THE ADAPTATION OF SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY
IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY ENGLISH DRAMA

Marion Frances O'Connor

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Abstract

Chapter I of this thesis surveys the extensive but obscure field of Shakespearean adaptations written in English in this century. Adaptations are categorised according to the various strategies by which adaptors have generated new dramatic texts out of Shakespearean ones, and changes in the popularity of these strategies are noted. Attempting both to account for these changes and also to explain the dearth of interpretative intelligence and theatrical imagination in most British adaptations until recent years, subsequent parts of the chapter situate them in a conjunction of popularised critical assumptions (increasingly mediated through Shakespearean production) with theatrical circumstances.

Subsequent chapters examine conceptual and technical problems particular to adaptations of Shakespearean tragedies. Centring discussion on adaptations of Romeo and Juliet, Chapter II looks first at a pair of plays which attempted to realise abstract models of tragic action, then at a group of later plays which either abandoned tragedy for theatricality or produced pathos by non-verbal means, and finally at three very recent plays which, pursuing a Shakespearean tragic plot with some precision, either rejected or fumbled tragic action. The first part of Chapter III suggests that early twentieth-century adaptations of Hamlet were bound in by that character of Hamlet which A.C. Bradley constructed at the centre of Shakespeare's text, and contrasts them with French adaptations of Hamlet in the tradition of Jules Laforgue. Three groups of English-language adaptations since ca. 1939 adjust, eventually discard, the critical construction of the title figure of Shakespeare's play as an inevitably tragic and universally applicable image of human consciousness. One recent adaptation, addressing audience assumptions about the play Hamlet rather than Prince Hamlet, was more successful in displacing that image. Chapter IV explores the problems of dramatic language, both visual and verbal, which are discernible in adaptations of King Lear. It points to the double jeopardy of Shakespearean adaptors who understood tragedy as the representation of internal conflict and adhered to naturalistic conventions of speech and scene. It then analyses the exact alignment, in a recent adaptation which was not bound by either of these constrictions, of both languages with a thesis at the centre of the play. It argues that the adaptor's point was not taken because his languages were private ones and suggests that such skilled solipsism may be as near an approximation of Shakespearean tragic language as is possible in contemporary adaptations.
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IN T R O D U C T I O N

i. British Adaptations of Shakespeare: a 1966 diagnosis and prognosis

In a New Society article published in 1966 under the title 'Shakespeare as Folklore,' the London Times critic Irving Wardle lamented:

The only class of British citizens who have consistently remained immune to Shakespeare are the British dramatists. There are signs...that this situation is beginning to change, but until now the separation has been complete. As we receive it, the Shakespearian tradition has been kept alive by poets, actors, directors, critics, leader writers — by everyone, in fact, except his own professional successors. There seems to have been an unspoken rule warning playwrights to keep their hands off. 1

Theatrical producers since the Restoration, Wardle pointed out, have felt free to manipulate Shakespeare and have sometimes done so with very heavy hands. Every production of a Shakespearean play — be it of an 18th-century 'improved' text complete with happy ending, confidantes, and supplementary speeches creating neo-classical parallelism, or be it a full-text production on some hypothetical reconstruction of the stage of the Globe Theatre — is after all a redefinition of Shakespeare for the time in which the production is staged. But these adjustments in and for performance did not satisfy Wardle:

Of course, Shakespeare is always our contemporary, and the proof of this is the impulse from one generation to the next to redefine him in our own image. But a good deal of the redefinition is as insensitive as Garrick's Romeo and Juliet, with its lovers' reunion in the tomb. It is satisfactory neither as an approach to the original nor as a new work. And it would not exist at all if writers were prepared to take Shakespearian themes and use them as folklore. The development of 'director's theatre' in this country has taken place almost entirely in Shakespearian production; and it has grown up largely because directors have been occupying a place left vacant by the playwrights. 2
Wardle argued that a very different situation has obtained on the Continent, that playwrights and librettists there have approached Shakespeare with fewer inhibitions than have their English counterparts. As masterful instances of 'foreign dramatists...turning to Shakespeare as source material,' he cited Goethe's Clavigo, Musset's Lorenzaccio, Chekhov's Seagull, and (his sole twentieth-century example) Mrozek's Tango. "Even from these restricted examples,' he claimed, it is clear that the reinterpretation of Shakespeare is no hack trade for a writer. With this evidence, the reluctance of British dramatists to engage in it is all the more difficult to understand. But there it is. Any infringement of the taboo automatically provokes derision and outrage. But this particular reaction only appears when playwrights do their work out in the open.

The critic went on to try to account for the situation:

Reasons for the bardic boycott are there if you look for them. The working conditions of our theatre since the Restoration have given playwrights no encouragement to build on the past. Also, the very familiarity of Shakespeare makes it harder for a British than for a foreign writer to take what he needs and ignore the rest. Instead of feeling free to select isolated elements as source material, he is liable to be drawn into the Shakespearian magnetic field and lose control over his own work.

For Wardle, these indigenous circumstances are external factors which paralyse the essential response to masterpieces. According to him and in explicit contradiction of Aristotle, tragedy does not calm us with catharsis but incites us to creativity:

What such works do is to stimulate a powerful sense of dissatisfaction and incompleteness. They make you want to do something — even if it is no more than writing criticism..... So far as Shakespeare is concerned, the spectator's sense of incompleteness is matched by an incompleteness in the work itself. The great plays all contain a strong element of unexplained mystery.

Wardle was careful to warn modern British playwrights off wasting their time on attempts to resolve the mysteries of the great Shakespearean
plays by speculating across gaps in their characterisation. The results of such attempts, he opined, 'conceivably might be acceptable but...would owe nothing to Shakespeare.' What he was recommending them to undertake is rather less clear:

The 19th century playwrights who used Shakespeare as a model did not make the mistake of trying to tie up the loose ends; they absorbed his work like a photographic plate held up to the sun, refracting it through their own patterns of temperament. And if this could be done during an age of illusionistic staging and romantic sensibility... it ought to be possible now that direct address to the audience and civic subject matter are restoring the Shakespearian tradition.

Wardle concluded by reverting to his previously-mentioned perception of signs of a changing times. For some unspecified reason, he explicitly excluded from consideration Charles Marowitz' collage Hamlet, which by 1966 had been turning up on London and Berlin stages in various shapes and sizes for over two years. He cited instead Barbara Carson's MacBird, a Shakespearean burlesque of Lyndon Baines Johnson and the Kennedys which wasn't produced anywhere until four months later, but which was by then in circulation among admiring literati on the American theatrical scene. His other example was Tom Stoppard's Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead, which the Oxford University Dramatic Society had staged as a Fringe offering at the Edinburgh Festival the month before the publication of Wardle's article. The critic concluded with a guardedly hopeful cry for more porridge:

Two plays do not make an impressive total; but at least they show that Shakespeare can still activate original writing, and that he is as adaptable to modern political allegory and existential comedy as he was to subjective romanticism and Russian naturalism. The field is wide open.

In 1966, the field of British adaptations of Shakespeare still contained many uncultivated spaces, but it was by no means the vacant
lot which Wardle envisaged. The two plays which Wardle hailed as signs of a changing times are rooted in territory which had been well and thoroughly plowed by English-language playwrights earlier in the century. Many of these modern Shakespearean epigones had attempted precisely the sort of gap-bridging off which Wardle was warning British playwrights of the 1960's, while some of their ancestors among English Romantic poets had attempted the kind of Shakespearean transmutation which he seems to have been recommending and for which he commended Continental writers of the nineteenth century. And while the topography of the field of English-language adaptations of Shakespeare was indeed changing in the mid 1960's, the change did not entail the displacement of directors by playwrights. Nor do the majority of the English-language adaptations written since 1966 seem to me to have responded to Wardle's call for playwrights to absorb Shakespeare's work 'like a photographic plate held up to the sun, refracting it through their own patterns of temperament' and 'to take Shakespearian themes and use them as folklore,' but that I cannot see this may be because I do not understand exactly what these similes were supposed to denote.

