of His Majesty's resting on his shoulders." Tree always insisted, recounted Courtney, that "I have to find something which will be agreeable to stalls, upper circle, pit, gallery--all at once" (Fortnightly Review, n.s. 102, 1917).

Desmond MacCarthy in his assessment of Tree in Max Beerbohm's collection of memoirs, wrote that His Majesty's was never a focus of all that was considered choicest, most inspiring, and most impressing in dramatic act, as the Lyceum had once been. The chief reason, he contended, was that the tradition had begun to lose prestige with the imaginative public. Her Majesty's under Tree stood instead for the grandly, lavishly popular; for years it represented the central British conception of the drama. Tree, he said, might have been a greater actor if he had had enough confidence to believe that what he could do best was more worth doing than bringing off effects which, in his youth, he had been taught were the triumphs of an actor's art; or even perhaps if his methods of production had not entailed such innumerable preoccupations which had nothing to do with acting. "But he lived in an uncritical age," maintained MacCarthy, "and he was ambitious." Tree set before him as an aim that preeminence in the theatrical world he did in fact attain, and in attaining it, many aptitudes, all clamouring for exercise, found satisfaction, the artist in him acquiescing--as far as MacCarthy could see from the stalls--without painful struggles. It was easy for Tree to follow the high road to popular success, judged the critic, because the Lyceum tradition did give enormous scope to his emotional, artistic temperament.[74]

Tree was essentially a romantic actor, claimed MacCarthy, "perhaps the last exuberant descendant of Romanticism flowering on the English stage." The dignity of Kemble's declamation, the power of Macready's pathos, the thrilling fury of the elder Kean and the marvel of his voice--there was also not much in their acting to which modern theatregoers would not have taken exception, he said, though it was pleasing and satisfactory to their contemporaries. The public was now increasingly aware that these famous actor-managers had also chopped and altered the text of Shakespeare; they observed that the actor-managers were praised for the ingenuity of their "business" (precisely the kind Tree was always inventing), and they suspected that the actor-managers' expression of emotion was pitched in a very high key indeed. MacCarthy suggested that the astringent atmosphere of the nineties and of the early years of this century was not favourable to the romantic, expansive side of Herbert Tree's art. In judging Tree's talent and in placing him among his precedessors and contemporaries, MacCarthy declared that "it is important to think of him as an actor trailing with him into the twentieth century clouds of romanticism, from which, for our eyes, the glow and colour had in a measure departed."[75]

It was the whole tradition that was wrong, declared MacCarthy, not the way Tree carried it out; in that he displayed a good deal of invention. The editions of Shakespeare issued at Her Majesty's were more sumptuously bound and richly illustrated than any the Lyceum had produced. However, Tree's 1913 Festival was subject to invidious comparisons with Granville-Barker's recent and revolutionary productions of The Winter's Tale and Twelfth Night at the Savoy Theatre. By this time the Festivals, which had been great successes in earlier years, were now showing losses. Tree's mistake, maintained MacCarthy, was to assume that Shakespeare's plays could be improved with extraneous effect. The result of all this accumulation of commentary, illustration and music, however ingenious or lavish, round a play was often to slow down its action intolerably; and while attempting to interpret Shakespeare to the eye, the production too often failed to interpret him to the mind.

Using Tree's final production, Romeo and Juliet as an example, MacCarthy insisted that Tree had learned nothing in this latest Festival "unless it is by this time that what once pleased now pleases neither so many nor so much. He has refused to trim his sails to catch the fresh wind that is blowing." No one, the critic contended, expected Tree to throw over elaborate scenery and to adopt within the year the apron-stage and the methods of Mr. Poel and Mr. Barker; but from a performance like Twelfth Night, at the Savoy the previous winter, Sir Herbert might have inferred three things which would have altered his sense of proportion as a producer: that the beauty, fun and passion of Shakespeare could hold an audience without extraneous excitement; that the whole play should be performed; and that the actors should be prevented from trying to illustrate by action and "business" every line they uttered. Whether it was because he belonged to the period when elaborate scenic effects first swept all before them, or because he trusted temperamentally to the big brush sensation, the actor-manager apparently found it impossible to believe that bare poetry could produce a dramatic effect. Nearly all of Sir Herbert Tree's failings as a producer of Shakespeare, charged MacCarthy, sprung from this inability to believe that the poet could, unaided, appeal to the emotions. Tree could not believe that Shakespeare had after all done his work, and that it only remained for the producer to make Romeo and Juliet as it stood vividly intelligible; and it was painfully clear that he had no respect whatever for the rhythms of comedy and tragedy, prose and passion, into which the poet had woven his story, for Tree would cut and pad a play until those rhythms approximated as nearly as possible to common melodrama.

And he had looked forward to seeing the performance of Romeo and Juliet, said the disappointed critic, condemning "this hateful method, which makes it quite unnecessary that Shakespeare should have written the words." Tree's Romeo and Juliet showed spectacular production methods at their most blatant. "But better ones are at hand," MacCarthy proclaimed, "and therefore, as a critic, as a runner outside the Temple of Drama, I raise the cry, 'Sir Herbert Tree's carriage stops the way'" (New Statesman, July 19, 1913).

NOTES

[1] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, letter to actress daughter Viola, Oct. 4, 1912, as quoted by Hesketh Pearson, Beerbohm Tree (New York. Harper and Row, 1956), p. 161.

[2] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Thoughts and After-Thoughts (London: Cassell, 1913), p. 48. All further references to this work are indicated in the text by page number.

[3] Moreover, in London alone over 242,000 people had witnessed his Julius Caesar, and nearly 220,000 were present during the run of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

[4] Joseph Harker, Studio and Stage (London: Nisbet, 1924), p. .

[5] Tree instituted a series of independent Wednesday afternoon matinées of untried dramas and Monday evening matinées of British and foreign plays that were generally regarded as above the average playgoer's intelligence. He perceived the genius of Ibsen, appreciated the poetical quality of Maeterlinck, and recognized the valuable work of Brieux. Even though as a commercial manager he had to make compromises and selected the less controversial dramas of Ibsen and Brieux and cut them extensively, and even though he rarely failed to think in terms of a fine part for himself, Tree's enterprise gave audiences the opportunity to see plays by avant-garde authors in a celebrated west-end theatre. The circle of playgoers who would care for this kind of fare might at first be limited, he contended, but the ordinary economic axiom would be reversed in time and the supply would create the demand (The Star, Oct. 27, 1890).

[6] In addition to the sixteen Shakespearean plays, Tree also revived David Garrick's adaptation of The Taming of the Shrew, entitled Katharine and Petruchio.

[7] Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 121.
Tree was also ready to engage the avant-garde Gordon Craig to design a Macbeth for him in 1909 and might have carried out the designs Craig submitted, had not scene painter Joseph Harker, bitterly opposed to the scheme, allowed Craig's models to get broken and thus effected a stop to the production.

[8] Hesketh Pearson, Beerbohm Tree, p. 116.

[9] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing 1890 to 1953, p. 37.

[10] Like Irving, however, Tree sacrificed archaeological accuracy on occasion to pictorial effect. His Julius Caesar, for example, was set

not in the Republican period but in the more picturesque era of the Empire, and Portia and Calphurnia wore Greek draperies to produce a more striking line.

[11] Max Beerbohm, quoted in Bernard Grebanier, _Then Came Each Actor_, p. 331.

[12] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, advertisement to _Romeo and Juliet_ production, 1913, in "Press Cuttings, June 1913," Tree Collection, Bristol University Theatre Collection, TB 45.

[13] Gordon Crosse, _Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen_, ms., p. 157.

[14] Advertisement to _Romeo and Juliet_, 1913, Tree Collection, Bristol.

[15] In one of his earliest Shakespearean productions, _A Midsummer Night's Dream_, Tree had already developed and elaborated lighting as a key element of his art, and the innovative effects attracted much contemporary account. "The Wood Near Athens" scene, according to the _Daily Chronicle_ (Jan. 11, 1900), opened in darkness but soon electric lights on the heads and wings of the fairies--aerial and on foot--glinted through the trees. In the middle of the presentation reviewers had much to admire, especially "the lovely picture of secluded glen and mountain ridge overlooking the moonlit sea, the iridescent dresses changing their tint with the movement of the wearers." Oberon, gorgeous in gold, representing the sun, was accentuated by electric lights cunningly put in her costume.

Some of Tree's promptbooks, such as the one for _The Winter's Tale_, reveal extensive use of lighting instruments in various positions as indicated by the electric and time plots which precede each scene. For his _Romeo and Juliet_ production, however, the rehearsal copies which exist give very little information about lighting.

[16] William Poel, _Fortnightly Review_, Aug. 1900, 355. Poel's condemnation of Tree appeared in a letter sent to _Fortnightly Review_ in which he replied to Tree's contentions.

[17] John Ripley, "Imagination Holds Dominion: Stage Spectacle in Beerbohm Tree's Productions 1897-1900," _Theatre Survey_, 9 (1968), 13.

[18] Nicholas Vardac, _From Stage to Screen_ (Cambridge, Mass., 1949; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), 167.

[19] John Ripley, "Imagination Holds Dominion," 14.

[20] Gordon Crosse, _Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen_, ms., p. 157.

[21] Programme to Tree's production of _Much Ado about Nothing_, Her Majesty's Theatre, 1905; in "Programmes _Much Ado about Nothing_," Birmingham Reference Library.

[22] An apt and simple explanation of the principle of alternation was recalled twenty years later by William Archer:

> . . . a general practice, in plays requiring frequent changes of scene, of alternating what we call "front" or "carpenter" scenes with full "sets." Thus, in "Othello" the curtain would rise in a moderately deep scene representing the interior of Brabantio's house. Then a painted "cloth" would be let down in front of this (or two "flats" would be shoved in), representing a street in Venice; and on the shallow space between this "cloth" and the footlights the first encounter between Othello and Brabantio would take place. This over, the "cloth" would be raised, or the "flats" withdrawn, and it would be found that Brabantio's house had been cleared away, and the whole depth of the stage called into requisition for a "set" representing the Venetian Senate chambers.

(William Archer, "The Elizabethan Stage," Quarterly Review, 208, 1908, 448-49)

Ellen Terry remarks on Irving's alternation of full and front sets, and Odell further notes Mary Anderson's use of this device (Ellen Terry, Ellen Terry's Memoirs, ed. Edith Craig and Christopher St. John, New York: Putnam, 1932, p. 134; Odell, II, 438). See also Cary Mazer, Shakespeare Refashioned: Elizabethan Plays on Edwardian Stages for further information about the alternation methods.

[23] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing, 1890 to 1953, p. 37.

[24] M. Lyon Phelps served as stage manager to both Irving and Tree and says that Tree was different from Irving--very sentimental, a dreamer, vague, very vague as to his ideas and requirements. During production he was impossible; while his officials were trying to fathom what was in his mind, they suffered the tortures of the damned until they lighted on the thing they thought he wanted. There was the difference: Irving knew what he wanted and got it; Tree only knew what he didn't want--and sometimes got it.

Phelps gives as example a rehearsal for Carnac Sahib, a play by Henry Arthur Jones. Rehearsals had been dragging on for weeks. The scene was an Indian bazaar and Tree was indulging in one of his usual fits of abstraction. "Here," he murmured, "I think we'll have a little tom-tom!" A loud voice came from the front of the house: "We'll have a little acting, if you don't mind, Tree. I haven't seen any yet!" It was the author speaking. Tree lost his temper, ordered the author out of the theatre and Jones never returned. The play ran five nights (M. Lyon Phelps, in Saintsbury and Palmer, eds., We Saw Him Act: A Symposium on the Art of Sir Henry Irving, p. 264).

[25] Hesketh Pearson, Beerbohm Tree, p. 165.

[26] Frances Donaldson, The Actor Managers, p. 153.

[27] Shaw, who often pointed out Irving's insistence on being the star actor, declared that Lewis Waller, playing with Tree in Julius Caesar in

1898, was ten times as good as the best man supporting Irving at the Lyceum. "He has authority, self-respect, dignity and often brilliancy: you do not see him dodging about the stage with one eye on 'the governor.'" Of Tree's method, he said, "Good policy Ellen, look to it" (Christopher St. John, ed., *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence*, New York: Putnam's, 1931, p. 214).

[28] Desmond MacCarthy in a review of Tree's production of *Romeo and Juliet* provides a detailed description of Phyllis Neilson-Terry's traditional interpretation of this scene. After the line "My dismal scene I needs must act alone," Juliet staggered to the bed, pretending to stifle her own screams, and buried her head in the clothes. After "Must I of force be married to the County/ No, no; this should forbid it; lie thou there," the dagger was stuffed under the pillow. When Juliet was making up her mind to drink, and the thought "Shall I not then be stifled in the vault?" came over her, she clutched at her throat and gasped as though she were already choking; and when the words described the vault where she would lie, she went through the pantomime of an awful, wondering waking, smoothing a dazed brow with cold fingertips, presently to be convulsed with quivering horror. At the words "loathsome smells" she made a face as though indeed some stench were in her nostrils; and at the line "O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught," she made the familiar gesture of all mad stage heroines from Ophelia to Tilburnia, passing her hands wildly through her hair. Then more pantomime of using bones as clubs followed and struggles with the air, culminating in her throwing herself in front of Tybalt's imaginary rapier. Then a long, long pause, and "Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee." Finally, she staggered to a pile of cushions, arranged so that her head should be lower than her feet; then came a totter, a fall, and the curtain (*New Statesman*, July 19, 1913).

[29] Charles Frederick Nirdlinger, *Masques and Mummers: Essays in the Theatre of Here and Now* (New York: Dewitt, 1899), p. 461.

[30] William Archer, *The Theatrical World of 1893* (London, 1894; New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), p. 119.

[31] Richard Dickens, *Forty Years of Shakespeare*, pp. 71, 87.

[32] Gordon Crosse, *Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen*, ms., p. 161.

[33] Gordon Crosse, *Shakespearean Performances Which I have Seen*, ms., p. 161.

[34] Shaw contemptuously related that in Tree's *Richard II*, for example, the most moving point was made with the assistance of a dog who does not appear among Shakespeare's dramatic personae. When the dog--Richard's pet dog--turned to Bolingbroke and licked his hand, Richard's heart broke and he left the stage with a sob. Then came his treatment of the entry of Bolingbroke and the deposed Richard into London. Shakespeare makes the Duke of York describe it; Tree, however, represented it in action with horses on the stage. Appearing with a great white horse, Richard

had a look of haunted terror as he turned his head and the crowd hooted him (George Bernard Shaw, 1919, in Max Beerbohm, ed., Herbert Beerbohm Tree, London: Hutchinson, 1920, pp. 248-50).

[35] Mrs. Patrick Campbell, My Life and Some Letters, London, 1922, p. 239.

[36] In the light of these statements it seems ironical today that Tree is known as the founder of what became the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. The years before 1914 witnessed much discussion of the idea of a National Theatre and Theatre School. Tree took unofficial but characteristic action by making Her Majesty's serve some of the functions of a National Theatre and by founding in 1904 this Academy. Writing for the need for a school of acting, George Bernard Shaw on a number of occasions pointed out that an author who understood acting, and wrote for the actor as a composer wrote for an instrument, giving it the material suitable to its range, tone, character, agility, and mechanism, necessarily assumed a certain technical accomplishment common to all actors; and this required the existence of a school of acting, or at least a tradition. There was no such provision in the days of Tree's novitiate. He and his actors had not inherited the tradition handed down at rehearsal by Phelps to Forbes-Robertson; nor was there any academic institution with authority enough to impress a novice of his calibre. Although affecting throughout his career to disdain technique and insisting for years that acting could not be taught, Tree sought to save the coming generation from the disadvantages that he obviously keenly realized and founded this academy, wherein elocution, dancing, fencing, deportment, pantomime and gesture, and teaching by rehearsals could be imparted. But he had to do without tuition himself. Like Irving, he had to make a style and technique out of his own personality, out of his peculiar weaknesses as well as his peculiar powers.

[37] Hesketh Pearson, Herbert Beerbohm Tree, p. 192.

[38] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing 1890 to 1953, p. 41.

[39] Ellen Terry, in Christopher St. John, ed., Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence, p. 215.

[40] Ralph Berry, "The Aesthetics of Beerbohm Tree's Shakespearean Festivals," Nineteenth Century Theatre Research, 9:1 (Summer 1981), 47.

[41] Richard Dickens, Forty Years of Shakespeare, p. 87.

[42] Matheson Lang, Mr. Wu Looks Back (London: Stanley Paul, 1940), p. 82.

[43] G. C. D. Odell, Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving, II, 463.

[44] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Souvenir Booklet for Julius Caesar production at Her Majesty's Theatre, 1898, London: Nassau, 1900, Birmingham Shakespeare Library, S-- Wilson Knight Bequest, 980455.

[45] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Souvenir Booklet for King John production at Her Majesty's Theatre, 1899, Birmingham Shakespeare Library, S652.31p.

[46] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Souvenir Booklet for Othello production at His Majesty's Theatre, 1912, Birmingham Shakespeare Library.

[47] Statistics in Michael Booth, The Victorian Spectacular Theatre, p. 134.

[48] An example of Tree's reasoning can be seen in his defense of his arrangement of Henry VIII. Tree contended that many passages in Shakespeare's play were also omitted in the dramatist's time since "a considerable portion of the play was considered by the author to be superfluous to the dramatic action." Developing this inspired strain of logic, Tree concluded that because Shakespeare's own theatre had played Henry VIII in "two short hours," more of it must have been omitted than in his own production in 1910, and therefore "we showed a greater respect of the text than Shakespeare himself." Attempting to account for his own four-hour production, the actor-manager later serenely announced that "an attempt was made to confine the absolute spoken words as nearly as possible within the time presented in the prologue" (pp. 281-82).

[49] The American actors Southern and Marlowe in a lavish, heavily cut presentation of the play at the Waldorf in 1907, which one critic said evoked memory of Lamb's "Scenes from Shakespeare," presented an innovative acting version that had six acts to allow for even more striking tableaux: Act I ended with the ball; Act II presented just the balcony scene; Act III ended with Mercutio's death; Act IV consisted of just Shakespeare's III.iii and v, Romeo's banished scene and Juliet's reaction to her husband's banishment; Act V was made up only of Shakespeare's IV.i, Juliet's scene with the Friar, and IV.iii, her potion scene; Act VI presented the death of the lovers in the tomb (Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen, ms., p. 62).

[50] The rehearsal copies in the Tree collection of the Bristol University Theatre Collection show cuts made on the text of an edition of the play introduced by George Brandes, published by Heinemann in 1904, and based on the text of the Cambridge Shakespeare. Rehearsal copies exist for the roles of Mercutio, Benvolio, Friar Lawrence, and Paris; there exist also a second copy for Paris and a copy not assigned to any particular role, merely marked "the property of Sir Herbert Tree." There are a few problems in using these copies: small sections of lines are cut in one book but not in another. On the whole, however, the six books are quite consistent, with only minor variations. Only a few basic stage directions are given; one important curtain and accompanying music are marked in Mercutio's book, and another curtain is marked in another book.

[51] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen, ms., p. 160.

[52] Tree's wife, actress Maud Tree, in Max Beerbohm, ed., Herbert Beerbohm Tree, p. 152.

[53] Desmond MacCarthy in Max Beerbohm, ed., Herbert Beerbohm Tree, pp. 221-22.

[54] John Ranken Towse, Sixty Years of the Theatre: An Old Critic's Memories (New York and London: Funk and Wagnall's, 1916), pp. 438-447.

[55] George Bernard Shaw, in Max Beerbohm, ed., Herbert Beerbohm Tree, pp. 240-41, 250-51.

Shaw here, of course, was also speaking ruefully of his own experience as an author who had to contend with Tree's "ingenuity." Tree in 1914 produced Shaw's Pygmalion and made thirteen thousand pounds out of this first production, taking it off when it was still making a great deal of money. Shaw, who knew Tree's methods only too well, refused to see the production until the hundredth performance, when he discovered without surprise that Tree, as Higgins, had introduced a happy ending by throwing a bunch of flowers to Eliza in the interval between the end of the play and the fall of the curtain. The actor-manager, who loved romantic endings, had thus anticipated an ending in flagrant opposition to Shaw's conception of the characters and their relationship. Frances Donaldson presents the encounter between author and producer as follows:

> Tree: "My ending makes money; you ought to be grateful."
> Shaw: "Your ending is damnable; you ought to be shot."
> (The Actor-Managers, p. 164)

In his memoir of the actor-manager, Shaw declared that "if he had not been so amusing, so ingenious, and so entirely well-intentioned, he would have driven me crazy."

[56] William Poel, footnote to George Bernard Shaw, The Dying Tongue of Great Elizabeth (London: London Shakespeare League, 1920), pp. 16, 18.

[57] Morning Post, Nov. 4, 1898, as quoted in John Ripley, "Imagination Holds Dominion," 14.

[58] Alfred Darbyshire, The Art of the Victorian Stage (1907; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), pp. 120, 122.

Not only did England recognize Tree's contribution to the late Victorian and Edwardian stage by awarding him a knighthood in 1909, but Germany also accorded him honour. In April, 1907, at the desire of the Kaiser, Tree and his company acted a number of Shakespearean plays for a week at the Royal Opera House in Berlin. Although the German critics were generally opposed to Tree's methods, the German public, like the English, was largely enthusiastic, and the Kaiser, showing his own appreciation of Tree's methods, conferred an order on the English actor-manager.

[59] Charles Shattuck, "Shakespeare in Performance," Riverside Shakespeare, p. 1811.

[60] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing, p. 37.

[61] Bernard Grebanier, Then Came Each Actor, p. 331.

[62] John Ripley, "Imagination Holds Dominion," p. 17.

[63] George Rowell, The Victorian Theatre, 1792-1914, A Survey (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978), p. 106.

[64] George Rowell, "Tree's Shakespearean Festivals (1905-1913)," Theatre Notebook, 29 (1975), 74.

[65] John Ripley, "Imagination Holds Dominion," 11.

[66] Flyleaf to Henry V bill, 1859; quoted in J. W. Cole, The Life and Theatrical Times of Charles Kean (London, 1859).

[67] Henry Irving, quoted in Sidney Lee, Shakespeare and the Modern Stage (New York: Scribner's, 1906), p. 10.

[68] Sidney Lee, Shakespeare and the Modern Stage, pp. 9-10. This book presents a series of Lee's articles from periodicals published 1899-1905. Many of the articles are advocating Poel's principles for production.

[69] George Rowell, "Tree's Shakespeare Festivals," 79-80. Rowell has examined the "Analysis of Treasury Payments and Estimated Weekly Trading Accounts (1904-1915)," p. 44, belonging to Her Majesty's Theatre and now in the possession of the Theatre Collection of the Bristol University Drama Department.

[70] Certainly Tree's productions were based not simply on public taste but on economic assumptions and opportunities which have very probably gone forever. Cheap labour was widely available; Michael Booth, for example, tells us that in the early twentieth century a super received between a shilling and a half-crown per performance (Victorian Spectacular Theatre, p. 18). Even the expensive sets at Her Majesty's could be related to the price the public was prepared to pay.

[71] This was not the kind of man to let slip the opportunity to try a new medium for spectacle. Tree's film of King John in 1898, now lost, enacted probably his interpolated scene of the signing of the Magna Carta and used all the gestures appropriate to the theatre. Those actions would seem very wooden to us today. Early films, until the 1920's, of course, were silent. Tree's next film, in 1905, presented the opening scene from The Tempest. The Era declared that "modern science has enabled Mr. Tree to fairly stagger us by some wonderful storm effects and to produce a magnificent realization of the shipwreck that opens the play. The vessel takes up the whole of the stage" (quoted in Grebanier, Then Came Each Actor, p. 401). The shipwreck was judged to be most realistic, as lightning flashed, billows assailed the sinking ship, and the passengers could be seen rushing about in a panic. Tree's film of Henry VIII in 1911, produced quite appropriately during the run of the stage production of the play, was filmed for the Barker Motion Photography Company at studios at Ealing. It employed a cast of two hundred and presented five scenes in sets copied from those used at His Majesty's, the scenes played as they were on stage and the characters speaking their parts. The scenes were then heavily cut and the finished

film, later destroyed, ran between twenty and twenty-five minutes. It was immediately declared "Film of the Year," not that it had many competitors. A strong supporter of the cinema and especially keen to put Shakespeare on film, Tree in 1917, shortly before his death, even went to California to make Macbeth.

It is noteworthy that of the number of silent Shakespeare films in the first three decades of this century, there were twenty films of Romeo and Juliet, making it the most popular of Shakespeare's plays on film (Charles Shattuck, "Stage History from 1660 to the Present," Riverside Shakespeare, p. 1820).

[72] William Bridges-Adams, The British Theatre (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1944), p. 34.

[73] Tree, as quoted in Charles Shattuck, "Shakespeare in Performance," Riverside Shakespeare, p. 1811.

[74] Desmond MacCarthy, in Max Beerbohm, ed., Herbert Beerbohm Tree, pp. 217, 218.

[75] Desmond MacCarthy, in Max Beerbohm, ed., Herbert Beerbohm Tree, p. 221.

CHAPTER VI

WILLIAM BRIDGES-ADAMS: FINDING AN AESTHETIC FOR SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Even though William Poel did not fully approve of Harley Granville-Barker's Shakespearean productions, it was through these productions--_The Winter's Tale_ and _Twelfth Night_ in 1912 and _A Midsummer Night's Dream_ in 1914--and through Granville-Barker's _Prefaces to Shakespeare_ that William Poel's ideas were most widely disseminated. In his _Prefaces_, one of the most influential critical works on Shakespeare of this century, Granville-Barker incorporates almost all of William Poel's principal theories. Just as Poel had emphasized in his writings that criticism and production are inseparable, so Harley Granville-Barker in the Introduction to the _First Series_ (1927) presented a plea for the study and the stage to merge and for a primary understanding of Shakespeare's theatre.[1] Granville-Barker's emphasis was on the simplicity of Shakespeare's stage resources as the key to the development of the boldness and subtlety of his art. He commented brilliantly upon the unlocalized stage and insisted again and again upon the importance of the verse-speaking as the actor's first and final sources of control of his audience. He showed he was keenly aware of pace and rhythm, lively action and rhetorical embroidery. Of twenty-one Shakespearean producers questioned by _Saturday Review_ in 1957 about what books and articles they found most stimulating in the formation of their own approach to Shakespeare and which ones were most useful in actual practice, it is noteworthy that more mentioned that they consulted, used or read Granville-Barker's Prefaces than any other critical work, a tribute to Granville-Barker himself but also an indication of the widespread distribution of many of Poel's ideas through Granville-Barker. These producers included William Bridges-Adams, Harcourt Williams, Tyrone Guthrie, John Gielgud, Glen Byam Shaw, Denis Carey, Douglas Seale, Michael Benthall, Michael Langham, and Peter Brook. Eight of the twenty-one indicated they would be happiest working on a stage with characteristics close to those which Shakespeare used, and others stressed "Elizabethan values" such as intimacy between actor and audience (originally gained by the platform stage), simplicity of set, and continuity of performance (Saturday Review, July 13, 1957).

Romeo and Juliet was never produced by Granville-Barker but his ideas on the playing of it are contained in the Second Series of his Prefaces to Shakespeare (1930) and have been greatly influential upon the production of this play on the twentieth-century stage.[2] What has not been acknowledged, however, is that Granville-Barker's "Preface to Romeo and Juliet" is obviously strongly indebted to Poel's stage-centred discussion of the play in his 1888 lecture "The Stage Version of Romeo and Juliet" which he presented to the New Shakspere Society and which was later reproduced in Shakespeare in the Theatre (1913). Granville-Barker is often given credit for initiating stage-centred criticism, but clearly it was Poel who was the pioneer in this field, his close criticism conducted with the eyes of a director. Remarkably similar comments are made in the two critical works concerning the structure of the play, the importance of speed and continuity in Shakespeare's design, the emphasis on the youth of the lovers, the importance and role of minor figures and scenes, and the mistakes of contemporary producers in presenting this tragedy.[3]

From 1881 to 1932 Poel presented his ideas in non-commercial ventures to a largely sceptical public. Among his actors, however, was a young Harley Granville-Barker, who, together with George Bernard Shaw, had been among Poel's audience at his 1905 production of Romeo and Juliet and was much impressed with what he saw. From 1912 to 1914 Granville-Barker--by then an established man of the theatre--set out to adapt Poel's ideas to the commercial theatre, producing three Shakespearean comedies at the Savoy on an apron stage with simple abstract settings, which were essentially conventional "decorations," and with no footlights.[4] To make time for a virtually unabridged text, the whole tempo of the production needed to be quick and only one break in the action was allowed. Having learned from William Poel "how swift and passionate a thing, how beautiful in its variety, Elizabethan blank verse might be when tongues were trained to speak and ears acute to hear it,"[5] Granville-Barker insisted on a much more rapid and musical delivery than was usual in Shakespearean playing; helped his actors by bringing them into closer contact with their audience for the set speeches; and finally, created physical conditions which gave him facilities similar to those of the Elizabethan playhouse for uninterrupted transition from scene to scene. Emphasizing teamwork, and eliminating "stars," solo display, cheap theatricality and empty histrionics, he was able to save other precious minutes by his ruthless excision of bits of traditional business and clowning. Within a period of sixteen months Granville-Barker had applied practical correctives to the outstanding weaknesses of the spectacular tradition for the presentation of Shakespeare. Some of

Poel's major ideas had thus conquered the commercial theatre and, somewhat ameliorated in Granville-Barker's Prefaces to Shakespeare, reached a wider reading than ever Poel's book and articles reached.

"As he [Shakespeare] cannot now come to us, the nearer we get to him the closer understanding we shall have of him," claimed Granville-Barker, echoing Poel.[6] Granville-Barker, however, rejected the strict Elizabethanism of Poel and his disciples:

> We cannot quite discard the present, and, even could we, entering into the past would be harder matter still. We should need to sit in an Elizabethan theatre as Elizabethans and be able as unconsciously, as spontaneously to enjoy the play. For spontaneity of enjoyment is the very life of the theatre and its art. This cannot be. Some half-way house of meeting must be found.[7]

Granville-Barker thus recognized that it was impossible for a modern audience to turn themselves into Elizabethans, yet he never let himself forget the work of such Elizabethanists as Poel, an awareness which helped him to realize the intrinsic relationship of Shakespeare's theatre and staging methods with those of his own. Working undogmatically towards a few simple principles, Granville-Barker was governed by an elementary rule: "Gain Shakespeare's effects by Shakespeare's means when you can; for, obviously, this will be the better way. But gain Shakespeare's effects; and it is your business to discern them."[8]

The aesthetic revolution in Shakespearean production spearheaded by William Poel, and adapted to the commercial stage by Harley Granville-Barker, was carried on by a succession of distinguished directors of the theatre, all of whom had been touched by Poel's vision: Barry Jackson at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, 1914 to 1918 and in other theatres thereafter; Nugent Monck at the Maddermarket Theatre at Norwick, from 1921 onwards; William Bridges-Adams directing the Stratford-upon-Avon

Shakespeare Festival with the New Shakespeare Company, 1919 to 1934; Ben Iden Payne at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1935 to 1942; Lewis Casson at the Manchester Gaiety between the wars; Robert Atkins, director at the Old Vic from 1920 to 1925; Harcourt Williams, also directing Shakespeare at the Old Vic from 1929 to 1933 All these directors in turn influenced other theatre people and thus further disseminated the ideas of William Poel, the chain of influence linking director to director a strong one among those who transferred their allegiance to dramatic values in their search for authenticity. As Ivor Brown pointed out in 1927, Poel had worked against a tide of mockery and financial difficulties but his influence had been pervasive, and "the better type of Shakespearean presentation today is simply Poel popularized without acknowledgments" (Saturday Review, July 16, 1927). Gordon Crosse noted that by the 1930's good Shakespearean productions were characterized by "swift speaking, brisk playing, a full text, simple mounting, all things I had long desired on the Shakespearean stage,"[9] and the Times, acknowledging that Mr. Poel had "brought the Elizabethan Shakespeare back to the English stage after three centuries," wrote in 1932 that "although the strictest of his archaism is not in general favour, the complete and continuous performance of Shakespeare's plays is now the rule and not the exception."[10]

II

William Bridges-Adams is a fine example of a producer whose fountainhead of artistic theory lay in the work of William Poel and Harley Granville-Barker. The first post-World War I director of

Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon, Bridges-Adams with acute perceptiveness saw past incidental idiosyncrasies to the essential soundness of Poel's theories and aimed to verify them in his own professional productions. Bridges-Adams' major achievement was to synthesize the innovations of Poel and Granville-Barker and to adapt them to the needs of large-scale commercial production. In 1919 he took over responsibility for the Shakespeare Festivals at Stratford-upon-Avon from Frank Benson and from this time until 1934 he presented more than 150 revivals of Shakespeare's plays, directing no less than twenty-nine plays in Shakespeare's Folio himself. For all but the last two years when he was given help, Bridges-Adams had sole responsibility for all aspects of production ranging from directing to acting to lighting to costume and scenic design for almost every play that was performed during the Stratford Festivals.

It is surprising that no critical study has been published on this important theatrical innovator. Only one collection of letters exists, edited and introduced by Robert Speaight.[11] General introductions to Bridges-Adams' work are encompassed in larger studies such as Sally Beauman's recent The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades (1982)[12] and in Susan Brock and Marian Pringle's Theatre in Focus: The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1919-1945 (1986), an audio-visual collection. accompanied by written commentary.[13] Today this director is largely unrecognized by most other theatre historians, yet the tributes that he has received from some quarters make clear that his contribution to theatre history is an important one indeed. Robert Speaight in 1971 announced that his edition of letters was devoted to a stage director who exercised "a formative influence upon the production of Shakespeare in our own time."[14] In a survey of twentieth-century Shakespearean directors, Gareth and Barbara Lloyd Evans pay brief, but important tribute to him by stating that Bridges-Adams was "perhaps the most underrated director of the twentieth century" and that he was, perhaps, "too modest to blow, or allow to be blown, any trumpets on his behalf."[15] Looking back on decades of productions at Stratford-upon-Avon, J. C. Trewin in 1964 wrote that several of Bridges-Adams' productions remained "some of the best in Stratford history" and cited especially that of Romeo and Juliet in 1933.[16]

Since 1886 the Shakespeare Festivals at Stratford-upon-Avon had been inseparable from the name of Frank Benson. Each year in April Benson and his touring company would arrive in Stratford-upon-Avon to put on a Shakespeare Festival of eight or so plays over two or three weeks, with a six- or seven-week Summer Festival added on after World War I. Benson's aim was to create a company which would revive the old traditions of the stage, practised by such great actor-managers as Samuel Phelps, and as well to keep alive the stock company with a repertoire of the best plays. The "Benson Charter" was based upon the following principles: that Shakespeare's plays were to be played constantly in their variety; that no long runs were to be permitted; that all parts were to be given to those trained in blank verse and who had gained knowledge in and experience of the range of Shakespearean drama; that no greater prominence to a role in a text was to be accorded than the text warranted; that scenic embellishment, while representational, should be simple and inexpensive and should be subordinated to the dramatic interest.[17]

Benson's company grew in stature during the thirty years from a crowd of enthusiasts to seasoned professionals who came to play the provinces every summer and whose fame eventually led them to play all over the world. The company became famous for the fine training given its young actors. Benson had found that there were very few good verse speakers on the contemporary stage and those were with the top companies; consequently, he trained his own and they then tutored the younger members of the company. Actors went from walk-ons to bit parts to major roles. Benson's actors were soon in high demand. An actor of disputed merit himself, Benson got the reputation not as a creator of great Shakespearean productions but as the teacher of great Shakespearean players.[18]

Benson believed that no play should be adapted for the sake of one part, but in the nineteenth-century tradition he took great liberties with the text and fell into the Victorian actor-manager's habit of savage cuts, transpositions and paraphrases. Often he ruthlessly sacrificed poetry to gain speed and unity of dramatic action. Although he did not make changes to effect self-aggrandisement, cutting meant that the balance of the parts was necessarily upset; moreover, because he assumed leading roles and was surrounded by actors less practised, he overshadowed them. In his methods of mounting the plays, Benson also remained resolutely Victorian; his productions were as elaborately realistic as could be managed by a touring company of modest means. He approved of spectacle, elaborate scenery and costumes, the introduction of pageants, processions, ballets and dances, although he could never outdo Tree and in his hands, as in Irving's, spectacle was generally artistic and intelligent. He was especially fond of picturesque business and eye-catching tableaux at the beginnings and ends of scenes. The texts of the plays, of course, had to be cut severely to accommodate these elaborations.[19] His method of production not only despoiled the text but also damaged the structure of the plays irreparably. Benson's manner of speaking Shakespearean verse, too, was in the tradition of early nineteenth-century actors: it was slow and drawn out, with lengthened vowels. Gordon Crosse recalled "the extreme slowness" with which many scenes were taken in a production of Hamlet and that Benson and his colleagues sometimes "spoke too deliberately, with many pauses and much repetition of words and phrases."[20]

By 1919 the time was ripe for a change in methods of Shakespearean production at Stratford-upon-Avon. That year a Joint Committee, which had been formed by the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee in London and the Governors of the Shakespeare Memorial at Stratford-upon-Avon, decided that there should be a formation there of a permanent company or companies of actors in order to meet demand for Shakespearean performances, to promote recognition of Shakespeare throughout Europe, and at the same time to pave the way for what would hopefully become the National Shakespeare Theatre. It was agreed that this "New Shakespeare Company," consisting of experienced Shakespearean actors, should be organized in time to undertake the usual five weeks' season of performances that year and that they should perform six or seven representative Shakespearean plays. Some aid would be given for this endeavour. The company was to produce "standard" Shakespeare. The director's methods were to contain a synthesis of new ideas yet were to embody nothing too revolutionary, because, as Sydney Carrol of the Sunday Times later expressed it, "modernity is all very well in its proper place. That place is not Stratford-upon-Avon" (Sunday Times, July 25, 1920).