Such challenges to minor points in Wardle's article could be continued, but there would remain the major concession that in 1966 British playwrights were indeed about to use Shakespearean scripts in ways different from those of their predecessors. This thesis aims to identify those ways as they have emerged in adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy. It is therefore concerned both to describe patterns and problems which have recurred among such adaptations across this century, and also to show that in recent years the patterns have changed as the playwrights have adopted new solutions and/or changed the terms of the problems.
ii. Previous Treatments of the Topic

Some index as to the amount of material overlooked in Wardle's assertion of the persistent immunity of modern British dramatists to Shakespeare is supplied by the fact that the decade after the publication of his article produced two full-length studies of modern Shakespearean adaptations, and both include treatments of the work of British playwrights. (Neither study gives any indication that its author had consulted Wardle's account; but the fact that both are the products of American scholarship may explain their common inattention to an article in a British periodical which does not confine its address to specialists in English literature or in drama.) Dolores Kay Gros Louis' unpublished doctoral thesis for the University of Wisconsin in 1968 dealt with dramatic adaptations of Shakespeare written in English since 1916. Of the 48 texts mentioned in the thesis, some 22 are by British writers, and all of these antedate Wardle's article. Ruby Cohn's Modern Shakespearean Offshoots ranges far more widely, giving more or less extensive treatment to some 26 texts in German, 12 in French and 45 in English. Of the English-language texts, 31 are by British authors; and of them, 23 are dramatic versions, of which 11 are anterior to Wardle's article. The latter set of figures suggests that Professor Cohn paid considerable attention to very recent texts, and this point both is of a piece with her concerns in the book and also, to a lesser extent, confirms Wardle's expectations of greater involvement in Shakespearean adaptation among British dramatists. Both sets of figures, however, suggest how many texts the critic had missed. That he should have done so is neither surprising nor culpable: most of them had rapidly fallen into obscurity or had never emerged from it in the first place.
As Dr. Gros Louis' thesis and Professor Cohn's book are the only full-length studies in English which have treated the area of my research, I think it appropriate at this early point to summarise their findings and arguments and to relate them to my own inquiry. Dr. Gros Louis' thesis, *Shakespeare by Many Other Names: Modern Dramatic Adaptations*, is confined to dramatic works by British and American authors. (One of her texts, however, appears to have been Australian in origin.) Its *terminus a quo* is 1916, the date of the spectacular New York production of Percy Wallace MacKay's *Caliban by the Yellow Sands*, which Dr. Gros Louis sees as 'marking the beginning of new directions and emphases in Shakespearean adaptation' by virtue of being a departure from the nineteenth-century tradition of burlesque adaptations. (In fact, however, the thesis gives extensive treatment to one text and brief mention to another which are anterior to this self-confessedly arbitrary point of departure.)

The constituent chapters of the thesis and their respective contents are: 'A Shakespearean Medley', the title of which is self-descriptive; 'As They Like It', which discusses five musical comedies, from The Boys from Syracuse (1938) to Babes in the Woods (1964); 'Romeo and Juliet Rejuvenated', which presents nine adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* from H.G.C. Stevens' *Romeo and Juliet in a Tearing Hurry* (1934) to Peter Ustinov's *Romanoff and Juliet* (1956); 'The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Shylock', which describes some nine dramatic texts in which that figure received more or less sympathetic reincarnation between 1922 and 1948; and 'Call Him What Instrument You Will', in which thirteen adaptations of *Hamlet* between 1923 and 1958 are treated under the headings 'Burlesques', 'Spectacles', 'Interpolations', and 'Analogues'. 


Dr. Gros Louis' thesis falls squarely in the sources-and-analogues tradition of criticism. Its strengths lie in extended and detailed accounts of analogies of plots, character, language and structure which the author has discerned between a given Shakespearean play and a modern adaptation. Her comparative criticism here is methodical and judicious. The value judgements which conclude most of these protracted parallels are less consistently cogent and convincing: there are some acute estimates of the fundamental flaws of particular texts (a notable example being her account of Robin Maugham's *Mr. Lear*), and common sense is on the whole abundantly, and often amusingly, present. What is absent, however, is any clear indication of the criteria according to which evaluations are made: judgments seem to have been dictated by, on the one hand, fairly conservative canons and categories of dramatic criticism, and on the other hand by a preference for remote derivation over direct dependence. Thus Gordon Bottomley's *Gruach* is rated lower than his *King Lear's Wife* on the grounds that it is 'notably duller... with no strong dramatic conflict and no really interesting character' and is 'more dependent on Shakespeare for its significance'. And while thus tending to give priority to what she terms 'entertainment value' and 'originality', Dr. Gros Louis is, however, perhaps too willing to set aside the latter in order to give authorial intentions more than their due — as long as those intentions do not seem to her to be 'didactic' or 'propagandistic'.

The weakest areas of Dr. Gros Louis' thesis are its occasional passages of cultural generalisation. These are neither precise nor well-substantiated. The chapter on Shylock, for example, opens with an account of pre-modern stage adaptations of *Merchant of Venice*, hypothesises some four reasons for Shylock's metamorphosis 'from the
Elizabethan complex comic-villain with depth and pathos...to the eighteen-century buffoon villain to the modern dignified and defended near-hero, and proceeds to develop these reasons quite unevenly and to defend them more or less inadequately. More seriously, the argument of the thesis as a whole is that its topic texts illustrate modern attitudes towards Shakespeare and...provide an illuminating index to the temperament of our age. Modern attitudes toward Shakespeare, however, are never analysed beyond the most obvious banalities, such as:

The large number of dramatic adaptations...point to the assumption that Shakespeare's works exist permanently as classics, even as legends....Like the tales in Ovid's Metamorphoses, it seems, the plays may be freely drawn upon, may be modernized or amplified, because the audience always knows the material of the source. 13

The temperament of our age is not very illuminatingly indexed either. We are simply told, for example, that

the influences on adaptations of Hamlet are many, and we have seen them before in adaptations of other Shakespeare plays --- Freudian psychology, political pessimism, confusion between art and reality, literary criticism, love of spectacle, bardolatry. 14

And that four adaptations of Hamlet from the 1950's are modern Hamlet analogues in the best sense of that phrase, for they convincingly testify to the universality of the various elements which comprise the Hamlet myth....The four works illustrate most clearly the aspects of Hamlet which have attracted the twentieth-century intellect: the relationship between Hamlet and his mother, the conflict between ideals and concrete reality, the cold cynicism of power, the difficulties of making decisions in a world that seems to care so little for individual aspirations and emotions. 15

What is 'of our age' (rather than for all time) about these influences and attractive aspects is never very firmly or finely established. The ahistoricity of the thesis is striking: though it sometimes attends to the initial inspiration and/or premiere production of particular
adaptations, broad generalisations such as the above are virtually all it offers on the subject of their cultural context. Moreover, there is not much sense of chronology, and still less is there any indication that adaptations have altered at all in the course of the half century which Dr. Gros Louis examines. On the contrary, the reader's impression by the end of the thesis is that 'Shakespearean adaptation' is a critical category so out of place and so amorphous as to be insusceptible of historical causality and change. It is thus not surprising to find Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Gerson's *MacBird*, and Donald Driver's rock musical *Your Own Thing* tucked into the final pages of the thesis as last-minute evidence proving only the probability of an indefinite continuation of 'the well-established practice of using Shakespeare as a source for new plays.'

Professor Cohn's *Modern Shakespeare Offshoots* covers a much broader field. Her presentation, more varied than was Dr. Gros Louis', is most easily summarised by quotation from her prefatory account of how it evolved:

"...Since linguistic intimacy is for me a necessity I examined plays written in English, French, German. Early in my investigation I decided to compare the offshoots with their Shakespearean sources. Then I became interested in tracing the effect of Shakespeare on certain modern playwrights... Later, I learned of... an English fringe group whose repertory was built around Shakespeare offshoots. Thus evolved the pattern for my separate chapters: offshoots of three Shakespeare tragedies: *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and one comedy *The Tempest*, productions of a theater company committed to Shakespeare offshoots *Steven Rumbelow's Triple Action Theatre*, and three major playwrights *Shaw, Brecht, and Beckett* whose creations show the impact of Shakespeare."

Further variation in Professor Cohn's presentation occurs among the four chapters on 'offshoots' of individual Shakespearean plays. That on *Macbeth* is the most orthodox in approach, beginning with a
summary of two pre-modern dramatic adaptations (Davenant’s and Garrick’s) and proceeding more or less chronologically from Bottomley’s Gruach (1921) to Galli’s Autopsie de Macbeth (1973). More than half of the chapter on Hamlet is devoted to prose fiction adaptations since Laurence Sterne. The chapter on King Lear takes a glance at what Shakespeare did with his source, and then a long look at what has been made of King Lear in ‘the essays of imaginative writers’ (i.e., Tolstoy, Shaw, Wilson Knight, Orwell, Freud, Brecht and McLuhan), before turning to four modern dramatic texts. The chapter on The Tempest begins with Robert Browning’s ‘Caliban on Setebos’ and subsequently studies another dramatic poem, Auden’s ‘The Sea and the Mirror’. As the paragraph quoted at length above concludes:

My discussions are not so neat as this summary, for modern Shakespeare offshoots are as various — even chaotic — as the modern theater that harbors them.

Professor Cohn’s ‘Afterword’ to the book again emphasises the heterogeneity of her material and the variety of method which has been required of her:

In describing this conglomeration of offshoots, I have relished the interdisciplinary eclecticism. Tracing Shakespeare avatars, I have had to learn about individual biographies of writers and theatermen, different stage traditions, various philosophies, cultural backgrounds, and political movements from the French Revolution to today. From Tolstoy’s inflexible Christianity to Césaire’s dedicated Negritude, there has been a strong moral purpose behind the most provocative Shakespeare offshoots. From Sterne’s Parson Yorick to Katsuhiro Oida’s Noh Ariel, there has been an intense artistic awareness behind the most provocative Shakespeare offshoots.....Behind these many Shakespeare offshoots is a desire to modernize the Bard. For dramatic offshoots, the most frequent aspect of modernization is political (if we define "political" broadly as pertaining to public affairs).....Though the main thematic drive of modern offshoots is political, the aesthetic drives are various — from shopworn Romanticism to the anti-establishment Alternative Theater.
It is difficult to evaluate so eclectic an undertaking. However, as far as dramatic adaptations are concerned, I think that Modern Shakespeare Offshoots is most consistently serviceable and successful in identifying the 'esthetic drives' of the texts it treats and in relating these to broad tendencies within the variety — even chaos — of the modern theatre. The overall effect is rather like that of a special-interest guidebook or map to, say, points of Shakespearean interest in Stratford-upon-Avon: a site or statue or building is pointed out and described, salient bits of its history are recounted, and its aesthetic antecedents and merits (if any) are noted. The tourist thus acquires a considerable quantity of selective information about various objects by which he would otherwise have passed in ignorance, and he has some vague idea of their location in Stratford; but he is not left very clear on whether those objects have any interconnexions other than their Shakespearean associations, nor has he mastered the topography of the town very thoroughly. The reader of Modern Shakespeare Offshoots has in Professor Cohn an industrious and engaging guide who is well acquainted with the territory of twentieth-century drama and theatre in the United States, England and Northern Europe and who has searched it well for Shakespearean landmarks, from the obvious to the obscure. But in the end that reader's appreciation of her topic texts is mainly as of manifestations of the variety — even chaos — of the modern theatre.