Frank Benson retired that year and under the urging of William Archer and George Bernard Shaw the Committee offered the position of director to William Bridges-Adams who, as Archer acknowledged, was "something of a 'dark horse' as far as London is concerned" (Nation, Aug. 9, 1919). Bridges-Adams was then only thirty years old but his experience in the theatre was already extensive. He had been a member of the Oxford University Dramatic Society, in leading roles in such plays as The Tempest and The Winter's Tale under George Foss, and upon his graduation from Oxford he had gone into the theatre professionally. He had acted in London's West End under Sir George Alexander and with Harley Granville-Barker; had been assistant stage manager to Nugent Monck for William Poel's production of The Two Gentlemen of Verona at Tree's Shakespeare Festival at Her Majesty's in 1910; and had played in Shakespearean repertory with Patrick Kirwan. Together with his first wife he had also been part manager-producer for the Bristol Repertory Theatre and he had been producer-manager of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre--which he rechristened the Playhouse. In the provinces he had produced everything from melodrama to revue and in the West End had directed at least two major productions. Although he had begun his career as an actor, Bridges-Adams had soon concentrated on directing and designing.

With his wide-ranging experience in the theatre and his personal acquaintance with many of the theatrical avant-garde, Bridges-Adams was well equipped to produce at Stratford-upon-Avon a synthesis of current ideas. Nonetheless, he reassured the Joint Committee with his statement that "the great temptation Shakespeare offers to the modern producer is to do the exciting and novel thing, which I am quite sure in the majority of cases is the wrong thing" (Observer, Aug. 13, 1919). In an interview in 1919 he put forth the theories of Shakespearean production which he intended to put into practice at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre:

> I am going strong for team work. No stars, but just a good all-round Shakespearean Company . . . . as a general sort of principle we are going on the lines of full text. A few cuts will be made here and there, but anything like transpositions or mutilations will be studiously avoided, and in my opinion the performance will gain by this. (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, July 25, 1919)

On another occasion, many years later, Bridges-Adams summarized the policy that had characterized his years at Stratford-upon-Avon:

> It was briefly as follows (you will find most of it in Hamlet's advice to the Players): Tradition without traditionalism: fresh air and high spirits: grandeur and tone of gesture without ranting--"using all gently": the virtues of the Elizabethan theatre without its vices, and its freedom without its fetters: scenic splendour where helpful, but the Play the Thing: all leading parts played by first rate people: Hamlet one night and a servant the next: the smallest part well played and balance and ensemble before everything: the play to be given as written: the text unmutilated whether in the interest of the stage carpenter or the leading man. Also (the ways of the human heart being inscrutable) that the director should be forcibly spared all temptation to act himself, by a clause in his contract to that effect.[21]

The crucial point of difference between the old policy and the new lay in this final clause, he pointed out. Frank Benson not only represented "but was, everything that was good in the (then) much abused actor manager system." Nonetheless, "still he, like Irving, had his cut and transposed stage versions (though nothing like the outrageous mutilat of say, Augustin Daly) and what he had to offer the public was primarily himself, in person, on the stage." It seemed to Bridges-Adams and to the Joint Committee that a standard Shakespearean company must be more faithful to the text than was then fashionable. For its leading parts it must have free choice of actors and it must be independent, able to maintain a tradition unimpaired by the coming or going of any individual.

It was as a follower of Poel and Granville-Barker that critics generally greeted Bridges-Adams when he came to Stratford-upon-Avon. Certainly his charter for the New Shakespeare Company was reminiscent of Granville-Barker and it was, in 1919, revolutionary. He wanted, he said, to create an ensemble company, "not the star and twenty sticks." It was his intention to present the plays "as plays, irrespective of mutilations made to suit the whim of a star or the exigencies of stage carpentry." He wanted "continuity of action, scene following scene, without unnecessary waits." The company in these productions, he said, was aiming at "real adequacy" and above all "at pleasing the real average play-going public." Whatever success they would have, Bridges-Adams pointed out, he knew that the company would not forget how much they owed to the fact that more than half of them were Bensonians, who had learned their business in a school that was not likely to be equalled for a long time to come (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, July 25, 1919).

That summer of 1919, helped by a number of experienced Bensonian actors, Bridges-Adams presented thirty-three performances of six Shakespearean plays during the four-week Shakespeare Festival at Stratford-upon-Avon. The Joint Committee had given him funding for only four weeks' rehearsals for all six plays, and he worked the company hard until late each night. In addition to directing all six plays, Bridges-Adams also designed the sets and the lighting for them. During this first season at Stratford-upon-Avon Bridges-Adams lived up to his promises: his New Shakespeare Company was devoid of star names, the plays were performed virtually intact, and the Stratford audiences had the novel experience of seeing them performed with only one brief interval.

The season was well received by the critics. Upon seeing many old Bensonians in the cast, the press was relieved to find that the break with the Benson tradition was not too violent and that there was nothing too revolutionary in Bridges-Adams' methods. Although innovatory, the new director was not "freakish, or futurist, or rebellious in any direction" (Observer, April 25, 1920). The Times expressed its approval of the first production, The Merry Wives of Windsor, with its sixteen swiftly changed scenes, and with only one break of ten minutes. The director had showed "how much more various and amusing and beautiful this play was when played almost word for word." Young although the company was, it had already mastered the great secret, that of team playing: "The ensemble, was from first to last, in spite of a few weaknesses, perhaps at this stage inevitable, a joy to watch." The whole production, the critic concluded, "was full of life and fun, yet nothing was overdrawn or over-emphasized" (Times, Aug. 4, 1919). The Daily Telegraph noted that in any production directed by Bridges-Adams "nobody takes all the limelight; you go to see a play not a player." The newspaper found Bridges-Adams' scenery for A Midsummer Night's Dream simple but never trivial; it was satisfying scenery, "harmonious with a great and modest beauty" (Aug. 27, 1919). Critics found Bridges-Adams a businesslike person who might be mistaken--except by the players--for one of the stage hands; "he is more concerned with getting things done than with getting a round of personal applause" (Star, Aug. 5, 1919).

By 1921 Bridges-Adams had strengthened his company and had lengthened the duration of the Shakespeare Festivals; eight productions were now mounted each spring, with two further new productions each summer. What the director could achieve, however, was always severely limited by the conditions under which he had to work and by the fact that the company was desperately insecure financially. The grant from the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre was never adequate; the idea of a state subsidy for the theatre was, at that time, an untenable proposition. The director was constantly faced with the frustration of keeping his company together for an entire year; it was both stressful and expensive to gather a new company together each spring. It made continuity of work difficult, and it meant that the initial rehearsal period in London, when company salaries had to be paid but there were no box office returns, had to be kept to a minimum. Sally Beauman, in her history of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, sympathetically depicts the adverse conditions that faced Bridges-Adams.[22] From 1922 on, the theatre and players were wholly governed by Stratford-upon-Avon. Archie Flower, Chairman of the Board of Governors, remained convinced that this large repertoire must be maintained, so that audiences could continue to see a different play each night of the week, just as they had during the Benson era. But whereas Benson had had an established repertoire of work, with complete sets and costumes and a company who knew their parts and the production intimately, Bridges-Adams was starting each season fresh, which made the work load intense. He was allowed only seven weeks' rehearsals for the eight spring plays, and no matter how much he protested that this time was inadequate, he could not get it extended. Prior to opening in Stratford-upon-Avon there was a week of dress rehearsals (one play dress-rehearsed each night, plus one matinée dress rehearsal) followed by a week of first nights (one play opening each night, plus one opening at a matinée). The immense strain these conditions caused was further exacerbated by the fact that he continued not only to direct, but also to design and light all the plays. He was also responsible for the day-to-day running of the Memorial Theatre itself during the Festivals. Because Stratford-upon-Avon productions were rarely reviewed nationally during the 1920's, an actor could make far greater impact by appearing in an Old Vic production in London than he ever could in a Memorial one, making it comparatively easy for the Old Vic to poach actors from Stratford-upon-Avon. Bridges-Adams was aware that the solution to these problems was money, but he was working for a Chairman and Board of Governors who grew extremely nervous at the first hint of losses. The worst problem of all, the lack of rehearsal time, could have been solved by reducing the repertoire, or staggering the openings of the plays, which would have involved no expense. The Board of Governors, under Archie Flower, however, stood fast, refusing any change.

It says much for Bridges-Adams' tenacity that he did not give up but that he continued to fight. He did so because he believed that the Memorial Theatre could become more prosperous and because, in spite of great obstacles, he knew that he was making progress. The Times, in a sympathetic review of his Shakespeare Festival in 1922, lamented that the New Shakespeare Company had been rehearsed at great speed and under great difficulties, and chastised the Governors who considered their "cinematographic enterprise . . . still of more importance than the rehearsal of a company on the stage." For all that, the critic proclaimed, "the company has worked with that love of Shakespeare and contempt for all difficulties which seems always to invigorate and inspire English players in Stratford-upon-Avon" (April 20, 1922).

By 1925 Bridges-Adams had gradually assembled the nucleus of a strong company, many of whom continued to work for him for years. For leading parts he could rely on a number of fine actors such as Roy Byford; he used actors such as George Hayes and Wilfred Walter who also were frequently at the Old Vic during this period. He developed several strong younger actors such as Ernest Hare and John Laurie. And, as the mainstay of his companies, he had his three main actors, Dorothy Green, Baliol Holloway, and Randle Ayrton, all of whom made many appearances at Stratford-upon-Avon in the 1920's.

The new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre opened in 1932. Still not given the means to increase long-term spending on the productions, to bring the best actors to Stratford-upon-Avon, to reduce the repertory, and to extend the seasons, Bridges-Adams continued to be threatened by the parochialism of those who held the theatre's purse-strings. He had waited thirteen years to work in a modern theatre and thirteen years to have the money and freedom to achieve his ideal of an ensemble company. Once the theatre was open he began to fight, and fight hard, for that privilege. The following year, in 1933, Bridges-Adams threatened to resign. Because of this threat the Governors adopted many of the ideas that he had advocated for years, though not without considerable misgivings on Archie Flower's part. The first continual season was announced, lasting twenty-one weeks from April to September. Ten plays were to be in the repertory but their openings were to be staggered. Six plays opened in the first fortnight, the rest at intervals throughout the season. Bridges-Adams managed to get guest directors such as the avant-garde Theodore Komisarjevsky, whom he had already invited as a guest director the previous year, and Tyrone Guthrie. Also, he was able to revive the three most successful plays from the previous season. All this meant that the intolerable work-load on Bridges-Adams was substantially reduced and that he had only two first-nights in the opening weeks to contend with. The company was slightly larger, and there were two leading men, George Hayes and Anew McMaster, which helped to spread the work-load on the actors. John Wyse, who had joined the company the previous summer, was the young leading man and Fabia Drake remained as leading lady, with novice actress Rachel Kempson playing Juliet, Ophelia, Hero and other parts. Most of the supporting players remained from the previous seasons so continuity was not broken. It was a capable company, not as star-studded as the casts Tyrone Guthrie assembled the same year for his Old Vic season, but imaginative and well balanced. The year 1933 proved to be the most successful the company ever had. It was successful artistically and successful at the box office, in spite of the world-wide depression. The numbers of patrons were undoubtedly swollen not only by the novelty of a new theatre but also by the fact that the level of production was high and critical reaction vigorous and on the whole favourable. J. C. Kemp wrote that it was especially Bridges-Adams' production of Romeo and Juliet that gave distinction to that 1933 season; indeed, he later ranked it as one of the very best productions ever seen at Stratford-upon-Avon.[23]

III

From 1932 to 1934 Bridges-Adams was finally able to gather round him a group of outstanding designers such as Theodore Komisarjevsky, Aubrey

Hammond and Norman Wilkinson. "It was not intended," the director stated in a radio talk in 1932, "to adhere to any single style of production. It was the play itself which should set the style." All the designers were experienced and chosen by Bridges-Adams because of their ability "to give Shakespeare the unusual beauty of mounting which is his due without smothering him in stage spectacle" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, April 15, 1932). No one, however, deviated drastically from Bridges-Adams' established conventions of permanent sets, curtains and stylized decoration; they were expected to work in close collaboration with him, often merely "decorating" his basic structures after he had made rough drawings of his scenic requirements. For the production of Romeo and Juliet in 1933, Bridges-Adams and Norman Wilkinson between them strove to create an Elizabethan atmosphere on an apron stage. Wilkinson had worked closely with Granville-Barker as a designer at the Savoy from 1912 to 1914, and his setting for Romeo and Juliet, a façade with side openings, a balcony and a recessed inner stage, was "one of the simplest of recent productions," reminisced T. C. Kemp and J. C. Trewin thirty years later in their history of the Stratford Festivals.[24] An attempt was made --"with conspicuous success," remarked the critics--to stage the play in as close an approximation to the Elizabethan manner as was consonant with the modern nature of the theatre (Midland Daily Telegraph, June 21, 1933). The designer explained in an interview that "for the first time at Stratford it has been decided to go backward--or forward!--or whatever you like--I should call it an advance--to the Elizabeth [sic] idiom, both as to the structure of the play and the structure of the stage it is played on" (Observer, June 18, 1933).

As they entered the theatre the audience members discovered that for the first time in Stratford-upon-Avon history there was no drop curtain and that the permanent part of the stage setting was visible to them. In his design Wilkinson had succeeded very cleverly in carrying the eye gradually forward without a jar, making the detail of shapes and decoration blend with the interior of the theatre. Critics pointed out how very ingenious as well as beautifully simple the setting was that Mr. Wilkinson had designed. The apron stage of the Memorial Theatre did not jut out sufficiently far into the auditorium to give most spectators the same sense of intimacy with the performers that the Elizabethan stage must have provided, but it was well in front of the proscenium and was broad and deep enough to accommodate much of the action. Behind this apron Wilkinson had built a graceful façade in olive green with four side openings. The upper two of the four openings led to a balcony which could be Juliet's or a musicians' gallery, or the Prince of Verona's judgement stand as occasion demanded. The spacious setting recessed beneath the balcony was sometimes closed off by curtains, sometimes employed as an inner stage with a painted backdrop for a street in Verona, a banqueting hall of Capulet's house, a garden, Juliet's bedroom with a pink four-poster, or the Capulet family vault. Small changeable scenes such as the Friar's cell were played in front of curtains. Wilkinson's multiple setting the Times found "convenient and comely" (June 21, 1933). With this flexible method of staging the story was able to unfold with "admirable briskness" as the action alternated between street brawls of the rival families and the episodes of Romeo and Juliet's love affair. The play was performed continuously, with only one interval, after III.ii, Juliet's "banished" scene. Critics found that the speed and continuity in the production made the love-making in the story "more precipitate than ever, and put a strain upon the emotions of the audience" (Burrow's Worcester Journal, May 19, 1934).

In its essentials the setting was very similar to Bridges-Adams' highly praised set, "artistic yet unobtrusive," for his productions of the play in 1929 and 1930.[25] Its main feature was the central arch below which ran an elevated gallery that served in turn for such places as the musicians' gallery, Capulet's house, or Juliet's balcony with a vista of tall poplars against a blue Italian sky (Birmingham Post, July 8, 1929). Bridges-Adams had employed a permanent setting to each of the three acts into which he had divided the play. These settings, with the occasional interpolation of curtain scenes, allowed practically continuous action and dialogue so long as the act-drop was up. His first act was dominated by the gallery bridging the stage, which, with an alternation of backcloths, served as the central feature of the street scenes, Capulet's ballroom and Juliet's garden. Friar Lawrence's cell and other small scenes were played in front of curtains. The middle act, set mainly in Juliet's bedroom, was conventionally treated with a full set, as was the final act, in which Bridges-Adams gave gorgeous staging to the Capulet tomb (Birmingham Mail, July 6, 1929).[26]

Norman Wilkinson earned praise not only for his set in 1933 but also for his costumes. The Times found that "though continually delightful in their ordered variety they are never a distraction." Elizabethan with Italian touches, they justified themselves on decorative grounds and did no violence to the audience's historical sense (June 21, 1933). Wilkinson explained that it was in properties and costumes that he approached nearer the Elizabethan than he did in decoration; the properties and costumes were "purely Elizabethan in character," he said, "though imaginatively rather than archaeologically carried out" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, June 16, 1933). Asked before the production what he would be doing with modern lighting resources, the designer explained that there would be no elaborate lighting effects and that an attempt would be made as far as possible to suggest the open-air daylight performances of the play in Shakespeare's own day. All the resources of the theatre would be utilized "to show how straightforward and how simple we can be. We are leaving all that to Juliet and the rest of them to tell the audience what the time of day is" (Observer, June 18, 1933). The audience found that no attempt indeed was made at elaborate lighting arrangements, but that the effects secured, though comparatively simple, were strikingly effective (Midland Daily Telegraph, June 21, 1933).

Discussing his designs, Norman Wilkinson paid tribute to William Poel who, he said, had strongly influenced his work. The general scenic setting that Wilkinson had contrived was "to all intents and purposes, an Elizabethan stage--the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre adapted." "I am myself an out-and-out believer in what William Poel has always consistently taught--that Shakespeare had to make his effects on his own audience by the magic of the spoken word, and that for a producer the method of simplicity is best." Poel's method, Wilkinson felt most strongly, was the only way of making Shakespeare on the stage worth listening to. "I am convinced that any deviation from the Poel method of simplicity is silly, old fashioned and dull" (Observer, June 18, 1933).

The 1933 production marked Bridges-Adams' nearest approach to Poel's methods. The fountainhead of his artistic theory, he acknowledged, lay in the work of William Poel. Bridges-Adams was assistant stage-manager in 1910 when Tree generously invited Poel to perform The Two Gentlemen of

Verona at his Shakespeare Festival. Bridges-Adams by that time had already worked with Nugent Monck who was himself a Poelite and used Poel's people, including costume designer Jennie Moore. "So I was Poel-steeped a long time before the old man took me on," he pointed out.[27] As Bridges-Adams later recognized, having worked with Poel and having directed his own Shakespearean productions with many of Poel's principles in mind, it was "not, however, through the negative virtues of austerity and archaism that Poel eventually made his influence felt as much as through the positive gain in swift and untrammelled action, and through the appeal which the verse, under his system of light and infrequent stressing, made to the ear."[28]

In 1912 a young Bridges-Adams wrote to Poel in a transport of enthusiasm after seeing Poel's production of Troilus and Cressida with Edith Evans as a memorable Cressida:

> I wish I could put into words all I thought about it . . . especially the love scene . . . and the Cressida! I wish I knew how you contrived to teach an amateur to give such a perfect and such a classic performance; it seemed to create Cressida once and for all for this generation.[29]

A number of times throughout his career Bridges-Adams paid important tribute to the work of Poel. Writing in 1947, he said that within short memory there had been something like a revolution in the English stage production of Shakespeare. The father of this revolution, he declared, was William Poel. "He was dubbed a crank," reminisced Bridges-Adams, "and in the course of a lifetime's struggle for his beliefs he nearly became one, dying at last before the stage had acknowledged how much it owed him."[30] In a letter in 1947 to the American scholar A.C. Sprague, Bridges-Adams wrote that he had known Poel very well, from 1910 to the last year of his life. Poel, he declared, was the "Father of the Puritan

Revolution in the theatre--a Dionysian ascetic . . . . As obstinate as a mule and as brave as a lion."[31] On another occasion he wrote to Sprague that Poel was "the stuff of martyrs . . . often heretical."[32]

Bridges-Adams found that many of Poel's most important theories were popularized by Harley Granville-Barker, a producer who "had out Poeled Poel and outtreed Tree all in one brilliant gesture":

> In point of decent salaries handsomely earned . . . ; of preparedness, efficiency, slickness; of apparently confident spending that looked for a hundred nights' run; of a seductive discarding of tradition that was already a winning card in the other arts; in short, of giving the town something to talk about at dinner--in all these respects young Barker left old Poel far behind.

Poel, he said, was always poor, derided and cold-shouldered into isolation, enough to turn a great man cranky, being, as most people agreed, "a man of too hard principles for success in this world." To Bridges-Adams the difference between Poel and Granville-Barker was that "Poel was a mystic and ascetic" and that Granville-Barker was "a rationalist."[33]

Although Bridges-Adams' production aims were clearly influenced by William Poel as well as by Harley Granville-Barker, his own sensibilities differed from theirs. "No one," he wrote many years later in The Irresistible Theatre, "should produce a play unless he has the instincts of a show-man, least of all should he attempt to produce a play by Shakespeare."[34] There was much of the showman in Bridges-Adams and his work at Stratford-upon-Avon was marked by a concern with sets, costumes and lighting, an emphasis which horrified the purist in Poel. "In certain vital matters Poel and his Elizabethan Stage Society were undoubtedly on the right track," acknowledged Bridges-Adams; "Shakespeare can be, and must be, spoken trippingly on the tongue; his action must be continuous; he responds to the freedom of the open stage."[35] Although the two producers shared the goal of rapid and continuous action on the stage, their methods of achieving this aim differed widely. The unadorned Elizabethan stage and apron Bridges-Adams rejected and with them their supporters whom he christened "Elizabethan Methodists," a title which implied criticism both of their puritanical rejection of decoration and what he saw as fanatical adherence to a single doctrine. "The symbol of their cult," he wrote, "was the bare, the chastely, indescribably bare, stage of the Elizabethans."[36] It was a weakness of the theorizers in this field, he said, that they persisted in thinking of the Elizabethan theatre as uniform and static. Was one to assume that between, say, Tamburlaine and Henry VIII, the stage and its usages underwent no change? None, said the theorists; The Theatre became the Globe, and the Globe set the pattern for the Fortune, in which certainty, said Bridges-Adams, they set about to work on their reconstructions. It was Poel's honourable intention to restore Shakespeare to the stage for which he wrote, pointed out Bridges-Adams, but beyond his conviction that its action was not hampered by scenery Poel had no precise conception of what the stage was like. Poel had started his crusade with little to help him beyond the Swan drawing and the knowledge that Twelfth Night was played in Middle Temple Hall.[37]

Bridges-Adams found Poel's contention that Shakespeare's plays appealed more to the hearing than to the eyes a dangerous one. "After all," he said, "Shakespeare meant the eyes of his audience to be entertained as well as their ears" (Daily Express, April 19, 1934). Using as illustration Shakespeare's battle scenes to point out the dramatist's use of spectacle, Bridges-Adams explained that flourishes and alarums penetrated the episodes. "The armies are token armies but with their banners they make an imposing show; the foils are few but they are real; the guns that one day set the Globe on fire are not pop-guns." There was no realism in the picture as a whole, Bridges-Adams acknowledged, but there was plenty of realism in its component parts. This semi-scenic convention began to take shape as one perfectly acceptable to a public unused to a proscenium frame. "We have, then," concluded Bridges-Adams, "good grounds for believing that the Elizabethan stage was not bare, but on the contrary that it was often elaborately dressed and handsome to the eye."[38] Bridges-Adams agreed with Granville-Barker that once a convention was abolished it could be painstakingly restored, but never to full life. "We cannot restore the audience of the Globe," he declared, echoing Granville-Barker and rejecting Poel's austere archaism.[39]

Bridges-Adams, however, also did not hesitate to criticize the staging methods of Harley Granville-Barker. While recognizing Granville-Barker's work as important and influential in the development of Shakespearean staging, Bridges-Adams found it in practice too strident a challenge to tradition: "People who would have blushed to speak of going to His Majesty's to see the scenery spoke without shame of going to the Savoy to see the décor," he said.[40] On another occasion he declared, "And if Tree, by the nature of his crusade, seemed to focus the attention, ironically enough, on externals, Barker did so a hundred times more."[41] Bridges-Adams found that in Granville-Barker's productions "the visual effects literally hit you in the eye, so that you remembered Hermione's gold umbrella more vividly than Hermione."[42] Bridges-Adams had not approved of Granville-Barker's golden fairies in A Midsummer

Night's Dream:

> The trouble with the stylistic treatment of Shakespeare is that it is not easy to be stylistic without being--what shall I say?--stylish, sophisticated, towny. Shakespeare was first and last a countryman; and his fairies . . . are first and last country fairies. They are scurrying, scudding, skimming creatures, not static little figurines on a London mantelpiece.[43]

In Granville-Barker's work Bridges-Adams found something cerebral and anaemic which he never liked. He admired Granville-Barker's Savoy productions, but found them clinical and cold.

In an interview at the beginning of his directorship, Bridges-Adams acknowledged that there were 101 ways of producing Shakespeare from the method of William Poel to the method of Sir Herbert Tree. Both of these extremists, he contended, had, at their best, done work of which the stage might be proud, but both had left the problem of Shakespearean mounting no nearer solution. Ophelia in a farthingale was very possibly the truest to Shakespeare and for an audience of the Elizabethan Stage Society this was no doubt the way to dress her, but for an average audience this could simply deflect in the direction of the mounting a certain amount of attention that should have gone to the play; it would take the audience some time to get acclimatized to her and proportionately less time would be left in which to consider her as a human being. Modern producers were in Bridges-Adams' view as guilty in the matter of overdressing Shakespeare's plays as many of their most maligned predecessors; it might be taken as a rule, he stated, that any setting which, either by its lavishness or even by its beauty, evoked a burst of applause from the audience, might be doing a service at the box office but was probably doing a disservice to the play. For Bridges-Adams there was only one golden rule to be observed in staging

Shakespeare, or for that matter, any play: "to do whatever will most quickly and unobtrusively make the majority of your audience feel at home in the play" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, July 25, 1919).

Bridges-Adams' aim was to combine the spaciousness, intimacy and continuity of action on the Elizabethan stage with as much scenic effect as seemed desirable; provided the general effect of Elizabethan simplicity and swiftness of performance was maintained, he saw no need to recreate the Elizabethan theatre. Poel had argued that the Elizabethan open stage was the only means of successfully dealing with the scattered locations of a Shakespearean play, but Bridges-Adams managed to devise a setting free from actuality of place while at the same time capable of providing specific scenic locations. During his first season at Stratford-upon-Avon he evolved a technique which was essentially a compromise between the bareness of Poel's staging and the scenic excess of Benson's: he subdivided the stage with traverse curtains, interspersing scenes which used the full stage with scenes in front of the curtains, so that sets could be changed quickly behind them while the action proceeded in front. This method enabled him to use numerous sets and to indicate location with literalness while maintaining speed of presentation, scene flowing into scene, with none of the traditional waits and intervals. Throughout his years at the Memorial Theatre Bridges-Adams continued to rely on the use of these traverse curtains and on simple sets--an archway, a flight of steps, a door, a line of pillars--almost always of architectural elements, with few attempts to reproduce woods and gardens with the laborious verisimilitude favoured by Benson. Yet he managed to create splendid interiors by using rich tapestry hangings and curtains and one or two well-placed pieces of furniture, achieving a sense of spaciousness in the exterior scenes by placing a painting vista between the columns or by cutting off the background with an abrupt hill or wall and hanging the rear of the stage with a plain blue sky-cloth.

Bridges-Adams' trademark was the use of an architectural frame which functioned as an inner proscenium, providing the advantages of the apron stage within a traditionally constructed theatre. The lack of space and the elevation and the remoteness of the stage floor at the Memorial Theatre made it impossible to extend a forestage beyond the proscenium as Poel and Granville-Barker had done and as Robert Atkins would do at the Old Vic. Bridges-Adams therefore often used such devices as pillars to create the inner proscenium. The two outer sections of the stage were closed off with curtains, tapestries or painted cloths to form an inner stage in the centre. The actors could move out of this narrow frame onto an "apron" in front of the columns for dialogue and soliloquy while the changing scenery could easily be struck or set upstage, in the case of some productions on rolling trucks.

Within the architectural frame scene changes were facilitated by a system of battens supporting traverse curtains which could be run upward and outward. A review in the Daily Mail provides a first-hand account of Bridges-Adams' method:

> He can give you a short scene in front of a plain heavy curtain. This done the curtain is raised in the ordinary way to show a full set. Anon, a gorgeous tapestry curtain is lowered, forming a striking background for the commencement of the next scene, which is often in full swing before the "rag" is partially withdrawn to reveal a vignette effect, of which the double advantage is that it concentrates the action in the centre of the stage and leaves the remainder of the area at the disposal of the stage hands. In due course the scene is

> effaced for a few moments, the trolley on which it has been mounted is whisked away, and everything is speedily in order for another full set. (April 29, 1920)

This method of production, of course, was not original. As Cary Mazer points out in his study of Elizabethan plays on Edwardian stages, Cecil Brodmeier in 1904 had proposed the "zonal theory" of Elizabethan staging which suggested that Shakespeare's stage had been divided by curtains into distinct areas, each area forming a playing space which could be used separately or in conjunction with another.[44] Both Poel and Granville-Barker had used curtains in their productions and, while this alternation theory was eventually discarded as an explanation of Shakespeare's staging, it continued to prove useful for the adaptation of the proscenium-arch stage for Elizabethan plays.[45]

William Poel, however, had reservations about Bridges-Adams' staging methods. In 1919 Bridges-Adams had used the device of traverse curtains in his first experiment to present Romeo and Juliet with unbroken continuity as well as with an admirable set of stage pictures. In a letter to the Nation written after he had seen Bridges-Adams' production, Poel pointed out that the Star had commented in its review that Bridges-Adams' settings "were perfect gems, though attention was somewhat distracted from them by the sustained excellence of the acting" (Star, Aug. 13, 1919). Obviously, said Poel, there were moments in the performance when the setting, beautiful in itself, interfered with sustained listening. "The tragedy that Shakespeare wrote to be acted in one scene, Mr. Bridges Adams presents in twenty-three scenes, the performance lasting three and a half hours. It can hardly be said that this production solves the difficulty of Shakespearean representation" (Nation, Aug. 23, 1919). In a letter to Bridges-Adams a month later Poel registered his disapproval of Bridges-Adams' scenic representation for a performance "which can hardly be called scholarly or educational, although in its way it was quite effective."[46]

In the first years of the New Shakespeare Company Poel went fairly regularly to Stratford-upon-Avon, and Robert Speaight relates that despite Poel's public stance of disapproval of Bridges-Adams' staging methods "he confessed a wicked pleasure in the stage pictures devised by Mr. Bridges-Adams behind the proscenium of the Old Memorial Theatre."[47] When Bridges-Adams brought his production of Henry V to the Strand in London in 1920, William Poel paid tribute to the producer's skill: "I think your . . . show is the high-water mark of efficiency for scenic representation, nothing else that has been done on our stage comes near it." Poel added, almost parenthetically, "Of course, myself, I see another way of staging the play, and I believe a more effective way because more dramatic."[48] As Sally Beauman points out, it is now difficult to assess Bridges-Adams' skill as a set designer. For most of his years at Stratford-upon-Avon he was working on a severely limited stage and with a tiny budget. Most of his designs were sketched on the backs of envelopes and those that remain were mostly recreated later from memory. The few photos of his 1920's productions are also a poor witness to his work. Such an important tribute from a formidable critic like William Poel, then, is a noteworthy one indeed.

Bridges-Adams had learned a good deal from Poel and Granville-Barker, but he was more romantic than either and held a reverence for the Lyceum "tradition," as he conceived it in theory (the closest he had come to the Lyceum was to tour with Laurence Irving, Henry Irving's son). Too young ever to have seen Henry Irving perform, Bridges-Adams nonetheless believed that Irving's death had opened up a void in English theatrical tradition: "Irving's death," he declared, "left a gap which Tree could not fill," and he dismissed Tree as "soapstone" after "granite."[49] Granville-Barker, he contended, did not fill it either. Like Frank Benson, Bridges-Adams was filled with fierce nostalgia for the "old" theatre--in his case, the theatre of actor-managers like Irving. Describing himself many years later as "irredeemably nineteenth century," Bridges-Adams was sentimentally attracted to the tradition of that era for the beauty of its stage picture and, above all, for the art of theatrical illusion.[50] It is fair to say, as Robert Speaight does, "that Bridges never got the whiff of the Lyceum out of his nostrils; and advocate as he always remained of scenic Shakespeare--if it were the right scenery--he smelled the parvenu in Tree."[51] Bridges-Adams' view of Tree was of "a large and lovable playboy who had not the force of spirit to dominate his own spectacle as Irving did."[52] Commenting on Tree's isolated experiment in presenting a non-scenic Hamlet in 1905, he contemptuously pointed out that the production had been "still impenitently Treeism, not Poelish at all."[53]

One aspect of stage production in which Bridges-Adams was indebted to Henry Irving was lighting. Bridges-Adams was never in sympathy with the "egalitarian brilliance," used by Granville-Barker, "which seemed to take all mystery from the stage."[54] He particularly disliked Granville-Barker's use of brilliant white light, which he described as "germ-free." He himself attempted to achieve with electric lights the soft chiaroscuro effects of the gas-lit theatre, the kind of effects Henry Irving had made famous at the Lyceum.[55] Bridges-Adams lit his sets atmospherically, but, in contrast to Irving, often illuminated only parts of the stage, a practice which irritated some of the Bensonians in his company who liked a good shaft of light in which to stand and deliver their lines. Bringing up a complaint that had often been levied against Bridges-Adams' lighting effects since the outset of his directorship at Stratford-upon-Avon, one reviewer of his Romeo and Juliet production in 1933 contended that Bridges-Adams' presentations often had been ruined on the stage by insufficient lighting. Although the critic acknowledged that the gloom was effective for the tomb scene of Romeo and Juliet, he felt that "there is something entirely wrong in a system that leaves the face of Juliet in the shadows through the immortal colloquy on the balcony, for if there is one scene in the world demanding the clear, cold light of the moon on the lovers' faces, it is this" (Birmingham Post, April 23, 1934). Poel had written to Bridges-Adams with a similar grievance after seeing Bridges-Adams' production of Henry V on tour at the Strand in London in 1920:

> You were hampered by not having a front light at the Strand to pick out the figures and bring them out of the background. . . . As a consequence one hardly ever sees the faces of the actors . . . and in many scenes the stage is so dark that one hears the voices and does not know where they come from.[56]

Other critics made corresponding remarks, commenting on Bridges-Adams' "favourite device of obscurity" (Birmingham Post, Aug. 8, 1919) and his "perpetual darkness" (Yorkshire Telegraph, Aug. 9, 1919).

In a letter written long after he had left Stratford-upon-Avon, Bridges-Adams explained his principles of lighting:

> The golden rule, as you probably know, is to keep all projected and focussed lighting on the actors and off the set. This brings the actors into relief and pushes the set back. Footlights are a great help if judiciously used. But the most effective focus-lamps are what we used to call perch-limes, striking sideways and downwards from just behind the proscenium columns; they unobtrusively put an edge on the actors without hitting the scenery.[57]

While some critics disliked Bridges-Adams' lighting techniques, dubbing his effects "murky," many who saw his productions commended the director for the way in which his lighting could shift and transform the moods within the plays, catching and reflecting the nuance of the moment. His scenes were characterized by soft colours and uncertain outlines, lending "a drowsy and dreamlike appearance without that false theatricality which comes from the use of a veil of gauzes." Gordon Crosse found that Bridges-Adams' lighting for his 1929 production of Romeo and Juliet was marked by "a glowing warmth and richness which displayed in full beauty the costumes worn by the players."[58] His pictures were beautiful stage pictures, suggesting an air of fantasy, yet not overpowering, allowing Shakespeare to maintain control over his own play. Bridges-Adams had a keen eye for delicate effects and William Archer's verdict, early in Bridges-Adams' directorship, that this was "originality without eccentricity," was probably a correct one (The Star, Aug. 6, 1919).

Many who saw Bridges-Adams' productions remarked on his gift, like that of Henry Irving, for grouping actors within a scene, no small task at a time when as many as twenty or thirty supernumeraries were still commonplace. Bridges-Adams acknowledged that he had admired the way in which Henry Irving had peopled a stage with groupings that recalled paintings "from Tintoretto to Meissonier."[59] In its review of Bridges-Adams' Romeo and Juliet in 1933, the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald commented that "there is no producer who can decorate his stage with his actors to such good purpose as Mr. Bridges Adams. His sense of the beautiful, ever subservient to his sense of what is right theatrically, has led him to the creation of some of the finest pictorial effects possible." Time and time again, noted the reviewer, the director had given his audience a thrill by such seemingly simple means as a few cloaked figures plotting in the flickering light of a torch held high by one of their number who stood sentinel over their schemes (June 23, 1933). The Midland Daily Telegraph, moreover, found that Bridges-Adams' introduction of such simple devices as a sonorously ticking clock into the setting for the Potion scene imparted a definitely eerie touch (June 21, 1933). M. C. Day and J. C. Trewin pointed out that Bridges-Adams had seldom used his stage more effectively than in the last scene of Romeo and Juliet in his 1929 production: Juliet lay on a marble bier in the foreground while at the back, outlined against the night sky, Paris and Romeo fought at the head of steps beyond an iron-barred gate.[60]

IV

Early in his directorship at Stratford-upon-Avon Bridges-Adams had professed his artistic credo. Declaring that although the New Shakespeare Company would aim to give an adequate and satisfactory presentation in each Shakespeare Festival from the scenic point of view, "we believe that the Art of the Theatre is acting and it is on that that we shall insist most" (Daily News, April 29, 1919). Asked in an interview about the role of decorative elements in his productions, Bridges-Adams explained that his aim was to create first and foremost the most fitting frame and background for the acting. Taking an opposing stance to that of producers such as Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Bridges-Adams professed his belief that the art value of a play should be made subordinate to its dramatic value. To him the Art of the Theatre had always been the art of acting. Although he admitted a great admiration for modern décor, the director stated that he would much rather, were the choice offered to him, spend the money on salaries for first-rate actors.[61] It was not the externals which gave magic to Shakespeare, he pointed out: "I always felt nearer to the true music of Shakespeare at a rehearsal on a summer evening with a bare stage and a property chair, and the voices of a young actor and actress running quietly through the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet."[62]

Reviewers of Bridges-Adams' 1933 production of Romeo and Juliet found that Bridges-Adams as producer and Norman Wilkinson as stage designer were a well-assorted pair. The one was able to work beauty into a simple setting which allowed the other to bring the play to the stage with all the swiftness that was essential to this lyric tragedy of four brief days' duration. Bridges-Adams achieved freshness and originality of treatment without either presenting Shakespeare as spectacle or interpreting him in terms that could only be sustained at the expense of the poetry. Praising the producer for his ingenuity and skill which were directed to needs other than their own, the Times commented that "the burden of the play comes ultimately to rest on the acting" (June 21, 1933).

During the 1920's and 1930's comparisons were often made between the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon and the Old Vic in London, for these two theatres were the only theatres regularly producing Shakespeare at that time. Some critics felt that the weakness of Bridges-Adams' work at Stratford-upon-Avon generally lay in the acting and verse-speaking of his company. Unkind critics implied that his emphasis on stage pictures masked an inability to draw performances from his actors. It was the judgment of W. G. Darlington of the Daily

Telegraph, for example, one of the few London critics who regularly made the journey to Stratford-upon-Avon in the 1920's and 1930's, that "the productions and settings at Stratford are certainly better conceived than anything the Waterloo Road house can show, but for team work and acting ability the Old Vic has it nine times out of ten." In general it was Darlington's belief that the Stratford-upon-Avon performances lacked metropolitan "class," and he wrote of "a certain lack of finish and precision" (Daily Telegraph, April 28, 1921). This was an early verdict before Bridges-Adams' companies got into their stride, but the critic later continued to sneer retrospectively at the Memorial and to assert that the companies there had always been poor and inferior to those at the Old Vic. But much of the retrospective criticism was unfair, occasioned partly by Bridges-Adams' refusal to employ stars, and his insistence on trying to build up a company, a policy that ran directly counter to the theatrical taste of the day. The crucial difference between the theatres, which Darlington failed to acknowledge, was one of continuity. The Old Vic company played together for six months of the year, time which allowed for the development of that intangible team spirit in both the company and its audience, and for adequate rehearsal time. Moreover, as Sally Beauman points out, the cross-fertilization between the Memorial Theatre and the Old Vic which continued through the 1920's, with both companies constantly using the same actors, suggests that the acting standards of the Old Vic and the Memorial must have been far more on a par than the critics chose later to suggest.[63]

When the editor of the Sunday Times in a column criticized Bridges-Adams for not using star actors in his productions, the director wrote to him, retorting that "the star system tempts and exploits, but cannot create, the great actor." Great acting, maintained Bridges-Adams, sprang from the stock system, when hard routine in a round of parts had "left its mark on a personality of the necessary force and magnetism." "That is why a young team-work company should be supported for its potentialities, no less than for its achievements," he admonished the editor.[64]

For his Romeo and Juliet productions Bridges-Adams followed William Poel's directive in choosing for his titular figures two relatively young and inexperienced actors who marvelously looked their parts. For his first production of Romeo and Juliet in 1919 he had used Joyce Carey, not yet twenty, who had been a pathetically childlike Juliet, sincere and charming, with all the timid assurances of a love too natural to be distrusted or even questioned. Even in the potion scene Carey had abstained from the traditional sensational delivery, rightly divining that if only she could bring out the terrible predicament, the perplexities and the utter loneliness of Juliet, she could leave the rest to Shakespeare. All this she had accomplished with quiet intensity more affecting than many a noisier and more demonstrative rendition recalled by critics (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, Aug. 15, 1919). In Bridges-Adams' 1929 and 1930 productions Joyce Bland had given grace, dignity and youth to her Juliet. Bland, too, was an actress of little experience but she had a winning simplicity, a soft and clear voice and, above all, a sense of character. With her "personal beauty, youthful appeal, variety of mood and manner, concentration," the young actress had poignantly developed Juliet's character from that of the docile, carefree child to that of the passionate, single-visioned woman" (Stage, July 11, 1929).

The Midland Daily Telegraph found that Bridges-Adams' revival of

Romeo and Juliet in 1933 was praiseworthy not only from the point of view of stage-craft, but also memorable for the "magnificent performance" given by a newcomer to the company (June 21, 1933). For this production Bridges-Adams' ideal for Juliet was found in the teenage Rachel Kempson (later Lady Redgrave), a Juliet touchingly young and yet ardent, whom J. C. Trewin later remembered as "heartbreaking in her youth."[65] Kempson had left the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art only a short time before, after distinguishing herself brilliantly in her final performances there. Immediately engaged by Bridges-Adams to begin rehearsing at Stratford-upon-Avon, she had already played Hero, Phoebe, Virgilia and other parts at the Memorial Theatre with outstanding success. Entrusted with the part of Juliet after only two months on the professional stage, the actress brought to Juliet a pale, cool beauty which seemed at first too faint in hue for its purpose but which deepened in colour and intensity as the need grew until it flamed finely in the potion scene. This was a beautiful performance, agreed critics, rich in delicate cadences and pulsating with restrained passion. Reviewers noted that Kempson's portrayal was not entirely free from faults, faults that would no doubt speedily disappear as she gained stage experience, but she played as though inspired, and her portrayal of the most lovely and compelling of Shakespeare's tragic heroines was marked throughout by an appeal which caused her performance "to abide in the memory as one of the most charming and fragrant one has witnessed in the Memorial Theatre" (Midland Daily Telegraph, June 21, 1933).

The Times pointed out that although the actress' verse-speaking might be more musical, the strength of Kempson's delivery was that it was unaffected, and besides giving freshness and spontaneity to familiar passages it had the emotional power which belonged to sincerity: "Whether ecstatic in the wings of happiness or distractedly rushing on death, her feeling is deep and true, and only escapes her control on rare and almost always lesser occasions" (June 21, 1933). Juliet's speaking of the purple passage which was such sweet prelude to the lovers' duet in Act II.ii was "breathed gently into the night breeze, a faithful messenger to the airs of her love," reported the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald. "I can still hear the delicate cadences of Miss Kempson's 'Do not swear at all,' and the delightfully naïve inflection given to that 'Stay but a little; I will come again,'" wrote the delighted critic (June 23, 1933). This was a balcony scene of "quite surpassing loveliness," agreed the Birmingham Mail. The softest nuances of her girlish voice "seemed like the caresses of the circumambient air, her gestures like touches of music." The reviewer commented that the actress "lived never acted the part," and was able to realize the lyrical grace of "how silver sweet sound lovers' tongues at night." This line was the keynote of the first half of the production, and in the second half, when the tragedy becomes deeper and more compelling, the actress rose to heights of intensity. Juliet's difficult soliloquy, "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds," introducing Act III.ii, was well attempted by the young actress, and in the potion scene her restraint showed her acting skills at their finest (June 21, 1933). "The potion scene was played with such fervour," noted one critic, "that one did not notice at what point she took the poison" (Birmingham Post, June 21, 1933). A year later, when Bridges-Adams revived his production for the next year's Stratford Festival and again used Kempson as his Juliet, the audience found that Juliet's urgent appeal in the crypt, at the end of the play, was so strong that she succeeded in wringing tears from the most hardened of playgoers (Birmingham Evening Despatch, April 23, 1934).

Finding Rachel Kempson's performance remarkable indeed for one who had but recently left the Academy, the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald proclaimed, "Miss Kempson need have no fears; she can teach many of her betters many things." The newspaper declared that if inexperience mitigated the effectiveness of some of her scenes, imagination and the glimmerings of inspiration more than compensated for any loss sustained by lack of "tricks" (June 23, 1933). Critics prophesized a brilliant theatrical future for the lovely novice actress whose Juliet was marked with unstilted diction and keen emotional power.

The very tight schedule of rehearsals for the Shakespeare Festivals at Stratford-upon-Avon left no time for those long discussions between director and artist which so often bring a fine performance to fruition. Robert Speaight relates that Bridges-Adams "engaged you because you knew your business and let you get on with it." Rachel Kempson, he said, was one of the few performers with whom Bridges-Adams worked in creative intimacy, and the result was a Juliet that Speaight remembered was "like the roses of the spring."[66] Kempson's triumphs that first season as Ophelia, Cordelia, Hero and Juliet all paid tribute to Bridges-Adams' fine direction.

Critics concentrated their reviews on the outstanding performance of Rachel Kempson but they also paid brief tribute to John Wyse who, having joined the company during the previous season, presented a handsome, suave, yet gentlemanly young Romeo to Kempson's Juliet. They judged Wyse best in the balcony scene where fine writing inspires worthy interpretation and where this young actor took "his rightful place in a duet which echoes the poet's greatness" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, June 23, 1933). Although reviewers found that the performance of Wyse as Romeo had its great moments, they generally assessed it as less pleasing than that of Kempson. For the Daily Midland Telegraph Wyse's performance frequently lacked the passionate fire necessary in the portrayal of so ardent a young lover (June 21, 1933), and for the Times this Romeo, like so many other Romeos in the past, "never quite came to the full height at which he could charge his defiance of the stars with an emotion beyond that of mere words" (June 21, 1933). On the whole, critics concurred that John Wyse's Romeo suffered from being too consciously acted; one reviewer noted of the young actor that "at the moment he is very much like an actor trying to play Romeo instead of being Romeo" (Birmingham Post, June 21, 1933). John Wyse strove mightily to make Romeo live, commented the Birmingham Mail, "perhaps so much that he forgot that his art, like his love, should sometimes come by stealth" (June 21, 1933). Summing up its comments on a production which in its acting was most memorable for its Juliet, the Birmingham Post made the point that "Romeo and Juliet has often turned out to be Juliet and Romeo; so it was last night at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre" (June 21, 1933).[67]

A number of critics commented on the fine acting of the secondary roles in Bridges-Adams' production. Of these smaller parts, said the Midland Daily Telegraph, "excellent delineations were forthcoming." George Hayes was commended for his Mercutio which the newspaper found especially admirable--clear-cut and virile (June 21, 1933). The Times praised Alice O'Day for her excellent delineation of the Nurse and Eric Lee for a Tybalt that was "something more than mere bluster" (June 21, 1933). The Friar Lawrence of Stanley Howlett, too, was acclaimed, a

Friar who in Bridges-Adams' conception could "twist that dagger out of Romeo's hand with the hard sinews begotten of hard living."[68]

Throughout the years critics had often applauded the ensemble acting in Bridges-Adams' productions. Writing at the end of the director's first Shakespeare Festival in 1919, the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald had spoken of the whole week's work: "Much hard work has been done by the smaller part artists . . . to these lesser lights a generous tribute should be paid." Their work, noted the critic, "was good and sound" (Aug. 8, 1919). In a review of Bridges-Adams' first production of Romeo and Juliet, the Morning Post had commented approvingly on the fact that in his company no one held a monopoly on any definite type of part or on parts of any given magnitude. The Mercutio of one day was the Caliban of the morrow; the Falstaff was also the Casca. "And it was remarkable," related the reviewer, "how many small parts, now that they were no longer regarded as insignificant and treated accordingly but were restored to their original offices, shone forth brilliantly" (Sept. 2, 1919). The Observer had made the point that "it is when we get to the small parts . . . we realise what good material Mr. Bridges Adams has to work on and how well he is working on it." "Here at last," declared the critic, "is a (not new) but true Shakespearean company" (April 25, 1920). Bridges-Adams in 1932 acknowledged that his company was a good team, although "team work" was a cant phrase which the director was careful to avoid. "It is detested by my company," he declared. "The thing which this metaphor connotes exists as a matter of course. I go all out for individual excellence, and trust my own authority to keep the balance."[69]

What was perceived by some critics to be inadequate instruction of actors in the art of verse-speaking and the failure to inspire them to effective performance stemmed to a large extent from the lack of rehearsal time and the impermanency of the company. After seeing Bridges-Adams' production of A Midsummer Night's Dream during the director's first season at Stratford-upon-Avon, Harley Granville-Barker wrote the young director that he had liked almost everything until almost the end of the production when Bridges-Adams had allowed his actors to use tired comic business. "But this must not be when you have 75 percent of the thing as right as right."[70] Granville-Barker had put his finger on the single problem which, more than any other, was to plague Bridges-Adams' work. Because he was never able to have adequate rehearsal time, except for a single season in 1933, Bridges-Adams generally had to rely on actors experienced at playing Shakespeare, but in using such actors, with only a few days to work on each play, it was virtually impossible for him to rid his productions entirely of the tired inheritance of stage "business." He knew as well as Granville-Barker that these stale traditions had to be cleared away if the plays were to be rethought freshly, but how was it to be possible with but a few days' rehearsal?[71]

There is no question, however, that Bridges-Adams had a perceptive appreciation of the actor's art and the difficulties inherent in its expression. A firm supporter of ensemble acting and the no-star system, his ideal for a company was "a succession of actors . . . employed for the principal parts; thus every member has the knowledge that in time he will be called upon to play the lead, and enthusiasm is maintained" (Daily News, April 23, 1920). The impossibility of supporting a permanent company and severely limited rehearsal time prevented the full realization of this ideal which had never been more than an optimistic hope.

It is clear from his letters and from the comments made in his occasional writings that Bridges-Adams, like Poel and Granville-Barker, placed great emphasis on the importance of effective verse-speaking. "Speaking of the verse is so sure a guide to the emotional rise and fall of the play that an actor with an ear will find it almost makes his points for him," declared Bridges-Adams many years after he had left Stratford-upon-Avon. In a play such as Romeo and Juliet, he pointed out, "it will help to keep the blood at fever heat."[72] His advice later to producers of Shakespeare was to place great emphasis on verse-speaking in the early rehearsals of a production, a practice that he himself had never been able to effect sufficiently due to lack of rehearsal time. Although he would have rejected Poel's methods in "the teaching of tunes" as too extreme and not grounded in Elizabethan practice, he was nonetheless in accord with Poel's emphasis on verse-speaking: "As to speaking, start them round a table, like Barker and Poel before him, and keep them there until you have their voices right."[73] In a letter to William Poel after Bridges-Adams had presented twenty of Shakespeare's plays, the director acknowledged that Poel's emphasis on verse-speaking was a correct one:

> I am more convinced than ever that the true understanding and right speaking of the lines are the only key to the theatre of Shakespeare, and his only protection against the mutilated versions of the star on the one hand, and the brilliant irrelevancies of the producer and designer on the other.[74]

Judging by the fine results achieved by Bridges-Adams' close direction of Rachel Kempson in his 1933 Romeo and Juliet production, one realizes the great heights which this director could have achieved if he had been given more rehearsal time over the years and had been accorded the opportunity to build a permanent company.

V

Bridges-Adams was influenced not only by William Poel's principles for staging, acting and verse-speaking in Shakespearean production, but also by that pioneer's insistence upon the integrity of Shakespeare's texts on the stage. When the young director arrived in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1919, he declared a policy of full texts and no cuts, still a revolutionary approach in the theatre at that time: "I want as far as possible to play Shakespeare without cuts, and without transposing scenes, and without intervals," he declared. Acknowledging that Old Shakespeareans might complain that certain traditional business had been eliminated in each of his productions, he explained that "in nine cases out of ten I am doing that in order to get in more text" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, July 25, 1919). It was his intention, moreover, to present Shakespeare "as far as possible unbowdlerized," and he pointed out that the company would give such speeches as Juliet's "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds," a passage which had been "hardly ever given before" (Athenaeum, Aug. 8, 1919).

That first season Bridges-Adams fulfilled his promise to follow "the line of full text" and he presented Shakespeare's plays virtually uncut, a policy which earned him Ben Greet's soubriquet of "Mr. Unabridges-Adams" (Morning Post, Aug. 19, 1919). He retained every line of Julius Caesar, for example, and cut only 60 of the 3,074 lines of The Winter's Tale, mostly on the grounds of indecency (Nation, Aug. 9, 1919). The Stratford-upon-Avon Herald reported that the producer presented "practically all" of Romeo and Juliet and commended him for retaining the Chorus and for restoring many scenes and lines commonly excised.

The young director, however, found himself under a barrage of criticism from William Archer who condemned his approach and who claimed that Romeo and Juliet suffered from the application of what George Bernard Shaw had referred to as "holus-bolus" Shakespeare. Indeed, Archer pointed out, Mr. Bridges-Adams showed himself more Shavian than Shaw and had retained more than one passage of "ultra Elizabethan grossness." The performance, he maintained, would have been "perceptively more enjoyable" if it had been relieved of fifteen or twenty minutes of "otiose and valueless matter" (Star, Aug. 18, 1919). Archer declared that it was a delight to come to Stratford-upon-Avon and hear every line of the text of A Midsummer Night's Dream, beautifully staged by Mr. Bridges-Adams, but that Romeo and Juliet "certainly did not gain by the retention of a good deal of grossness and puerility" (Nation, Aug. 23, 1919). Opposed to a policy of textually faithful Shakespeare, the critic contended that "a good deal of inert matter which, if not absolutely incomprehensible, at any rate conveys no meaning to ninety-nine hearers out of a hundred." Disagreeing with Poel's and Shaw's insistence on playing Shakespeare in his integrity, Archer declared, "If Mr. Bridges-Adams is to do justice to his great gifts as a producer, he must make a resolute stand against the mischievous fanaticism which clamors for holus-bolus Shakespeare" (Nation, Aug. 9, 1919).

Although Bridges-Adams from the outset had professed his intention to present Shakespeare uncut, he admitted that he was "not, however, a fanatical adherent of no cuts" (Athenaeum, Aug. 8, 1919).[75] By 1922 he was already saying that this policy needed review, and from about 1923 onwards he began to cut texts much more freely. In a letter written a few years into his directorship at Stratford-upon-Avon, Bridges-Adams explained that he had regarded his no-cuts policy in 1919 as experimental, "for I wanted to find out really what the plays made of themselves when left alone, and it is only possible to do this by seeing them acted." Now that he knew more about the plays, he would not hesitate to cut when he considered it advisable," for I shall be able to do it with less fear of mutilating."[76]

On another occasion, many years later, he wrote that it had been a good thing to pass the whole of Shakespeare under review, and see what he amounted to, at a time when mutilations were still customary on the stage. Certainly, he had discovered, an uncut text restored much neglected beauty. But it also reminded one that even the first Folio--compiled as it might have been by actors from recollections of their parts as well as from manuscripts still undiscovered--abounded in imperfections, even setting its seal on some unmistakable gags. Contemporary evidence, including Hamlet's famous protest, pointed to a stage production that by no means held the author's text inviolate, Bridges-Adams explained, contending that one of the tests of a producer was how far the play emerged cleaner and stronger for his cutting. The problem, he said, varied greatly from play to play; who needed to cut a line of A Midsummer Night's Dream? On the other hand, the clearly corrupt Macbeth went off "like a thunderclap" when certain excisions were made or could drag without them."[77] It was his belief, for example, that the scene between Ross and the Old Man slowed the action and that it was "much better to go straight to Forres and that haunted throne."[78]

Bridges-Adams rejected the rigid insistence of the "Elizabethan Methodists"--and he counted Shaw among them--on uncut texts in performance; their bible, he said, was the Folio, "gags, corruptions, obscenities and all."[79] His own view was that "a great play is not a fragile thing like a sonnet; it only achieves itself through actors and spectators," and he condemned the rigid adherence to uncut texts by those who preferred "still-life perfection to live imperfection."[80] Shakespeare's plays were written in the hurly-burly of theatre with certain actors in mind, no doubt, and the writing, done in the forge of the theatre, was subject to all sorts of practical considerations. The text of a Shakespearean play was the one that was used by a company for performance, and whatever original version existed would inevitably have undergone many changes before performance. Shakespeare would have expected this and certainly would have had no conception of his original version as something sacrosanct to be guarded for future generations.

At a conference on the theatre sponsored by the British Drama League in 1919, and reported in the Morning Post, Bridges-Adams spoke on "Shakespeare in the Theatre" and wittily outlined a classification of cuts commonly made in Shakespearean productions. The first, he said, was the "cut selfish" by which an actor-manager reduced to a shadow the parts played by his unhappy comrades. Then came the "cut modest," the removal of matter that had ceased to be polite. Third came the "cut obscure" where textual corruption had made the passage meaningless. Fourth was the "cut prudential or politic" whereby the actor-manager relieved himself of whatever he did not fancy (Morning Post, Aug. 18, 1919).

Bridges-Adams himself employed the "cut modest" and the "cut obscure" with prudency and, although he was not an actor-manager, he also employed the "cut prudential" on occasion. Robert Speaight relates that Bridges-Adams conceived "a chronic aversion to Christopher Sly and had him away altogether when he felt he could do so with impunity." With his instinct for dramatic momentum he cut some hundreds of lines out of

Richard III and, "less excusably," said Speaight, the prison scene from Twelfth Night.[81] Sally Beauman points out that cuts were also made for other reasons. There was an "over-tender sensitivity, a delicate squeamishness in his temperament," which could make him rebel against the uncompromising harshness of certain Shakespearean plays or certain scenes. In Othello, for example, he shied away from the rankness of Iago's sexual innuendo and preferred to cut the key scene in which Othello, "reduced to the ignominy of pushing his black face round the edge of a curtain," eavesdrops on Cassio and Bianca.[82] He was also prepared on occasion to cut a play if, by doing so, he could satisfy the "instincts of the show-man" within him. Coriolanus, for example, he staged spectacularly in the Reinhardt manner, with highly vocal supernumeraries teeming onto the stage from the orchestra pit. His changes altered the import of the play significantly but enabled him to stage it in such a way that its epic excitement was still vividly remembered by some critics over forty years later.

In general principle, however, Bridges-Adams cut texts with discretion, and it was Speaight's contention that Bridges-Adams "earned--upon the whole--Ben Greet's soubriquet of Mr. Unabridges-Adams."[83] In a review of one of Bridges-Adams' early productions of Hamlet, the Daily Telegraph noted that the play was given almost entirely within a time of playing of not more than three and a half hours. The reviewer found that the text had been "sparingly and carefully cut" so that the original balance and order of the play was preserved; "in fact, a very close knowledge of the text is needed to detect that it has been cut at all" (Daily Telegraph, Aug. 5, 1922).

In his 1930 "Preface to Romeo and Juliet," Granville-Barker pointed out that in presenting this play on the stage the producer had a few problems to face. First of all was the minor one of indecency. "One or two of Mercutio's jabs are too outrageous for modern public usage," he stated; "they will create discomfort among a mixed audience instead of laughter." The critic warned producers, however, that the full-blooded sensuality in the play was set by Shakespeare very purposely against Romeo's romantic idealism, and this balance and contrast must not be destroyed. A producer was tempted to cutting far more than this, however, and it was Granville-Barker's contention that most producers fell to the temptation. The play as commonly presented started fairly true to Shakespeare, a troublesome passage suppressed here and there; but as it advanced, more and more of the text disappeared until it became "hop-skip-and-jump, and 'Selections from the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet'" could be a truer title for it. This practice, he warned, would not do. Granville-Barker admitted that the play's construction, very naturally, did not show the skill of Shakespeare's maturity, nor did every character stand "consistent and foursquare." The writing ran to "extravagant rhetoric and often to redundancy." But Shakespeare's chosen method of close consecutive narration, maintained Granville-Barker, could be lamed by savage mutilation; and rhetoric and redundancy, the violence, the absurdities even, were the medium in which the characters were intentionally painted. The verbiage and its eccentricities to modern ears seemed harder to compass, but the critic explained that much that struck one as strange in print would pass and make its own effect in the rush of performance.[84]

In a letter written a few years into his directorship at Stratford-upon-Avon, Bridges-Adams explained that the plays of Shakespeare that he would advise playing uncut (barring bawdy) were not many; if he were to save an average audience not only from shock but also from bewilderment and boredom, he would have a list of only three: A Midsummer Night's Dream, Julius Caesar, and Twelfth Night. The director explained that he would almost add Romeo and Juliet to his list except that he would cut "most of the obscurity" but, in contrast to most other producers, would leave in "some of the hard edges of obscenity which to my mind just save the play from softness."[85]

The Birmingham Mail in its review of Bridges-Adams' 1930 presentation of the play commended the director for his judicious handling of cuts and noted that the producer was particularly to be congratulated on his boldness in defying Mrs. Grundy and giving the audience Mercutio's daring vocabulary as Shakespeare wrote it (June 24, 1930). In a comment similar to that made by Granville-Barker, Bridges-Adams later pointed out in The Irresistible Theatre that to overprune the pleasantries of Mercutio and the Nurse was to rob the play of something that particularly helped its presentation of young love. "Any tempering of any harshness may weaken the whole," he asserted; "it is on a sunless day that there are no shadows."[86] The Stratford-upon-Avon Herald found his text in performance an effective one: "There must be here shown a contrast--for this is a play of contrasts--between the lewd, though homely woman of restricted outlook, and the spiritual purity of the child who is her charge" (Aug. 16, 1929).

In cutting bawdy in his 1933 production of Romeo and Juliet, Bridges-Adams excised only those passages that he considered intolerably indecent: the initial bawdy dialogue between the servants in the first scene (I.i.25-35), Mercutio's obscene wish for Romeo to be a "poplin pear" (II.i.37), his statement that Rosaline refused to "open her lap to saint seducing gold" (I.ii.217), and the last six lines of his Queen Mab speech (I.iv.89-94). He also cut the bawdy jokes of Mercutio and Romeo against the Nurse in II.iv (72-105) and the Nurse's warning to Juliet, "I am the drudge and toil in your delight;/ But you shall bear the burden soon at night" (II.v.75-76).

For this production Bridges-Adams used the Temple edition of the play, from which he cut approximately six hundred lines. Frank Benson, by contrast, used to cut almost thirteen hundred lines in his presentations of the play. The promptbook for Bridges-Adams' production is now housed in the Shakespeare Memorial Library in Stratford-upon-Avon.[87] The only sustained cuts he made were the scene of Peter and the musicians in IV.v; the short scene in which Lady Capulet, Nurse, Capulet and servingmen make preparation for the wedding of Juliet and Paris (IV.iv); and a good deal of the narration at the end of the play concerning the circumstances of the death of the young lovers (V.iii). Important passages of commentary such as the two choruses Bridges-Adams kept entire as well as key scenes such as the initial encounter between the young couple (I.v), their balcony scene (II.ii), Juliet's impatience for news of her beloved and her ardent anticipation of her wedding night (III.ii), the farewell between the lovers (III.v), and Juliet's potion scene (IV.v).

In the other scenes it was Bridges-Adams' general practice to make excisions within speeches. His policy for such cuts he presented in an early interview in which he revealed that he shared Poel's concern for cutting carefully within speeches. His own method was as follows:

> In studying the book . . . one frequently finds in the middle of a long speech a passage admirably adapted for cutting. Half-way through a line you come upon a full-stop, then the

> speaker branches off along quite a different avenue of thought, and continues until another full-stop is reached in the middle of another line. If you take out the whole of the self-contained passage and link the two broken lines together, you don't interfere with the rhythm or the spirit of the text and people are filled with admiration for your industry in giving them the "full text Shakespeare." (Birmingham Mail, March 3, 1921)[88]

This method Bridges-Adams used in cutting passages in Romeo and Juliet. In the first act he deleted 131 lines. In scene i his largest excision was to Montague's rhetorical description of Aurora's bed. In the second scene he condensed by ten lines the Nurse's reminiscences of Juliet's childhood, "For I had then laid wormwood to my dug" (I.iii.25-34), and by eight lines Lady Capulet's extravagant description of Paris' face and her exhortation to Juliet to "examine every married lineament,/ And see how one another lends content" (I.iii.83-91). In the last scene of Act I Bridges-Adams shortened Capulet's description of Romeo of whom Verona "brags . . . to be a virtuous well-governed youth" (I.v.70-75). The director also cut entirely the sixteen-line preliminary business of the servingmen coming forth with napkins (I.v.1-16).

Bridges-Adams cut only sixty-seven lines from Act II. Besides pruning the bawdiness of Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio (II.iv.72-105), he condensed by nine lines the Friar's elaborate description of "the earth that's nature's mother is her tomb" (II.iii.9-23). He kept entire II.vi, the short scene in which the Friar announces to Romeo and Juliet "you shall not stay alone/ Till Holy Church incorporate two in one."

In Act III, in which Tybalt is killed and Romeo is banished, Bridges-Adams clearly aimed to speed up the dramatic momentum and he therefore curtailed the lamentations of Tybalt's kinsmen as well as Benvolio's lengthy narrative to the Prince of the circumstances of the fray. Unlike producers before him Bridges-Adams kept in its integrity Juliet's vital "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds." On the other hand, like most producers before him, Bridges-Adams cut Juliet's subsequent tormented word play on "Aye," "I" and "eye" (III.ii.44-51), a cut which in his view would have fallen under the category of the "cut obscure." It was Granville-Barker's contention, however, that to shirk Juliet's delirium of puns was to lower the scene's temperature and "flatten it out when Shakespeare had planned to lift it, by these very means, to a sudden height of intoxicated excitement."[89] Bridges-Adams as well condensed by fourteen lines Juliet's prolonged anguish, in III.ii, on learning of her husband's banishment. The director had a short interval of ten minutes after this important scene.

In the subsequent scene, in which Romeo reacts to his banishment, the producer pruned eight lines from the prolonged anguish of the young lover and shortened by sixteen lines the Friar's angry exhortations, "Why railest thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth?" (III.iii.119-134). After the poignant farewell between the lovers at dawn, in III.v, comes the scene in which Lady Capulet and Juliet grieve over the death of Tybalt. Bridges-Adams cut extensively the word-play in this passage and Juliet's extravagant appeal "O, how my heart abhors to hear him named" (III.v.100-104). Similarly he curtailed Capulet's rhetorical description of Juliet's tears (III.v.130-139).

Shakespeare in Act IV ironically juxtaposes Juliet, who after drinking the potion falls "upon her bed, within the curtains," with the bustling preparations made by the household for her wedding. This contrast Bridges-Adams chose to omit, and in his production the action progressed from Juliet falling upon her bed to the Nurse discovering her as she "draws back the curtains" (IV.v). In the subsequent scene Shakespeare presents the lamentations of the family, Paris, Nurse and Friar as they react to the discovery of the supposedly dead Juliet. Granville-Barker pointed out with this scene how the cutting of a speech or two is "like the removal of a few bricks from a wall; it may be a harmless operation and it may not." Acknowledging that the antiphonal mourning over Juliet was doubtless crude, he maintained that a producer would be tempted to get rid of it, or at least to modify it. If he did so, however, what became of the calming effect of Friar Lawrence's long speeches? There would be nothing for him to calm. Cut this passage, too, and Capulet would have to turn without rhyme or reason from distracted grief to dignified resignation, while the others, the Friar included, stood like foolish lay figures.[90] Frank Benson's solution to this problem had been to end the act on Juliet's potion scene and to excise the 138 lines of scenes iv and v. Unlike most producers before him Bridges-Adams recognized the importance of the lengthy lamentations and kept them in their entirety; he then condensed by thirteen lines the elaborate word-play in the Friar's speech, "Peace, ho, for shame! Confusion's cure lives not in these confusions" (IV.v.65-68, 70-78). The producer ended the act on a conventional note, however, with the Friar's exhortation for the family and Paris "to follow this fair corse unto her grave." Effecting a grand tableau in which, as the stage directions point out, "all exit followed by the Nurse leaving the Friar standing by the body of Juliet," Bridges-Adams cut entirely the subsequent scene between Peter and the musicians. William Poel had presented this scene, with only a few lines cut, in his 1905 production at the Royalty. Gordon Crosse had praised Barry Jackson's company at the Regent Theatre in

London in 1924 for also presenting the scene, one which, noted the critic, he had never heard before on the stage. How effectively the dialogue relieved the tension, Crosse pointed out, just when relief was needed.[91]

Frank Benson in his presentations of Romeo and Juliet at Stratford-upon-Avon used to bring down the final curtain on the death of Juliet. In a review of a production of Romeo and Juliet at the Strand in 1926, the Observer pointed out that extraordinary cuts to the last act could still be found on the contemporary stage. In the Strand production, too, the play ended with the death of Juliet, and the reconciliation of the Capulets and Montagues was cut entirely away (Dec. 19, 1926). Both Poel and Granville-Barker, however, had pointed out that to finish the play on the poignant note of Juliet's death was to falsify Shakespeare's whole intention and that to restore the play to its own sort of stage would serve to curb such follies, at least."[92]

Although Bridges-Adams did not end his production on Juliet's death, like almost all producers before him, including William Poel, he cut extensively from the last act of the play, omitting 168 lines, most of which were excised from the final scene. The speeches of the watchmen were cut entirely as were Lord and Lady Capulet's lamentations on "look how our daughter bleeds." In his production the play progressed directly from the Prince's command, "Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes" (V.iii.198) to his demand, "Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague,/ See what a scourge is laid upon your hate" (V.iii.291-92). Cut entirely in this ninety-four-line excision were the lamentations of the Capulets and Montagues as well as the Friar's lengthy narrative of the circumstances surrounding the death of the young lovers. Like Poel

Bridges-Adams stressed the reconciliation of the two households. In his production the Prince, having declared, "All are punished," and including his own name among those guilty, then took, according to the stage directions, "Montague's hand across the tomb" as Capulet exclaimed, "O brother Montague, give me thy hand." As the fathers of the two opposing families shook hands "over the bodies of their dead children," the Prince spoke the final passage, "A gloomy peace this morning with it brings . . . For never was a story of more woe/ Than this of Juliet and her Romeo."

VI

The *Times* found that Bridges-Adams had so adroitly turned to account the freedom of movement given him by the multiple setting that the story of Romeo and Juliet was able to reveal itself with vividness and completeness. The newspaper urged Shakespeareans who ardently desired a decent pretext for visiting the Shakespeare Festival a second time to seize upon this new production of *Romeo and Juliet* as a compelling reason. "In many ways it is the biggest thing that has been done at Stratford this year," reported the *Times*, pointing out that the production achieved "freshness and originality of treatment" without either arranging Shakespeare as spectacle or interpreting him in psychological terms that could be sustained at the expense of the poetry. Mr. Wilkinson had done his work unobtrusively and well, and Mr. Bridges-Adams had seized the opportunity thus afforded him. The *Times* judged Bridges-Adams' production "swift, balanced and perceptive," enabled by its swiftness to make vivid the contrast between scene and scene which is

Shakespeare's most obvious technical device in this tragedy; by its balance to keep clearly in the audience's minds the vital connection between the death of the star-crossed lovers and the burial of their parents' strife; and by its perceptiveness to send the viewers away from the theatre "with the tragedy shaped and quivering in our minds, yet more than ever persuaded that we are all in love with love" (Times, June 21, 1933). A year later, when the production was revived at the 1934 Shakespeare Festival, the newspaper stated that Romeo and Juliet seemed to possess much of its original beauty and that it was a production "altogether free from eccentricity and dependent on no startling ingenuities of stage-craft" (April 23, 1934). Although the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald had held the opinion that during the first hour of the production the sixteenth and twentieth centuries were waging a battle royal over the matter of style, and that certain of Mr. William Poel's theories were about to be put into practice with a vengeance, and that these, and these only, mattered (June 23, 1933), a more general consensus appeared in the tribute by the Yorkshire Post that Mr. William Bridges-Adams had produced Romeo and Juliet with "meticulous care" and that "a completely satisfying show" was the result (May 28, 1934).

Early in Bridges-Adams' career at Stratford-upon-Avon, William Archer had given his impression of the director's achievements in Shakespearean production:

> There was no impertinent intrusion of the producer between the poet and his audience, no tedious over-elaboration, no pretentious "intellectuality." Shakespeare was suffered to speak for himself and to speak rapidly, smoothly and melodiously. The effect sought for and generally attained was that which lay in the words themselves. . . . Mr. Adams rightly conceives that the function of the producer is to interpret his

> author, not to collaborate with him. He is inspired by an artistic chivalry which forbids him to take advantage of the Bard's defencelessness. (The Nation, Aug. 9, 1919)

Although Bridges-Adams was an artist with a very striking and individual sense of the theatrical design in all branches of theatrical art, behind all his work lay the strong tradition of a drama that was finding its way back to its origins. On Bridges-Adams, as on Granville-Barker, William Poel had been a profound influence. Bridges-Adams' 1933 production of Romeo and Juliet marked his closest approach to Poel's ideals. Looking back many years later, long after he had left Stratford-upon-Avon, he remarked, "I must have apprehended from Poel a notion of the Elizabethan mind and its outlook and values which more and more influenced the spirit in which I approached the plays."[93] Breaking away from the outworn, representational style of production which had been reduced to its absurdum by Tree's live rabbits in A Midsummer Night's Dream, this director had returned to something which, in its essentials, was very similar to the Elizabethan system of an open stage allowing speed of playing and continuity of action. Yet Bridges-Adams always remained an admirer of the beautiful pictorial effects created by Henry Irving in the spectacular theatre at its height; and the director gave his audience at Stratford-upon-Avon, when he felt it was warranted, such scenic features as a landscape or a garden, always maintaining, however, "a setting for actors," not, as in Tree's productions, "a landscape with figures." Many of these scenes, simple and easily moved and lightly built, "were deservedly welcomed at Stratford as very beautiful to eye and mind" (Observer, April 25 , 1920).