Some attempt at imposing argumentative order is made in the book's opening chapter, suggestively titled 'A Mishmash of Adaptations and Transformations'. Professor Cohn begins this by proposing a three-fold division of the field of rewriting Shakespeare:
Almost every professional production modifies a Shakespeare text, usually by cutting lines and/or emending words. I classify offshoots that are close to a Shakespearean text by the process that molds them: reduction/emendation. Adaptation will constitute the second group. Christopher Spencer supplies a definition: "The typical adaptation includes substantial cuts of scenes, speeches, and speech assignments; much alteration of language; and at least one and usually several important (or scene-length) additions." Additions are crucial in distinguishing reduction/emendation from adaptation, but my definition is wider than Spencer’s, including plays that are relatively faithful to Shakespeare’s story, however far they depart from his text. Invention will be the basis for the third grouping, transformation. Shakespearean characters are often simplified or truncated through new events, with the Shakespearean ending scrapped. In transformations Shakespearean characters move through a partly or wholly non-Shakespearean plot, sometimes with introduction of non-Shakespearean characters.

Perhaps because I have been unable to contrive a more firmly systematic scheme of classification, I am not satisfied with Professor Cohn’s. In the first place, it has no real purpose in her book: offshoots wrought by reduction/emendation are immediately ruled out of account on the grounds that they 'are properly considered as theater history rather than literary alterations'; and the separation of adaptations from transformations is maintained only through her first chapter, a miscellany 'including significant (and some insignificant) offshoots that do not fall into another rubric.' There is a hint here that the scheme was an afterthought to the studies which comprise subsequent chapters; and it is difficult to see how it could have done them much service, for it is too shaky to sustain extensive application to specific texts. In the passage quoted above, Professor Cohn would seem to be claiming that the principle of division in her tri-part scheme derives from the process applied in the rewriting — with reduction/emendation operating eponymously, with addition as the specific difference of adaptation, and with invention as the basis for transformation. As soon as she elaborates these distinctions,
however, it becomes apparent that for her the principle of division is not among different processes of rewriting but rather among differences in the areas and amounts of contact between the product of rewriting and the original. That is, Professor Cohn's reduction/emendation preserves Shakespearean dialogue with minor alterations; her adaptations 'are relatively faithful to Shakespeare's story, however far they depart from his text' — in other words, they preserve his plots though they may do without his dialogue; and her transformations retain at least some of Shakespeare's characters but dispense altogether or at least in part with his plot as well as dialogue.

The difficulties inherent in this scheme become apparent even within the first chapter, the only one to employ it. By Professor Cohn's definitions, for example, Friedrich Mirrenmatt's König Johann (which is 'relatively faithful to Shakespeare's story'in King John) would be an adaptation, while his Titus Andronicus (in which 'Shakespearean characters move through a partly...non-Shakespearean plot...with introduction of non-Shakespearean characters' — notably, the Gothic chieftain Alaric, who brings about the revised dénouement) would fall under transformations. Yet Professor Cohn classifies both as adaptations. Later in the chapter she discusses Jarry's Ubu Roi as a transformation: remote analogies of plot and faint echoes of dialogue are noted between Jarry's play and Shakespeare's King Lear, Julius Caesar, Hamlet, the English history plays and especially Macbeth. However, Professor Cohn insists:

The personality of the usurper is much more significant than these few verbal echoes or the plot structure.... Ubu combines Falstaff's gusto for good food and Macbeth's lust for power. 21
This combination of characteristics hardly suffices to establish Ubu as a Shakespearean hero (however hybrid), which is what Professor Cohn's definition minimally requires. Moreover, one suspects that any identification of Père (and Mère) Ubu's remote ancestors among Shakespeare's dramatic heroes (and heroines) depends in the first instance upon the recognition of verbal echoes and parodistic plotting.

Behind such quibbles as these lie two basic problems which I perceive in Professor Cohn's classificatory scheme. I emphasise them because I am none too confident of having avoided them myself, and because I am quite certain of not having solved the large critical issues onto which they eventually open. In the first place, Professor Cohn has proceeded from an opening cadence of some seventeen terms by which adaptations of Shakespeare have been named, through the 'looser and more neutral word, "offshoot,"' to a series of definitions among which the specific differences are the points of contact between one modern text and one Renaissance text. These points of contact — dialogue, plot and character — are critical constructs which, subject to more or less radical reshaping, have been steadily and sturdily serviceable as principles of organisation in dramatic theory and criticism since Aristotle. I will myself be using these constructs to organise my own discussion in subsequent chapters of this thesis. But such constructs exist in mutual symbiosis within the theoretical/critical discourse which posits them. I question whether they are sufficiently discrete, or at least even extricable, from each other and from that discourse to be able to serve as the differentiating categories of a descriptive classification such as Professor Cohn proposes. Secondly, Professor Cohn promptly proceeds to assert a hierarchy of degree of contact:
This first chapter examines a mishmash of adaptations and transformations...The plays are treated in an order of increasing distance from the Shakespearean source. I do not see by what clear and certain criteria this distance can be calculated. I also wonder where in the hierarchy one can distinguish between Shakespearean 'source' and Shakespearean 'influence', and how Shakespearean 'influence' can be established at all on the internal evidence of texts which do not have an overt Shakespearean source. In a book which devotes three of its nine constituent chapters to 'three major playwrights whose work shows the impact of Shakespeare' and which is elsewhere much concerned to relate texts to artistic trends, some clarification of its author's understanding of literary influence would have been helpful.

The principal problem faced by Professor Cohn's and Dr. Gros Louis' studies, as by my thesis, is the heterogeneity of kind and disparity of quality among the texts designated 'Shakespearean adaptation'. Any attempt to deal with one problem leads to the other: a scheme of classification implies the critical questions which can and will be asked; and a critical question can only be answered within a delimited and organised field of reference. The only real and necessary connections among all the very various texts termed 'Shakespearean adaptations' are their common derivation from Shakespearean plays (though within this common ground there is enormous variation in the directness of derivation), their common use of dramatic form (with the exception of the essays and fiction treated by Professor Cohn and with 'dramatic form' construed as loosely as possible), and finally their common composition in the twentieth century (some of Professor Cohn's topic texts again excepted). Subsidiary connections can be made among some texts by a variety of schematisations: (1) by language; (2) by source play; (3) by authorship;
(4) by formal type; (5) by dramatic school or trend; (6) by theatrical context; and (7) by cultural commonplaces. Dr. Gros Louis defined her field according to the first and organised her discourse almost exclusively by the second (though with some secondary attention to the fourth in her chapter on Hamlet and with some implicit but undeveloped use of the sixth in her chapter on American musical comedies). Her self-restriction to English-language texts pretty well precluded any substantial measure of attention to the fifth, since in this century major dramatic trends have not originated in the Anglophone theatre. It is, for example, faintly amazing to read a 1968 thesis on Shakespeare in Modern Drama which makes no mention of Bertolt Brecht in all its 299 pages, and which has no wider terms of dramatic reference than such as the following:

In their concern with contemporary ethical problems, these plays about Shylock reflect a major trend in modern theatre. In contrast to Shakespeare's philosophical and universal concerns, serious drama...often focuses upon current moral, social and political issues. The most important plays, such as Miller's The Crucible and Lorraine Hansberry's A Raisin in the Sun, transcend the particular contemporary situation and approach universal significance. Such intrinsic value has not been found in the pro-semitic propaganda drama discussed above. 23

By contrast it is precisely for its breadth of reference that Professor Cohn's compendious account of American, British, French, German and some few Italian adaptations in this century is most impressive. At the same time, however, Professor Cohn's multilingual array of texts, her exclusion of amateur efforts and her omission (except by error) of radio and television drama, and her critical orientation towards international dramatic styles and developments have precluded any sustained and detailed treatment of the specific cultural and theatrical contexts of the adaptations which she discusses. Modern Shakespeare Offshoots draws attention to cultural
commonplaces only rarely and then on a large scale — notably in the half chapter on prose fiction adaptations of *Hamlet*, which includes an instructive account of the Romantic incarnation and pervasive after-life of that Shakespearean figure in and through Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. The theatrical contexts to which Professor Cohn refers likewise tend to be very broad and also to be mainly matters of performance style. The chapter on Steven Rumbelow's Triple Action Theatre, for example, notes a resemblance between Rumbelow's ideas and Artaud's, gives the occasion of Grotowski's influence upon Rumbelow, and twice connects Rumbelow's 1972 adaptation of *The Tempest* with Brook's and Barrault's multinational experiment with that text in 1968. However, the nearest that the chapter comes to relating the Triple Action Theatre to the vogues and vagaries of the indigenous U.K. Alternative Theatre is a paragraph which recounts the company's financial difficulties.  