The time saved by Bridges-Adams' method of dividing the plays into scenes that followed one another in rapid continuity enabled him to give so much more of Shakespeare's texts than had been customary at Stratford-upon-Avon under Frank Benson. As the reviewer pointed out, "some of us who have not recently looked the plays up in the book may have been surprised at hearing what we heard and seeing what we saw." So it was with the acting. In place of the old emotional thrills which the audience used to enjoy at seeing a great player in a great part, it now got the emotional thrill of seeing a great play: "They play for the play. They play it as a whole--swiftly, cleanly, faithfully. They are youth and energy all through, and no one is allowed to hang up the action by private 'stunts.'" Certainly, as the critic acknowledged, there was nothing new in these features. Other modern managers and companies had tried it, but, as the Observer noted, "Mr. Bridges Adams and his company are trying it hard, trying it on a biggish repertory, trying it in circumstances that draw the eyes of all the world upon them; and they are succeeding to admiration" (Observer, April 25, 1920).

These had been tributes accorded Bridges-Adams early in his years at Stratford-upon-Avon. By 1933 the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and the Shakespeare Festivals were on sound financial footing. Financial contributions towards the building of the new Memorial Theatre had poured in from all over the world. The year 1933 marked Bridges-Adams' most successful season, both artistically and financially, and he had been able to persuade the reluctant governors to allocate him more rehearsal time, staggered openings and increased funding. The inclusion of guest directors such as Tyrone Guthrie and Theodore Komisarjevski and designers such as Norman Wilkinson had provided the benefit of fresh talent as well as the reduction of the impossible workload upon himself. His 1933 season, especially his production of Romeo and Juliet, demonstrated in the main his gifts as a director--his sensitivity, his ability to orchestrate a play, and his capacity, so often denied, to coax a performance from an actor. The season also demonstrated his other gift--his ability as an impresario of a theatre. In his choice of designers such as Norman Wilkinson he showed his discernment; in his encouragement of such artists, his generosity. To achieve what he had achieved in 1933 had required constant fighting and manoeuvring in the face of Archie Flower's strong opposition.

When it came to planning the 1934 season, Bridges-Adams was greatly dismayed to discover that almost all that had been accomplished the previous year was thrown away. The production budget was cut back sharply and a new sub-committee of governors formed to supervise spending. Out of a repertoire of eight productions, five were revivals in order to save money that did not need to be saved. There was to be only one guest director; moreover, there was to be no increase in rehearsal time and no increase in salaries. As Sally Beauman explains, far from utilizing the money now available to improve production standards, Archie Flower used affluence as an argument for retrenchment: if low budget, hastily rehearsed productions could still attract an audience, then why was it necessary to spend money?[94]

Bridges-Adams in 1934 felt it was time for him to go. He maintained that six or seven consecutive openings were as oppressive to everyone working behind the curtain as they were inimical to what they achieved there. He wanted a revision in the size of the repertoire and the timing of rehearsals and openings; he wanted a closer link with other bodies engaged in similar enterprises, giving him larger resources in personnel, even at the cost of some independence; he wanted an international status for the theatre and more guest directors of international repute. When he saw no evidence that these policies would be endorsed, he resigned.[95]

Influenced by critics such as W. A. Darlington of the Daily Telegraph, Archie Flower for years had been heaping much wrong-headed criticism upon his director. The acting at Stratford-upon-Avon, he had convinced the Governors, was not good enough. The reason, he suggested, was not the overambitious repertoire or the lack of rehearsal time; it was that Bridges-Adams was more concerned with sets and lighting than with directing actors.[96] Announcing Bridges-Adams' resignation, Archie Flower passed judgment on his director: "While we admire the flair which Bridges-Adams has for a beautiful picture, I have personally expressed the opinion that more attention should be given to the actor, the speech and the acting" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, April 27, 1934).

This harsh judgment against the director, however, was disputed by his actors who later paid Bridges-Adams great tribute. Rachel Kempson, a novice actress faced with the formidable task of playing Juliet in 1933 with only two months' experience on the professional stage, stated that she had found him "infinitely painstaking and patient."[97] Other actors emphasized that Bridges-Adams was concerned with the texts of Shakespeare's plays and with delivering their meaning as fully as possible on the stage. The actress Fabia Drake, who excelled as Shakespeare's comic heroine in Bridges-Adams' productions, wrote that "his actors sensed that he knew this author backwards. There was very little that he found either obscure or unreachable. We relied upon him to keep us true to Shakespeare and no company could ask for more."[98]

Upon Bridges-Adams' resignation George Bernard Shaw, who together with William Archer had sought his appointment in 1919 and who had always supported him, wrote the director: "It is important that you should retire with all the honours. Your name should be connected with Stratford as the George Washington of the revolution against Bensonianism."[99] William Poel, too, had been supportive of his efforts and sympathetic to his troubles. Now elderly, Poel had written Bridges-Adams two years earlier when the new Memorial Theatre had opened: "May every success attend your heavy labours at Stratford-on-Avon. Your New Theatre promises well."[100]

Bridges-Adams' career had been inextricably bound up with the Memorial Theatre and necessarily limited by the financial and artistic restrictions imposed by the Festivals. He had done little work outside Stratford-upon-Avon during his directorship and on retirement he quietly withdrew almost totally from the practical theatre, dedicating the rest of his life to writing books on the British theatre. Sally Beauman's contention is that for twelve years after his departure the Memorial Theatre languished and declined. "There can be no question but that his resignation was a terrible mistake which should not . . . have happened."[101]

"Of all those applying themselves to the production of Shakespeare in England between the two wars Bridges-Adams probably had the best mind," states Robert Speaight, lamenting that this director was not always given the best means to carry out his ideas.[102] J. C. Trewin in his study of Shakespeare on the twentieth-century English stage concurs: Bridges-Adams, he states, produced the most "balanced" Shakespeare of the era and the critic maintains that the director's results would have been even finer if he had not been forced, as a rule, to coax half-a-dozen productions into six nights. Yet for all this flurry of work as the players raced from play to play, Trewin found that the results would often be more animated and persuasive than in the widely-spaced, doggedly rehearsed repertory more than thirty years later. "No period in Stratford record--one, moreover, direly fraught with worry--has been so underpraised," declares Trewin, maintaining that Bridges-Adams' productions had an importance and a vitality that through the years have been too meagrely acknowledged.[103] The director, he says, was never the showman that Henry Irving or Herbert Beerbohm Tree had been but was a profoundly sympathetic Shakespearean whose imagination and grace refreshed everything he undertook. "His own productions--in spite of the lack of rehearsal time and the opening huddle of work--remain some of the best in Stratford history," Trewin wrote three decades later, citing especially Romeo and Juliet and Coriolanus in 1933 and The Tempest and Love's Labours Lost in 1934.[104]

In 1919, when the methods of Herbert Beerbohm Tree were still the norm in Shakespearean production, Bridges-Adams' production methods appeared fresh and exciting. Fifteen years later his presentations were still admired for swiftness of performance, simple scenery, lighting of intense beauty, and ensemble acting. Bridges-Adams' emphasis was on the plays as plays, his commitment was to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, his ambition "to build up something stronger than myself."[105] In so doing Bridges-Adams failed to gain a wide personal following, and in this respect he suffers in any comparison with his predecessor Sir Frank Benson, who always remained at the centre of the Stratford revels each spring. In his own assessment of his career at Stratford-upon-Avon Bridges-Adams considered his greatest achievement to be the development of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre as an institution of international standing.

Susan Brock rightly points out in her audio-visual commentary on the history of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre that Bridges-Adams was never among the first rank of theatrical innovators with Granville-Barker, Terence Grey or Tyrone Guthrie.[106] Indeed, it was by necessity rather than by choice that he fulfilled Edward Gordon Craig's conception of the ideal man of the theatre: an autonomous artist-director who designed settings and costumes, controlled lighting and trained the actors. He was an "imaginative traditionalist" who trod the narrow path between the innovative and the conservative. His special talent lay in his ability to build on the work of others and, in his own words, "to unite aberrations, nihilisms and sheer lunacies in a new classicism."[107]

Bridges-Adams is a fine example of a modern producer who, seeing the value of William Poel's ideas and yet recognizing that a modern audience could not turn itself into Elizabethans, was able to adapt the best of Poel's ideas as well as those of the Irving tradition [illegible] service of the twentieth-century commercial stage. Bridges-Adams [illegible]r achievement was to synthesize the innovations of Poel and Granville-Barker and adapt them to the needs of large-scale commercial production.[108] Modern producers of Shakespeare, on the whole, have been reluctant to give up the technical advantages of the modern theatre in order to gain the speed and continuity of Elizabethan playing; but the impetus, the principles, and the methods which have determined the nature of modern production bear a direct link with William Poel's insistence upon the relationship between the play and its own stage. After nearly three centuries of cutting and rearranging, the theatre has begun to come to terms with Shakespeare's texts in their integrity, and the idea that the author knew his business is now a serious factor in every good producer's calculations. The work of William Poel and Granville-Barker has given a characteristic bias to twentieth-century reforms in Romeo and Juliet presentation, so that ultimately producers like Bridges-Adams have concentrated on matter rather than on manner, and have sought first, by recreating the essentials in the original conditions of performance, to understand Shakespeare's dramatic technique in order fully to comprehend what it was the play has to say, thereby laying a solid foundation for future exploration of Romeo and Juliet's dramatic potential. Bridges-Adams' revivals from 1919 to 1934 initiated movement at Stratford-upon-Avon towards reinterpretation of Shakespeare: restoration of fuller texts, introduction of flexible and unobtrusive settings, continuity of action, and effort to secure fine individual performances and balanced ensemble, principles that have become axioms of the best modern Shakespearean productions.

NOTES

[1] Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare, First Series (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1927); rpt. in four volumes (Princeton: PUP, 1947).

[2] Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare, Second Series (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1930); rpt. Princeton: PUP, 1947, II, 300-349.

[3] A few examples aptly point out the similarities between these two stage-centred critical works.

Both Poel and Granville-Barker remind readers that Shakespeare begins not with the star-crossed lovers but with a clash of the two houses. Reiterating Poel, Granville-Barker explains that "the play's true end is less in the death of the star-crossed lovers than in the burying of their parents' strife" (p. 323). Also echoing Poel, Granville-Barker criticizes producers who heavily cut the final scene of the play: "To omit the final scurry of the Montagues and Capulets and citizens of Verona to the tomb and the Friar's redundant story for the sake of finishing upon the more poignant note of Juliet's death is . . . to falsify Shakespeare's whole intention; and to omit the sequel to the drinking of the potion is as bad or worse! Restoring the play to its own sort of stage will serve to curb these follies, at least" (p. 320).

Like Poel, Granville-Barker examines the differences of Shakespeare's story from Brooke's tale and shows that Shakespeare doubles its dramatic value by turning its months to days. "All the action is shot through with haste and violence," he says (p. 312). "Over a succession of scenes there is no relaxing of tension, vehemence or speed; for every flagging moment in them there is some fresh spur, they reinforce each other, too" (p. 313). Like Poel, Granville-Barker condemns producers who bring down a curtain upon "a display of virtuosity in a 'potion scene,' long drawn out, worried to bits, and leave us to recover till they are ready with Romeo in Mantua and the apothecary" (p. 319).

Both critics point out Shakespeare's emphasis on youth. "This is a tragedy of youth," says Granville-Barker (p. 330). Juliet's tragedy, he declares, "is a child's tragedy; half its poignancy would be gone otherwise" (pp. 343-44). "A Juliet must have both the look and the spirit of a girl of from fourteen to sixteen, and any further sophistication, or worse, a mature assumption of innocence--will be the poet's ruin" (p. 344). Moreover, both critics condemn the false and conventional portrayal of minor characters. "Customary mutilations" leave Capulet, for example, "a mere domestic tyrant, which he is not," declares Granville-Barker (p. 333).

Poel and Granville-Barker emphasize that Shakespeare makes much use of contrast: "One cannot too strongly insist upon the effect Shakespeare gains by this vivid contrast between scene and scene, swiftly succeeding each other. It is his chief technical resource" (p. 308). Like Poel, Granville-Barker contends that no curtain should fall upon the marriage of the lovers. "An act pause after the marriage falls with a certain effect, but it nullifies the far better effect by which Tybalt is shown striking the streets in search of Romeo at the very moment when the Friar is marrying him to Juliet" (p. 326). Poel stresses that the second outbreak of hostilities is important and that there should be no curtain on Romeo's "O I am fortune's fool." Granville-Barker, likewise, emphasizes the need for the audience to be "sped on with little relaxation." Juliet's ecstasy of expectation, "Gallop apace," makes "the best of contrasts, in matter and manner, to the sternness of Romeo's banishing" (p. 311). Everything seems to point to Shakespeare having planned Romeo and Juliet as a thing indivisible, agree the two critics. "It can be so acted without much outrunning the two hours' traffic," a time that to Granville-Barker, as to Poel, means nearer two hours than either one or three.

[4] Granville-Barker's methods of staging were revolutionary in England, even if they were influenced by what had already become commonplaces of the German theatre. In Germany a similar impulse to Poel's found expression in the professional theatre. Under the influence of the ideas of Appia, Craig and Fuchs, realism in staging of Shakespeare and the poetic drama was rapidly abandoned, to be replaced on the new "Raumbühne" by simplified settings, permanent or semi-permanent, free of all superfluous detail and of wings and perspective scene painting, equipped in most cases with a cyclorama for open-air scenes, and in some cases--as in the Munich Künstlertheater--with an arrangement of fore-, middle- and rear-stages that was almost Elizabethan. Stage Year Book for 1910 and 1911 juxtaposes in photographs current German productions, in which all superfluous detail is eliminated, with two lavishly spectacular scenes from Twelfth Night as presented by Tree in Berlin.

In Barker's methods of staging, a false proscenium, fixed in the actual arch, reduced the depth and width of the stage proper, which was then raised by the height of a couple of steps and thus provided an acting area which could be used for set or furnished scenes. The front of the stage and the portion actually spanned by the arch made a wider but shallow middle acting area, at a lower level; and this was enlarged, again at a slightly lower level, by having an apron built over the orchestra pit. Proscenium doors gave entry to the middle- and down-stage areas and set speeches were delivered from the very edge of the stage directly to the audience. The footlights were abolished and the forward areas lighted from the front of the dress-circle by search-lamps converging on the stage.

[5] Harley Granville-Barker, Introduction to acting edition of A Midsummer Night's Dream (1914), as repeated in Robert Speaight, Shakespeare on the Stage (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973), p. 141.

Lillah McCarthy relates that in the Savoy productions "the delivery of the verse was given in accordance with Poel's methods" (Lillah McCarthy, Lecture to the Royal Institute, Jan. 27, 1934, Enthoven Collection, Theatre Museum, London).

Theodore Stier, musical director for the Court Theatre, notes that Granville-Barker aimed at musical harmony. Stier describes

Granville-Barker conducting rehearsals as he would an orchestra: "I want a tremendous crescendo here," he would cry. "A sudden stop. A firmata. Now--down to pianissimo." And to an actress overplaying her role: "'But my dear child,' he would lament, 'you deliver your lines as if you were the trombone, whereas you really are the oboe in this ensemble.'" (Theodore Stier, With Pavlova Round the World, London, Hurst and Blackett, 1927, p. 259)

Throughout his Prefaces Granville-Barker discussed the appropriate voices and pace. He thought of the plays as musically controlled; "orchestrated" was his word. He wrote of A Midsummer Night's Dream as if it were "a musical symphony":

> To hold an audience to the end entranced with the play's beauty one depends much upon the right changing of tune and tune, and the shifting of key from scene to scene and from speech to speech. . . . All the time it must be delightful to listen to, musical, with each change in a definite and purposeful relation to what went before, to what will come after. (The Exemplary Theatre, London, Chatto and Windus, 1922, p. 225)

Intimacy permitted speech that was swift, melodic and natural, and this kind of speaking was in turn the key to the rhythmic structure of Shakespeare's verse drama, the contrast of mood with mood, character with character, and scene with scene, in a continuous flow.

[6] Harley Granville-Barker, The Exemplary Theatre, p. 208

[7] Harley Granville-Barker, "Introduction to The Players' Shakespeare" (1923), in More Prefaces to Shakespeare, ed. Edward M. Moore (Princeton: PUP, 1974), p. 47.

[8] Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare, First Series, p. xi.

[9] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing, p. 69.

[10] Quoted in Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 264.

[11] William Bridges-Adams, A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, ed. with a memoir by Robert Speaight (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1971).

[12] Sally Beauman, The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades (Oxford: OUP, 1982).

[13] Susan Brock and Marian Pringle, Theatre in Focus: The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1919-1945 (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey Ltd., In Association with the Consortium for Drama and Media in Higher Education, 1984).

[14] Robert Speaight, introd., Bridges-Adams: A Letter Book, p. 7.

[15] Gareth and Barbara Lloyd Evans, Everyman's Companion to Shakespeare (London: Dent, 1978), p. 166.

[16] J. C. Trewin, Shakespeare on the English Stage 1900-1964 (London: Barrie and Rockcliff, 1964), p. 166.

[17] Summarized by Sidney Lee in Shakespeare and the Modern Stage (1906), p. 112.

[18] Poel, as quoted in Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 216.
When Benson was knighted in 1916, William Poel thought the honour thoroughly deserved. Benson, he said, comparing him with Irving, "had a far larger and healthier grasp of his responsibility as a manager towards his author." The actors who worked with him, said Poel, were encouraged and expected to do their utmost to give individuality and prominence to their parts. "Nor would Benson tolerate the long run of a play which turned both actors and authors into mere machines."

[19] In Henry V Benson cut the Chorus completely for many years. The forty-two scenes of Antony and Cleopatra were reduced to fourteen, playing havoc with the plot, let alone the artistic sense of the play. His working stagebook completed in 1897 for his production of A Midsummer Night's Dream at Stratford-upon-Avon shows that Benson employed not just troops of children but also "twelve red soldiers, four slaves, two old men, two priests, two crowd, and six Amazons." Every location--Theseus' palace, the wood near Athens, Quince's house, Titania's bower--had a different set. The last scene of the play took place in an elaborate Graeco-Roman temple. During the four intervals of the three-hour production, the orchestra played Mendelssohn's music to the play. (From Sally Beauman, The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades, p. 35.)

[20] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing 1890 to 1952, p. 30.

[21] Note appended to a letter to J. C. Trewin, Jan. 23, 1932, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 32.

[22] Sally Beauman, The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades, pp. 80-92.

[23] T. C. Kemp and J. C. Trewin, The Stratford Festivals (Birmingham: Cornish, 1953, p. 170).

[24] T. C. Kemp and J. C. Trewin, The Stratford Festivals, p. 170.

[25] Gordon Crosse, "Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen," ms., Vol. 12, p. 81, Birmingham Reference Library.

[26] Bridges-Adams' designs are reproduced in M. C. Day and J. C. Trewin, The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, opposite p. 212.

[27] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Oct. 11, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, Special Collections, 1.3.17.

[28] Bridges-Adams, *The British Theatre* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1944), p. 34.

[29] Bridges-Adams, quoted in Robert Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival*, p. 199.

[30] Bridges-Adams, *Looking at a Play* (London: Phoenix House, 1947), p. 25.

[31] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Jan. 31, 1948, in *A Bridges-Adams Letter Book*, p. 35.

[32] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Jan. 27, 1948; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.14.

[33] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Sept. 26, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.16.

Bridges-Adams acknowledged, nonetheless, that Poel was "now and again, more than a trifle mad." Writing to Robert Speaight while Speaight was penning his biography of Poel in 1952, Bridges-Adams admonished the biographer, "I hope you have made it part of your pious duty to remind such of the faithful as survive how very mad, in fact, Poel could be." Why, for instance, he queried in exasperation, on an Elizabethan stage reverse the Elizabethan usage by putting women into the parts of men? Why engage a plump matron for Valentine and proceed to upbraid her for her lack of virility, he said, referring to an incident which he had observed.

[34] Bridges-Adams, *The Irresistible Theatre* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1957), I, 206.

[35] Bridges-Adams, "Theatre," in *Edwardian England 1901-1914*, ed. Simon Nowell-Smith (London: Oxford UP, 1964), p. 403.

[36] Bridges-Adams, *The Irresistible Theatre*, I, 206.

[37] Bridges-Adams, *The Irresistible Theatre*, I, 209.

[38] Bridges-Adams, *The Irresistible Theatre*, p. 220.

[39] Bridges-Adams, *The Irresistible Theatre*, p. 222.

[40] Bridges-Adams, "The Lost Leader," Broadcast Talk in 1953 on Harley Granville-Barker; in *A Bridges-Adams Letter Book*, pp. 89-93.

[41] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Sept. 26, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.16.

[42] Bridges Adams, "The Lost Leader," *A Bridges-Adams Letter Book*,

p. 91.

[43] Bridges Adams, "The Lost Leader," A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 91.

[44] Cary Mazer, Shakespeare Refashioned: Elizabethan Plays on Edwardian Stages (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1981), p. 63.

[45] But as Bridges-Adams pointed out many years later, "long after we had discarded the notion that there were traverses, or sliding curtains, between the columns supporting the canopy, [the] alcove stage remained an indispensible part of our conjecture," and he noted that Poel as well as Granville-Barker assumed its existence (The Irresistible Theatre, I, 209).

The tradition of considering an inner stage arose directly out of a prevailing theatrical mode of painted scenery. Despite the fact that there was no evidence in the Swan drawing to indicate the use of curtains between columns, nothing was able to detach the imagination of editors from the idea that some sort of visual changeability must have helped Shakespeare's audience to remove their minds from one part of a forest to another. This idea arose in the first place because no other kind of theatrical experience had been for a long while available.

[46] William Poel, letter to Bridges-Adams, Sept. 24, 1919; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.9.

[47] Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 235.

[48] William Poel, letter to Bridges-Adams, Oct. 6, 1920; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.12.

Poel, of course, had suggestions for improvement. He spoke, for example, of Bridges-Adams' use of music between scenes. "In Germany," he pointed out, "where they produce Shakespeare on exactly the same lines as you do, they have no music between the scenes. I think myself that you have not taken into account the dramatic value of dead silence simply as a contrast to sound. As an illustration the pause that took place at the end of the first and opening chorus, before the curtains opened over the first scene was most effective . . . you could by way of contrast omit the music occasionally."

[49] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Sept. 26, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.16.

[50] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Jan. 1956, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 68.

[51] Memoir by Robert Speaight, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 14.

[52] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Sept. 26, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.16.

[53] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Oct. 11, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.17.

[54] Bridges-Adams, "Granville-Barker and the Savoy," Drama, New Series (52, 1959), 30.

[55] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, March 25, 1949, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, pp. 39-40.

[56] William Poel, letter to Bridges-Adams, Oct. 6, 1920; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.12.

[57] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Jan. 3, 1962, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 15.

[58] Gordon Crosse, "Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen," Ms. vol. 12, p. 81, Birmingham Reference Library.

[59] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Feb. 28, 1953, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 51.

[60] M. C. Day and J. C. Trewin, The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, point out that Benson, by contrast, in his productions of Romeo and Juliet used to prefer Romeo to break into the tomb from the front of the stage: there was always some vigorous exercise with mattock and wrenching iron (p. 210).

[61] Quoted in "The Art of the Theatre: The Designs of W. Bridges-Adams," [no Journal given, probably 1919], in an album of newspaper clippings; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library.

[62] Bridges-Adams, quoted in memoir by Robert Speaight, A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 17.

[63] Sally Beauman, The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades, p. 89.

[64] Bridges-Adams, letter to Hannen Swaffer, Oct. 16, 1920; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.14.

[65] J. C. Trewin, Shakespeare on the English Stage 1900-1964, p. 167.

[66] In memoir by Speaight, A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 21.

[67] At Stratford-upon-Avon the critics' ideal of Romeo had probably never been fully realized. In an 1888 production Frank Benson had been praised for being a Romeo who looked ideal for the part, a youth straight from the hot Italian noonday, but some critics thought his Romeo too matter-of-fact, too athletic. In his later years Benson played Mercutio and found the role much more to his liking. Basil Rathbone, an experienced Bensonian actor, played Romeo to Joyce Carey's Ju[illegible] 1919, but he also was found to fall short of the heights for be[illegible] stagey and forced than Juliet" (Birmingham Mail, Aug. 14, 1919). Stratford-upon-Avon Herald held the view that, superficially, George Hayes in 1929 was excellent as Romeo but never once did he become the

ideal mate for Joyce Bland's Juliet. The expression of emotion was commonly considered bad form on the contemporary stage, explained the critic, but it was the critic's own view that it was "virtually necessary to feel the emotions to be portrayed if the audience is to be made as responsive as the author intends" (Aug. 16, 1929). The actor was criticized for faulty pronunciation and for tricks of intonation (Stage, July 11, 1929). It was the critics' conclusion that Hayes could be energetic and manly but he could not encompass that sense of rapture which characterizes the perfect lover of romance (Birmingham Post, July 8, 1929). He was much more successful as Mercutio in Bridges-Adams' Romeo and Juliet production in 1933.

[68] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Jan. 11, 1956, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 72.

[69] Bridges-Adams, letter to J. C. Trewin, Jan. 22, 1932, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 15.

[70] Harley Granville-Barker, letter to Bridges-Adams, Aug. 20, 1919; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary library, 5.2.7.

[71] William Poel had made a remark similar to that of Granville-Barker. In a letter written to Bridges-Adams after seeing one of the director's early productions, Poel commented that Murray Carrington, an old Bensonian, was an excellent actor but that he could get "nothing like enough variation" into his long speeches. A great actor, charged Poel, with a finely trained voice of compass, should be able to get as much change of time, tone and emotion into his speeches as a pianist could produce on his piano. "Carrington's modern dressing room conversation tones go all through the play without variation," complained Poel (Poel, letter to Bridges-Adams, Oct. 6, 1920; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.12).

[72] Bridges-Adams, Looking at a Play (London: Phoenix House, 1947), p. 27.

[73] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Jan. 11, 1956, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, pp. 68-69.

[74] Bridges-Adams, letter to William Poel, no date, Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.3.4.

[75] This attitude appeared even before he began working at Stratford-upon-Avon. Certainly Shaw had felt a need to reprimand him on this score:

> It is really almost impossible to do Shakespear at full length without being forced into the right way of playing him. You can imagine my feelings when you calmly remarked that you thought the last part of Twelfth Night might very well be cut. Why not the first part, and the middle as well, if Shakespear was a fool who did not know what was good for himself. . . . Let Shakespear alone if you dont [sic] believe in him. (letter to Bridges-

Adams, May 26, 1919; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.5)

[76] Bridges-Adams, letter to Mr. R. Crompton Rhodes, no date; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.21.

[77] Bridges-Adams, Looking at a Play, p. 27.

[78] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, June 19, 1955) in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 17.

[79] Bridges-Adams, The Irresistible Theatre, I, 206.

[80] Bridges-Adams, letter to R. Crompton Rhodes, no date; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.21.

[81] Robert Speaight, memoir, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 16.

[82] Sally Beauman, The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades, p. 90; Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Dec. 16, 1953, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 57.

[83] Robert Speaight, memoir, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 16.

[84] Harley Granville-Barker, "Preface to Romeo and Juliet," 1930 (rpt. Princeton: PUP: 1947), II, 327-330.

[85] Bridges-Adams, letter to R. Crompton Rhodes, no date; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.21.

[86] Bridges-Adams, The Irresistible Theatre, I, 85.

[87] The promptbook for Bridges-Adams' 1933 production of Romeo and Juliet is classified in the Shakespeare Memorial Library under 71.21/1933 RO. An undated promptbook for Frank Benson's presentations of Romeo and Juliet also exists in this library and is catalogued under 72929 Ben 4172 (f. 87).

[88] Bridges-Adams, letter to R. Crompton Rhodes, no date; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.21.

[89] Harley Granville-Barker, "Preface to Romeo and Juliet," 1930 (rpt. Princeton: PUP, 1947), II, 330.

[90] Harley Granville-Barker, "Preface to Romeo and Juliet," 1930 (rpt. Princeton: PUP, 1947), II, 329-330.

[91] Gordon Crosse, "Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen," Ms. vol. 8, p. 153, Birmingham Reference Library.

[92] Harley Granville-Barker, "Preface to Romeo and Juliet," 1930 (rpt. Princeton: PUP, 1947), II, 329.

[93] Bridges-Adams, letter, unpublished, 1952; The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham.

[94] Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, p. 133.

[95] In a letter of resignation Bridges-Adams said that the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, "like any other vital institution, needs from time to time the infusion of new blood. It is my hope that, by resigning myself, I may encourage the local administration to face this fact, and what the facing of it implies." His stated reason for resigning, as gently worded as it might be, did nonetheless imply strong criticism of Chairman and Governors: "it is my considered opinion that no further progress is likely without drastic reforms" (Bridges-Adams, letter, Sept. 8, 1934; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.22.5).

[96] In Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, p. 122.

[97] Rachel Kempson, Interview with Sally Beauman, 1979, in Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, p. 133.

[98] Fabia Drake, letter to Sally Beauman, 1979, in Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, p. 74.

[99] George Bernard Shaw, letter to Bridges-Adams, undated, but ca. Aug.-Sept. 1934; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.22.4.

[100] William Poel, letter to Bridges-Adams, July 22, 1932; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.17.15.

[101] Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, pp. 136-137.

Ben Iden Payne became Bridges-Adams' successor as director at the Memorial Theatre for eight years. Beauman contends that he was appointed in part because he was a much more pliable man than Bridges-Adams and in part because he placed great emphasis on verse-speaking (p. 138).

A director who regarded William Poel as mentor, Ben Iden Payne had been working in America, mainly in small theatres, and had been instituting many of Poel's ideas there. Bill Savery, general manager of the Memorial Theatre, wrote to Bridges-Adams when Iden Payne first took over the directorship:

> He thinks he can teach actors to speak Shakespeare. If he or anyone else had the available time it might be possible, but there is no time. For repertory the old Shakespearean actors have to be brought in, and I doubt if this way can be altered. (letter to Bridges-Adams, Sept. 28, 1934; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.22.12)

Payne spent long hours coaching actors he hired in verse-speaking and deportment. During Payne's directorship, however, the Governors once again curtailed rehearsal time to five weeks. In the end, Payne assembled a company two-thirds of which was composed of the same Bensonians whom Bridges-Adams had retained for so many years and most of these actors remained in his companies throughout the eight years that Payne worked at Stratford-upon-Avon. Payne soon realized that to meet the Festival schedules and get productions on the stage with so little rehearsal time, it was impossible to bring in many new actors. Like Bridges-Adams, Payne directed most plays himself; the result was that he became as exhausted and overworked as Bridges-Adams had been in the 1920's. In such circumstances the training of actors he had envisioned became an impossibility.

[102] Robert Speaight, Shakespeare on the Stage, p. 162.

[103] J. C. Trewin, Shakespeare on the English Stage, 1900-1964, p. 123.

[104] J. C. Trewin, Shakespeare on the English Stage, 1900-1964, p. 166.

[105] Bridges-Adams, letter to J. C. Trewin, Jan. 23, 1932, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 32.
One of the reasons for Bridges-Adams' resignation was what he considered to be the Memorial Theatre's failure to fulfill its obligations, incurred in the acceptance of financial support from all over the world from 1932 on, to stage more than adequate and conventional Shakespeare. As he explained on the occasion of the Memorial Theatre's Diamond Jubilee in 1939, "the World has decided that Stratford must be to Shakespeare what Bayreuth is to Wagner and Salzburg to Mozart; it was not for Stratford to say no" (Listener, April 13, 1939).

[106] Susan Brock and Marian Pringle, The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1919-1945, p. 55.

[107] Bridges-Adams, unsent letter to M. St. Clare Byrne, Nov. 9, 1947; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library.

[108] Poel's Elizabethan stage with its purely architectural background has seldom been adopted for general use by twentieth-century producers. In essence, parts of his ideas were adapted at times for different purposes. The adherence to Poel's ideas was greatest at Nugent Monck's Maddermarket Theatre in Norwich where from 1921 on an Elizabethan stage and set with no extra scenery were used. Here, even today, a typical presentation of Romeo and Juliet is given in two and a quarter hours, with a single interval of ten minutes and with only a few lines cut.
Ben Iden Payne in [illegible] at Stratford-upon-Avon produced three Shakespearean plays on a modified Elizabethan stage, following faithfully the principles of William Poel. Sally Beauman points out that over the next eight years Stratford audiences were to grow thoroughly tired of this unchanging stage (Sally Beauman, The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades, p. 144).

terms of box-office receipts. Kean wrote at the end of his decade at the Princess's:

> the vast sums expended . . . make it advisable that I should now retire from the self-imposed responsibility of management, involving such a perilous outlay; and the more especially, as a building so restricted in size as the Princess's, renders any adequate returns utterly hopeless.[66]

In a series of strictures at the end of the century, condemning the actor-managers for their lavish productions, Sidney Lee explained that spectacular embellishments were so costly that, according to the system in vogue, the performance of a play of Shakespeare involved heavy financial risks. In London, he noted, Shakespearean revivals were comparatively rare; they took place at uncertain intervals and only those plays viewed with favour by the London manager which lent themselves in his opinion to more or less ostentatious spectacle, and the interpolation of music and dancing, were played. Lee refuted the commonly held belief that by spectacular methods alone could Shakespeare be made to "pay" in the theatre. Kean's mantle, he pointed out, was subsequently assumed by Henry Irving who gave the spectacular and scenic system in the production of Shakespeare every advantage that it could derive from munificent expenditure and the cooperation of highly endowed artists. Yet Irving announced not long before his death that he had lost on his Shakespearean productions a hundred thousand pounds, and the actor-manager was then led to the following pronouncement:

> The enormous costs of a Shakespearean production on the liberal and elaborate scale which the public is now accustomed to expect makes it almost impossible for any manager--I don't care who it is--to a continuous policy of Shakespeare for many years with any hope of profit in the long run.[67]

In the face of this authoritative pronouncement, declared Lee, it was necessary to conclude that the spectacular system had been given, within recent memory, every chance of succeeding, and, as far as recorded testimony was available, had been, from the commercial point of view, a failure.[68]

Even the economic fortunes of Herbert Beerbohm Tree, who valiantly attempted upholstered Shakespeare in repertory and whose lavish productions catered to every possible desire of the masses, came to a similar fate. George Rowell has examined the financial books of Her Majesty's Theatre during the years of the Shakespeare Festivals and has come to the conclusion that the shape of Tree's later Festivals, with consecutive performances of the same play, did not draw as well as the earlier "six plays in six days" had done. Even the play Romeo and Juliet in 1913--new to his Majesty's but a revival in sets, costumes, music and leading lady of the 1911 New Theatre production--earned only twelve hundred pounds. Evidently there was a loyal audience which would pay to see Tree and his company in a round of Shakespeare plays, but the general public was not drawn by a week's run of a familiar production.[69] Rowell has discovered that in the early years the account books of Her Majesty's show that the Festivals were self-supporting and that they had great appeal at the box office. The most successful year was in 1910, the year in which a gala performance of Henry VIII was shown to the new King and Queen. By 1911, a loss was shown--much had probably been spent on the Gala performance--and in 1912 and 1913 there were also big losses. Tree never again played Shakespeare at His Majesty's.

It could be argued that Tree's reputation as the last exponent of a "picture-book" Shakespeare was as much due to changing economic conditions as the public's mounting rejection of his ideas. Tree's death in 1917 coincided with the revolution in theatrical management brought about by the Great War. The stringent financial conditions after 1918 meant that, at least in London, actor-managers could no longer pay for unprofitable ventures by reviving established favourites. A desire came for a less dictatorial and expensive theatre. Unionized labour, allied to high general inflation, made the workings of pictorial spectacle, requiring vast resources of money and manpower, quite beyond the economy-conscious theatre of the post-war era and made the type of production Tree offered all but an extinct species.[70] Its place was taken by the film, the natural vehicle for two of Tree's greatest features: special effects and large casts.

It was also the development of the film, at the turn of the century, which caused the demise of the spectacular theatre. The ne plus ultra in spectacular staging was reached in The Whip at Drury Lane in 1909, in which Bruce Smith mounted a horserace on a treadmill and a train wreck. A chariot race had already been seen in Ben Hur in 1902. These productions were enormously admired and were the result of great technological skill, but they were literally on the wrong tracks. The cinema ensured that for the theatre this kind of realism was a dead end: the moving camera could so far surpass it. The opportunities that the medium offered for massive spectacle, as first demonstrated by Quo Vadis in 1912, were to prove the final death blow to the actor-managers' spectacular productions.

In exploiting a realistic and pictorial approach, Irving's and Tree's offerings fulfilled the taste for a cinematic kind of theatre. Their success, marking a theatrical need for the motion picture, reached its peak simultaneously with the arrival and early development of the film. Their rise to popularity coincided with the final phase in the development of the motion picture, and, upon its appearance and progress, fell into a decline. This would suggest that the success of Irving's and Tree's examples, offering a certain stimulation to the promotion of the process, was subsequently undermined by its capacities and, as the motion picture brought the pictorial cycle of realism and romance into a higher level of perfection, was eventually deprived of its audience.

There was little critics like George Bernard Shaw or innovators like William Poel could do as long as the taste of audiences was satisfied by lavish display in Shakespeare, accompanied, of course, by the star performance of the actor-manager. When the cinema developed its own form of realistic pictorial spectacle at much lower prices, the theatre, with its artistic direction already being changed by the reformers and revolutionaries, could no longer compete on the same terms. Only three years after the British public was made aware of the cinema, the first filmed attempt with Shakespeare was made, and, appropriately, it was Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, always eager for experiment and enjoying the excitement of taking chances, who was the pioneer and explored this new medium for spectacle, in 1898 photographed in motion in a scene from King John.[71]

Most important, however, was that by 1913 theatregoers in greatly increasing numbers were realizing that the whole spectacular tradition of presenting Shakespeare in the theatre was a wrong-headed one. The full-scale scenic treatment of Shakespeare initiated by Kemble had reached its apogee and now audiences were perceiving that in the hands of Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree at His Majesty's, "it was lapsing into an even more magnificent decline," as William Bridges-Adams appropriately termed it.[72] Tree's productions, said Sidney Dark, "left you with the conviction that the trimmings were the things which he cared about most" (English Review, 25, 1917). Popular taste, which Sir Herbert had served loyally, was beginning to question strongly whether his conjectural reconstruction of Cleopatra's barge was quite as impressive as Enobarbus' description of it, and whether that notoriously ill-used play The Tempest gained much by excising made in the interests of the scenic artist and a star Caliban. The prime instigator of this revolt, of course, was William Poel who for decades had unrelentingly advertised his beliefs and to whom Tree, the most chivalrous of men, more than once offered a share of his Shakespeare Festivals. An ever greater number of Shakespeare lovers were coming to perceive that Shakespeare the playwright knew his business and that on the stage the dramatic essence of his plays should be realized, not diluted or smothered. In certain theatrical, literary and academic circles Tree's methods were denounced. Yet it is easier for critics to attack bad methods than for artists to create good methods and win acceptance for them. No one in Tree's lifetime managed to break his hold upon the general public.

In a reply to Tree's "The Living Shakespeare: A Defence of Public Taste," W. Hughes Hallet pointed out that the greatest evil under the present system was that the actor knew the attention of the audience was not concentrated on him, but to a greater or lesser extent directed to scenery and costume. His art consequently suffered; moreover, he was always in danger of becoming subordinate to his surroundings. When David Garrick and Spranger Barry in 1750 were performing Romeo and Juliet at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, respectively, reminded Hallet, the opinion of the viewers was divided. One lady on being appealed to replied that had she been Juliet to Garrick's Romeo, so ardent and impassioned was he, she should have expected that he would have come up to her in the balcony; but had she been Juliet to Barry's lover, so tender and eloquent and so seductive was he, that she should certainly have gone down to him. The actor of those days, insisted Hallet, monopolized the ears and eyes of the spectator, and knowing this, he ran up and down the gamut of the passions that many at least would feel with him, producing effects not attempted on the contemporary stage.

In refuting Tree's defence in Fortnightly Review, Hallet queried whether Tree in his lavish productions did not fall into the common mistake of applying to poetic drama the principles of realistic drama. In modern drama, for example, he explained, in the plays of Pinero, Jones and Grundy, it was the triumph of the authors to create men and women, to invent incidents, to compose dialogue, which should be as exact a reproduction as possible of what the audience saw and heard, or might see and hear in the world around them. Their plays were a sort of essence of everyday life. In a word, said Hallet, with realistic drama everything animate and inanimate had to be set forth, clearly visible, and nothing was left to the imagination. With poetic drama, on the other hand, it was not so, and here much had to be left to the imagination. Convention met the audience at every turn. The language was rhetorical to a degree, unknown in any age, and it was cast in a form which, viewed as ordinary speech, was absurd. Moreover, the characters comported themselves and expressed themselves after certain conventions. The pettiness of modern acting was out of place in the poetic drama, the fidgetiness, the breaking up of speeches, the constant sitting down and getting up, the lack of repose, the mortal terror lest the fact should peep out that the author wrote in verse (Fortnightly Review, n.s. 68, 1900).

H. Hamilton Fyfe, concurring with this view, stated that gradually the theatre had been converted--or, in his view, perverted--from Poetry to Realism. The first things, he said, that were impressed upon the contemporary young dramatist was that he must cultivate natural dialogue and cut out everything which did not advance the action of the play. "Apply that text to any poetical dramas that you like, ancient or modern," he stated, "and you will see that they are hopelessly antiquated" (The World, March 18, 1908).

Tree's faith in his method, however, was never shaken. When about 1912 the idea of a National Theatre was being seriously considered, Tree confidently expected to be appointed to the directorship. Younger rivals, like Harley Granville-Barker, who espoused more "modern methods," were in his eyes nothing but "humbug." "What one wants," he declared, sublimely indifferent to the theatrical revolution that would soon discredit all he had stood for, "is sincerity, directness, and a reverence for Shakespeare."[73] Tree, reminisced W. L. Courtney, had little sympathy with the movement spearheaded by Poel; "he took a great interest in it, of course, . . . he preferred older methods." With regard to Granville-Barker's productions, inspired by Poel's teachings, "he seemed to feel that they were bizarre freakish experiments which would only appeal to a section of the public and not to the great mass of theatregoers. For himself . . . he had the vast auditorium of His Majesty's resting on his shoulders." Tree always insisted, recounted Courtney, that "I have to find something which will be agreeable to stalls, upper circle, pit, gallery--all at once" (Fortnightly Review, n.s. 102, 1917).

Desmond MacCarthy in his assessment of Tree in Max Beerbohm's collection of memoirs, wrote that His Majesty's was never a focus of all that was considered choicest, most inspiring, and most impressing in dramatic act, as the Lyceum had once been. The chief reason, he contended, was that the tradition had begun to lose prestige with the imaginative public. Her Majesty's under Tree stood instead for the grandly, lavishly popular; for years it represented the central British conception of the drama. Tree, he said, might have been a greater actor if he had had enough confidence to believe that what he could do best was more worth doing than bringing off effects which, in his youth, he had been taught were the triumphs of an actor's art; or even perhaps if his methods of production had not entailed such innumerable preoccupations which had nothing to do with acting. "But he lived in an uncritical age," maintained MacCarthy, "and he was ambitious." Tree set before him as an aim that preeminence in the theatrical world he did in fact attain, and in attaining it, many aptitudes, all clamouring for exercise, found satisfaction, the artist in him acquiescing--as far as MacCarthy could see from the stalls--without painful struggles. It was easy for Tree to follow the high road to popular success, judged the critic, because the Lyceum tradition did give enormous scope to his emotional, artistic temperament.[74]

Tree was essentially a romantic actor, claimed MacCarthy, "perhaps the last exuberant descendant of Romanticism flowering on the English stage." The dignity of Kemble's declamation, the power of Macready's pathos, the thrilling fury of the elder Kean and the marvel of his voice--there was also not much in their acting to which modern theatregoers would not have taken exception, he said, though it was pleasing and satisfactory to their contemporaries. The public was now increasingly aware that these famous actor-managers had also chopped and altered the text of Shakespeare; they observed that the actor-managers were praised for the ingenuity of their "business" (precisely the kind Tree was always inventing), and they suspected that the actor-managers' expression of emotion was pitched in a very high key indeed. MacCarthy suggested that the astringent atmosphere of the nineties and of the early years of this century was not favourable to the romantic, expansive side of Herbert Tree's art. In judging Tree's talent and in placing him among his precedessors and contemporaries, MacCarthy declared that "it is important to think of him as an actor trailing with him into the twentieth century clouds of romanticism, from which, for our eyes, the glow and colour had in a measure departed."[75]

It was the whole tradition that was wrong, declared MacCarthy, not the way Tree carried it out; in that he displayed a good deal of invention. The editions of Shakespeare issued at Her Majesty's were more sumptuously bound and richly illustrated than any the Lyceum had produced. However, Tree's 1913 Festival was subject to invidious comparisons with Granville-Barker's recent and revolutionary productions of The Winter's Tale and Twelfth Night at the Savoy Theatre. By this time the Festivals, which had been great successes in earlier years, were now showing losses. Tree's mistake, maintained MacCarthy, was to assume that Shakespeare's plays could be improved with extraneous effect. The result of all this accumulation of commentary, illustration and music, however ingenious or lavish, round a play was often to slow down its action intolerably; and while attempting to interpret Shakespeare to the eye, the production too often failed to interpret him to the mind.

Using Tree's final production, Romeo and Juliet as an example, MacCarthy insisted that Tree had learned nothing in this latest Festival "unless it is by this time that what once pleased now pleases neither so many nor so much. He has refused to trim his sails to catch the fresh wind that is blowing." No one, the critic contended, expected Tree to throw over elaborate scenery and to adopt within the year the apron-stage and the methods of Mr. Poel and Mr. Barker; but from a performance like Twelfth Night, at the Savoy the previous winter, Sir Herbert might have inferred three things which would have altered his sense of proportion as a producer: that the beauty, fun and passion of Shakespeare could hold an audience without extraneous excitement; that the whole play should be performed; and that the actors should be prevented from trying to illustrate by action and "business" every line they uttered. Whether it was because he belonged to the period when elaborate scenic effects first swept all before them, or because he trusted temperamentally to the big brush sensation, the actor-manager apparently found it impossible to believe that bare poetry could produce a dramatic effect. Nearly all of Sir Herbert Tree's failings as a producer of Shakespeare, charged MacCarthy, sprung from this inability to believe that the poet could, unaided, appeal to the emotions. Tree could not believe that Shakespeare had after all done his work, and that it only remained for the producer to make Romeo and Juliet as it stood vividly intelligible; and it was painfully clear that he had no respect whatever for the rhythms of comedy and tragedy, prose and passion, into which the poet had woven his story, for Tree would cut and pad a play until those rhythms approximated as nearly as possible to common melodrama.

And he had looked forward to seeing the performance of Romeo and Juliet, said the disappointed critic, condemning "this hateful method, which makes it quite unnecessary that Shakespeare should have written the words." Tree's Romeo and Juliet showed spectacular production methods at their most blatant. "But better ones are at hand," MacCarthy proclaimed, "and therefore, as a critic, as a runner outside the Temple of Drama, I raise the cry, 'Sir Herbert Tree's carriage stops the way'" (New Statesman, July 19, 1913).

NOTES

[1] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, letter to actress daughter Viola, Oct. 4, 1912, as quoted by Hesketh Pearson, Beerbohm Tree (New York. Harper and Row, 1956), p. 161.

[2] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Thoughts and After-Thoughts (London: Cassell, 1913), p. 48. All further references to this work are indicated in the text by page number.

[3] Moreover, in London alone over 242,000 people had witnessed his Julius Caesar, and nearly 220,000 were present during the run of A Midsummer Night's Dream.

[4] Joseph Harker, Studio and Stage (London: Nisbet, 1924), p. .

[5] Tree instituted a series of independent Wednesday afternoon matinées of untried dramas and Monday evening matinées of British and foreign plays that were generally regarded as above the average playgoer's intelligence. He perceived the genius of Ibsen, appreciated the poetical quality of Maeterlinck, and recognized the valuable work of Brieux. Even though as a commercial manager he had to make compromises and selected the less controversial dramas of Ibsen and Brieux and cut them extensively, and even though he rarely failed to think in terms of a fine part for himself, Tree's enterprise gave audiences the opportunity to see plays by avant-garde authors in a celebrated west-end theatre. The circle of playgoers who would care for this kind of fare might at first be limited, he contended, but the ordinary economic axiom would be reversed in time and the supply would create the demand (The Star, Oct. 27, 1890).

[6] In addition to the sixteen Shakespearean plays, Tree also revived David Garrick's adaptation of The Taming of the Shrew, entitled Katharine and Petruchio.

[7] Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 121.
Tree was also ready to engage the avant-garde Gordon Craig to design a Macbeth for him in 1909 and might have carried out the designs Craig submitted, had not scene painter Joseph Harker, bitterly opposed to the scheme, allowed Craig's models to get broken and thus effected a stop to the production.

[8] Hesketh Pearson, Beerbohm Tree, p. 116.

[9] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing 1890 to 1953, p. 37.

[10] Like Irving, however, Tree sacrificed archaeological accuracy on occasion to pictorial effect. His Julius Caesar, for example, was set

not in the Republican period but in the more picturesque era of the Empire, and Portia and Calphurnia wore Greek draperies to produce a more striking line.

[11] Max Beerbohm, quoted in Bernard Grebanier, Then Came Each Actor, p. 331.

[12] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, advertisement to Romeo and Juliet production, 1913, in "Press Cuttings, June 1913," Tree Collection, Bristol University Theatre Collection, TB 45.

[13] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen, ms., p. 157.

[14] Advertisement to Romeo and Juliet, 1913, Tree Collection, Bristol.

[15] In one of his earliest Shakespearean productions, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Tree had already developed and elaborated lighting as a key element of his art, and the innovative effects attracted much contemporary account. "The Wood Near Athens" scene, according to the Daily Chronicle (Jan. 11, 1900), opened in darkness but soon electric lights on the heads and wings of the fairies--aerial and on foot--glinted through the trees. In the middle of the presentation reviewers had much to admire, especially "the lovely picture of secluded glen and mountain ridge overlooking the moonlit sea, the iridescent dresses changing their tint with the movement of the wearers." Oberon, gorgeous in gold, representing the sun, was accentuated by electric lights cunningly put in her costume.

Some of Tree's promptbooks, such as the one for The Winter's Tale, reveal extensive use of lighting instruments in various positions as indicated by the electric and time plots which precede each scene. For his Romeo and Juliet production, however, the rehearsal copies which exist give very little information about lighting.

[16] William Poel, Fortnightly Review, Aug. 1900, 355. Poel's condemnation of Tree appeared in a letter sent to Fortnightly Review in which he replied to Tree's contentions.

[17] John Ripley, "Imagination Holds Dominion: Stage Spectacle in Beerbohm Tree's Productions 1897-1900," Theatre Survey, 9 (1968), 13.

[18] Nicholas Vardac, From Stage to Screen (Cambridge, Mass., 1949; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1968), 167.

[19] John Ripley, "Imagination Holds Dominion," 14.

[20] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen, ms., p. 157.

[21] Programme to Tree's production of Much Ado about Nothing, Her Majesty's Theatre, 1905; in "Programmes Much Ado about Nothing," Birmingham Reference Library.

[22] An apt and simple explanation of the principle of alternation was recalled twenty years later by William Archer:

> . . . a general practice, in plays requiring frequent changes of scene, of alternating what we call "front" or "carpenter" scenes with full "sets." Thus, in "Othello" the curtain would rise in a moderately deep scene representing the interior of Brabantio's house. Then a painted "cloth" would be let down in front of this (or two "flats" would be shoved in), representing a street in Venice; and on the shallow space between this "cloth" and the footlights the first encounter between Othello and Brabantio would take place. This over, the "cloth" would be raised, or the "flats" withdrawn, and it would be found that Brabantio's house had been cleared away, and the whole depth of the stage called into requisition for a "set" representing the Venetian Senate chambers.

(William Archer, "The Elizabethan Stage," Quarterly Review, 208, 1908, 448-49)

Ellen Terry remarks on Irving's alternation of full and front sets, and Odell further notes Mary Anderson's use of this device (Ellen Terry, Ellen Terry's Memoirs, ed. Edith Craig and Christopher St. John, New York: Putnam, 1932, p. 134; Odell, II, 438). See also Cary Mazer, Shakespeare Refashioned: Elizabethan Plays on Edwardian Stages for further information about the alternation methods.

[23] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing, 1890 to 1953, p. 37.

[24] M. Lyon Phelps served as stage manager to both Irving and Tree and says that Tree was different from Irving--very sentimental, a dreamer, vague, very vague as to his ideas and requirements. During production he was impossible; while his officials were trying to fathom what was in his mind, they suffered the tortures of the damned until they lighted on the thing they thought he wanted. There was the difference: Irving knew what he wanted and got it; Tree only knew what he didn't want--and sometimes got it.

Phelps gives as example a rehearsal for Carnac Sahib, a play by Henry Arthur Jones. Rehearsals had been dragging on for weeks. The scene was an Indian bazaar and Tree was indulging in one of his usual fits of abstraction. "Here," he murmured, "I think we'll have a little tom-tom!" A loud voice came from the front of the house: "We'll have a little acting, if you don't mind, Tree. I haven't seen any yet!" It was the author speaking. Tree lost his temper, ordered the author out of the theatre and Jones never returned. The play ran five nights (M. Lyon Phelps, in Saintsbury and Palmer, eds., We Saw Him Act: A Symposium on the Art of Sir Henry Irving, p. 264).

[25] Hesketh Pearson, Beerbohm Tree, p. 165.

[26] Frances Donaldson, The Actor Managers, p. 153.

[27] Shaw, who often pointed out Irving's insistence on being the star actor, declared that Lewis Waller, playing with Tree in Julius Caesar in

1898, was ten times as good as the best man supporting Irving at the Lyceum. "He has authority, self-respect, dignity and often brilliancy: you do not see him dodging about the stage with one eye on 'the governor.'" Of Tree's method, he said, "Good policy Ellen, look to it" (Christopher St. John, ed., Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence, New York: Putnam's, 1931, p. 214).

[28] Desmond MacCarthy in a review of Tree's production of Romeo and Juliet provides a detailed description of Phyllis Neilson-Terry's traditional interpretation of this scene. After the line "My dismal scene I needs must act alone," Juliet staggered to the bed, pretending to stifle her own screams, and buried her head in the clothes. After "Must I of force be married to the County/ No, no; this should forbid it; lie thou there," the dagger was stuffed under the pillow. When Juliet was making up her mind to drink, and the thought "Shall I not then be stifled in the vault?" came over her, she clutched at her throat and gasped as though she were already choking; and when the words described the vault where she would lie, she went through the pantomime of an awful, wondering waking, smoothing a dazed brow with cold fingertips, presently to be convulsed with quivering horror. At the words "loathsome smells" she made a face as though indeed some stench were in her nostrils; and at the line "O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught," she made the familiar gesture of all mad stage heroines from Ophelia to Tilburnia, passing her hands wildly through her hair. Then more pantomime of using bones as clubs followed and struggles with the air, culminating in her throwing herself in front of Tybalt's imaginary rapier. Then a long, long pause, and "Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee." Finally, she staggered to a pile of cushions, arranged so that her head should be lower than her feet; then came a totter, a fall, and the curtain (New Statesman, July 19, 1913).

[29] Charles Frederick Nirdlinger, Masques and Mummers: Essays in the Theatre of Here and Now (New York: Dewitt, 1899), p. 461.

[30] William Archer, The Theatrical World of 1893 (London, 1894; New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), p. 119.

[31] Richard Dickens, Forty Years of Shakespeare, pp. 71, 87.

[32] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen, ms., p. 161.

[33] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Performances Which I have Seen, ms., p. 161.

[34] Shaw contemptuously related that in Tree's Richard II, for example, the most moving point was made with the assistance of a dog who does not appear among Shakespeare's dramatic personae. When the dog--Richard's pet dog--turned to Bolingbroke and licked his hand, Richard's heart broke and he left the stage with a sob. Then came his treatment of the entry of Bolingbroke and the deposed Richard into London. Shakespeare makes the Duke of York describe it; Tree, however, represented it in action with horses on the stage. Appearing with a great white horse, Richard

had a look of haunted terror as he turned his head and the crowd hooted him (George Bernard Shaw, 1919, in Max Beerbohm, ed., *Herbert Beerbohm Tree*, London: Hutchinson, 1920, pp. 248-50).

[35] Mrs. Patrick Campbell, *My Life and Some Letters*, London, 1922, p. 239.

[36] In the light of these statements it seems ironical today that Tree is known as the founder of what became the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. The years before 1914 witnessed much discussion of the idea of a National Theatre and Theatre School. Tree took unofficial but characteristic action by making Her Majesty's serve some of the functions of a National Theatre and by founding in 1904 this Academy. Writing for the need for a school of acting, George Bernard Shaw on a number of occasions pointed out that an author who understood acting, and wrote for the actor as a composer wrote for an instrument, giving it the material suitable to its range, tone, character, agility, and mechanism, necessarily assumed a certain technical accomplishment common to all actors; and this required the existence of a school of acting, or at least a tradition. There was no such provision in the days of Tree's novitiate. He and his actors had not inherited the tradition handed down at rehearsal by Phelps to Forbes-Robertson; nor was there any academic institution with authority enough to impress a novice of his calibre. Although affecting throughout his career to disdain technique and insisting for years that acting could not be taught, Tree sought to save the coming generation from the disadvantages that he obviously keenly realized and founded this academy, wherein elocution, dancing, fencing, deportment, pantomime and gesture, and teaching by rehearsals could be imparted. But he had to do without tuition himself. Like Irving, he had to make a style and technique out of his own personality, out of his peculiar weaknesses as well as his peculiar powers.

[37] Hesketh Pearson, *Herbert Beerbohm Tree*, p. 192.

[38] Gordon Crosse, *Shakespearean Playgoing 1890 to 1953*, p. 41.

[39] Ellen Terry, in Christopher St. John, ed., *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence*, p. 215.

[40] Ralph Berry, "The Aesthetics of Beerbohm Tree's Shakespearean Festivals," *Nineteenth Century Theatre Research*, 9:1 (Summer 1981), 47.

[41] Richard Dickens, *Forty Years of Shakespeare*, p. 87.

[42] Matheson Lang, *Mr. Wu Looks Back* (London: Stanley Paul, 1940), p. 82.

[43] G. C. D. Odell, *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving*, II, 463.

[44] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Souvenir Booklet for *Julius Caesar* production at Her Majesty's Theatre, 1898, London: Nassau, 1900, Birmingham Shakespeare Library, S-- Wilson Knight Bequest, 980455.

[45] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Souvenir Booklet for King John production at Her Majesty's Theatre, 1899, Birmingham Shakespeare Library, S652.31p.

[46] Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Souvenir Booklet for Othello production at His Majesty's Theatre, 1912, Birmingham Shakespeare Library.

[47] Statistics in Michael Booth, The Victorian Spectacular Theatre, p. 134.

[48] An example of Tree's reasoning can be seen in his defense of his arrangement of Henry VIII. Tree contended that many passages in Shakespeare's play were also omitted in the dramatist's time since "a considerable portion of the play was considered by the author to be superfluous to the dramatic action." Developing this inspired strain of logic, Tree concluded that because Shakespeare's own theatre had played Henry VIII in "two short hours," more of it must have been omitted than in his own production in 1910, and therefore "we showed a greater respect of the text than Shakespeare himself." Attempting to account for his own four-hour production, the actor-manager later serenely announced that "an attempt was made to confine the absolute spoken words as nearly as possible within the time presented in the prologue" (pp. 281-82).

[49] The American actors Southern and Marlowe in a lavish, heavily cut presentation of the play at the Waldorf in 1907, which one critic said evoked memory of Lamb's "Scenes from Shakespeare," presented an innovative acting version that had six acts to allow for even more striking tableaux: Act I ended with the ball; Act II presented just the balcony scene; Act III ended with Mercutio's death; Act IV consisted of just Shakespeare's III.iii and v, Romeo's banished scene and Juliet's reaction to her husband's banishment; Act V was made up only of Shakespeare's IV.i, Juliet's scene with the Friar, and IV.iii, her potion scene; Act VI presented the death of the lovers in the tomb (Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen, ms., p. 62).

[50] The rehearsal copies in the Tree collection of the Bristol University Theatre Collection show cuts made on the text of an edition of the play introduced by George Brandes, published by Heinemann in 1904, and based on the text of the Cambridge Shakespeare. Rehearsal copies exist for the roles of Mercutio, Benvolio, Friar Lawrence, and Paris; there exist also a second copy for Paris and a copy not assigned to any particular role, merely marked "the property of Sir Herbert Tree." There are a few problems in using these copies: small sections of lines are cut in one book but not in another. On the whole, however, the six books are quite consistent, with only minor variations. Only a few basic stage directions are given; one important curtain and accompanying music are marked in Mercutio's book, and another curtain is marked in another book.

[51] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen, ms., p. 160.

[52] Tree's wife, actress Maud Tree, in Max Beerbohm, ed., Herbert Beerbohm Tree, p. 152.

[53] Desmond MacCarthy in Max Beerbohm, ed., Herbert Beerbohm Tree, pp. 221-22.

[54] John Ranken Towse, Sixty Years of the Theatre: An Old Critic's Memories (New York and London: Funk and Wagnall's, 1916), pp. 438-447.

[55] George Bernard Shaw, in Max Beerbohm, ed., Herbert Beerbohm Tree, pp. 240-41, 250-51.

Shaw here, of course, was also speaking ruefully of his own experience as an author who had to contend with Tree's "ingenuity." Tree in 1914 produced Shaw's Pygmalion and made thirteen thousand pounds out of this first production, taking it off when it was still making a great deal of money. Shaw, who knew Tree's methods only too well, refused to see the production until the hundredth performance, when he discovered without surprise that Tree, as Higgins, had introduced a happy ending by throwing a bunch of flowers to Eliza in the interval between the end of the play and the fall of the curtain. The actor-manager, who loved romantic endings, had thus anticipated an ending in flagrant opposition to Shaw's conception of the characters and their relationship. Frances Donaldson presents the encounter between author and producer as follows:

> Tree: "My ending makes money; you ought to be grateful."
> Shaw: "Your ending is damnable; you ought to be shot."
> (The Actor-Managers, p. 164)

In his memoir of the actor-manager, Shaw declared that "if he had not been so amusing, so ingenious, and so entirely well-intentioned, he would have driven me crazy."

[56] William Poel, footnote to George Bernard Shaw, The Dying Tongue of Great Elizabeth (London: London Shakespeare League, 1920), pp. 16, 18.

[57] Morning Post, Nov. 4, 1898, as quoted in John Ripley, "Imagination Holds Dominion," 14.

[58] Alfred Darbyshire, The Art of the Victorian Stage (1907; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969), pp. 120, 122.

Not only did England recognize Tree's contribution to the late Victorian and Edwardian stage by awarding him a knighthood in 1909, but Germany also accorded him honour. In April, 1907, at the desire of the Kaiser, Tree and his company acted a number of Shakespearean plays for a week at the Royal Opera House in Berlin. Although the German critics were generally opposed to Tree's methods, the German public, like the English, was largely enthusiastic, and the Kaiser, showing his own appreciation of Tree's methods, conferred an order on the English actor-manager.

[59] Charles Shattuck, "Shakespeare in Performance," Riverside Shakespeare, p. 1811.

[60] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing, p. 37.

[61] Bernard Grebanier, Then Came Each Actor, p. 331.

[62] John Ripley, "Imagination Holds Dominion," p. 17.

[63] George Rowell, The Victorian Theatre, 1792-1914, A Survey (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978), p. 106.

[64] George Rowell, "Tree's Shakespearean Festivals (1905-1913)," Theatre Notebook, 29 (1975), 74.

[65] John Ripley, "Imagination Holds Dominion," 11.

[66] Flyleaf to Henry V bill, 1859; quoted in J. W. Cole, The Life and Theatrical Times of Charles Kean (London, 1859).

[67] Henry Irving, quoted in Sidney Lee, Shakespeare and the Modern Stage (New York: Scribner's, 1906), p. 10.

[68] Sidney Lee, Shakespeare and the Modern Stage, pp. 9-10. This book presents a series of Lee's articles from periodicals published 1899-1905. Many of the articles are advocating Poel's principles for production.

[69] George Rowell, "Tree's Shakespeare Festivals," 79-80. Rowell has examined the "Analysis of Treasury Payments and Estimated Weekly Trading Accounts (1904-1915)," p. 44, belonging to Her Majesty's Theatre and now in the possession of the Theatre Collection of the Bristol University Drama Department.

[70] Certainly Tree's productions were based not simply on public taste but on economic assumptions and opportunities which have very probably gone forever. Cheap labour was widely available; Michael Booth, for example, tells us that in the early twentieth century a super received between a shilling and a half-crown per performance (Victorian Spectacular Theatre, p. 18). Even the expensive sets at Her Majesty's could be related to the price the public was prepared to pay.

[71] This was not the kind of man to let slip the opportunity to try a new medium for spectacle. Tree's film of King John in 1898, now lost, enacted probably his interpolated scene of the signing of the Magna Carta and used all the gestures appropriate to the theatre. Those actions would seem very wooden to us today. Early films, until the 1920's, of course, were silent. Tree's next film, in 1905, presented the opening scene from The Tempest. The Era declared that "modern science has enabled Mr. Tree to fairly stagger us by some wonderful storm effects and to produce a magnificent realization of the shipwreck that opens the play. The vessel takes up the whole of the stage" (quoted in Grebanier, Then Came Each Actor, p. 401). The shipwreck was judged to be most realistic, as lightning flashed, billows assailed the sinking ship, and the passengers could be seen rushing about in a panic. Tree's film of Henry VIII in 1911, produced quite appropriately during the run of the stage production of the play, was filmed for the Barker Motion Photography Company at studios at Ealing. It employed a cast of two hundred and presented five scenes in sets copied from those used at His Majesty's, the scenes played as they were on stage and the characters speaking their parts. The scenes were then heavily cut and the finished

film, later destroyed, ran between twenty and twenty-five minutes. It was immediately declared "Film of the Year," not that it had many competitors. A strong supporter of the cinema and especially keen to put Shakespeare on film, Tree in 1917, shortly before his death, even went to California to make Macbeth.

It is noteworthy that of the number of silent Shakespeare films in the first three decades of this century, there were twenty films of Romeo and Juliet, making it the most popular of Shakespeare's plays on film (Charles Shattuck, "Stage History from 1660 to the Present," Riverside Shakespeare, p. 1820).

[72] William Bridges-Adams, The British Theatre (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1944), p. 34.

[73] Tree, as quoted in Charles Shattuck, "Shakespeare in Performance," Riverside Shakespeare, p. 1811.

[74] Desmond MacCarthy, in Max Beerbohm, ed., Herbert Beerbohm Tree, pp. 217, 218.

[75] Desmond MacCarthy, in Max Beerbohm, ed., Herbert Beerbohm Tree, p. 221.

CHAPTER VI

WILLIAM BRIDGES-ADAMS: FINDING AN AESTHETIC FOR SHAKESPEARE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Even though William Poel did not fully approve of Harley Granville-Barker's Shakespearean productions, it was through these productions--The Winter's Tale and Twelfth Night in 1912 and A Midsummer Night's Dream in 1914--and through Granville-Barker's Prefaces to Shakespeare that William Poel's ideas were most widely disseminated. In his Prefaces, one of the most influential critical works on Shakespeare of this century, Granville-Barker incorporates almost all of William Poel's principal theories. Just as Poel had emphasized in his writings that criticism and production are inseparable, so Harley Granville-Barker in the Introduction to the First Series (1927) presented a plea for the study and the stage to merge and for a primary understanding of Shakespeare's theatre.[1] Granville-Barker's emphasis was on the simplicity of Shakespeare's stage resources as the key to the development of the boldness and subtlety of his art. He commented brilliantly upon the unlocalized stage and insisted again and again upon the importance of the verse-speaking as the actor's first and final sources of control of his audience. He showed he was keenly aware of pace and rhythm, lively action and rhetorical embroidery. Of twenty-one Shakespearean producers questioned by Saturday Review in 1957 about what books and articles they found most stimulating in the formation of their own approach to Shakespeare and which ones were most useful in actual practice, it is noteworthy that more mentioned that they consulted, used or read Granville-Barker's Prefaces than any other critical work, a tribute to Granville-Barker himself but also an indication of the widespread distribution of many of Poel's ideas through Granville-Barker. These producers included William Bridges-Adams, Harcourt Williams, Tyrone Guthrie, John Gielgud, Glen Byam Shaw, Denis Carey, Douglas Seale, Michael Benthall, Michael Langham, and Peter Brook. Eight of the twenty-one indicated they would be happiest working on a stage with characteristics close to those which Shakespeare used, and others stressed "Elizabethan values" such as intimacy between actor and audience (originally gained by the platform stage), simplicity of set, and continuity of performance (Saturday Review, July 13, 1957).

Romeo and Juliet was never produced by Granville-Barker but his ideas on the playing of it are contained in the Second Series of his Prefaces to Shakespeare (1930) and have been greatly influential upon the production of this play on the twentieth-century stage.[2] What has not been acknowledged, however, is that Granville-Barker's "Preface to Romeo and Juliet" is obviously strongly indebted to Poel's stage-centred discussion of the play in his 1888 lecture "The Stage Version of Romeo and Juliet" which he presented to the New Shakspere Society and which was later reproduced in Shakespeare in the Theatre (1913). Granville-Barker is often given credit for initiating stage-centred criticism, but clearly it was Poel who was the pioneer in this field, his close criticism conducted with the eyes of a director. Remarkably similar comments are made in the two critical works concerning the structure of the play, the importance of speed and continuity in Shakespeare's design, the emphasis on the youth of the lovers, the importance and role of minor figures and scenes, and the mistakes of contemporary producers in presenting this tragedy.[3]

From 1881 to 1932 Poel presented his ideas in non-commercial ventures to a largely sceptical public. Among his actors, however, was a young Harley Granville-Barker, who, together with George Bernard Shaw, had been among Poel's audience at his 1905 production of Romeo and Juliet and was much impressed with what he saw. From 1912 to 1914 Granville-Barker--by then an established man of the theatre--set out to adapt Poel's ideas to the commercial theatre, producing three Shakespearean comedies at the Savoy on an apron stage with simple abstract settings, which were essentially conventional "decorations," and with no footlights.[4] To make time for a virtually unabridged text, the whole tempo of the production needed to be quick and only one break in the action was allowed. Having learned from William Poel "how swift and passionate a thing, how beautiful in its variety, Elizabethan blank verse might be when tongues were trained to speak and ears acute to hear it,"[5] Granville-Barker insisted on a much more rapid and musical delivery than was usual in Shakespearean playing; helped his actors by bringing them into closer contact with their audience for the set speeches; and finally, created physical conditions which gave him facilities similar to those of the Elizabethan playhouse for uninterrupted transition from scene to scene. Emphasizing teamwork, and eliminating "stars," solo display, cheap theatricality and empty histrionics, he was able to save other precious minutes by his ruthless excision of bits of traditional business and clowning. Within a period of sixteen months Granville-Barker had applied practical correctives to the outstanding weaknesses of the spectacular tradition for the presentation of Shakespeare. Some of

Poel's major ideas had thus conquered the commercial theatre and, somewhat ameliorated in Granville-Barker's Prefaces to Shakespeare, reached a wider reading than ever Poel's book and articles reached.

"As he [Shakespeare] cannot now come to us, the nearer we get to him the closer understanding we shall have of him," claimed Granville-Barker, echoing Poel.[6] Granville-Barker, however, rejected the strict Elizabethanism of Poel and his disciples:

> We cannot quite discard the present, and, even could we, entering into the past would be harder matter still. We should need to sit in an Elizabethan theatre as Elizabethans and be able as unconsciously, as spontaneously to enjoy the play. For spontaneity of enjoyment is the very life of the theatre and its art. This cannot be. Some half-way house of meeting must be found.[7]

Granville-Barker thus recognized that it was impossible for a modern audience to turn themselves into Elizabethans, yet he never let himself forget the work of such Elizabethanists as Poel, an awareness which helped him to realize the intrinsic relationship of Shakespeare's theatre and staging methods with those of his own. Working undogmatically towards a few simple principles, Granville-Barker was governed by an elementary rule: "Gain Shakespeare's effects by Shakespeare's means when you can; for, obviously, this will be the better way. But gain Shakespeare's effects; and it is your business to discern them."[8]

The aesthetic revolution in Shakespearean production spearheaded by William Poel, and adapted to the commercial stage by Harley Granville-Barker, was carried on by a succession of distinguished directors of the theatre, all of whom had been touched by Poel's vision: Barry Jackson at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, 1914 to 1918 and in other theatres thereafter; Nugent Monck at the Maddermarket Theatre at Norwick, from 1921 onwards; William Bridges-Adams directing the Stratford-upon-Avon

Shakespeare Festival with the New Shakespeare Company, 1919 to 1934; Ben Iden Payne at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1935 to 1942; Lewis Casson at the Manchester Gaiety between the wars; Robert Atkins, director at the Old Vic from 1920 to 1925; Harcourt Williams, also directing Shakespeare at the Old Vic from 1929 to 1933 All these directors in turn influenced other theatre people and thus further disseminated the ideas of William Poel, the chain of influence linking director to director a strong one among those who transferred their allegiance to dramatic values in their search for authenticity. As Ivor Brown pointed out in 1927, Poel had worked against a tide of mockery and financial difficulties but his influence had been pervasive, and "the better type of Shakespearean presentation today is simply Poel popularized without acknowledgments" (*Saturday Review*, July 16, 1927). Gordon Crosse noted that by the 1930's good Shakespearean productions were characterized by "swift speaking, brisk playing, a full text, simple mounting, all things I had long desired on the Shakespearean stage,"[9] and the *Times*, acknowledging that Mr. Poel had "brought the Elizabethan Shakespeare back to the English stage after three centuries," wrote in 1932 that "although the strictest of his archaism is not in general favour, the complete and continuous performance of Shakespeare's plays is now the rule and not the exception."[10]

II

William Bridges-Adams is a fine example of a producer whose fountainhead of artistic theory lay in the work of William Poel and Harley Granville-Barker. The first post-World War I director of

Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon, Bridges-Adams with acute perceptiveness saw past incidental idiosyncrasies to the essential soundness of Poel's theories and aimed to verify them in his own professional productions. Bridges-Adams' major achievement was to synthesize the innovations of Poel and Granville-Barker and to adapt them to the needs of large-scale commercial production. In 1919 he took over responsibility for the Shakespeare Festivals at Stratford-upon-Avon from Frank Benson and from this time until 1934 he presented more than 150 revivals of Shakespeare's plays, directing no less than twenty-nine plays in Shakespeare's Folio himself. For all but the last two years when he was given help, Bridges-Adams had sole responsibility for all aspects of production ranging from directing to acting to lighting to costume and scenic design for almost every play that was performed during the Stratford Festivals.