My own research began, like Professor Cohn's, with wide reading of adaptations in various languages — English, French, German, Italian and some Spanish. Given the absence of any single bibliographical guide to such material, my investigations were initially somewhat unsystematic. Such focus as was to be found in the early stages of my work was supplied by the categories of authorship, source play and formal type. The first of these survived only through an eventually discarded chapter on Mørrenstatt, so it was gratifying to find that Professor Cohn had devoted goodly measures of her book to Brecht and to Shaw, figures to whom any author-centred account of Shakespearean adaptations in this century must accord extensive attention. Formal type preoccupies much of my present first chapter, for it most efficiently facilitates any such general description of the field as I have undertaken there. In subsidiary conjunction with
categorisation by source play, formal type also shapes most of the subsequent chapters and is recorded in the appended bibliography.

All three of these categories with which I began, however, persistently pointed me towards questions of context. For what specific set of theatrical circumstances was an adaptor writing? What are the critical suppositions and implications of his work and how commonplace were/are they among his contemporaries and/or countrymen? Why have some types of adaptation been massively perpetrated in some times and places and abandoned in others? Why have some Shakespearean scripts been almost perennially subject to adaptation while others have been tampered with only from time to time? Indeed, in the only-too-frequent cases of scripts of otherwise unrelieved tedium, such questions as 'Why and for whom was this adaptation undertaken?' — or, more exasperatedly, 'Why would anyone ever have wanted to see, let alone write, this play?' — seemed to be the only considerations to which the texts were entitled and were certainly the only ones which recurred. In order to address contextual questions, however, I found it increasingly imperative to narrow my linguistic field: a comprehensive selection of obscure and/or ephemeral texts, regular access to adequate information about any theatrical productions of them, and a working knowledge of both the critical assumptions and norms, and also the theatrical circumstances and practices, prevalent in the time and place of their composition were quite beyond my command for Shakespearean adaptations in languages other than English, and were only partly possible in the case of American adaptations. Consequently, my first chapter — which attempts to relate formal types of adaptation to critical vogue and theatrical situation — describes only English-language texts and British
contexts. Reference to adaptations in languages other than English has here been restricted to very minor purposes of comparison.

While the minutiae uncovered in my research thus encouraged me to attend to questions of context, and while my own limitations thus constrained me to address them within a very narrow field of reference, the more serious and substantial texts tended more and more to point towards the much-pondered problem of tragedy in modern drama.

Dr. Gros Louis offers two suggestive asides on the subject, but does not develop either, while Professor Cohn is so much more interested in questions of style than those of genre that she does not directly deal with the latter. Such questions, however, inform the second through fourth chapters of this thesis: the chapter on adaptations of Romeo and Juliet deals primarily with dramatic texts which have attempted to translate Shakespearean tragic action and/or plot into twentieth-century terms; the chapter on adaptations of Hamlet looks at several successive series of dramatic texts which have, with varying degrees of explicitness, queried the possibility of reconstituting that tragedy today and which in so doing have pinned their questions on the title figure and through him on considerations of character; and the chapter on adaptations of King Lear, examining plays which as a group are representative of the full spectrum of twentieth-century types of adaptation, considers the various efforts of adaptors to invent a modern tragic language. These are not exclusively Anglophone, let alone insular, issues, and there therefore will be some citation of Continental texts, mainly in my third chapter. Primary and preponderant reference throughout the thesis, however, will be to English-language texts: as my knowledge of them is the more thorough, my conclusions about them seem to me the more certain.
To summarise this account of the relationship between this thesis and the two previous studies of the field: where Dr. Gros Louis confines her attention solely to English-language texts and Professor Cohn ranges through several languages, I concentrate upon English-language adaptations (and only there am I confident of having achieved a coverage complete enough to be convincing), but I occasionally refer, by way of contrast or of confirmation, to foreign-language ones. Where Dr. Gros Louis restricts herself to dramatic adaptations (including musical comedies) and Professor Cohn turns to an assortment of novels, essays and poems as well as plays, I am concentrating upon dramatic adaptations: among these I include some radio and television drama, a conspicuous omission in both previous studies, but I attend to musical comedy only infrequently. Where Dr. Gros Louis, despite her limited field of temporal and linguistic reference and despite her attention to amateur as well as professional theatre scripts from that field, offers nothing of any weight or precision by way of contextual criticism, and where Professor Cohn's selection of material and her critical bent cannot accommodate such, I have tried in my first chapter to make some connexions which both overlook. And where Dr. Gros Louis' critical procedure is to compare and contrast adaptations with their Shakespearean sources, and Professor Cohn's is to place them in international dramatic trends, my primary critical concern in chapters subsequent to my first is to consider these adaptations as illustrative of the various problems and even more various solutions met by twentieth-century writers of tragedy.
CHAPTER I
CATEGORIES, CRITICAL CONNECTIONS AND THEATRICAL CONTEXTS
OF SHAKESPEAREAN ADAPTATIONS

i. Introduction

While subsequent chapters of this thesis will be treating adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy only, this first chapter will offer, as background to subsequent discussion, an account of twentieth-century English-language adaptations of Shakespearean drama in general. The first part of the chapter will outline, in very broad classificatory terms, the different strategies which English-language adaptors of Shakespeare have most frequently adopted in this century, the respective advantages and difficulties which the various approaches can be shown to entail, and the changes which can be discerned in the ways in which and the frequency with which they have been used. Such changes will be specified mainly with reference to British adaptations alone, but for the other, more formal, considerations there will be reference to the work of American playwrights as well. The latter parts of the chapter will look to the contexts of the British adaptations: one part will suggest some connections between fashions in Shakespearean adaptation and dominant critical assumptions about Shakespearean drama, and another will attempt to relate adaptations to the successive sets of specific theatrical circumstances and priorities for which the majority of them were written.
ii. Categories of Adaptation

Before beginning to outline the various strategies which I have discerned in twentieth-century English adaptations of Shakespearean drama, I must emphasise that the categories outlined below are but convenient critical constructs. In a sense they themselves stand as strategies within this thesis: they enable me both to specify the kinds of dramatic texts which I have located under the extremely imprecise heading of 'Shakespearean adaptation', and also to establish some distinctions and associations for the sake of subsequent discussion. I do not pretend that many adaptors have been so self-consciously 'strategic' in setting about their work: as will be remarked again in the next section of this chapter, some of them have obviously been aware that they were playing a game, but only infrequently have they subtitled their texts in the terms which I have imposed upon them. Moreover, within a given adaptation, the strategies sometimes come fused in tandem or even threesome; and so, as will shortly be obvious, the categories frequently overlap. As a map of a vast and unkempt field, what follows is, I believe, accurate; but I cannot claim that the order which it attempts to impose is anything other than artificial.

a. travesty, burlesque, parody

The first of my descriptive categories for twentieth-century adaptations of Shakespeare is so deeply rooted in the preceding century that it can justly be considered a tradition: travesties, burlesques, and parodies. Although there has been a fair amount written on the subject, and especially on its Shakespearean variant, there is little consensus about the exact reference of these terms and less uniformity in their usage. I am therefore adopting Dwight MacDonald's definitions,
which approximately correspond to distinctions offered by other apologists or observers of the tradition, though the terminology of its practitioners is often at variance with that of its critics:

TRAVESTY (literally 'changing clothes'...),... raises laughs... by putting high, classic characters into prosaic situations, with a corresponding stepping-down of the language. BURLESQUE (from Italian burla, 'ridicule')... imitates the style of the original. It differs from parody in that the writer is concerned with the original not in itself but merely as a device for topical humour. PARODY, from the Greek parodia ("a beside-or-against-song"), concentrates on the style and thought of the original.3

These distinctions, which require at least some measure of appreciation of authorial intention, are sometimes so finely shaded that the lines of division blur. Either a travesty or a parody, for example, may edge into burlesque when it spins towards the specificity of topical satire.4 The effect of all three depends upon incongruity: between modern type-figures, stock situations, and demotic idioms and the exalted associations of characters' names and plot mechanics in the case of travesty; between contemporary reference and high style in the case of burlesque; and within or between the original style and substance in the case of parody. The centre of travesty is the typical; the centre of burlesque is the topical; and the centre of parody is the stylistic. The smaller that centre, the more limited the appeal and the more restricted the audience.

This summary analysis is borne out by the history of Shakespearean travesties, burlesques and parodies in the present century. Travesties are intended for mass consumption and are sometimes even matters of mass production: Frank Dumont's Shakespearean travesties (1905), H.G.C. Stevens' High Speed Shakespeare (1934), F.A. Carter's Haywire Shakespeare (1944) and More Haywire Shakespeare (1953) publish travesties en bloc; and within such collections, one travesty is distinguishable from another only by the familiar Shakespearean name and narrative.
From what they offer as fair game and funny, one can construct a crude and vague outline of the time, place and social class of the people whom they addressed, but they give no evidence of any special interest among their audience other than a desire to be amused. Various playlets (Dumont's and Stevens') and dramatic monologues (Carter's), all are so very brief that they could only have been performed as part of an evening of 'entertainments'; and one could almost use these collections to mark successive stages in the migration of such shows from professional stages in the nineteenth century to amateur ones in the twentieth. Increasingly restricted to the amateur theatre market, in twentieth-century England Shakespearean travesties flourish and decline with the amateur theatre movement — i.e., from the end of the First World War to the mid-1950's. In this travesty has shared the fortune of several other approaches to Shakespearean adaptation associated with the amateur theatre movement. I will return to travesty in my account of one such approach, the out-of-place assembly, and again in my account of another, the transposition, which has not been so restricted. Both out-of-place assemblies and transpositions, it will be seen, have sometimes set about 'putting high, classic characters into prosaic situations, with a corresponding stepping-down of the language' and so shared travesty's traffic in the typical.

Shakespearean burlesques are more limited than travesties in their social appeal, and individually they are less durable. Centring upon the topical, they require an audience which both knows the topic and also approaches it with common (or at least compatible) interests and opinions. The former requirement means that any given burlesque has a short life expectancy, while the latter limits its potential audience. On both accounts, Shakespearean burlesques are eminently appropriate vehicles for entertainments of initiates and exhortations
of the faithful, and the common professional and/or political concerns of their intended audiences are virtually always evident in the texts of burlesques. Where travesties in twentieth-century England have tended to have been written for staging by any group of amateurs interested in 'doing a show', burlesques have often originated with specific groups of amateurs whose common interests were, in the first instance, non-theatrical. Thus while Shakespearean burlesques are often associated with amateurs, they have not been tied to the amateur theatre market, and so have proved a considerably hardier breed of adaptation than has travesty.

Given the extreme unlikelihood of any single Shakespearean script entirely and exactly fitting any burlesque topic figure for figure, incident for incident, and speech for speech, one might anticipate an inverse proportion between the length of any given burlesque and the precision and proximity with which it adheres to its Shakespearean original. Overall, this is so. Yet a comparison of very recent burlesques with ones from earlier in the century indicates that writers of burlesque have tended over the past half century to presuppose less and less literary knowledge on the part of their audiences. In the first few decades of this century, one finds burlesques closely and systematically modelled on single Shakespearean plays or scenes. In their 1911 Christmas theatricals, for example, the Residents of Guy's Hospital managed to incorporate mockery of their medical colleagues into the plot of Macbeth, and to make further play with specific points of discrepancy between Shakespeare's dialogue and theirs. In 1926 the National Union of Railwaymen published a close, line-for-line burlesque of the funeral scene of Julius Caesar as adjusted to a crucial issue in the General Strike. In these cases, thorough knowledge of a single Shakespearean text
was assumed of a non-literary audience or readership. Yet one also finds more eclectic burlesques of Shakespeare written at about this time. *King George the Fifth: A Tragical, Comical, Historical Drama* dating from 1917, uses speeches and sometimes entire scenes from *King Henry V*, both parts of *King Henry IV*, *Hamlet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Richard III*, and *Macbeth* for its comment, part satiric and part patriotic, on British foreign and domestic affairs in World War I. The burlesque was published, but it is difficult to imagine its ever having been staged. A prefatory note reads, 'Owing to the stupendous dimensions of the cast in this great production a separate list of Dramatis Personae is, for the convenience of the audience, prefixed to each act.' As topical burlesques have tended to be associated, at least at their inceptions, with comparatively small groups of like-minded people, I think it unlikely that 'the stupendous dimensions of the cast' of *King George V* were ever filled out in production.

By contrast, *King Edward VIII, or The Merry Wife of Windsor*, was staged by such a group (an American Shakespeare society of what would seem to have been very dubious taste) in 1938 but was never published. Like *King George V*, however, it exemplifies eclecticism in topical burlesques of Shakespeare: its three acts owe rather more to *Hamlet* and to *King Richard II* than to the source suggested by its subtitle.

Later in the century eclecticism of this order becomes the rule in Shakespearean burlesques. Their writers have tended more and more to draw their materials from various Shakespearean stables and to trot out mainly the same old warhorse speeches from a few set-text plays. Not surprisingly, this tendency is particularly apparent in the longer burlesques. Students at the London School of Economics in 1967, for example, raided various of Shakespeare's major tragedies and histories...
for the incidents and dialogue of their five-scene Tragedy of Sir Kidney Sane. Carson's Machbird, which was first staged in the States and then in England in the same year, pursued the plot of Macbeth fairly closely through its own three acts (a total of seventeen scenes), but it borrowed familiar speeches from other Shakespearean plays, notably Hamlet and King Henry V. The 1974 London musical comedy burlesque about Watergate, David Edgar's Dick Deterred, again approximated the plot intricacies of its Shakespearean original (King Richard III) with some rigour, and did so through some fifteen scenes; but it was even more eclectic than Macbird in its Shakespearean sources of dialogue. In The Watergate Classics, Yale University Drama School's response to the same political developments, one does find a burlesque of a single Shakespearean text; but, as one of twelve sketches in a revue, 'The Tragical History of Samlet' was on a very much smaller scale than either Dick Deterred or Macbird. In England and more recently, David Rudkin's one-act contribution to the Jubilee Year, Sovereignty Under Elizabeth (1977), quickly abandoned the burlesque of the Macbeth sleepwalking scene with which it had begun and which it had pursued mainly in its opening configuration of characters (a Queen, a Doctor and a Gentlewoman, all costumed and characterised as allegorical figures) and very little in verbal echoe. Still more recently, Terry Eagleton's Brecht and Company borrows lines from various Shakespearean texts (notably Macbeth and The Merchant of Venice) for a brief play-within-a-play representing Hitler's bribery of the German bourgeoisie.

Diffusion of Shakespearean focus is even more apparent among parodies than in the increasing eclecticism of Shakespearean sources among travesties and burlesques. This is true even though the majority of such parodies (which have not been numerous in this century) have
originated in small and literate groups. For example, A E. Wilson's 'A Venetian Nobleman' was conceived for a West End revue on which various critics and theatrical journalists of London were to have collaborated. After the prospect of West End production collapsed with the withdrawal of the backer, 'A Venetian Nobleman' went into rehearsal as part of the first production of the newly-formed amateur dramatic society of the News Chronicle and The Star, for which Wilson was drama critic. The Blitz, however, brought an end to rehearsals and to the infant drama society, and 'A Venetian Nobleman' was eventually published in Wilson's Playwrights in Aspic (1946), a collection of parodies of well-known dramatists. 16

A theatrically more successful instance of a Shakespearean parody written for restricted revue performance was 'So That's the Way You Like It' in Beyond the Fringe, which had its beginnings in academic circles as closed as the journalistic ones in which Wilson had been working fifteen years earlier. 17 Though 'So That's the Way You Like It' has at first some special reference to King Richard II, neither it nor 'A Venetian Nobleman' parodies any particular play but rather Shakespearean style extracted from a large chunk of the canon. And this is true of all twentieth-century parodies of Shakespeare: Paul Dehn's 1956 'Hambeline, The Moor of Tyre, or Much Ado About What You Will', though itself a parodistic pastiche of quotations from Shakespeare rather than a parody, bears a title appropriate unto the entire lot. 18 The one adaptation which appears from its title to be an exception — Tom Taggart's Macbeth à la Mode (1955) — is in fact a parody of Gilbert and Sullivan, not of Shakespeare, and Taggart ranges as freely through their works as parodists of Shakespeare now range through his. 19

The British heyday of pure parody, that spoof of style which
approaches literary criticism, passed with the Edwardians, though its flame flickers in journals, like Punch, The New Statesman and The Spectator, which have a readership sufficiently restricted to be presumed highly literate. Topical burlesques continue there, too; and burlesques are still to be found (rather more frequently than are parodies) in theatrical ambiances that have relatively homogeneous audiences — notably university stages and, in England, the 'Fringe' or 'alternative' theatre which has burgeoned since 1968. I expect, indeed, that Shakespearean burlesques will continue to be written and staged as long as Shakespeare — in however restricted a sampling — is a staple of stage and school and as long as there are topics to be attacked. Travesties, as remarked above, have declined with the amateur theatre movement in which they thrived through most of the first half of this century. During that time and within that context, however, they accounted for a large percentage of English-language adaptations of Shakespeare. One reason they did so is that travesty, more than burlesque and very much more than parody, is so easily amenable to combination with most other forms of Shakespearean adaptation.

b. pastiche

The only category of adaptation in which travesty is by definition unlikely to appear, in fact, is pastiche. This approach to adaptation assembles passages of dialogue dislocated from any two or more Shakespearean scripts into a single text. Pastiche thus resembles, but is not to be confused with, the fairly frequent directorial practice of compressing two or more Shakespearean plays, usually from the histories, into one. Common instances of this practice have been amalgamations of the two parts of King Henry IV,
such as those arranged by Augustin Daly in New York in 1896, by
Joan Littlewood at the Edinburgh Festival in 1964, and by John Barton for
the Royal Shakespeare Company's touring Theatreground in 1970. (Playing
five and a half hours, the last even took in *King Henry V.* ) Also akin to
pastiche, but still distinct from it, is a rather rarer directorial
practice of larding a well-carved script by Shakespeare with materials
from one or more of its sources and/or analogues. Such, for example,
were Peter Creswell's *Rosalynde in Arden*, a two-hour-long radio version
of *As You Like It*, in which the Shakespearean text was cut and
interspersed with songs from Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* and which was
broadcast over the BBC's National Programme in 1938, and John Barton's
more complicated interweaving of Shakespeare's *King John*, John Bale's
*Kyng Johan*, the anonymous *Troublesome Raigne of King John*, some
medieval carols, and his own blank verse in the production which he