It is surprising that no critical study has been published on this important theatrical innovator. Only one collection of letters exists, edited and introduced by Robert Speaight.[11] General introductions to Bridges-Adams' work are encompassed in larger studies such as Sally Beauman's recent The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades (1982)[12] and in Susan Brock and Marian Pringle's Theatre in Focus: The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1919-1945 (1986), an audio-visual collection, accompanied by written commentary.[13] Today this director is largely unrecognized by most other theatre historians, yet the tributes that he has received from some quarters make clear that his contribution to theatre history is an important one indeed. Robert Speaight in 1971 announced that his edition of letters was devoted to a stage director who exercised "a formative influence upon the production of Shakespeare in our own time."[14] In a survey of twentieth-century Shakespearean directors, Gareth and Barbara Lloyd Evans pay brief, but important tribute to him by stating that Bridges-Adams was "perhaps the most underrated director of the twentieth century" and that he was, perhaps, "too modest to blow, or allow to be blown, any trumpets on his behalf."[15] Looking back on decades of productions at Stratford-upon-Avon, J. C. Trewin in 1964 wrote that several of Bridges-Adams' productions remained "some of the best in Stratford history" and cited especially that of Romeo and Juliet in 1933.[16]

Since 1886 the Shakespeare Festivals at Stratford-upon-Avon had been inseparable from the name of Frank Benson. Each year in April Benson and his touring company would arrive in Stratford-upon-Avon to put on a Shakespeare Festival of eight or so plays over two or three weeks, with a six- or seven-week Summer Festival added on after World War I. Benson's aim was to create a company which would revive the old traditions of the stage, practised by such great actor-managers as Samuel Phelps, and as well to keep alive the stock company with a repertoire of the best plays. The "Benson Charter" was based upon the following principles: that Shakespeare's plays were to be played constantly in their variety; that no long runs were to be permitted; that all parts were to be given to those trained in blank verse and who had gained knowledge in and experience of the range of Shakespearean drama; that no greater prominence to a role in a text was to be accorded than the text warranted; that scenic embellishment, while representational, should be simple and inexpensive and should be subordinated to the dramatic interest.[17]

Benson's company grew in stature during the thirty years from a crowd of enthusiasts to seasoned professionals who came to play the provinces every summer and whose fame eventually led them to play all over the world. The company became famous for the fine training given its young actors. Benson had found that there were very few good verse speakers on the contemporary stage and those were with the top companies; consequently, he trained his own and they then tutored the younger members of the company. Actors went from walk-ons to bit parts to major roles. Benson's actors were soon in high demand. An actor of disputed merit himself, Benson got the reputation not as a creator of great Shakespearean productions but as the teacher of great Shakespearean players.[18]

Benson believed that no play should be adapted for the sake of one part, but in the nineteenth-century tradition he took great liberties with the text and fell into the Victorian actor-manager's habit of savage cuts, transpositions and paraphrases. Often he ruthlessly sacrificed poetry to gain speed and unity of dramatic action. Although he did not make changes to effect self-aggrandisement, cutting meant that the balance of the parts was necessarily upset; moreover, because he assumed leading roles and was surrounded by actors less practised, he overshadowed them. In his methods of mounting the plays, Benson also remained resolutely Victorian; his productions were as elaborately realistic as could be managed by a touring company of modest means. He approved of spectacle, elaborate scenery and costumes, the introduction of pageants, processions, ballets and dances, although he could never outdo Tree and in his hands, as in Irving's, spectacle was generally artistic and intelligent. He was especially fond of picturesque business and eye-catching tableaux at the beginnings and ends of scenes. The texts of the plays, of course, had to be cut severely to accommodate these elaborations.[19] His method of production not only despoiled the text but also damaged the structure of the plays irreparably. Benson's manner of speaking Shakespearean verse, too, was in the tradition of early nineteenth-century actors: it was slow and drawn out, with lengthened vowels. Gordon Crosse recalled "the extreme slowness" with which many scenes were taken in a production of Hamlet and that Benson and his colleagues sometimes "spoke too deliberately, with many pauses and much repetition of words and phrases."[20]

By 1919 the time was ripe for a change in methods of Shakespearean production at Stratford-upon-Avon. That year a Joint Committee, which had been formed by the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Committee in London and the Governors of the Shakespeare Memorial at Stratford-upon-Avon, decided that there should be a formation there of a permanent company or companies of actors in order to meet demand for Shakespearean performances, to promote recognition of Shakespeare throughout Europe, and at the same time to pave the way for what would hopefully become the National Shakespeare Theatre. It was agreed that this "New Shakespeare Company," consisting of experienced Shakespearean actors, should be organized in time to undertake the usual five weeks' season of performances that year and that they should perform six or seven representative Shakespearean plays. Some aid would be given for this endeavour. The company was to produce "standard" Shakespeare. The director's methods were to contain a synthesis of new ideas yet were to embody nothing too revolutionary, because, as Sydney Carrol of the Sunday Times later expressed it, "modernity is all very well in its proper place. That place is not Stratford-upon-Avon" (Sunday Times, July 25, 1920).

Frank Benson retired that year and under the urging of William Archer and George Bernard Shaw the Committee offered the position of director to William Bridges-Adams who, as Archer acknowledged, was "something of a 'dark horse' as far as London is concerned" (Nation, Aug. 9, 1919). Bridges-Adams was then only thirty years old but his experience in the theatre was already extensive. He had been a member of the Oxford University Dramatic Society, in leading roles in such plays as The Tempest and The Winter's Tale under George Foss, and upon his graduation from Oxford he had gone into the theatre professionally. He had acted in London's West End under Sir George Alexander and with Harley Granville-Barker; had been assistant stage manager to Nugent Monck for William Poel's production of The Two Gentlemen of Verona at Tree's Shakespeare Festival at Her Majesty's in 1910; and had played in Shakespearean repertory with Patrick Kirwan. Together with his first wife he had also been part manager-producer for the Bristol Repertory Theatre and he had been producer-manager of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre--which he rechristened the Playhouse. In the provinces he had produced everything from melodrama to revue and in the West End had directed at least two major productions. Although he had begun his career as an actor, Bridges-Adams had soon concentrated on directing and designing.

With his wide-ranging experience in the theatre and his personal acquaintance with many of the theatrical avant-garde, Bridges-Adams was well equipped to produce at Stratford-upon-Avon a synthesis of current ideas. Nonetheless, he reassured the Joint Committee with his statement that "the great temptation Shakespeare offers to the modern producer is to do the exciting and novel thing, which I am quite sure in the majority of cases is the wrong thing" (Observer, Aug. 13, 1919). In an interview in 1919 he put forth the theories of Shakespearean production which he intended to put into practice at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre:

> I am going strong for team work. No stars, but just a good all-round Shakespearean Company . . . . as a general sort of principle we are going on the lines of full text. A few cuts will be made here and there, but anything like transpositions or mutilations will be studiously avoided, and in my opinion the performance will gain by this. (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, July 25, 1919)

On another occasion, many years later, Bridges-Adams summarized the policy that had characterized his years at Stratford-upon-Avon:

> It was briefly as follows (you will find most of it in Hamlet's advice to the Players): Tradition without traditionalism: fresh air and high spirits: grandeur and tone of gesture without ranting--"using all gently": the virtues of the Elizabethan theatre without its vices, and its freedom without its fetters: scenic splendour where helpful, but the Play the Thing: all leading parts played by first rate people: Hamlet one night and a servant the next: the smallest part well played and balance and ensemble before everything: the play to be given as written: the text unmutilated whether in the interest of the stage carpenter or the leading man. Also (the ways of the human heart being inscrutable) that the director should be forcibly spared all temptation to act himself, by a clause in his contract to that effect.[21]

The crucial point of difference between the old policy and the new lay in this final clause, he pointed out. Frank Benson not only represented "but was, everything that was good in the (then) much abused actor manager system." Nonetheless, "still he, like Irving, had his cut and transposed stage versions (though nothing like the outrageous mutilat of say, Augustin Daly) and what he had to offer the public was primarily himself, in person, on the stage." It seemed to Bridges-Adams and to the Joint Committee that a standard Shakespearean company must be more faithful to the text than was then fashionable. For its leading parts it must have free choice of actors and it must be independent, able to maintain a tradition unimpaired by the coming or going of any individual.

It was as a follower of Poel and Granville-Barker that critics generally greeted Bridges-Adams when he came to Stratford-upon-Avon. Certainly his charter for the New Shakespeare Company was reminiscent of Granville-Barker and it was, in 1919, revolutionary. He wanted, he said, to create an ensemble company, "not the star and twenty sticks." It was his intention to present the plays "as plays, irrespective of mutilations made to suit the whim of a star or the exigencies of stage carpentry." He wanted "continuity of action, scene following scene, without unnecessary waits." The company in these productions, he said, was aiming at "real adequacy" and above all "at pleasing the real average play-going public." Whatever success they would have, Bridges-Adams pointed out, he knew that the company would not forget how much they owed to the fact that more than half of them were Bensonians, who had learned their business in a school that was not likely to be equalled for a long time to come (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, July 25, 1919).

That summer of 1919, helped by a number of experienced Bensonian actors, Bridges-Adams presented thirty-three performances of six Shakespearean plays during the four-week Shakespeare Festival at Stratford-upon-Avon. The Joint Committee had given him funding for only four weeks' rehearsals for all six plays, and he worked the company hard until late each night. In addition to directing all six plays, Bridges-Adams also designed the sets and the lighting for them. During this first season at Stratford-upon-Avon Bridges-Adams lived up to his promises: his New Shakespeare Company was devoid of star names, the plays were performed virtually intact, and the Stratford audiences had the novel experience of seeing them performed with only one brief interval.

The season was well received by the critics. Upon seeing many old Bensonians in the cast, the press was relieved to find that the break with the Benson tradition was not too violent and that there was nothing too revolutionary in Bridges-Adams' methods. Although innovatory, the new director was not "freakish, or futurist, or rebellious in any direction" (Observer, April 25, 1920). The Times expressed its approval of the first production, The Merry Wives of Windsor, with its sixteen swiftly changed scenes, and with only one break of ten minutes. The director had showed "how much more various and amusing and beautiful this play was when played almost word for word." Young although the company was, it had already mastered the great secret, that of team playing: "The ensemble, was from first to last, in spite of a few weaknesses, perhaps at this stage inevitable, a joy to watch." The whole production, the critic concluded, "was full of life and fun, yet nothing was overdrawn or over-emphasized" (Times, Aug. 4, 1919). The Daily Telegraph noted that in any production directed by Bridges-Adams "nobody takes all the limelight; you go to see a play not a player." The newspaper found Bridges-Adams' scenery for A Midsummer Night's Dream simple but never trivial; it was satisfying scenery, "harmonious with a great and modest beauty" (Aug. 27, 1919). Critics found Bridges-Adams a businesslike person who might be mistaken--except by the players--for one of the stage hands; "he is more concerned with getting things done than with getting a round of personal applause" (Star, Aug. 5, 1919).

By 1921 Bridges-Adams had strengthened his company and had lengthened the duration of the Shakespeare Festivals; eight productions were now mounted each spring, with two further new productions each summer. What the director could achieve, however, was always severely limited by the conditions under which he had to work and by the fact that the company was desperately insecure financially. The grant from the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre was never adequate; the idea of a state subsidy for the theatre was, at that time, an untenable proposition. The director was constantly faced with the frustration of keeping his company together for an entire year; it was both stressful and expensive to gather a new company together each spring. It made continuity of work difficult, and it meant that the initial rehearsal period in London, when company salaries had to be paid but there were no box office returns, had to be kept to a minimum. Sally Beauman, in her history of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, sympathetically depicts the adverse conditions that faced Bridges-Adams.[22] From 1922 on, the theatre and players were wholly governed by Stratford-upon-Avon. Archie Flower, Chairman of the Board of Governors, remained convinced that this large repertoire must be maintained, so that audiences could continue to see a different play each night of the week, just as they had during the Benson era. But whereas Benson had had an established repertoire of work, with complete sets and costumes and a company who knew their parts and the production intimately, Bridges-Adams was starting each season fresh, which made the work load intense. He was allowed only seven weeks' rehearsals for the eight spring plays, and no matter how much he protested that this time was inadequate, he could not get it extended. Prior to opening in Stratford-upon-Avon there was a week of dress rehearsals (one play dress-rehearsed each night, plus one matinée dress rehearsal) followed by a week of first nights (one play opening each night, plus one opening at a matinée). The immense strain these conditions caused was further exacerbated by the fact that he continued not only to direct, but also to design and light all the plays. He was also responsible for the day-to-day running of the Memorial Theatre itself during the Festivals. Because Stratford-upon-Avon productions were rarely reviewed nationally during the 1920's, an actor could make far greater impact by appearing in an Old Vic production in London than he ever could in a Memorial one, making it comparatively easy for the Old Vic to poach actors from Stratford-upon-Avon. Bridges-Adams was aware that the solution to these problems was money, but he was working for a Chairman and Board of Governors who grew extremely nervous at the first hint of losses. The worst problem of all, the lack of rehearsal time, could have been solved by reducing the repertoire, or staggering the openings of the plays, which would have involved no expense. The Board of Governors, under Archie Flower, however, stood fast, refusing any change.

It says much for Bridges-Adams' tenacity that he did not give up but that he continued to fight. He did so because he believed that the Memorial Theatre could become more prosperous and because, in spite of great obstacles, he knew that he was making progress. The Times, in a sympathetic review of his Shakespeare Festival in 1922, lamented that the New Shakespeare Company had been rehearsed at great speed and under great difficulties, and chastised the Governors who considered their "cinematographic enterprise . . . still of more importance than the rehearsal of a company on the stage." For all that, the critic proclaimed, "the company has worked with that love of Shakespeare and contempt for all difficulties which seems always to invigorate and inspire English players in Stratford-upon-Avon" (April 20, 1922).

By 1925 Bridges-Adams had gradually assembled the nucleus of a strong company, many of whom continued to work for him for years. For leading parts he could rely on a number of fine actors such as Roy Byford; he used actors such as George Hayes and Wilfred Walter who also were frequently at the Old Vic during this period. He developed several strong younger actors such as Ernest Hare and John Laurie. And, as the mainstay of his companies, he had his three main actors, Dorothy Green, Baliol Holloway, and Randle Ayrton, all of whom made many appearances at Stratford-upon-Avon in the 1920's.

The new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre opened in 1932. Still not given the means to increase long-term spending on the productions, to bring the best actors to Stratford-upon-Avon, to reduce the repertory, and to extend the seasons, Bridges-Adams continued to be threatened by the parochialism of those who held the theatre's purse-strings. He had waited thirteen years to work in a modern theatre and thirteen years to have the money and freedom to achieve his ideal of an ensemble company. Once the theatre was open he began to fight, and fight hard, for that privilege. The following year, in 1933, Bridges-Adams threatened to resign. Because of this threat the Governors adopted many of the ideas that he had advocated for years, though not without considerable misgivings on Archie Flower's part. The first continual season was announced, lasting twenty-one weeks from April to September. Ten plays were to be in the repertory but their openings were to be staggered. Six plays opened in the first fortnight, the rest at intervals throughout the season. Bridges-Adams managed to get guest directors such as the avant-garde Theodore Komisarjevsky, whom he had already invited as a guest director the previous year, and Tyrone Guthrie. Also, he was able to revive the three most successful plays from the previous season. All this meant that the intolerable work-load on Bridges-Adams was substantially reduced and that he had only two first-nights in the opening weeks to contend with. The company was slightly larger, and there were two leading men, George Hayes and Anew McMaster, which helped to spread the work-load on the actors. John Wyse, who had joined the company the previous summer, was the young leading man and Fabia Drake remained as leading lady, with novice actress Rachel Kempson playing Juliet, Ophelia, Hero and other parts. Most of the supporting players remained from the previous seasons so continuity was not broken. It was a capable company, not as star-studded as the casts Tyrone Guthrie assembled the same year for his Old Vic season, but imaginative and well balanced. The year 1933 proved to be the most successful the company ever had. It was successful artistically and successful at the box office, in spite of the world-wide depression. The numbers of patrons were undoubtedly swollen not only by the novelty of a new theatre but also by the fact that the level of production was high and critical reaction vigorous and on the whole favourable. J. C. Kemp wrote that it was especially Bridges-Adams' production of Romeo and Juliet that gave distinction to that 1933 season; indeed, he later ranked it as one of the very best productions ever seen at Stratford-upon-Avon.[23]

III

From 1932 to 1934 Bridges-Adams was finally able to gather round him a group of outstanding designers such as Theodore Komisarjevsky, Aubrey

Hammond and Norman Wilkinson. "It was not intended," the director stated in a radio talk in 1932, "to adhere to any single style of production. It was the play itself which should set the style." All the designers were experienced and chosen by Bridges-Adams because of their ability "to give Shakespeare the unusual beauty of mounting which is his due without smothering him in stage spectacle" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, April 15, 1932). No one, however, deviated drastically from Bridges-Adams' established conventions of permanent sets, curtains and stylized decoration; they were expected to work in close collaboration with him, often merely "decorating" his basic structures after he had made rough drawings of his scenic requirements. For the production of Romeo and Juliet in 1933, Bridges-Adams and Norman Wilkinson between them strove to create an Elizabethan atmosphere on an apron stage. Wilkinson had worked closely with Granville-Barker as a designer at the Savoy from 1912 to 1914, and his setting for Romeo and Juliet, a façade with side openings, a balcony and a recessed inner stage, was "one of the simplest of recent productions," reminisced T. C. Kemp and J. C. Trewin thirty years later in their history of the Stratford Festivals.[24] An attempt was made --"with conspicuous success," remarked the critics--to stage the play in as close an approximation to the Elizabethan manner as was consonant with the modern nature of the theatre (Midland Daily Telegraph, June 21, 1933). The designer explained in an interview that "for the first time at Stratford it has been decided to go backward--or forward!--or whatever you like--I should call it an advance--to the Elizabeth [sic] idiom, both as to the structure of the play and the structure of the stage it is played on" (Observer, June 18, 1933).

As they entered the theatre the audience members discovered that for the first time in Stratford-upon-Avon history there was no drop curtain and that the permanent part of the stage setting was visible to them. In his design Wilkinson had succeeded very cleverly in carrying the eye gradually forward without a jar, making the detail of shapes and decoration blend with the interior of the theatre. Critics pointed out how very ingenious as well as beautifully simple the setting was that Mr. Wilkinson had designed. The apron stage of the Memorial Theatre did not jut out sufficiently far into the auditorium to give most spectators the same sense of intimacy with the performers that the Elizabethan stage must have provided, but it was well in front of the proscenium and was broad and deep enough to accommodate much of the action. Behind this apron Wilkinson had built a graceful façade in olive green with four side openings. The upper two of the four openings led to a balcony which could be Juliet's or a musicians' gallery, or the Prince of Verona's judgement stand as occasion demanded. The spacious setting recessed beneath the balcony was sometimes closed off by curtains, sometimes employed as an inner stage with a painted backdrop for a street in Verona, a banqueting hall of Capulet's house, a garden, Juliet's bedroom with a pink four-poster, or the Capulet family vault. Small changeable scenes such as the Friar's cell were played in front of curtains. Wilkinson's multiple setting the Times found "convenient and comely" (June 21, 1933). With this flexible method of staging the story was able to unfold with "admirable briskness" as the action alternated between street brawls of the rival families and the episodes of Romeo and Juliet's love affair. The play was performed continuously, with only one interval, after III.ii, Juliet's "banished" scene. Critics found that the speed and continuity in the production made the love-making in the story "more precipitate than ever, and put a strain upon the emotions of the audience" (Burrow's Worcester Journal, May 19, 1934).

In its essentials the setting was very similar to Bridges-Adams' highly praised set, "artistic yet unobtrusive," for his productions of the play in 1929 and 1930.[25] Its main feature was the central arch below which ran an elevated gallery that served in turn for such places as the musicians' gallery, Capulet's house, or Juliet's balcony with a vista of tall poplars against a blue Italian sky (Birmingham Post, July 8, 1929). Bridges-Adams had employed a permanent setting to each of the three acts into which he had divided the play. These settings, with the occasional interpolation of curtain scenes, allowed practically continuous action and dialogue so long as the act-drop was up. His first act was dominated by the gallery bridging the stage, which, with an alternation of backcloths, served as the central feature of the street scenes, Capulet's ballroom and Juliet's garden. Friar Lawrence's cell and other small scenes were played in front of curtains. The middle act, set mainly in Juliet's bedroom, was conventionally treated with a full set, as was the final act, in which Bridges-Adams gave gorgeous staging to the Capulet tomb (Birmingham Mail, July 6, 1929).[26]

Norman Wilkinson earned praise not only for his set in 1933 but also for his costumes. The Times found that "though continually delightful in their ordered variety they are never a distraction." Elizabethan with Italian touches, they justified themselves on decorative grounds and did no violence to the audience's historical sense (June 21, 1933). Wilkinson explained that it was in properties and costumes that he approached nearer the Elizabethan than he did in decoration; the properties and costumes were "purely Elizabethan in character," he said, "though imaginatively rather than archaeologically carried out" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, June 16, 1933). Asked before the production what he would be doing with modern lighting resources, the designer explained that there would be no elaborate lighting effects and that an attempt would be made as far as possible to suggest the open-air daylight performances of the play in Shakespeare's own day. All the resources of the theatre would be utilized "to show how straightforward and how simple we can be. We are leaving all that to Juliet and the rest of them to tell the audience what the time of day is" (Observer, June 18, 1933). The audience found that no attempt indeed was made at elaborate lighting arrangements, but that the effects secured, though comparatively simple, were strikingly effective (Midland Daily Telegraph, June 21, 1933).

Discussing his designs, Norman Wilkinson paid tribute to William Poel who, he said, had strongly influenced his work. The general scenic setting that Wilkinson had contrived was "to all intents and purposes, an Elizabethan stage--the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre adapted." "I am myself an out-and-out believer in what William Poel has always consistently taught--that Shakespeare had to make his effects on his own audience by the magic of the spoken word, and that for a producer the method of simplicity is best." Poel's method, Wilkinson felt most strongly, was the only way of making Shakespeare on the stage worth listening to. "I am convinced that any deviation from the Poel method of simplicity is silly, old fashioned and dull" (Observer, June 18, 1933).

The 1933 production marked Bridges-Adams' nearest approach to Poel's methods. The fountainhead of his artistic theory, he acknowledged, lay in the work of William Poel. Bridges-Adams was assistant stage-manager in 1910 when Tree generously invited Poel to perform The Two Gentlemen of

Verona at his Shakespeare Festival. Bridges-Adams by that time had already worked with Nugent Monck who was himself a Poelite and used Poel's people, including costume designer Jennie Moore. "So I was Poel-steeped a long time before the old man took me on," he pointed out.[27] As Bridges-Adams later recognized, having worked with Poel and having directed his own Shakespearean productions with many of Poel's principles in mind, it was "not, however, through the negative virtues of austerity and archaism that Poel eventually made his influence felt as much as through the positive gain in swift and untrammelled action, and through the appeal which the verse, under his system of light and infrequent stressing, made to the ear."[28]

In 1912 a young Bridges-Adams wrote to Poel in a transport of enthusiasm after seeing Poel's production of Troilus and Cressida with Edith Evans as a memorable Cressida:

> I wish I could put into words all I thought about it . . . especially the love scene . . . and the Cressida! I wish I knew how you contrived to teach an amateur to give such a perfect and such a classic performance; it seemed to create Cressida once and for all for this generation.[29]

A number of times throughout his career Bridges-Adams paid important tribute to the work of Poel. Writing in 1947, he said that within short memory there had been something like a revolution in the English stage production of Shakespeare. The father of this revolution, he declared, was William Poel. "He was dubbed a crank," reminisced Bridges-Adams, "and in the course of a lifetime's struggle for his beliefs he nearly became one, dying at last before the stage had acknowledged how much it owed him."[30] In a letter in 1947 to the American scholar A.C. Sprague, Bridges-Adams wrote that he had known Poel very well, from 1910 to the last year of his life. Poel, he declared, was the "Father of the Puritan

Revolution in the theatre--a Dionysian ascetic . . . . As obstinate as a mule and as brave as a lion."[31] On another occasion he wrote to Sprague that Poel was "the stuff of martyrs . . . often heretical."[32]

Bridges-Adams found that many of Poel's most important theories were popularized by Harley Granville-Barker, a producer who "had out Poeled Poel and outtreed Tree all in one brilliant gesture":

> In point of decent salaries handsomely earned . . . ; of preparedness, efficiency, slickness; of apparently confident spending that looked for a hundred nights' run; of a seductive discarding of tradition that was already a winning card in the other arts; in short, of giving the town something to talk about at dinner--in all these respects young Barker left old Poel far behind.

Poel, he said, was always poor, derided and cold-shouldered into isolation, enough to turn a great man cranky, being, as most people agreed, "a man of too hard principles for success in this world." To Bridges-Adams the difference between Poel and Granville-Barker was that "Poel was a mystic and ascetic" and that Granville-Barker was "a rationalist."[33]

Although Bridges-Adams' production aims were clearly influenced by William Poel as well as by Harley Granville-Barker, his own sensibilities differed from theirs. "No one," he wrote many years later in The Irresistible Theatre, "should produce a play unless he has the instincts of a show-man, least of all should he attempt to produce a play by Shakespeare."[34] There was much of the showman in Bridges-Adams and his work at Stratford-upon-Avon was marked by a concern with sets, costumes and lighting, an emphasis which horrified the purist in Poel. "In certain vital matters Poel and his Elizabethan Stage Society were undoubtedly on the right track," acknowledged Bridges-Adams; "Shakespeare can be, and must be, spoken trippingly on the tongue; his action must be continuous; he responds to the freedom of the open stage."[35] Although the two producers shared the goal of rapid and continuous action on the stage, their methods of achieving this aim differed widely. The unadorned Elizabethan stage and apron Bridges-Adams rejected and with them their supporters whom he christened "Elizabethan Methodists," a title which implied criticism both of their puritanical rejection of decoration and what he saw as fanatical adherence to a single doctrine. "The symbol of their cult," he wrote, "was the bare, the chastely, indescribably bare, stage of the Elizabethans."[36] It was a weakness of the theorizers in this field, he said, that they persisted in thinking of the Elizabethan theatre as uniform and static. Was one to assume that between, say, Tamburlaine and Henry VIII, the stage and its usages underwent no change? None, said the theorists; The Theatre became the Globe, and the Globe set the pattern for the Fortune, in which certainty, said Bridges-Adams, they set about to work on their reconstructions. It was Poel's honourable intention to restore Shakespeare to the stage for which he wrote, pointed out Bridges-Adams, but beyond his conviction that its action was not hampered by scenery Poel had no precise conception of what the stage was like. Poel had started his crusade with little to help him beyond the Swan drawing and the knowledge that Twelfth Night was played in Middle Temple Hall.[37]

Bridges-Adams found Poel's contention that Shakespeare's plays appealed more to the hearing than to the eyes a dangerous one. "After all," he said, "Shakespeare meant the eyes of his audience to be entertained as well as their ears" (Daily Express, April 19, 1934). Using as illustration Shakespeare's battle scenes to point out the dramatist's use of spectacle, Bridges-Adams explained that flourishes and alarums penetrated the episodes. "The armies are token armies but with their banners they make an imposing show; the foils are few but they are real; the guns that one day set the Globe on fire are not pop-guns." There was no realism in the picture as a whole, Bridges-Adams acknowledged, but there was plenty of realism in its component parts. This semi-scenic convention began to take shape as one perfectly acceptable to a public unused to a proscenium frame. "We have, then," concluded Bridges-Adams, "good grounds for believing that the Elizabethan stage was not bare, but on the contrary that it was often elaborately dressed and handsome to the eye."[38] Bridges-Adams agreed with Granville-Barker that once a convention was abolished it could be painstakingly restored, but never to full life. "We cannot restore the audience of the Globe," he declared, echoing Granville-Barker and rejecting Poel's austere archaism.[39]

Bridges-Adams, however, also did not hesitate to criticize the staging methods of Harley Granville-Barker. While recognizing Granville-Barker's work as important and influential in the development of Shakespearean staging, Bridges-Adams found it in practice too strident a challenge to tradition: "People who would have blushed to speak of going to His Majesty's to see the scenery spoke without shame of going to the Savoy to see the décor," he said.[40] On another occasion he declared, "And if Tree, by the nature of his crusade, seemed to focus the attention, ironically enough, on externals, Barker did so a hundred times more."[41] Bridges-Adams found that in Granville-Barker's productions "the visual effects literally hit you in the eye, so that you remembered Hermione's gold umbrella more vividly than Hermione."[42] Bridges-Adams had not approved of Granville-Barker's golden fairies in A Midsummer

Night's Dream:

> The trouble with the stylistic treatment of Shakespeare is that it is not easy to be stylistic without being--what shall I say?--stylish, sophisticated, towny. Shakespeare was first and last a countryman; and his fairies . . . are first and last country fairies. They are scurrying, scudding, skimming creatures, not static little figurines on a London mantelpiece.[43]

In Granville-Barker's work Bridges-Adams found something cerebral and anaemic which he never liked. He admired Granville-Barker's Savoy productions, but found them clinical and cold.

In an interview at the beginning of his directorship, Bridges-Adams acknowledged that there were 101 ways of producing Shakespeare from the method of William Poel to the method of Sir Herbert Tree. Both of these extremists, he contended, had, at their best, done work of which the stage might be proud, but both had left the problem of Shakespearean mounting no nearer solution. Ophelia in a farthingale was very possibly the truest to Shakespeare and for an audience of the Elizabethan Stage Society this was no doubt the way to dress her, but for an average audience this could simply deflect in the direction of the mounting a certain amount of attention that should have gone to the play; it would take the audience some time to get acclimatized to her and proportionately less time would be left in which to consider her as a human being. Modern producers were in Bridges-Adams' view as guilty in the matter of overdressing Shakespeare's plays as many of their most maligned predecessors; it might be taken as a rule, he stated, that any setting which, either by its lavishness or even by its beauty, evoked a burst of applause from the audience, might be doing a service at the box office but was probably doing a disservice to the play. For Bridges-Adams there was only one golden rule to be observed in staging

Shakespeare, or for that matter, any play: "to do whatever will most quickly and unobtrusively make the majority of your audience feel at home in the play" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, July 25, 1919).

Bridges-Adams' aim was to combine the spaciousness, intimacy and continuity of action on the Elizabethan stage with as much scenic effect as seemed desirable; provided the general effect of Elizabethan simplicity and swiftness of performance was maintained, he saw no need to recreate the Elizabethan theatre. Poel had argued that the Elizabethan open stage was the only means of successfully dealing with the scattered locations of a Shakespearean play, but Bridges-Adams managed to devise a setting free from actuality of place while at the same time capable of providing specific scenic locations. During his first season at Stratford-upon-Avon he evolved a technique which was essentially a compromise between the bareness of Poel's staging and the scenic excess of Benson's: he subdivided the stage with traverse curtains, interspersing scenes which used the full stage with scenes in front of the curtains, so that sets could be changed quickly behind them while the action proceeded in front. This method enabled him to use numerous sets and to indicate location with literalness while maintaining speed of presentation, scene flowing into scene, with none of the traditional waits and intervals. Throughout his years at the Memorial Theatre Bridges-Adams continued to rely on the use of these traverse curtains and on simple sets--an archway, a flight of steps, a door, a line of pillars--almost always of architectural elements, with few attempts to reproduce woods and gardens with the laborious verisimilitude favoured by Benson. Yet he managed to create splendid interiors by using rich tapestry hangings and curtains and one or two well-placed pieces of furniture, achieving a sense of spaciousness in the exterior scenes by placing a painting vista between the columns or by cutting off the background with an abrupt hill or wall and hanging the rear of the stage with a plain blue sky-cloth.

Bridges-Adams' trademark was the use of an architectural frame which functioned as an inner proscenium, providing the advantages of the apron stage within a traditionally constructed theatre. The lack of space and the elevation and the remoteness of the stage floor at the Memorial Theatre made it impossible to extend a forestage beyond the proscenium as Poel and Granville-Barker had done and as Robert Atkins would do at the Old Vic. Bridges-Adams therefore often used such devices as pillars to create the inner proscenium. The two outer sections of the stage were closed off with curtains, tapestries or painted cloths to form an inner stage in the centre. The actors could move out of this narrow frame onto an "apron" in front of the columns for dialogue and soliloquy while the changing scenery could easily be struck or set upstage, in the case of some productions on rolling trucks.

Within the architectural frame scene changes were facilitated by a system of battens supporting traverse curtains which could be run upward and outward. A review in the Daily Mail provides a first-hand account of Bridges-Adams' method:

> He can give you a short scene in front of a plain heavy curtain. This done the curtain is raised in the ordinary way to show a full set. Anon, a gorgeous tapestry curtain is lowered, forming a striking background for the commencement of the next scene, which is often in full swing before the "rag" is partially withdrawn to reveal a vignette effect, of which the double advantage is that it concentrates the action in the centre of the stage and leaves the remainder of the area at the disposal of the stage hands. In due course the scene is

> effaced for a few moments, the trolley on which it has been mounted is whisked away, and everything is speedily in order for another full set. (April 29, 1920)

This method of production, of course, was not original. As Cary Mazer points out in his study of Elizabethan plays on Edwardian stages, Cecil Brodmeier in 1904 had proposed the "zonal theory" of Elizabethan staging which suggested that Shakespeare's stage had been divided by curtains into distinct areas, each area forming a playing space which could be used separately or in conjunction with another.[44] Both Poel and Granville-Barker had used curtains in their productions and, while this alternation theory was eventually discarded as an explanation of Shakespeare's staging, it continued to prove useful for the adaptation of the proscenium-arch stage for Elizabethan plays.[45]

William Poel, however, had reservations about Bridges-Adams' staging methods. In 1919 Bridges-Adams had used the device of traverse curtains in his first experiment to present Romeo and Juliet with unbroken continuity as well as with an admirable set of stage pictures. In a letter to the Nation written after he had seen Bridges-Adams' production, Poel pointed out that the Star had commented in its review that Bridges-Adams' settings "were perfect gems, though attention was somewhat distracted from them by the sustained excellence of the acting" (Star, Aug. 13, 1919). Obviously, said Poel, there were moments in the performance when the setting, beautiful in itself, interfered with sustained listening. "The tragedy that Shakespeare wrote to be acted in one scene, Mr. Bridges Adams presents in twenty-three scenes, the performance lasting three and a half hours. It can hardly be said that this production solves the difficulty of Shakespearean representation" (Nation, Aug. 23, 1919). In a letter to Bridges-Adams a month later Poel registered his disapproval of Bridges-Adams' scenic representation for a performance "which can hardly be called scholarly or educational, although in its way it was quite effective."[46]

In the first years of the New Shakespeare Company Poel went fairly regularly to Stratford-upon-Avon, and Robert Speaight relates that despite Poel's public stance of disapproval of Bridges-Adams' staging methods "he confessed a wicked pleasure in the stage pictures devised by Mr. Bridges-Adams behind the proscenium of the Old Memorial Theatre."[47] When Bridges-Adams brought his production of Henry V to the Strand in London in 1920, William Poel paid tribute to the producer's skill: "I think your . . . show is the high-water mark of efficiency for scenic representation, nothing else that has been done on our stage comes near it." Poel added, almost parenthetically, "Of course, myself, I see another way of staging the play, and I believe a more effective way because more dramatic."[48] As Sally Beauman points out, it is now difficult to assess Bridges-Adams' skill as a set designer. For most of his years at Stratford-upon-Avon he was working on a severely limited stage and with a tiny budget. Most of his designs were sketched on the backs of envelopes and those that remain were mostly recreated later from memory. The few photos of his 1920's productions are also a poor witness to his work. Such an important tribute from a formidable critic like William Poel, then, is a noteworthy one indeed.

Bridges-Adams had learned a good deal from Poel and Granville-Barker, but he was more romantic than either and held a reverence for the Lyceum "tradition," as he conceived it in theory (the closest he had come to the Lyceum was to tour with Laurence Irving, Henry Irving's son). Too young ever to have seen Henry Irving perform, Bridges-Adams nonetheless believed that Irving's death had opened up a void in English theatrical tradition: "Irving's death," he declared, "left a gap which Tree could not fill," and he dismissed Tree as "soapstone" after "granite."[49] Granville-Barker, he contended, did not fill it either. Like Frank Benson, Bridges-Adams was filled with fierce nostalgia for the "old" theatre--in his case, the theatre of actor-managers like Irving. Describing himself many years later as "irredeemably nineteenth century," Bridges-Adams was sentimentally attracted to the tradition of that era for the beauty of its stage picture and, above all, for the art of theatrical illusion.[50] It is fair to say, as Robert Speaight does, "that Bridges never got the whiff of the Lyceum out of his nostrils; and advocate as he always remained of scenic Shakespeare--if it were the right scenery--he smelled the parvenu in Tree."[51] Bridges-Adams' view of Tree was of "a large and lovable playboy who had not the force of spirit to dominate his own spectacle as Irving did."[52] Commenting on Tree's isolated experiment in presenting a non-scenic Hamlet in 1905, he contemptuously pointed out that the production had been "still impenitently Treeism, not Poelish at all."[53]

One aspect of stage production in which Bridges-Adams was indebted to Henry Irving was lighting. Bridges-Adams was never in sympathy with the "egalitarian brilliance," used by Granville-Barker, "which seemed to take all mystery from the stage."[54] He particularly disliked Granville-Barker's use of brilliant white light, which he described as "germ-free." He himself attempted to achieve with electric lights the soft chiaroscuro effects of the gas-lit theatre, the kind of effects Henry Irving had made famous at the Lyceum.[55] Bridges-Adams lit his sets atmospherically, but, in contrast to Irving, often illuminated only parts of the stage, a practice which irritated some of the Bensonians in his company who liked a good shaft of light in which to stand and deliver their lines. Bringing up a complaint that had often been levied against Bridges-Adams' lighting effects since the outset of his directorship at Stratford-upon-Avon, one reviewer of his Romeo and Juliet production in 1933 contended that Bridges-Adams' presentations often had been ruined on the stage by insufficient lighting. Although the critic acknowledged that the gloom was effective for the tomb scene of Romeo and Juliet, he felt that "there is something entirely wrong in a system that leaves the face of Juliet in the shadows through the immortal colloquy on the balcony, for if there is one scene in the world demanding the clear, cold light of the moon on the lovers' faces, it is this" (Birmingham Post, April 23, 1934). Poel had written to Bridges-Adams with a similar grievance after seeing Bridges-Adams' production of Henry V on tour at the Strand in London in 1920:

> You were hampered by not having a front light at the Strand to pick out the figures and bring them out of the background. . . . As a consequence one hardly ever sees the faces of the actors . . . and in many scenes the stage is so dark that one hears the voices and does not know where they come from.[56]

Other critics made corresponding remarks, commenting on Bridges-Adams' "favourite device of obscurity" (Birmingham Post, Aug. 8, 1919) and his "perpetual darkness" (Yorkshire Telegraph, Aug. 9, 1919).