The more
ambitious attempts at amalgamation have generally also entailed such
interlacing of imported or invented material: obviously, the more
drastic the excisions of the Shakespearean text, the greater the need
for some supplementary material to make narrative sense of whatever
is left of the original. Thus, Orson Welles' *Five Kings* in 1939
and Peter Hall's, Clifford Williams', and John Barton's *The Wars of
the Roses* in 1962, respectively reducing eight plays and four plays
to two, both used non-Shakespearean material. Welles' project was
punctuated with passages from Holinshed, read by the figure of
a Chorus, while *The Wars of the Roses* was held together by chronicle-
based insertions of Barton's composition.  One wonders what Fanny
Bradshaw could possibly have used to provide dramaturgic glue and
thematic gloss in her condensation of *King Henry V*, the three parts
of *King Henry VI*, and *King Richard III* into *The White Rose and the Red,*
which had a playing time of two and a half hours when produced in New York in the spring of 1964. Even this extreme undertaking, however, centred upon the staging of Shakespearean texts, as did the other and less breathless condensations mentioned above. Some of them left their component plays with an appreciable amount of individual integrity, and all attempted to construct a coherent dramatic whole.

The pastiche adaptations, on the other hand, are at best literary games in which little drama, and less integrity, is left. Few of them could command the prolonged attention of an individual in a study, let alone that of an audience in a theatre. Pastiche adaptation, like directorial amalgamation, entails at least two things: the breaking up of two or more Shakespearean scripts into fragments of dialogue and the rearrangement of these fragments in some new order. In both pastiche adaptations and directorial amalgamations, the degree of fragmentation may vary from whole acts down to half lines, but it tends to be more radical in the former case. The difference between them, however, is discernible in the new orders which they assembled: in the case of directorial amalgamation, the skeletal structure is still Shakespearean and its interstices are filled with more or less homogeneous simulacra. In the cases of those few pastiches which follow the fortunes of one Shakespearean character through his various appearances, now sifted out of several scripts into one, and of those even rarer pastiches in which figures bearing the names of characters from one Shakespearean play are resituated in the texts of one or more other Shakespearean plays, one has as it were an Identikit of Shakespearean features, the sum of which is without dramatic shape. And in the pastiches for which the Shakespearean dialogue has been so thoroughly decomposed that
it loses its literal sense as well as its defining context, the possibilities for re-ordering are in theory as endless as they would be for phrases which a dramatist had overheard and jotted down at a party.

In theory, that is, but not in practice: the same familiarity and authority that invite quotation out of context seem to have forbidden the creation of a new context. As an a posteriori rule of thumb, the smaller the units of fragmentation made in the analytical stage of pastiche, the further the subsequent synthesis moves from Shakespearean dramaturgy — and the less the likelihood of the adaptor inventing any new order which could be called dramatic. It is as if, once the Shakespearean texts have been reduced to verbal rubble, the pastiche adaptor were unable to draw up a blueprint which would make good use of all those stolen stones. Traditional dramatic construction being defeated by the materials deployed, adaptors have tended to order their pastiches by one or the other of two non-dramatic principles.

One of these principles is discursive, ordering by theme: the fragments of the Shakespearean texts are reassembled according to content and reference. Writ large, this is the dynamic both of masques and pageants such as Percy MacKaye's Caliban by the Yellow Sands (1916) or Guy Endore's Call Me Shakespeare (1966), and also of entertainments in which an assortment of speeches and/or scenes are grouped according to what somebody has taken to be their theme — rather in the way that Neville Coghill utilised the so-called 'Marriage Group' of The Canterbury Tales as the basis of his libretto for the musical comedy of Chaucer's title. The pageants tend to have been composed for amateur performance and are almost always occasional, the occasion usually being Shakespeare's birthday. The
entertainments may or may not be tied to an occasion and are more often star-vehicles for professionals. The entertainments leave the explication of their logic to programme notes or to interpolated commentary, while the masques and pageants attempt to weave it in through invented passages which may or may not be pitched to a similar key. The raison d'être in all cases is merely to display an ordered sampling of Shakespearean opinion and dramaturgy; and any frame of a non-Shakespearean dramatic situation is established and articulated only just so far as will warrant this display of Shakespearean sententiae and skill, if that far.

Writ small, thematic pastiches abandon even these minuscule pretensions to drama and provide even more disjointed utterances on fewer subjects from more plays. The celebration of peace and the praise of this scept'r'd isle account for R.W. Babcock's 'Shakespeare Speaks on V-E Day'; and eight years earlier 'Peace' alone had supplied sufficient theme for Francis Habgood's 'Shakespeare and the Crisis: A Masque'. Subtitled with a phrase from Sonnet 97, 'What dark days seen,' this commentary on the Munich conference contrived to quote every play in the Shakespearean canon except Timon of Athens. The odd off-the-topic line served at once as syntactical filler and as sustainer of the minimal dramatic situation which the adaptor managed to establish among the melange of politicians and personifications to whom he assigned all the borrowed bits and pieces:

CHAMBERLAIN: I shall show you peace and fair-faced league. Thou art a Roman, be not barbarous. Kind Rome,
Rome the nurse of judgment,
Glad my heart.27

Hardly susceptible of staging, a pastiche such as this reads rather like a commonplace book culled solely from Shakespeare, and a couple
of its predecessors from the First World War are actually laid out on the page as such. The overriding assumption throughout is of course that Shakespeare has said everything worth saying about anything — that, as the preface to one such pastiche puts it, 'Out of this wondrous treasury of wisdom, with which we have been dowered, it is possible to draw a commentary suitable to every occasion.' Such efforts are as painful to the historically sensitive as they are to the dramatically nice, but their popularity in both World Wars is striking.

The alternative principle of order, a much more recent and as yet rarer one, is by contrast blatantly non-discursive. Rather than group speeches and lines by common theme, it arranges them so as to emphasise disjunctions and discrepancies and thus to uncover unnoticed meanings in individual lines and unpredictable patterns among them. Again, there is an apparent but misleading analogy with an approximately contemporaneous development in Shakespearean staging; in this case the style of speaking Shakespearean verse which came into favour with the Royal Shakespeare Company in the 1960's. But where that style was evolved in order to redirect attention to the sense and shape of the verse and away from its more obvious emphases and hypnotic rhythms, this method of ordering a pastiche adaptation defies semantic sequence, and a fortiori rhetorical structure. It is rather the equivalent of montage in the cinema or collage in the visual arts. More frequently practised upon a single Shakespearean script than between or among two or more, it will in my chapter on adaptations of Hamlet be discussed in connection with the sort of disintegrative adaptation of individual plays which has been developed by Steven Rumbelow and Charles Marowitz, among others. Collage work such as theirs exploits the non-verbal parts of production, but it also plays
with expectations derived from characters (however underdeveloped) and plot situations (however attenuated) recognisable from the original script. When non-discursive pastiche is practised upon a multitude of scripts at once, such expectations cannot be raised long enough to serve as the basis of anything.

A painfully extreme but mercifully unique exemplar of the chaotic results of such en masse montage is Houhanness Pilikian's The Copy for 'Mahumodo' (1964), which draws upon some twenty Shakespearean plays to create 'the thirty-eighth play of Shakespeare.'

To quote from its protracted and pretentious preface:

Here then is how the play is Shakespeare's and only Shakespeare's. I have taken different passages, lines and words from different plays, and rearranging them into a new order of being, in a new context, I could generate a whole 'brave new world' of Meaning and meanings or, in my words, a new image of existential Multiple-Meaningness, in other words, Multiple-Meaningness of essential existence.30

So much for discursive order. As for an aesthetic structure manipulating the various sensory perceptions which are open to patterning in theatrical performance:

In Mahumodo the Shakespearean text \(\frac{18}{18}\) everything. It is a theatrical manual, a hand-book or the prompt-copy for the producer. It contains necessary setting, lighting, stage directions, etc. the complex of the necessities of stage-production, hence, it should be accordingly carefully examined and constantly consulted.31

— which it will have to be, faute de mieux from adaptor Pilikian, who omits stage directions. Claiming that 'one of the unusual novelties which Mahumodo presents is the non-exaction of characters,' he not only does not assign speeches, he does not even mark them off. The text of Mahumodo is in fact some seventeen pages of line references broken by indications of 'Session' and 'Hearing', which correspond to 'Act' and 'Scene'. The musical rather than the juridical senses of the former pair of terms are the opposite ones. Where the thematic
pastiches turn the Shakespearean canon into a well-indexed compendium of quotations, the collective collage renders it as a musical score in which the system of notation is traditional enough, but the orchestration is experimental.

c. out-of-place assembly

Falling somewhere between travesties and pastiches is a hybrid category of adaptation which I will term 'out-of-place assembly'. Bringing together disparate figures from different Shakespearean plays, the out-of-place assemblies may be studded with the dialogue originally assigned these figures. In Charles George's When Shakespeare's Ladies Get Together (1942), for example, five Shakespearean heroines from as many plays come to advise the heroine of a sixth, Juliet Capulet, on matters of the heart. She turns the tables on her visitors and advises them. George's text includes direct quotations of varying length from all six of the plays from which he has poached the names and histories of his protagonists: Ophelia, for example, is told to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them, and Katherine is lectured with her own speech of submission from the final scene of The Taming of the Shrew. There are, moreover, allusions to other Shakespearean scripts in such lines as 'Ay, poor Ophelia indeed! Jilted by the melancholy Dane. Truly case of Love's Labour's Lost.' When, as in this case, out-of-place assemblies incorporate quotations from and allusions to Shakespearean texts, these reminders of original and of other dramatic contexts provide both some identification of the figures in the assembly and, more importantly, emphasis upon the (purportedly) comic incongruities among them.

Jokes such as these are, however, secondary in most of the
out-of-place assemblies. With or without the use of pastiche quotation and/or allusion, adaptations of this kind usually make heavily comic work of one or more ways of establishing the Shakespearean identities of the displaced characters. Probably the most ponderous are lines such as that quoted above about Ophelia. These tend to be used to introduce or anticipate each displaced character at his or her entrance. Thus in another out-of-place assembly, Desdemona is identified with 'How could she ever have married that Moor?' and Titania with 'There's a woman I cannot understand. She seems ever to dwell in a sort of Midsummer Night's Dream.' Second, and only slightly less excruciating, there are the memory-jogging glosses which sometimes turn up in the lists of *dramatis personae*. The list for *When Shakespeare's Ladies Get Together* specifies the titles of the Shakespearean plays from which the heroines have come, but the more usual kind of gloss may be exemplified by this list from Stuart Ready's *Vassals Departing* (1938):

LEAR — a pensioner
IAGO — a major General
DESDEMONA — a grass widow
NICK BOTTOM — L.R.A.M., (Eloc.)
HAMLET — a student
CLEOPATRA — an ex-queen
ROSALIND — a bright young thing

Ready's out-of-place assembly also well illustrates the third and principal strategy for establishing character identities — the use of a combination of conventional stage Shakespearean costume with modern details, and/or of modern costume with stage Shakespearean details:

When the CURTAIN rises, LEAR is seated on the settee, mending his robe. He has a large work-bag by his side from which he selects cottons and needles. He is dressed much in the manner of the latter part of *King Lear*, but he wears spectacles and a pair of very shabby boots. IAGO...wears a popular type of grey
military shirt and a Sam Browne belt, but he has retained the more familiar nether garments. DESDEMONA wears an apron over the clothes she wore in Othello. NICK BOTTOM wears his usual garb of an Athenian mechanical, but he has added a particularly doggy cloth cap of the type one sees at a football match. He carries a copy of the "Amateur Stage". DEMON wears an apron over the clothes she wore in Othello. NICK BOTTOM wears his usual garb of an Athenian mechanical, but he has added a particularly doggy cloth cap of the type one sees at a football match. He carries a copy of the "Amateur Stage". DESDEMONA wears an apron over the clothes she wore in Othello. NICK BOTTOM wears his usual garb of an Athenian mechanical, but he has added a particularly doggy cloth cap of the type one sees at a football match. He carries a copy of the "Amateur Stage".

Rather less frequently, such combinations may be specified for the sets of out-of-place assemblies. For example, Pauline Phelps' turn-of-the-century Shakespearean Conference (among Romeo, Hamlet, Macbeth, Shylock, Cleopatra, Lady Macbeth, Juliet, Desdemona, and Miss Cawdor, one of the witches from Macbeth) has for its scene 'A room in DESDEMONA'S apartment, furnished as an ordinary sitting-room, with the addition of some Moorish armour, ornaments, etc.'

The point to be emphasised about these absurd incongruities in costumes and sets, and to a lesser extent about the first and second strategies cited above, is that their humour depends upon the discrepancy between things familiar from the audience's lives and things familiar from their theatre-going. On this account, most of the out-of-place assemblies seem to me very close to the essential operation of travesties as described above.

Whether the figures in an out-of-place assembly be identified by name by quotation, by visual clues or by all three, the establishment of some on-stage situation in which such a motley crew could convene is generally most clumsily strained. The usual options amount to overt fantasy, in this world or in another: either a present-time setting in a world which approximates the audience's and which is then more or less unaccountably invaded by the Shakespearean ranks; or an out-of-time setting in some imaginary realm where anything can happen.
The former is exemplified by Victoria Schrager's How Like a God, written and set in Smith College in 1939, in which students bemoaning their inability to discover a senior play with an all-female cast are miraculously rescued by the arrival of Katherine, Desdemona, Ophelia, Juliet, etc. The latter is exemplified by Clive Sansom's Celestial Meeting (1935), in which:

The scene is a walk in heaven. There is a white bench on the left....Desdemona enters, from right, dressed in her usual fashion, but with two small white wings added; Viola, from left, in boy's costume (also winged)....

VIOLA: I haven't forgotten you, Desdemona.

DESDEMONA: You know my name? You remember me? I felt that I had seen or heard you once, but where —

VIOLA: In England; before this dream began. A field on the Avon where the trees stood admiring themselves in the water all day long in the summer.

DESDEMONA: England — that had almost gone with Venice and the rest. But I begin to remember you.

Two pages later, there enters Lady Macbeth: she is also 'traditionally attired' but with black wings added and is made to explain why she has been released from hell. Occasionally such adaptations make more emphatic play with their otherworldliness. In Ready's Vassals Departing, for instance; 'The action of the play passes in a room [in the Shakespeare Colony] of the City of Created Effort, some time between the year 1600 and the present day'; and as the play progresses, a radio is from time to time switched on to broadcast news of Monmouth's Rebellion, then news of the Battle of Waterloo, and finally a modern radio production of A Midsummer Night's Dream, complete with Mendelssohn's music and crowd noises.

As compared with the pastiches, the out-of-place assembly adaptations are less often occasional efforts and for the most part are clearly intended for performance, specifically for amateur performance.
The out-of-place assemblies set in the audience's world tend to have been written by amateurs, or at least to have been written for production in the first instance by a particular group of amateurs, while the plays set in literary Valhalla tend to have been written by professional playwrights specialising in the amateur market. In either case, once figures have been identified and the dramatic situation established, the principle of ordering in such adaptations is never more than some more or less caricatured mirroring of the world of the amateur audience. This is particularly pronounced in the cases of plays which originated with a specific amateur group. A good illustration of this is Schrager's previously-cited *How Like A God*, in which the assembled Shakespearean heroines are, like the audience assembled to watch them in an American East Coast women's college in the late 1930's, preoccupied with problems peculiar to an Amazonian society. (The adaptation, moreover, concludes by conceding tribute to male authority in the person of the college president!) Another such is Mabel Moran's *The Shakespeare Garden Club* (1919), the action of which is merely the meeting of a women's club whose members may bear the names of Shakespearean heroines, but whose minimally sketched characteristics are, like the proceedings, modelled upon those of the world in which the original ladies' club audience lived. The professionally written plays set in imaginary realms are somewhat less specific in mirroring but only slightly more sophisticated in structure. Sansom's *Celestial Meeting* amounts to nothing more than an exchange of stereotyped bickering over a question of status — which of the three heroines who are assembled has the best claim to the title of Shakespeare's greatest heroine? — and all that is accomplished in sorting that one out is a few changes of tone and pace. Similarly, in Charles George's *When Shakespeare's*
Gentlemen Get Together, where the scene is Shylock's house and the time 'is anybody's guess,' the assembly of Shakespearean heroes are simply specimens of middle-class marital strain: Hamlet (whose wife Ophelia has grown spendthrift), Romeo (whose wife Juliet has proved likewise and who has the further problem of being unable to borrow because the in-laws are still feuding); Antony (whose Cleopatra is running up bills for dresses and costume jewellery); and Othello (who is still jealous of Desdemona, for whose sake he has gotten into debt from buying all those presents). They expound their difficulties to Shylock. As he has no solution, they are about to put themselves further into debt, but are in the end forestalled by the sudden arrival of Petruchio with advice on taming shrews. As in travesty, the figures are contemporary types bearing Shakespearean names; but here, any semblance of a Shakespearean plot being obviously impossible, one cannot even look forward to an end with any certain confidence.

There are a very few out-of-place assemblies which are not travesties and which are even more otherworldly in setting and tedious in reading than those which are. These reflect their audience's worlds in personifications rather than caricatures and through allegory rather than stock situation. As all three present Hamlet as the personification of modern human consciousness, I will refer to them again in my chapter on adaptations of Hamlet. Suffice at this point to remark their dramatis personae, settings and allegorical actions. Two are the work of one author, Denton Jaques Snider, and were published in the same year (1923) and with some duplication of dialogue between them. Snider's The Redemption of the Hamlets (Son and Father) falls into two parts, with four acts in the first part and five in the second. It presents Hamlet the Prince, Horatio the Friend, Florizel and Perdita, Portia and Helena, Hermione (in the first part
only), and the Ghost of Hamlet the King (in the second part only).