In a letter written long after he had left Stratford-upon-Avon, Bridges-Adams explained his principles of lighting:

> The golden rule, as you probably know, is to keep all projected and focussed lighting on the actors and off the set. This brings the actors into relief and pushes the set back. Footlights are a great help if judiciously used. But the most effective focus-lamps are what we used to call perch-limes, striking sideways and downwards from just behind the proscenium columns; they unobtrusively put an edge on the actors without hitting the scenery.[57]

While some critics disliked Bridges-Adams' lighting techniques, dubbing his effects "murky," many who saw his productions commended the director for the way in which his lighting could shift and transform the moods within the plays, catching and reflecting the nuance of the moment. His scenes were characterized by soft colours and uncertain outlines, lending "a drowsy and dreamlike appearance without that false theatricality which comes from the use of a veil of gauzes." Gordon Crosse found that Bridges-Adams' lighting for his 1929 production of Romeo and Juliet was marked by "a glowing warmth and richness which displayed in full beauty the costumes worn by the players."[58] His pictures were beautiful stage pictures, suggesting an air of fantasy, yet not overpowering, allowing Shakespeare to maintain control over his own play. Bridges-Adams had a keen eye for delicate effects and William Archer's verdict, early in Bridges-Adams' directorship, that this was "originality without eccentricity," was probably a correct one (The Star, Aug. 6, 1919).

Many who saw Bridges-Adams' productions remarked on his gift, like that of Henry Irving, for grouping actors within a scene, no small task at a time when as many as twenty or thirty supernumeraries were still commonplace. Bridges-Adams acknowledged that he had admired the way in which Henry Irving had peopled a stage with groupings that recalled paintings "from Tintoretto to Meissonier."[59] In its review of Bridges-Adams' Romeo and Juliet in 1933, the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald commented that "there is no producer who can decorate his stage with his actors to such good purpose as Mr. Bridges Adams. His sense of the beautiful, ever subservient to his sense of what is right theatrically, has led him to the creation of some of the finest pictorial effects possible." Time and time again, noted the reviewer, the director had given his audience a thrill by such seemingly simple means as a few cloaked figures plotting in the flickering light of a torch held high by one of their number who stood sentinel over their schemes (June 23, 1933). The Midland Daily Telegraph, moreover, found that Bridges-Adams' introduction of such simple devices as a sonorously ticking clock into the setting for the Potion scene imparted a definitely eerie touch (June 21, 1933). M. C. Day and J. C. Trewin pointed out that Bridges-Adams had seldom used his stage more effectively than in the last scene of Romeo and Juliet in his 1929 production: Juliet lay on a marble bier in the foreground while at the back, outlined against the night sky, Paris and Romeo fought at the head of steps beyond an iron-barred gate.[60]

IV

Early in his directorship at Stratford-upon-Avon Bridges-Adams had professed his artistic credo. Declaring that although the New Shakespeare Company would aim to give an adequate and satisfactory presentation in each Shakespeare Festival from the scenic point of view, "we believe that the Art of the Theatre is acting and it is on that that we shall insist most" (Daily News, April 29, 1919). Asked in an interview about the role of decorative elements in his productions, Bridges-Adams explained that his aim was to create first and foremost the most fitting frame and background for the acting. Taking an opposing stance to that of producers such as Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Bridges-Adams professed his belief that the art value of a play should be made subordinate to its dramatic value. To him the Art of the Theatre had always been the art of acting. Although he admitted a great admiration for modern décor, the director stated that he would much rather, were the choice offered to him, spend the money on salaries for first-rate actors.[61] It was not the externals which gave magic to Shakespeare, he pointed out: "I always felt nearer to the true music of Shakespeare at a rehearsal on a summer evening with a bare stage and a property chair, and the voices of a young actor and actress running quietly through the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet."[62]

Reviewers of Bridges-Adams' 1933 production of Romeo and Juliet found that Bridges-Adams as producer and Norman Wilkinson as stage designer were a well-assorted pair. The one was able to work beauty into a simple setting which allowed the other to bring the play to the stage with all the swiftness that was essential to this lyric tragedy of four brief days' duration. Bridges-Adams achieved freshness and originality of treatment without either presenting Shakespeare as spectacle or interpreting him in terms that could only be sustained at the expense of the poetry. Praising the producer for his ingenuity and skill which were directed to needs other than their own, the Times commented that "the burden of the play comes ultimately to rest on the acting" (June 21, 1933).

During the 1920's and 1930's comparisons were often made between the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon and the Old Vic in London, for these two theatres were the only theatres regularly producing Shakespeare at that time. Some critics felt that the weakness of Bridges-Adams' work at Stratford-upon-Avon generally lay in the acting and verse-speaking of his company. Unkind critics implied that his emphasis on stage pictures masked an inability to draw performances from his actors. It was the judgment of W. G. Darlington of the Daily

Telegraph, for example, one of the few London critics who regularly made the journey to Stratford-upon-Avon in the 1920's and 1930's, that "the productions and settings at Stratford are certainly better conceived than anything the Waterloo Road house can show, but for team work and acting ability the Old Vic has it nine times out of ten." In general it was Darlington's belief that the Stratford-upon-Avon performances lacked metropolitan "class," and he wrote of "a certain lack of finish and precision" (Daily Telegraph, April 28, 1921). This was an early verdict before Bridges-Adams' companies got into their stride, but the critic later continued to sneer retrospectively at the Memorial and to assert that the companies there had always been poor and inferior to those at the Old Vic. But much of the retrospective criticism was unfair, occasioned partly by Bridges-Adams' refusal to employ stars, and his insistence on trying to build up a company, a policy that ran directly counter to the theatrical taste of the day. The crucial difference between the theatres, which Darlington failed to acknowledge, was one of continuity. The Old Vic company played together for six months of the year, time which allowed for the development of that intangible team spirit in both the company and its audience, and for adequate rehearsal time. Moreover, as Sally Beauman points out, the cross-fertilization between the Memorial Theatre and the Old Vic which continued through the 1920's, with both companies constantly using the same actors, suggests that the acting standards of the Old Vic and the Memorial must have been far more on a par than the critics chose later to suggest.[63]

When the editor of the Sunday Times in a column criticized Bridges-Adams for not using star actors in his productions, the director wrote to him, retorting that "the star system tempts and exploits, but cannot create, the great actor." Great acting, maintained Bridges-Adams, sprang from the stock system, when hard routine in a round of parts had "left its mark on a personality of the necessary force and magnetism." "That is why a young team-work company should be supported for its potentialities, no less than for its achievements," he admonished the editor.[64]

For his Romeo and Juliet productions Bridges-Adams followed William Poel's directive in choosing for his titular figures two relatively young and inexperienced actors who marvelously looked their parts. For his first production of Romeo and Juliet in 1919 he had used Joyce Carey, not yet twenty, who had been a pathetically childlike Juliet, sincere and charming, with all the timid assurances of a love too natural to be distrusted or even questioned. Even in the potion scene Carey had abstained from the traditional sensational delivery, rightly divining that if only she could bring out the terrible predicament, the perplexities and the utter loneliness of Juliet, she could leave the rest to Shakespeare. All this she had accomplished with quiet intensity more affecting than many a noisier and more demonstrative rendition recalled by critics (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, Aug. 15, 1919). In Bridges-Adams' 1929 and 1930 productions Joyce Bland had given grace, dignity and youth to her Juliet. Bland, too, was an actress of little experience but she had a winning simplicity, a soft and clear voice and, above all, a sense of character. With her "personal beauty, youthful appeal, variety of mood and manner, concentration," the young actress had poignantly developed Juliet's character from that of the docile, carefree child to that of the passionate, single-visioned woman" (Stage, July 11, 1929).

The Midland Daily Telegraph found that Bridges-Adams' revival of

Romeo and Juliet in 1933 was praiseworthy not only from the point of view of stage-craft, but also memorable for the "magnificent performance" given by a newcomer to the company (June 21, 1933). For this production Bridges-Adams' ideal for Juliet was found in the teenage Rachel Kempson (later Lady Redgrave), a Juliet touchingly young and yet ardent, whom J. C. Trewin later remembered as "heartbreaking in her youth."[65] Kempson had left the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art only a short time before, after distinguishing herself brilliantly in her final performances there. Immediately engaged by Bridges-Adams to begin rehearsing at Stratford-upon-Avon, she had already played Hero, Phoebe, Virgilia and other parts at the Memorial Theatre with outstanding success. Entrusted with the part of Juliet after only two months on the professional stage, the actress brought to Juliet a pale, cool beauty which seemed at first too faint in hue for its purpose but which deepened in colour and intensity as the need grew until it flamed finely in the potion scene. This was a beautiful performance, agreed critics, rich in delicate cadences and pulsating with restrained passion. Reviewers noted that Kempson's portrayal was not entirely free from faults, faults that would no doubt speedily disappear as she gained stage experience, but she played as though inspired, and her portrayal of the most lovely and compelling of Shakespeare's tragic heroines was marked throughout by an appeal which caused her performance "to abide in the memory as one of the most charming and fragrant one has witnessed in the Memorial Theatre" (Midland Daily Telegraph, June 21, 1933).

The Times pointed out that although the actress' verse-speaking might be more musical, the strength of Kempson's delivery was that it was unaffected, and besides giving freshness and spontaneity to familiar passages it had the emotional power which belonged to sincerity: "Whether ecstatic in the wings of happiness or distractedly rushing on death, her feeling is deep and true, and only escapes her control on rare and almost always lesser occasions" (June 21, 1933). Juliet's speaking of the purple passage which was such sweet prelude to the lovers' duet in Act II.ii was "breathed gently into the night breeze, a faithful messenger to the airs of her love," reported the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald. "I can still hear the delicate cadences of Miss Kempson's 'Do not swear at all,' and the delightfully naïve inflection given to that 'Stay but a little; I will come again,'" wrote the delighted critic (June 23, 1933). This was a balcony scene of "quite surpassing loveliness," agreed the Birmingham Mail. The softest nuances of her girlish voice "seemed like the caresses of the circumambient air, her gestures like touches of music." The reviewer commented that the actress "lived never acted the part," and was able to realize the lyrical grace of "how silver sweet sound lovers' tongues at night." This line was the keynote of the first half of the production, and in the second half, when the tragedy becomes deeper and more compelling, the actress rose to heights of intensity. Juliet's difficult soliloquy, "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds," introducing Act III.ii, was well attempted by the young actress, and in the potion scene her restraint showed her acting skills at their finest (June 21, 1933). "The potion scene was played with such fervour," noted one critic, "that one did not notice at what point she took the poison" (Birmingham Post, June 21, 1933). A year later, when Bridges-Adams revived his production for the next year's Stratford Festival and again used Kempson as his Juliet, the audience found that Juliet's urgent appeal in the crypt, at the end of the play, was so strong that she succeeded in wringing tears from the most hardened of playgoers (Birmingham Evening Despatch, April 23, 1934).

Finding Rachel Kempson's performance remarkable indeed for one who had but recently left the Academy, the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald proclaimed, "Miss Kempson need have no fears; she can teach many of her betters many things." The newspaper declared that if inexperience mitigated the effectiveness of some of her scenes, imagination and the glimmerings of inspiration more than compensated for any loss sustained by lack of "tricks" (June 23, 1933). Critics prophesized a brilliant theatrical future for the lovely novice actress whose Juliet was marked with unstilted diction and keen emotional power.

The very tight schedule of rehearsals for the Shakespeare Festivals at Stratford-upon-Avon left no time for those long discussions between director and artist which so often bring a fine performance to fruition. Robert Speaight relates that Bridges-Adams "engaged you because you knew your business and let you get on with it." Rachel Kempson, he said, was one of the few performers with whom Bridges-Adams worked in creative intimacy, and the result was a Juliet that Speaight remembered was "like the roses of the spring."[66] Kempson's triumphs that first season as Ophelia, Cordelia, Hero and Juliet all paid tribute to Bridges-Adams' fine direction.

Critics concentrated their reviews on the outstanding performance of Rachel Kempson but they also paid brief tribute to John Wyse who, having joined the company during the previous season, presented a handsome, suave, yet gentlemanly young Romeo to Kempson's Juliet. They judged Wyse best in the balcony scene where fine writing inspires worthy interpretation and where this young actor took "his rightful place in a duet which echoes the poet's greatness" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, June 23, 1933). Although reviewers found that the performance of Wyse as Romeo had its great moments, they generally assessed it as less pleasing than that of Kempson. For the Daily Midland Telegraph Wyse's performance frequently lacked the passionate fire necessary in the portrayal of so ardent a young lover (June 21, 1933), and for the Times this Romeo, like so many other Romeos in the past, "never quite came to the full height at which he could charge his defiance of the stars with an emotion beyond that of mere words" (June 21, 1933). On the whole, critics concurred that John Wyse's Romeo suffered from being too consciously acted; one reviewer noted of the young actor that "at the moment he is very much like an actor trying to play Romeo instead of being Romeo" (Birmingham Post, June 21, 1933). John Wyse strove mightily to make Romeo live, commented the Birmingham Mail, "perhaps so much that he forgot that his art, like his love, should sometimes come by stealth" (June 21, 1933). Summing up its comments on a production which in its acting was most memorable for its Juliet, the Birmingham Post made the point that "Romeo and Juliet has often turned out to be Juliet and Romeo; so it was last night at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre" (June 21, 1933).[67]

A number of critics commented on the fine acting of the secondary roles in Bridges-Adams' production. Of these smaller parts, said the Midland Daily Telegraph, "excellent delineations were forthcoming." George Hayes was commended for his Mercutio which the newspaper found especially admirable--clear-cut and virile (June 21, 1933). The Times praised Alice O'Day for her excellent delineation of the Nurse and Eric Lee for a Tybalt that was "something more than mere bluster" (June 21, 1933). The Friar Lawrence of Stanley Howlett, too, was acclaimed, a

Friar who in Bridges-Adams' conception could "twist that dagger out of Romeo's hand with the hard sinews begotten of hard living."[68]

Throughout the years critics had often applauded the ensemble acting in Bridges-Adams' productions. Writing at the end of the director's first Shakespeare Festival in 1919, the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald had spoken of the whole week's work: "Much hard work has been done by the smaller part artists . . . to these lesser lights a generous tribute should be paid." Their work, noted the critic, "was good and sound" (Aug. 8, 1919). In a review of Bridges-Adams' first production of Romeo and Juliet, the Morning Post had commented approvingly on the fact that in his company no one held a monopoly on any definite type of part or on parts of any given magnitude. The Mercutio of one day was the Caliban of the morrow; the Falstaff was also the Casca. "And it was remarkable," related the reviewer, "how many small parts, now that they were no longer regarded as insignificant and treated accordingly but were restored to their original offices, shone forth brilliantly" (Sept. 2, 1919). The Observer had made the point that "it is when we get to the small parts . . . we realise what good material Mr. Bridges Adams has to work on and how well he is working on it." "Here at last," declared the critic, "is a (not new) but true Shakespearean company" (April 25, 1920). Bridges-Adams in 1932 acknowledged that his company was a good team, although "team work" was a cant phrase which the director was careful to avoid. "It is detested by my company," he declared. "The thing which this metaphor connotes exists as a matter of course. I go all out for individual excellence, and trust my own authority to keep the balance."[69]

What was perceived by some critics to be inadequate instruction of actors in the art of verse-speaking and the failure to inspire them to effective performance stemmed to a large extent from the lack of rehearsal time and the impermanency of the company. After seeing Bridges-Adams' production of A Midsummer Night's Dream during the director's first season at Stratford-upon-Avon, Harley Granville-Barker wrote the young director that he had liked almost everything until almost the end of the production when Bridges-Adams had allowed his actors to use tired comic business. "But this must not be when you have 75 percent of the thing as right as right."[70] Granville-Barker had put his finger on the single problem which, more than any other, was to plague Bridges-Adams' work. Because he was never able to have adequate rehearsal time, except for a single season in 1933, Bridges-Adams generally had to rely on actors experienced at playing Shakespeare, but in using such actors, with only a few days to work on each play, it was virtually impossible for him to rid his productions entirely of the tired inheritance of stage "business." He knew as well as Granville-Barker that these stale traditions had to be cleared away if the plays were to be rethought freshly, but how was it to be possible with but a few days' rehearsal?[71]

There is no question, however, that Bridges-Adams had a perceptive appreciation of the actor's art and the difficulties inherent in its expression. A firm supporter of ensemble acting and the no-star system, his ideal for a company was "a succession of actors . . . employed for the principal parts; thus every member has the knowledge that in time he will be called upon to play the lead, and enthusiasm is maintained" (Daily News, April 23, 1920). The impossibility of supporting a permanent company and severely limited rehearsal time prevented the full realization of this ideal which had never been more than an optimistic hope.

It is clear from his letters and from the comments made in his occasional writings that Bridges-Adams, like Poel and Granville-Barker, placed great emphasis on the importance of effective verse-speaking. "Speaking of the verse is so sure a guide to the emotional rise and fall of the play that an actor with an ear will find it almost makes his points for him," declared Bridges-Adams many years after he had left Stratford-upon-Avon. In a play such as Romeo and Juliet, he pointed out, "it will help to keep the blood at fever heat."[72] His advice later to producers of Shakespeare was to place great emphasis on verse-speaking in the early rehearsals of a production, a practice that he himself had never been able to effect sufficiently due to lack of rehearsal time. Although he would have rejected Poel's methods in "the teaching of tunes" as too extreme and not grounded in Elizabethan practice, he was nonetheless in accord with Poel's emphasis on verse-speaking: "As to speaking, start them round a table, like Barker and Poel before him, and keep them there until you have their voices right."[73] In a letter to William Poel after Bridges-Adams had presented twenty of Shakespeare's plays, the director acknowledged that Poel's emphasis on verse-speaking was a correct one:

> I am more convinced than ever that the true understanding and right speaking of the lines are the only key to the theatre of Shakespeare, and his only protection against the mutilated versions of the star on the one hand, and the brilliant irrelevancies of the producer and designer on the other.[74]

Judging by the fine results achieved by Bridges-Adams' close direction of Rachel Kempson in his 1933 Romeo and Juliet production, one realizes the great heights which this director could have achieved if he had been given more rehearsal time over the years and had been accorded the opportunity to build a permanent company.

V

Bridges-Adams was influenced not only by William Poel's principles for staging, acting and verse-speaking in Shakespearean production, but also by that pioneer's insistence upon the integrity of Shakespeare's texts on the stage. When the young director arrived in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1919, he declared a policy of full texts and no cuts, still a revolutionary approach in the theatre at that time: "I want as far as possible to play Shakespeare without cuts, and without transposing scenes, and without intervals," he declared. Acknowledging that Old Shakespeareans might complain that certain traditional business had been eliminated in each of his productions, he explained that "in nine cases out of ten I am doing that in order to get in more text" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, July 25, 1919). It was his intention, moreover, to present Shakespeare "as far as possible unbowdlerized," and he pointed out that the company would give such speeches as Juliet's "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds," a passage which had been "hardly ever given before" (Athenaeum, Aug. 8, 1919).

That first season Bridges-Adams fulfilled his promise to follow "the line of full text" and he presented Shakespeare's plays virtually uncut, a policy which earned him Ben Greet's soubriquet of "Mr. Unabridges-Adams" (Morning Post, Aug. 19, 1919). He retained every line of Julius Caesar, for example, and cut only 60 of the 3,074 lines of The Winter's Tale, mostly on the grounds of indecency (Nation, Aug. 9, 1919). The Stratford-upon-Avon Herald reported that the producer presented "practically all" of Romeo and Juliet and commended him for retaining the Chorus and for restoring many scenes and lines commonly excised.

The young director, however, found himself under a barrage of criticism from William Archer who condemned his approach and who claimed that Romeo and Juliet suffered from the application of what George Bernard Shaw had referred to as "holus-bolus" Shakespeare. Indeed, Archer pointed out, Mr. Bridges-Adams showed himself more Shavian than Shaw and had retained more than one passage of "ultra Elizabethan grossness." The performance, he maintained, would have been "perceptively more enjoyable" if it had been relieved of fifteen or twenty minutes of "otiose and valueless matter" (Star, Aug. 18, 1919). Archer declared that it was a delight to come to Stratford-upon-Avon and hear every line of the text of A Midsummer Night's Dream, beautifully staged by Mr. Bridges-Adams, but that Romeo and Juliet "certainly did not gain by the retention of a good deal of grossness and puerility" (Nation, Aug. 23, 1919). Opposed to a policy of textually faithful Shakespeare, the critic contended that "a good deal of inert matter which, if not absolutely incomprehensible, at any rate conveys no meaning to ninety-nine hearers out of a hundred." Disagreeing with Poel's and Shaw's insistence on playing Shakespeare in his integrity, Archer declared, "If Mr. Bridges-Adams is to do justice to his great gifts as a producer, he must make a resolute stand against the mischievous fanaticism which clamors for holus-bolus Shakespeare" (Nation, Aug. 9, 1919).

Although Bridges-Adams from the outset had professed his intention to present Shakespeare uncut, he admitted that he was "not, however, a fanatical adherent of no cuts" (Athenaeum, Aug. 8, 1919).[75] By 1922 he was already saying that this policy needed review, and from about 1923 onwards he began to cut texts much more freely. In a letter written a few years into his directorship at Stratford-upon-Avon, Bridges-Adams explained that he had regarded his no-cuts policy in 1919 as experimental, "for I wanted to find out really what the plays made of themselves when left alone, and it is only possible to do this by seeing them acted." Now that he knew more about the plays, he would not hesitate to cut when he considered it advisable," for I shall be able to do it with less fear of mutilating."[76]

On another occasion, many years later, he wrote that it had been a good thing to pass the whole of Shakespeare under review, and see what he amounted to, at a time when mutilations were still customary on the stage. Certainly, he had discovered, an uncut text restored much neglected beauty. But it also reminded one that even the first Folio--compiled as it might have been by actors from recollections of their parts as well as from manuscripts still undiscovered--abounded in imperfections, even setting its seal on some unmistakable gags. Contemporary evidence, including Hamlet's famous protest, pointed to a stage production that by no means held the author's text inviolate, Bridges-Adams explained, contending that one of the tests of a producer was how far the play emerged cleaner and stronger for his cutting. The problem, he said, varied greatly from play to play; who needed to cut a line of A Midsummer Night's Dream? On the other hand, the clearly corrupt Macbeth went off "like a thunderclap" when certain excisions were made or could drag without them."[77] It was his belief, for example, that the scene between Ross and the Old Man slowed the action and that it was "much better to go straight to Forres and that haunted throne."[78]

Bridges-Adams rejected the rigid insistence of the "Elizabethan Methodists"--and he counted Shaw among them--on uncut texts in performance; their bible, he said, was the Folio, "gags, corruptions, obscenities and all."[79] His own view was that "a great play is not a fragile thing like a sonnet; it only achieves itself through actors and spectators," and he condemned the rigid adherence to uncut texts by those who preferred "still-life perfection to live imperfection."[80] Shakespeare's plays were written in the hurly-burly of theatre with certain actors in mind, no doubt, and the writing, done in the forge of the theatre, was subject to all sorts of practical considerations. The text of a Shakespearean play was the one that was used by a company for performance, and whatever original version existed would inevitably have undergone many changes before performance. Shakespeare would have expected this and certainly would have had no conception of his original version as something sacrosanct to be guarded for future generations.

At a conference on the theatre sponsored by the British Drama League in 1919, and reported in the Morning Post, Bridges-Adams spoke on "Shakespeare in the Theatre" and wittily outlined a classification of cuts commonly made in Shakespearean productions. The first, he said, was the "cut selfish" by which an actor-manager reduced to a shadow the parts played by his unhappy comrades. Then came the "cut modest," the removal of matter that had ceased to be polite. Third came the "cut obscure" where textual corruption had made the passage meaningless. Fourth was the "cut prudential or politic" whereby the actor-manager relieved himself of whatever he did not fancy (Morning Post, Aug. 18, 1919).

Bridges-Adams himself employed the "cut modest" and the "cut obscure" with prudency and, although he was not an actor-manager, he also employed the "cut prudential" on occasion. Robert Speaight relates that Bridges-Adams conceived "a chronic aversion to Christopher Sly and had him away altogether when he felt he could do so with impunity." With his instinct for dramatic momentum he cut some hundreds of lines out of

Richard III and, "less excusably," said Speaight, the prison scene from Twelfth Night.[81] Sally Beauman points out that cuts were also made for other reasons. There was an "over-tender sensitivity, a delicate squeamishness in his temperament," which could make him rebel against the uncompromising harshness of certain Shakespearean plays or certain scenes. In Othello, for example, he shied away from the rankness of Iago's sexual innuendo and preferred to cut the key scene in which Othello, "reduced to the ignominy of pushing his black face round the edge of a curtain," eavesdrops on Cassio and Bianca.[82] He was also prepared on occasion to cut a play if, by doing so, he could satisfy the "instincts of the show-man" within him. Coriolanus, for example, he staged spectacularly in the Reinhardt manner, with highly vocal supernumeraries teeming onto the stage from the orchestra pit. His changes altered the import of the play significantly but enabled him to stage it in such a way that its epic excitement was still vividly remembered by some critics over forty years later.

In general principle, however, Bridges-Adams cut texts with discretion, and it was Speaight's contention that Bridges-Adams "earned--upon the whole--Ben Greet's soubriquet of Mr. Unabridges-Adams."[83] In a review of one of Bridges-Adams' early productions of Hamlet, the Daily Telegraph noted that the play was given almost entirely within a time of playing of not more than three and a half hours. The reviewer found that the text had been "sparingly and carefully cut" so that the original balance and order of the play was preserved; "in fact, a very close knowledge of the text is needed to detect that it has been cut at all" (Daily Telegraph, Aug. 5, 1922).

In his 1930 "Preface to Romeo and Juliet," Granville-Barker pointed out that in presenting this play on the stage the producer had a few problems to face. First of all was the minor one of indecency. "One or two of Mercutio's jabs are too outrageous for modern public usage," he stated; "they will create discomfort among a mixed audience instead of laughter." The critic warned producers, however, that the full-blooded sensuality in the play was set by Shakespeare very purposely against Romeo's romantic idealism, and this balance and contrast must not be destroyed. A producer was tempted to cutting far more than this, however, and it was Granville-Barker's contention that most producers fell to the temptation. The play as commonly presented started fairly true to Shakespeare, a troublesome passage suppressed here and there; but as it advanced, more and more of the text disappeared until it became "hop-skip-and-jump, and 'Selections from the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet'" could be a truer title for it. This practice, he warned, would not do. Granville-Barker admitted that the play's construction, very naturally, did not show the skill of Shakespeare's maturity, nor did every character stand "consistent and foursquare." The writing ran to "extravagant rhetoric and often to redundancy." But Shakespeare's chosen method of close consecutive narration, maintained Granville-Barker, could be lamed by savage mutilation; and rhetoric and redundancy, the violence, the absurdities even, were the medium in which the characters were intentionally painted. The verbiage and its eccentricities to modern ears seemed harder to compass, but the critic explained that much that struck one as strange in print would pass and make its own effect in the rush of performance.[84]

In a letter written a few years into his directorship at Stratford-upon-Avon, Bridges-Adams explained that the plays of Shakespeare that he would advise playing uncut (barring bawdy) were not many; if he were to save an average audience not only from shock but also from bewilderment and boredom, he would have a list of only three: A Midsummer Night's Dream, Julius Caesar, and Twelfth Night. The director explained that he would almost add Romeo and Juliet to his list except that he would cut "most of the obscurity" but, in contrast to most other producers, would leave in "some of the hard edges of obscenity which to my mind just save the play from softness."[85]

The Birmingham Mail in its review of Bridges-Adams' 1930 presentation of the play commended the director for his judicious handling of cuts and noted that the producer was particularly to be congratulated on his boldness in defying Mrs. Grundy and giving the audience Mercutio's daring vocabulary as Shakespeare wrote it (June 24, 1930). In a comment similar to that made by Granville-Barker, Bridges-Adams later pointed out in The Irresistible Theatre that to overprune the pleasantries of Mercutio and the Nurse was to rob the play of something that particularly helped its presentation of young love. "Any tempering of any harshness may weaken the whole," he asserted; "it is on a sunless day that there are no shadows."[86] The Stratford-upon-Avon Herald found his text in performance an effective one: "There must be here shown a contrast--for this is a play of contrasts--between the lewd, though homely woman of restricted outlook, and the spiritual purity of the child who is her charge" (Aug. 16, 1929).

In cutting bawdy in his 1933 production of Romeo and Juliet, Bridges-Adams excised only those passages that he considered intolerably indecent: the initial bawdy dialogue between the servants in the first scene (I.i.25-35), Mercutio's obscene wish for Romeo to be a "poplin pear" (II.i.37), his statement that Rosaline refused to "open her lap to saint seducing gold" (I.ii.217), and the last six lines of his Queen Mab speech (I.iv.89-94). He also cut the bawdy jokes of Mercutio and Romeo against the Nurse in II.iv (72-105) and the Nurse's warning to Juliet, "I am the drudge and toil in your delight;/ But you shall bear the burden soon at night" (II.v.75-76).

For this production Bridges-Adams used the Temple edition of the play, from which he cut approximately six hundred lines. Frank Benson, by contrast, used to cut almost thirteen hundred lines in his presentations of the play. The promptbook for Bridges-Adams' production is now housed in the Shakespeare Memorial Library in Stratford-upon-Avon.[87] The only sustained cuts he made were the scene of Peter and the musicians in IV.v; the short scene in which Lady Capulet, Nurse, Capulet and servingmen make preparation for the wedding of Juliet and Paris (IV.iv); and a good deal of the narration at the end of the play concerning the circumstances of the death of the young lovers (V.iii). Important passages of commentary such as the two choruses Bridges-Adams kept entire as well as key scenes such as the initial encounter between the young couple (I.v), their balcony scene (II.ii), Juliet's impatience for news of her beloved and her ardent anticipation of her wedding night (III.ii), the farewell between the lovers (III.v), and Juliet's potion scene (IV.v).

In the other scenes it was Bridges-Adams' general practice to make excisions within speeches. His policy for such cuts he presented in an early interview in which he revealed that he shared Poel's concern for cutting carefully within speeches. His own method was as follows:

> In studying the book . . . one frequently finds in the middle of a long speech a passage admirably adapted for cutting. Half-way through a line you come upon a full-stop, then the

> speaker branches off along quite a different avenue of thought, and continues until another full-stop is reached in the middle of another line. If you take out the whole of the self-contained passage and link the two broken lines together, you don't interfere with the rhythm or the spirit of the text and people are filled with admiration for your industry in giving them the "full text Shakespeare." (Birmingham Mail, March 3, 1921)[88]

This method Bridges-Adams used in cutting passages in Romeo and Juliet. In the first act he deleted 131 lines. In scene i his largest excision was to Montague's rhetorical description of Aurora's bed. In the second scene he condensed by ten lines the Nurse's reminiscences of Juliet's childhood, "For I had then laid wormwood to my dug" (I.iii.25-34), and by eight lines Lady Capulet's extravagant description of Paris' face and her exhortation to Juliet to "examine every married lineament,/ And see how one another lends content" (I.iii.83-91). In the last scene of Act I Bridges-Adams shortened Capulet's description of Romeo of whom Verona "brags . . . to be a virtuous well-governed youth" (I.v.70-75). The director also cut entirely the sixteen-line preliminary business of the servingmen coming forth with napkins (I.v.1-16).

Bridges-Adams cut only sixty-seven lines from Act II. Besides pruning the bawdiness of Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio (II.iv.72-105), he condensed by nine lines the Friar's elaborate description of "the earth that's nature's mother is her tomb" (II.iii.9-23). He kept entire II.vi, the short scene in which the Friar announces to Romeo and Juliet "you shall not stay alone/ Till Holy Church incorporate two in one."

In Act III, in which Tybalt is killed and Romeo is banished, Bridges-Adams clearly aimed to speed up the dramatic momentum and he therefore curtailed the lamentations of Tybalt's kinsmen as well as Benvolio's lengthy narrative to the Prince of the circumstances of the fray. Unlike producers before him Bridges-Adams kept in its integrity Juliet's vital "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds." On the other hand, like most producers before him, Bridges-Adams cut Juliet's subsequent tormented word play on "Aye," "I" and "eye" (III.ii.44-51), a cut which in his view would have fallen under the category of the "cut obscure." It was Granville-Barker's contention, however, that to shirk Juliet's delirium of puns was to lower the scene's temperature and "flatten it out when Shakespeare had planned to lift it, by these very means, to a sudden height of intoxicated excitement."[89] Bridges-Adams as well condensed by fourteen lines Juliet's prolonged anguish, in III.ii, on learning of her husband's banishment. The director had a short interval of ten minutes after this important scene.

In the subsequent scene, in which Romeo reacts to his banishment, the producer pruned eight lines from the prolonged anguish of the young lover and shortened by sixteen lines the Friar's angry exhortations, "Why railest thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth?" (III.iii.119-134). After the poignant farewell between the lovers at dawn, in III.v, comes the scene in which Lady Capulet and Juliet grieve over the death of Tybalt. Bridges-Adams cut extensively the word-play in this passage and Juliet's extravagant appeal "O, how my heart abhors to hear him named" (III.v.100-104). Similarly he curtailed Capulet's rhetorical description of Juliet's tears (III.v.130-139).

Shakespeare in Act IV ironically juxtaposes Juliet, who after drinking the potion falls "upon her bed, within the curtains," with the bustling preparations made by the household for her wedding. This contrast Bridges-Adams chose to omit, and in his production the action progressed from Juliet falling upon her bed to the Nurse discovering her as she "draws back the curtains" (IV.v). In the subsequent scene Shakespeare presents the lamentations of the family, Paris, Nurse and Friar as they react to the discovery of the supposedly dead Juliet. Granville-Barker pointed out with this scene how the cutting of a speech or two is "like the removal of a few bricks from a wall; it may be a harmless operation and it may not." Acknowledging that the antiphonal mourning over Juliet was doubtless crude, he maintained that a producer would be tempted to get rid of it, or at least to modify it. If he did so, however, what became of the calming effect of Friar Lawrence's long speeches? There would be nothing for him to calm. Cut this passage, too, and Capulet would have to turn without rhyme or reason from distracted grief to dignified resignation, while the others, the Friar included, stood like foolish lay figures.[90] Frank Benson's solution to this problem had been to end the act on Juliet's potion scene and to excise the 138 lines of scenes iv and v. Unlike most producers before him Bridges-Adams recognized the importance of the lengthy lamentations and kept them in their entirety; he then condensed by thirteen lines the elaborate word-play in the Friar's speech, "Peace, ho, for shame! Confusion's cure lives not in these confusions" (IV.v.65-68, 70-78). The producer ended the act on a conventional note, however, with the Friar's exhortation for the family and Paris "to follow this fair corse unto her grave." Effecting a grand tableau in which, as the stage directions point out, "all exit followed by the Nurse leaving the Friar standing by the body of Juliet," Bridges-Adams cut entirely the subsequent scene between Peter and the musicians. William Poel had presented this scene, with only a few lines cut, in his 1905 production at the Royalty. Gordon Crosse had praised Barry Jackson's company at the Regent Theatre in

London in 1924 for also presenting the scene, one which, noted the critic, he had never heard before on the stage. How effectively the dialogue relieved the tension, Crosse pointed out, just when relief was needed.[91]

Frank Benson in his presentations of Romeo and Juliet at Stratford-upon-Avon used to bring down the final curtain on the death of Juliet. In a review of a production of Romeo and Juliet at the Strand in 1926, the Observer pointed out that extraordinary cuts to the last act could still be found on the contemporary stage. In the Strand production, too, the play ended with the death of Juliet, and the reconciliation of the Capulets and Montagues was cut entirely away (Dec. 19, 1926). Both Poel and Granville-Barker, however, had pointed out that to finish the play on the poignant note of Juliet's death was to falsify Shakespeare's whole intention and that to restore the play to its own sort of stage would serve to curb such follies, at least."[92]

Although Bridges-Adams did not end his production on Juliet's death, like almost all producers before him, including William Poel, he cut extensively from the last act of the play, omitting 168 lines, most of which were excised from the final scene. The speeches of the watchmen were cut entirely as were Lord and Lady Capulet's lamentations on "look how our daughter bleeds." In his production the play progressed directly from the Prince's command, "Search, seek, and know how this foul murder comes" (V.iii.198) to his demand, "Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague,/ See what a scourge is laid upon your hate" (V.iii.291-92). Cut entirely in this ninety-four-line excision were the lamentations of the Capulets and Montagues as well as the Friar's lengthy narrative of the circumstances surrounding the death of the young lovers. Like Poel

Bridges-Adams stressed the reconciliation of the two households. In his production the Prince, having declared, "All are punished," and including his own name among those guilty, then took, according to the stage directions, "Montague's hand across the tomb" as Capulet exclaimed, "O brother Montague, give me thy hand." As the fathers of the two opposing families shook hands "over the bodies of their dead children," the Prince spoke the final passage, "A gloomy peace this morning with it brings . . . For never was a story of more woe/ Than this of Juliet and her Romeo."

VI

The Times found that Bridges-Adams had so adroitly turned to account the freedom of movement given him by the multiple setting that the story of Romeo and Juliet was able to reveal itself with vividness and completeness. The newspaper urged Shakespeareans who ardently desired a decent pretext for visiting the Shakespeare Festival a second time to seize upon this new production of Romeo and Juliet as a compelling reason. "In many ways it is the biggest thing that has been done at Stratford this year," reported the Times, pointing out that the production achieved "freshness and originality of treatment" without either arranging Shakespeare as spectacle or interpreting him in psychological terms that could be sustained at the expense of the poetry. Mr. Wilkinson had done his work unobtrusively and well, and Mr. Bridges-Adams had seized the opportunity thus afforded him. The Times judged Bridges-Adams' production "swift, balanced and perceptive," enabled by its swiftness to make vivid the contrast between scene and scene which is

Shakespeare's most obvious technical device in this tragedy; by its balance to keep clearly in the audience's minds the vital connection between the death of the star-crossed lovers and the burial of their parents' strife; and by its perceptiveness to send the viewers away from the theatre "with the tragedy shaped and quivering in our minds, yet more than ever persuaded that we are all in love with love" (Times, June 21, 1933). A year later, when the production was revived at the 1934 Shakespeare Festival, the newspaper stated that Romeo and Juliet seemed to possess much of its original beauty and that it was a production "altogether free from eccentricity and dependent on no startling ingenuities of stage-craft" (April 23, 1934). Although the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald had held the opinion that during the first hour of the production the sixteenth and twentieth centuries were waging a battle royal over the matter of style, and that certain of Mr. William Poel's theories were about to be put into practice with a vengeance, and that these, and these only, mattered (June 23, 1933), a more general consensus appeared in the tribute by the Yorkshire Post that Mr. William Bridges-Adams had produced Romeo and Juliet with "meticulous care" and that "a completely satisfying show" was the result (May 28, 1934).

Early in Bridges-Adams' career at Stratford-upon-Avon, William Archer had given his impression of the director's achievements in Shakespearean production:

> There was no impertinent intrusion of the producer between the poet and his audience, no tedious over-elaboration, no pretentious "intellectuality." Shakespeare was suffered to speak for himself and to speak rapidly, smoothly and melodiously. The effect sought for and generally attained was that which lay in the words themselves. . . . Mr. Adams rightly conceives that the function of the producer is to interpret his

> author, not to collaborate with him. He is inspired by an artistic chivalry which forbids him to take advantage of the Bard's defencelessness. (The Nation, Aug. 9, 1919)

Although Bridges-Adams was an artist with a very striking and individual sense of the theatrical design in all branches of theatrical art, behind all his work lay the strong tradition of a drama that was finding its way back to its origins. On Bridges-Adams, as on Granville-Barker, William Poel had been a profound influence. Bridges-Adams' 1933 production of Romeo and Juliet marked his closest approach to Poel's ideals. Looking back many years later, long after he had left Stratford-upon-Avon, he remarked, "I must have apprehended from Poel a notion of the Elizabethan mind and its outlook and values which more and more influenced the spirit in which I approached the plays."[93] Breaking away from the outworn, representational style of production which had been reduced to its absurdum by Tree's live rabbits in A Midsummer Night's Dream, this director had returned to something which, in its essentials, was very similar to the Elizabethan system of an open stage allowing speed of playing and continuity of action. Yet Bridges-Adams always remained an admirer of the beautiful pictorial effects created by Henry Irving in the spectacular theatre at its height; and the director gave his audience at Stratford-upon-Avon, when he felt it was warranted, such scenic features as a landscape or a garden, always maintaining, however, "a setting for actors," not, as in Tree's productions, "a landscape with figures." Many of these scenes, simple and easily moved and lightly built, "were deservedly welcomed at Stratford as very beautiful to eye and mind" (Observer, April 25 , 1920).

The time saved by Bridges-Adams' method of dividing the plays into scenes that followed one another in rapid continuity enabled him to give so much more of Shakespeare's texts than had been customary at Stratford-upon-Avon under Frank Benson. As the reviewer pointed out, "some of us who have not recently looked the plays up in the book may have been surprised at hearing what we heard and seeing what we saw." So it was with the acting. In place of the old emotional thrills which the audience used to enjoy at seeing a great player in a great part, it now got the emotional thrill of seeing a great play: "They play for the play. They play it as a whole--swiftly, cleanly, faithfully. They are youth and energy all through, and no one is allowed to hang up the action by private 'stunts.'" Certainly, as the critic acknowledged, there was nothing new in these features. Other modern managers and companies had tried it, but, as the Observer noted, "Mr. Bridges Adams and his company are trying it hard, trying it on a biggish repertory, trying it in circumstances that draw the eyes of all the world upon them; and they are succeeding to admiration" (Observer, April 25, 1920).

These had been tributes accorded Bridges-Adams early in his years at Stratford-upon-Avon. By 1933 the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and the Shakespeare Festivals were on sound financial footing. Financial contributions towards the building of the new Memorial Theatre had poured in from all over the world. The year 1933 marked Bridges-Adams' most successful season, both artistically and financially, and he had been able to persuade the reluctant governors to allocate him more rehearsal time, staggered openings and increased funding. The inclusion of guest directors such as Tyrone Guthrie and Theodore Komisarjevski and designers such as Norman Wilkinson had provided the benefit of fresh talent as well as the reduction of the impossible workload upon himself. His 1933 season, especially his production of Romeo and Juliet, demonstrated in the main his gifts as a director--his sensitivity, his ability to orchestrate a play, and his capacity, so often denied, to coax a performance from an actor. The season also demonstrated his other gift--his ability as an impresario of a theatre. In his choice of designers such as Norman Wilkinson he showed his discernment; in his encouragement of such artists, his generosity. To achieve what he had achieved in 1933 had required constant fighting and manoeuvring in the face of Archie Flower's strong opposition.

When it came to planning the 1934 season, Bridges-Adams was greatly dismayed to discover that almost all that had been accomplished the previous year was thrown away. The production budget was cut back sharply and a new sub-committee of governors formed to supervise spending. Out of a repertoire of eight productions, five were revivals in order to save money that did not need to be saved. There was to be only one guest director; moreover, there was to be no increase in rehearsal time and no increase in salaries. As Sally Beauman explains, far from utilizing the money now available to improve production standards, Archie Flower used affluence as an argument for retrenchment: if low budget, hastily rehearsed productions could still attract an audience, then why was it necessary to spend money?[94]

Bridges-Adams in 1934 felt it was time for him to go. He maintained that six or seven consecutive openings were as oppressive to everyone working behind the curtain as they were inimical to what they achieved there. He wanted a revision in the size of the repertoire and the timing of rehearsals and openings; he wanted a closer link with other bodies engaged in similar enterprises, giving him larger resources in personnel, even at the cost of some independence; he wanted an international status for the theatre and more guest directors of international repute. When he saw no evidence that these policies would be endorsed, he resigned.[95]

Influenced by critics such as W. A. Darlington of the Daily Telegraph, Archie Flower for years had been heaping much wrong-headed criticism upon his director. The acting at Stratford-upon-Avon, he had convinced the Governors, was not good enough. The reason, he suggested, was not the overambitious repertoire or the lack of rehearsal time; it was that Bridges-Adams was more concerned with sets and lighting than with directing actors.[96] Announcing Bridges-Adams' resignation, Archie Flower passed judgment on his director: "While we admire the flair which Bridges-Adams has for a beautiful picture, I have personally expressed the opinion that more attention should be given to the actor, the speech and the acting" (Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, April 27, 1934).

This harsh judgment against the director, however, was disputed by his actors who later paid Bridges-Adams great tribute. Rachel Kempson, a novice actress faced with the formidable task of playing Juliet in 1933 with only two months' experience on the professional stage, stated that she had found him "infinitely painstaking and patient."[97] Other actors emphasized that Bridges-Adams was concerned with the texts of Shakespeare's plays and with delivering their meaning as fully as possible on the stage. The actress Fabia Drake, who excelled as Shakespeare's comic heroine in Bridges-Adams' productions, wrote that "his actors sensed that he knew this author backwards. There was very little that he found either obscure or unreachable. We relied upon him to keep us true to Shakespeare and no company could ask for more."[98]

Upon Bridges-Adams' resignation George Bernard Shaw, who together with William Archer had sought his appointment in 1919 and who had always supported him, wrote the director: "It is important that you should retire with all the honours. Your name should be connected with Stratford as the George Washington of the revolution against Bensonianism."[99] William Poel, too, had been supportive of his efforts and sympathetic to his troubles. Now elderly, Poel had written Bridges-Adams two years earlier when the new Memorial Theatre had opened: "May every success attend your heavy labours at Stratford-on-Avon. Your New Theatre promises well."[100]

Bridges-Adams' career had been inextricably bound up with the Memorial Theatre and necessarily limited by the financial and artistic restrictions imposed by the Festivals. He had done little work outside Stratford-upon-Avon during his directorship and on retirement he quietly withdrew almost totally from the practical theatre, dedicating the rest of his life to writing books on the British theatre. Sally Beauman's contention is that for twelve years after his departure the Memorial Theatre languished and declined. "There can be no question but that his resignation was a terrible mistake which should not . . . have happened."[101]

"Of all those applying themselves to the production of Shakespeare in England between the two wars Bridges-Adams probably had the best mind," states Robert Speaight, lamenting that this director was not always given the best means to carry out his ideas.[102] J. C. Trewin in his study of Shakespeare on the twentieth-century English stage concurs: Bridges-Adams, he states, produced the most "balanced" Shakespeare of the era and the critic maintains that the director's results would have been even finer if he had not been forced, as a rule, to coax half-a-dozen productions into six nights. Yet for all this flurry of work as the players raced from play to play, Trewin found that the results would often be more animated and persuasive than in the widely-spaced, doggedly rehearsed repertory more than thirty years later. "No period in Stratford record--one, moreover, direly fraught with worry--has been so underpraised," declares Trewin, maintaining that Bridges-Adams' productions had an importance and a vitality that through the years have been too meagrely acknowledged.[103] The director, he says, was never the showman that Henry Irving or Herbert Beerbohm Tree had been but was a profoundly sympathetic Shakespearean whose imagination and grace refreshed everything he undertook. "His own productions--in spite of the lack of rehearsal time and the opening huddle of work--remain some of the best in Stratford history," Trewin wrote three decades later, citing especially Romeo and Juliet and Coriolanus in 1933 and The Tempest and Love's Labours Lost in 1934.[104]

In 1919, when the methods of Herbert Beerbohm Tree were still the norm in Shakespearean production, Bridges-Adams' production methods appeared fresh and exciting. Fifteen years later his presentations were still admired for swiftness of performance, simple scenery, lighting of intense beauty, and ensemble acting. Bridges-Adams' emphasis was on the plays as plays, his commitment was to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, his ambition "to build up something stronger than myself."[105] In so doing Bridges-Adams failed to gain a wide personal following, and in this respect he suffers in any comparison with his predecessor Sir Frank Benson, who always remained at the centre of the Stratford revels each spring. In his own assessment of his career at Stratford-upon-Avon Bridges-Adams considered his greatest achievement to be the development of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre as an institution of international standing.

Susan Brock rightly points out in her audio-visual commentary on the history of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre that Bridges-Adams was never among the first rank of theatrical innovators with Granville-Barker, Terence Grey or Tyrone Guthrie.[106] Indeed, it was by necessity rather than by choice that he fulfilled Edward Gordon Craig's conception of the ideal man of the theatre: an autonomous artist-director who designed settings and costumes, controlled lighting and trained the actors. He was an "imaginative traditionalist" who trod the narrow path between the innovative and the conservative. His special talent lay in his ability to build on the work of others and, in his own words, "to unite aberrations, nihilisms and sheer lunacies in a new classicism."[107]

Bridges-Adams is a fine example of a modern producer who, seeing the value of William Poel's ideas and yet recognizing that a modern audience could not turn itself into Elizabethans, was able to adapt the best of Poel's ideas as well as those of the Irving tradition [illegible] service of the twentieth-century commercial stage. Bridges-Adam [illegible] r achievement was to synthesize the innovations of Poel and Granville-Barker and adapt them to the needs of large-scale commercial production.[108] Modern producers of Shakespeare, on the whole, have been reluctant to give up the technical advantages of the modern theatre in order to gain the speed and continuity of Elizabethan playing; but the impetus, the principles, and the methods which have determined the nature of modern production bear a direct link with William Poel's insistence upon the relationship between the play and its own stage. After nearly three centuries of cutting and rearranging, the theatre has begun to come to terms with Shakespeare's texts in their integrity, and the idea that the author knew his business is now a serious factor in every good producer's calculations. The work of William Poel and Granville-Barker has given a characteristic bias to twentieth-century reforms in Romeo and Juliet presentation, so that ultimately producers like Bridges-Adams have concentrated on matter rather than on manner, and have sought first, by recreating the essentials in the original conditions of performance, to understand Shakespeare's dramatic technique in order fully to comprehend what it was the play has to say, thereby laying a solid foundation for future exploration of Romeo and Juliet's dramatic potential. Bridges-Adams' revivals from 1919 to 1934 initiated movement at Stratford-upon-Avon towards reinterpretation of Shakespeare: restoration of fuller texts, introduction of flexible and unobtrusive settings, continuity of action, and effort to secure fine individual performances and balanced ensemble, principles that have become axioms of the best modern Shakespearean productions.

NOTES

[1] Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare, First Series (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1927); rpt. in four volumes (Princeton: PUP, 1947).

[2] Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare, Second Series (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1930); rpt. Princeton: PUP, 1947, II, 300-349.

[3] A few examples aptly point out the similarities between these two stage-centred critical works.

Both Poel and Granville-Barker remind readers that Shakespeare begins not with the star-crossed lovers but with a clash of the two houses. Reiterating Poel, Granville-Barker explains that "the play's true end is less in the death of the star-crossed lovers than in the burying of their parents' strife" (p. 323). Also echoing Poel, Granville-Barker criticizes producers who heavily cut the final scene of the play: "To omit the final scurry of the Montagues and Capulets and citizens of Verona to the tomb and the Friar's redundant story for the sake of finishing upon the more poignant note of Juliet's death is . . . to falsify Shakespeare's whole intention; and to omit the sequel to the drinking of the potion is as bad or worse! Restoring the play to its own sort of stage will serve to curb these follies, at least" (p. 320).

Like Poel, Granville-Barker examines the differences of Shakespeare's story from Brooke's tale and shows that Shakespeare doubles its dramatic value by turning its months to days. "All the action is shot through with haste and violence," he says (p. 312). "Over a succession of scenes there is no relaxing of tension, vehemence or speed; for every flagging moment in them there is some fresh spur, they reinforce each other, too" (p. 313). Like Poel, Granville-Barker condemns producers who bring down a curtain upon "a display of virtuosity in a 'potion scene,' long drawn out, worried to bits, and leave us to recover till they are ready with Romeo in Mantua and the apothecary" (p. 319).

Both critics point out Shakespeare's emphasis on youth. "This is a tragedy of youth," says Granville-Barker (p. 330). Juliet's tragedy, he declares, "is a child's tragedy; half its poignancy would be gone otherwise" (pp. 343-44). "A Juliet must have both the look and the spirit of a girl of from fourteen to sixteen, and any further sophistication, or worse, a mature assumption of innocence--will be the poet's ruin" (p. 344). Moreover, both critics condemn the false and conventional portrayal of minor characters. "Customary mutilations" leave Capulet, for example, "a mere domestic tyrant, which he is not," declares Granville-Barker (p. 333).

Poel and Granville-Barker emphasize that Shakespeare makes much use of contrast: "One cannot too strongly insist upon the effect Shakespeare gains by this vivid contrast between scene and scene, swiftly succeeding each other. It is his chief technical resource" (p. 308). Like Poel, Granville-Barker contends that no curtain should fall upon the marriage of the lovers. "An act pause after the marriage falls with a certain effect, but it nullifies the far better effect by which Tybalt is shown striking the streets in search of Romeo at the very moment when the Friar is marrying him to Juliet" (p. 326). Poel stresses that the second outbreak of hostilities is important and that there should be no curtain on Romeo's "O I am fortune's fool." Granville-Barker, likewise, emphasizes the need for the audience to be "sped on with little relaxation." Juliet's ecstasy of expectation, "Gallop apace," makes "the best of contrasts, in matter and manner, to the sternness of Romeo's banishing" (p. 311). Everything seems to point to Shakespeare having planned Romeo and Juliet as a thing indivisible, agree the two critics. "It can be so acted without much outrunning the two hours' traffic," a time that to Granville-Barker, as to Poel, means nearer two hours than either one or three.

[4] Granville-Barker's methods of staging were revolutionary in England, even if they were influenced by what had already become commonplaces of the German theatre. In Germany a similar impulse to Poel's found expression in the professional theatre. Under the influence of the ideas of Appia, Craig and Fuchs, realism in staging of Shakespeare and the poetic drama was rapidly abandoned, to be replaced on the new "Raumbühne" by simplified settings, permanent or semi-permanent, free of all superfluous detail and of wings and perspective scene painting, equipped in most cases with a cyclorama for open-air scenes, and in some cases--as in the Munich Künstlertheater--with an arrangement of fore-, middle- and rear-stages that was almost Elizabethan. Stage Year Book for 1910 and 1911 juxtaposes in photographs current German productions, in which all superfluous detail is eliminated, with two lavishly spectacular scenes from Twelfth Night as presented by Tree in Berlin.

In Barker's methods of staging, a false proscenium, fixed in the actual arch, reduced the depth and width of the stage proper, which was then raised by the height of a couple of steps and thus provided an acting area which could be used for set or furnished scenes. The front of the stage and the portion actually spanned by the arch made a wider but shallow middle acting area, at a lower level; and this was enlarged, again at a slightly lower level, by having an apron built over the orchestra pit. Proscenium doors gave entry to the middle- and down-stage areas and set speeches were delivered from the very edge of the stage directly to the audience. The footlights were abolished and the forward areas lighted from the front of the dress-circle by search-lamps converging on the stage.

[5] Harley Granville-Barker, Introduction to acting edition of A Midsummer Night's Dream (1914), as repeated in Robert Speaight, Shakespeare on the Stage (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973), p. 141.

Lillah McCarthy relates that in the Savoy productions "the delivery of the verse was given in accordance with Poel's methods" (Lillah McCarthy, Lecture to the Royal Institute, Jan. 27, 1934, Enthoven Collection, Theatre Museum, London).

Theodore Stier, musical director for the Court Theatre, notes that Granville-Barker aimed at musical harmony. Stier describes

Granville-Barker conducting rehearsals as he would an orchestra: "I want a tremendous crescendo here," he would cry. "A sudden stop. A firmata. Now--down to pianissimo." And to an actress overplaying her role: "'But my dear child,' he would lament, 'you deliver your lines as if you were the trombone, whereas you really are the oboe in this ensemble.'" (Theodore Stier, With Pavlova Round the World, London, Hurst and Blackett, 1927, p. 259)

Throughout his Prefaces Granville-Barker discussed the appropriate voices and pace. He thought of the plays as musically controlled; "orchestrated" was his word. He wrote of A Midsummer Night's Dream as if it were "a musical symphony":

> To hold an audience to the end entranced with the play's beauty one depends much upon the right changing of tune and tune, and the shifting of key from scene to scene and from speech to speech. . . . All the time it must be delightful to listen to, musical, with each change in a definite and purposeful relation to what went before, to what will come after. (The Exemplary Theatre, London, Chatto and Windus, 1922, p. 225)

Intimacy permitted speech that was swift, melodic and natural, and this kind of speaking was in turn the key to the rhythmic structure of Shakespeare's verse drama, the contrast of mood with mood, character with character, and scene with scene, in a continuous flow.

[6] Harley Granville-Barker, The Exemplary Theatre, p. 208

[7] Harley Granville-Barker, "Introduction to The Players' Shakespeare" (1923), in More Prefaces to Shakespeare, ed. Edward M. Moore (Princeton: PUP, 1974), p. 47.

[8] Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare, First Series, p. xi.

[9] Gordon Crosse, Shakespearean Playgoing, p. 69.

[10] Quoted in Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 264.

[11] William Bridges-Adams, A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, ed. with a memoir by Robert Speaight (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1971).

[12] Sally Beauman, The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades (Oxford: OUP, 1982).

[13] Susan Brock and Marian Pringle, Theatre in Focus: The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1919-1945 (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey Ltd., In Association with the Consortium for Drama and Media in Higher Education, 1984).

[14] Robert Speaight, introd., Bridges-Adams: A Letter Book, p. 7.

[15] Gareth and Barbara Lloyd Evans, *Everyman's Companion to Shakespeare* (London: Dent, 1978), p. 166.

[16] J. C. Trewin, *Shakespeare on the English Stage 1900-1964* (London: Barrie and Rockcliff, 1964), p. 166.

[17] Summarized by Sidney Lee in *Shakespeare and the Modern Stage* (1906), p. 112.

[18] Poel, as quoted in Robert Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival*, p. 216.
When Benson was knighted in 1916, William Poel thought the honour thoroughly deserved. Benson, he said, comparing him with Irving, "had a far larger and healthier grasp of his responsibility as a manager towards his author." The actors who worked with him, said Poel, were encouraged and expected to do their utmost to give individuality and prominence to their parts. "Nor would Benson tolerate the long run of a play which turned both actors and authors into mere machines."

[19] In *Henry V* Benson cut the Chorus completely for many years. The forty-two scenes of *Antony and Cleopatra* were reduced to fourteen, playing havoc with the plot, let alone the artistic sense of the play. His working stagebook completed in 1897 for his production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Stratford-upon-Avon shows that Benson employed not just troops of children but also "twelve red soldiers, four slaves, two old men, two priests, two crowd, and six Amazons." Every location--Theseus' palace, the wood near Athens, Quince's house, Titania's bower--had a different set. The last scene of the play took place in an elaborate Graeco-Roman temple. During the four intervals of the three-hour production, the orchestra played Mendelssohn's music to the play. (From Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, p. 35.)

[20] Gordon Crosse, *Shakespearean Playgoing 1890 to 1952*, p. 30.

[21] Note appended to a letter to J. C. Trewin, Jan. 23, 1932, in *A Bridges-Adams Letter Book*, p. 32.

[22] Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, pp. 80-92.

[23] T. C. Kemp and J. C. Trewin, *The Stratford Festivals* (Birmingham: Cornish, 1953, p. 170).

[24] T. C. Kemp and J. C. Trewin, *The Stratford Festivals*, p. 170.

[25] Gordon Crosse, "Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen," ms., Vol. 12, p. 81, Birmingham Reference Library.

[26] Bridges-Adams' designs are reproduced in M. C. Day and J. C. Trewin *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, opposite p. 212.

[27] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Oct. 11, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, Special Collections, 1.3.17.

[28] Bridges-Adams, The British Theatre (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1944), p. 34.

[29] Bridges-Adams, quoted in Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 199.

[30] Bridges-Adams, Looking at a Play (London: Phoenix House, 1947), p. 25.

[31] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Jan. 31, 1948, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 35.

[32] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Jan. 27, 1948; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.14.

[33] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Sept. 26, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.16.
Bridges-Adams acknowledged, nonetheless, that Poel was "now and again, more than a trifle mad." Writing to Robert Speaight while Speaight was penning his biography of Poel in 1952, Bridges-Adams admonished the biographer, "I hope you have made it part of your pious duty to remind such of the faithful as survive how very mad, in fact, Poel could be." Why, for instance, he queried in exasperation, on an Elizabethan stage reverse the Elizabethan usage by putting women into the parts of men? Why engage a plump matron for Valentine and proceed to upbraid her for her lack of virility, he said, referring to an incident which he had observed.

[34] Bridges-Adams, The Irresistible Theatre (London: Secker and Warburg, 1957), I, 206.

[35] Bridges-Adams, "Theatre," in Edwardian England 1901-1914, ed. Simon Nowell-Smith (London: Oxford UP, 1964), p. 403.

[36] Bridges-Adams, The Irresistible Theatre, I, 206.

[37] Bridges-Adams, The Irresistible Theatre, I, 209.

[38] Bridges-Adams, The Irresistible Theatre, p. 220.

[39] Bridges-Adams, The Irresistible Theatre, p. 222.

[40] Bridges-Adams, "The Lost Leader," Broadcast Talk in 1953 on Harley Granville-Barker; in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, pp. 89-93.

[41] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Sept. 26, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.16.

[42] Bridges Adams, "The Lost Leader," A Bridges-Adams Letter Book,

p. 91.

[43] Bridges Adams, "The Lost Leader," A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 91.

[44] Cary Mazer, Shakespeare Refashioned: Elizabethan Plays on Edwardian Stages (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1981), p. 63.

[45] But as Bridges-Adams pointed out many years later, "long after we had discarded the notion that there were traverses, or sliding curtains, between the columns supporting the canopy, [the] alcove stage remained an indispensible part of our conjecture," and he noted that Poel as well as Granville-Barker assumed its existence (The Irresistible Theatre, I, 209).

The tradition of considering an inner stage arose directly out of a prevailing theatrical mode of painted scenery. Despite the fact that there was no evidence in the Swan drawing to indicate the use of curtains between columns, nothing was able to detach the imagination of editors from the idea that some sort of visual changeability must have helped Shakespeare's audience to remove their minds from one part of a forest to another. This idea arose in the first place because no other kind of theatrical experience had been for a long while available.

[46] William Poel, letter to Bridges-Adams, Sept. 24, 1919; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.9.

[47] Robert Speaight, William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival, p. 235.

[48] William Poel, letter to Bridges-Adams, Oct. 6, 1920; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.12.

Poel, of course, had suggestions for improvement. He spoke, for example, of Bridges-Adams' use of music between scenes. "In Germany," he pointed out, "where they produce Shakespeare on exactly the same lines as you do, they have no music between the scenes. I think myself that you have not taken into account the dramatic value of dead silence simply as a contrast to sound. As an illustration the pause that took place at the end of the first and opening chorus, before the curtains opened over the first scene was most effective . . . you could by way of contrast omit the music occasionally."

[49] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Sept. 26, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.16.

[50] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Jan. 1956, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 68.

[51] Memoir by Robert Speaight, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 14.

[52] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Sept. 26, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.16.

[53] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Oct. 11, 1952; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 1.3.17.

[54] Bridges-Adams, "Granville-Barker and the Savoy," Drama, New Series (52, 1959), 30.

[55] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, March 25, 1949, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, pp. 39-40.

[56] William Poel, letter to Bridges-Adams, Oct. 6, 1920; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.12.

[57] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, Jan. 3, 1962, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 15.

[58] Gordon Crosse, "Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen," Ms. vol. 12, p. 81, Birmingham Reference Library.

[59] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Feb. 28, 1953, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 51.

[60] M. C. Day and J. C. Trewin, The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, point out that Benson, by contrast, in his productions of Romeo and Juliet used to prefer Romeo to break into the tomb from the front of the stage: there was always some vigorous exercise with mattock and wrenching iron (p. 210).

[61] Quoted in "The Art of the Theatre: The Designs of W. Bridges-Adams," [no Journal given, probably 1919], in an album of newspaper clippings; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library.

[62] Bridges-Adams, quoted in memoir by Robert Speaight, A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 17.

[63] Sally Beauman, The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades, p. 89.

[64] Bridges-Adams, letter to Hannen Swaffer, Oct. 16, 1920; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.14.

[65] J. C. Trewin, Shakespeare on the English Stage 1900-1964, p. 167.

[66] In memoir by Speaight, A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 21.

[67] At Stratford-upon-Avon the critics' ideal of Romeo had probably never been fully realized. In an 1[illegible]8 production Frank Benson had been praised for being a Romeo who looked ideal for the part, a youth straight from the hot Italian noonday, but some critics thought his Romeo too matter-of-fact, too athletic. In his later years Benson played Mercutio and found the role much more to his liking. Basil Rathbone, [illegible] experienced Bensonian actor, played Romeo to Joyce Carey's Ju[illegible] 1919, but he also was found to fall short of the heights for be[illegible] stagey and forced than Juliet" (Birmingham Mail, Aug. 14, 1919). Stratford-upon-Avon Herald held the view that, superficially, George Hayes in 1929 was excellent as Romeo but never once did he become the

ideal mate for Joyce Bland's Juliet. The expression of emotion was commonly considered bad form on the contemporary stage, explained the critic, but it was the critic's own view that it was "virtually necessary to feel the emotions to be portrayed if the audience is to be made as responsive as the author intends" (Aug. 16, 1929). The actor was criticized for faulty pronunciation and for tricks of intonation (Stage, July 11, 1929). It was the critics' conclusion that Hayes could be energetic and manly but he could not encompass that sense of rapture which characterizes the perfect lover of romance (Birmingham Post, July 8, 1929). He was much more successful as Mercutio in Bridges-Adams' Romeo and Juliet production in 1933.

[68] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Jan. 11, 1956, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 72.

[69] Bridges-Adams, letter to J. C. Trewin, Jan. 22, 1932, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 15.

[70] Harley Granville-Barker, letter to Bridges-Adams, Aug. 20, 1919; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary library, 5.2.7.

[71] William Poel had made a remark similar to that of Granville-Barker. In a letter written to Bridges-Adams after seeing one of the director's early productions, Poel commented that Murray Carrington, an old Bensonian, was an excellent actor but that he could get "nothing like enough variation" into his long speeches. A great actor, charged Poel, with a finely trained voice of compass, should be able to get as much change of time, tone and emotion into his speeches as a pianist could produce on his piano. "Carrington's modern dressing room conversation tones go all through the play without variation," complained Poel (Poel, letter to Bridges-Adams, Oct. 6, 1920; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.12).

[72] Bridges-Adams, Looking at a Play (London: Phoenix House, 1947), p. 27.

[73] Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Jan. 11, 1956, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, pp. 68-69.

[74] Bridges-Adams, letter to William Poel, no date, Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.3.4.

[75] This attitude appeared even before he began working at Stratford-upon-Avon. Certainly Shaw had felt a need to reprimand him on this score:

> It is really almost impossible to do Shakespear at full length without being forced into the right way of playing him. You can imagine my feelings when you calmly remarked that you thought the last part of Twelfth Night might very well be cut. Why not the first part, and the middle as well, if Shakespear was a fool who did not know what was good for himself. . . . Let Shakespear alone if you dont [sic] believe in him. (letter to Bridges-

Adams, May 26, 1919; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.5)

[76] Bridges-Adams, letter to Mr. R. Crompton Rhodes, no date; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.21.

[77] Bridges-Adams, *Looking at a Play*, p. 27.

[78] Bridges-Adams, letter to Robert Speaight, June 19, 1955) in *A Bridges-Adams Letter Book*, p. 17.

[79] Bridges-Adams, *The Irresistible Theatre*, I, 206.

[80] Bridges-Adams, letter to R. Crompton Rhodes, no date; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.21.

[81] Robert Speaight, memoir, in *A Bridges-Adams Letter Book*, p. 16.

[82] Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, p. 90; Bridges-Adams, letter to A. C. Sprague, Dec. 16, 1953, in *A Bridges-Adams Letter Book*, p. 57.

[83] Robert Speaight, memoir, in *A Bridges-Adams Letter Book*, p. 16.

[84] Harley Granville-Barker, "Preface to *Romeo and Juliet*," 1930 (rpt. Princeton: PUP: 1947), II, 327-330.

[85] Bridges-Adams, letter to R. Crompton Rhodes, no date; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.21.

[86] Bridges-Adams, *The Irresistible Theatre*, I, 85.

[87] The promptbook for Bridges-Adams' 1933 production of *Romeo and Juliet* is classified in the Shakespeare Memorial Library under 71.21/1933 RO. An undated promptbook for Frank Benson's presentations of *Romeo and Juliet* also exists in this library and is catalogued under 72929 Ben 4172 (f. 87).

[88] Bridges-Adams, letter to R. Crompton Rhodes, no date; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.2.21.

[89] Harley Granville-Barker, "Preface to *Romeo and Juliet*," 1930 (rpt. Princeton: PUP, 1947), II, 330.

[90] Harley Granville-Barker, "Preface to *Romeo and Juliet*," 1930 (rpt. Princeton: PUP, 1947), II, 329-330.

[91] Gordon Crosse, "Shakespearean Performances Which I Have Seen," Ms. vol. 8, p. 153, Birmingham Reference Library.

[92] Harley Granville-Barker, "Preface to *Romeo and Juliet*," 1930 (rpt. Princeton: PUP, 1947), II, 329.

[93] Bridges-Adams, letter, unpublished, 1952; The Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham.

[94] Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, p. 133.

[95] In a letter of resignation Bridges-Adams said that the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, "like any other vital institution, needs from time to time the infusion of new blood. It is my hope that, by resigning myself, I may encourage the local administration to face this fact, and what the facing of it implies." His stated reason for resigning, as gently worded as it might be, did nonetheless imply strong criticism of Chairman and Governors: "it is my considered opinion that no further progress is likely without drastic reforms" (Bridges-Adams, letter, Sept. 8, 1934; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.22.5).

[96] In Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, p. 122.

[97] Rachel Kempson, Interview with Sally Beauman, 1979, in Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, p. 133.

[98] Fabia Drake, letter to Sally Beauman, 1979, in Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, p. 74.

[99] George Bernard Shaw, letter to Bridges-Adams, undated, but ca. Aug.-Sept. 1934; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.22.4.

[100] William Poel, letter to Bridges-Adams, July 22, 1932; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.17.15.

[101] Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades*, pp. 136-137.

Ben Iden Payne became Bridges-Adams' successor as director at the Memorial Theatre for eight years. Beauman contends that he was appointed in part because he was a much more pliable man than Bridges-Adams and in part because he placed great emphasis on verse-speaking (p. 138).

A director who regarded William Poel as mentor, Ben Iden Payne had been working in America, mainly in small theatres, and had been instituting many of Poel's ideas there. Bill Savery, general manager of the Memorial Theatre, wrote to Bridges-Adams when Iden Payne first took over the directorship:

> He thinks he can teach actors to speak Shakespeare. If he or anyone else had the available time it might be possible, but there is no time. For repertory the old Shakespearean actors have to be brought in, and I doubt if this way can be altered. (letter to Bridges-Adams, Sept. 28, 1934; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library, 5.22.12)

Payne spent long hours coaching actors he hired in verse-speaking and deportment. During Payne's directorship, however, the Governors once again curtailed rehearsal time to five weeks. In the end, Payne assembled a company two-thirds of which was composed of the same Bensonians whom Bridges-Adams had retained for so many years and most of these actors remained in his companies throughout the eight years that Payne worked at Stratford-upon-Avon. Payne soon realized that to meet the Festival schedules and get productions on the stage with so little rehearsal time, it was impossible to bring in many new actors. Like Bridges-Adams, Payne directed most plays himself; the result was that he became as exhausted and overworked as Bridges-Adams had been in the 1920's. In such circumstances the training of actors he had envisioned became an impossibility.

[102] Robert Speaight, Shakespeare on the Stage, p. 162.

[103] J. C. Trewin, Shakespeare on the English Stage, 1900-1964, p. 123.

[104] J. C. Trewin, Shakespeare on the English Stage, 1900-1964, p. 166.

[105] Bridges-Adams, letter to J. C. Trewin, Jan. 23, 1932, in A Bridges-Adams Letter Book, p. 32.

One of the reasons for Bridges-Adams' resignation was what he considered to be the Memorial Theatre's failure to fulfill its obligations, incurred in the acceptance of financial support from all over the world from 1932 on, to stage more than adequate and conventional Shakespeare. As he explained on the occasion of the Memorial Theatre's Diamond Jubilee in 1939, "the World has decided that Stratford must be to Shakespeare what Bayreuth is to Wagner and Salzburg to Mozart; it was not for Stratford to say no" (Listener, April 13, 1939).

[106] Susan Brock and Marian Pringle, The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1919-1945, p. 55.

[107] Bridges-Adams, unsent letter to M. St. Clare Byrne, Nov. 9, 1947; Bridges-Adams Collection, University of Calgary Library.

[108] Poel's Elizabethan stage with its purely architectural background has seldom been adopted for general use by twentieth-century producers. In essence, parts of his ideas were adapted at times for different purposes. The adherence to Poel's ideas was greatest at Nugent Monck's Maddermarket Theatre in Norwich where from 1921 on an Elizabethan stage and set with no extra scenery were used. Here, even today, a typical presentation of Romeo and Juliet is given in two and a quarter hours, with a single interval of ten minutes and with only a few lines cut.

Ben Iden Payne in [illegible] at Stratford-upon-Avon produced three Shakespearean plays on a modified Elizabethan stage, following faithfully the principles of William Poel. Sally Beauman points out that over the next eight years Stratford audiences were to grow thoroughly tired of this unchanging stage (Sally Beauman, The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades, p. 144).

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