'The scene is laid in Shakespearopolis, the city of Shakespeare
of which the mentioned people are residents' and on which a Dante-esque
figure of a Guide gives running commentary. 'The action,' according
to Snider, 'is made to pass from a human destruction to a human
reconstruction.' The passage is protracted — 192 pages of
exquisitely turgid prose and blank verse — but by the end of Part I
Hermione, the embodiment of World-Motherhood, has reconciled Hamlet
to life; and by the end of Part II the Ghost has been 'Transformed
from the Spirit malign of War, / Inspiring the Spirit of Peace universal.'

Snider's The Shakespeariad is even longer and more pretentious:

The plan is to present Shakespeare's entire work in the action
of a poem, of which he is the hero performing a literary deed
as yet the most significant in history. The Shakespeariad
is located in the Magic Isle well known as the scene of the
poet's "Tempest". The poem is composed of three main Parts,
which form successive stages of an ascent from low to high.
The First Part is the Magic Wood... which is rimed on the
outside by the sea. The Second Part is the Magic City,
which rises up in the center of the Isle and is called
Shakespearopolis, embracing all the poet's characters in its
separate abodes. The Third Part is the Magic Overworld, whose
name hints the poet's supernatural form — ghosts and spirits.
The throng of visitors from all quarters of the globe
appear especially in two representatives: Pandora from Hellas
and the East, and young Prospero from Atlantis and the West.

Twenty years later, Robert Herring's Harlequin Mercutio (1940/1) made
equally ambitious allegory out of rather fewer figures and a setting
whereof the symbolism was rather closer to home. As with Snider's
Shakespeariad, quotation from the authorial synopsis will suffice for
a summary statement of the setting, dramatis personae and action of the
seven scenes of Harlequin Mercutio:

In this pantomime of present-day London, EGO...delves through
the rubble that he may find the centre from which to
begin again.... He is accompanied by HARLEQUIN, his many-
faceted mind, and at each site finds something of his Spirit.
This is personified by MERCUTIO.
MERCUTIO, as in the play, dies, cursing "a plague on
both your houses". His soul is therefore condemned to seek a habitation. At each site, he is baffled by a figure of HAMLET, who will not face him. It is only when he has learnt to face himself that MERCUPIO realizes that HAMLET is another aspect of his own self, and that together they form EGO.

This unification is presented as their being blown together by a bomb. From this fusion rises HARLEQUIN, le malin....He...represents the good in Man. 45

Not surprisingly, I have found no indication that any of these three allegorical assemblies was ever staged, and only in the scene directions is there any sign that their adaptors gave any thought at all to their being so.

The travestied out-of-place assembly adaptations, however, obviously do anticipate performance — specifically, performance by amateurs. Indeed, until the end of World War II, they are fairly frequent phenomena among scripts written for the amateur market. However, I have found only three (at least one of which, and the only British exemplar of the breed since World War II, was never published) dating from after 1945 and none later than 1968. 46 This can in part be explained by reference to the previously-mentioned passing from vogue of travesty, to which, as described above, almost all of the out-of-place assembly adaptations are related in as much as they reduce Shakespearean figures to the lowest common denominators of the adaptor's and/or audience's world. Moreover, the out-of-place assembly adaptations have been peculiar to the amateur theatre movement: the frequency of their composition might therefore be expected to follow the fortunes of that movement. That they virtually disappear in this country a full decade before the British amateur theatre movement declined in the mid 1950's suggests that its fate does not offer sufficient explanation of theirs. Furthermore, the pastiche adaptations, which had not been the exclusive property of the amateur market on either side of the Atlantic, have not
proved very much harder. Experimental collages significantly excepted, these have survived through the 1960's mainly in scripts intended for schools performance and for the initiation of readers into Shakespearean opinion. I think it plausible to link the demise of the out-of-place assemblies in the mid 1940's and the dwindling of the pastiches (again, other than collages) by the mid 1960's to the gradual discrediting of their shared informing assumption that the parts of a play are permanently detachable from the whole — and specifically that a dramatic character has an absolute existence independent of the intricate form and evanescent occasion which is a play in performance, and that dramatic dialogue retains sense, significance and resonance when extrapolated from the form and uttered outside that occasion. Although these assumptions are not quite corollaries of each other, they are akin and generally keep company. And while they are criss-crossed through Victorian opinion about all kinds of drama, it is in both popular and academic criticism of Shakespeare in particular that they have been most pronounced. As Clifford Leech wrote in 1960:

In the childhood of people yet living, Shakespeare's plays were valued firstly as portrait-galleries, marvellous for the variety of character they presented, and secondly as anthologies of fine speeches, often to be detached from their context before being learned by heart.47

The cherishing of Shakespeare's plays as anthologies of fine speeches is important for dramatic adaptations of his works only to a limited extent: this assumption is at work in the pastiche adaptations (the more or less overtly non-dramatic character of which has been noted above), and it is attacked in the collage adaptations (which present a rather different set of dramatic difficulties which will be discussed in my third chapter). However, the prizing of those plays as portrait galleries was probably the crucial assumption for the bulk of Shakespearean adaptations in English until the middle of
this century; it lies behind the out-of-place assembly
adaptations, and it hovers most obviously over a more extensive
and densely populated category of adaptations which may be summarily
described as 'The Novel Vantage Point.'

The revised point of view in such adaptations may be presented
through a previously secondary character or through one who has
been invented for the purposes of the adaptation: What was Ophelia's
vision of the events at Elsinore? How did the Players happen to come
there and what did they make of the disruption of their performance?
How did the English Court take to the Royal Dane who came visiting,
and what did his shipmates make of him? Or it may take off from a
point in time before or after the action of the Shakespearean
original: How rotten was the state of Denmark before King Hamlet's
death? And after Prince Hamlet's? Or it may combine a shift to
the point of view of a minor or new character with a shift to a new
point in time: What provisions had Lady Polonius made for her
daughter's moral welfare in a corrupt court? What made Claudius
decide to poison his brother? What in Lear's domestic life could
ever have made him deserve daughters as malicious as Goneril and
Regan? Whatever happened to Malvolio? And how many children had
Lady Macbeth? As far as I know, there is no English-language play
which is exclusively addressed to the last question. There is,
however, Bottomley's Gruach (1920) to tell us how, on the eve of her
wedding day, a young lady of that name came sleepwalking down the
staircase into the hall of her familial castle and propositioned a
stranger, a royal envoy named Macbeth, with whom she elopes at the
play's end. And there is Margaret Wood's Instruments of Darkness (1955),
in which an old serving woman recalls, among other glimpses she has had of the local coven of witches,

...the night the wee bairn died — Macbeth's only child. I sat here by the fire...and I saw the three grey hags sweep past the window crooning over something that they held. A second later the cry of the women told me the babe was dead.50

There are, moreover, English-language plays which devote themselves to answering all the other questions posed in the preceding paragraph. When one discovers that the following exchange from Act III, scene iii, of Antony and Cleopatra —

ALEXAS: Good majesty, Herod of Jewry dare not look upon you But when you are well pleas'd.

CLEOPATRA: That Herod's head I'll have: but how, when Antony is gone, Through whom I might command it?

— inspired Arthur Symons to a one-act play in blank verse,51 one begins to appreciate how nearly infinite are the potential provocations to this kind of adaptation. When, in the 1966 New Society article summarised in the introduction to this thesis, Wardle warned modern writers off 'trying to close the circle' of plot or characterisation in Shakespearean plays, he jokingly projected three titles: 'Romeo and Rosaline; A Dane at Wittenberg; Son of Banquo'. There exist plays which could be given two of these titles, and I may well have missed one which would fit the third.52 The circle has been amusingly closed in some non-dramatic studies of more or less satiric intent — such as a 1933 article in which Anne Harris reconstructed the biography of Mrs. Polonius ('undoubtedly the daughter of Queen Gertrude's French music-mistress')53 and a 1947 one in which E. C. V. Knox drew attention to the magic fate of the Second Murderer in Richard III ('an outcast for ever from royal favour, penniless, risking his life, unable to find employment at any ducal labour exchange, utterly at
odds with his fellow employees'). But the dramatic adaptations of this order tend to be deadly — not because they are derivative, but rather because virtually all most of them do is to draw attention to the fact of derivation. As James Agate wrote in his review of the 1924 London premiere of Bottomley's *Gruach*:

"I shall not take upon myself...to say whether it is a good play or not. Apart from Macbeth, it did not seem to me to exist or to have any reason for existing....Blank verse was the reputed medium. Again I can only say that this may or may not have been the case. The only line I remember is Gruach's "I will go upstairs and change my things".....The real interest, of course, lay in spotting in Gruach the seeds of the future Lady Macbeth. These Mr. Bottomley has scattered plentifully."

But at least Bottomley scattered such seeds with considerable subtlety and dexterity. The novel vantage point has offered less skilled and/or serious adaptors an easy and efficient way to appear to have written a play: for dramatic construction, hack-work can substitute a more or less judicious distribution of ponderous allusions to Shakespearean characterisation and plot cruxes. A choice illustration of such nudging of audience elbows occurs in H.F. Rubinstein's one-act Prelude to a Tragedy (1937). An ailing Lady Polonius has just entrusted her excessively adolescent daughter to the care of a priggish Prince Hamlet, and the children are getting acquainted:

**OPHELIA:** I do admire your father so. I think he makes a wonderful king!

**HAMLET:** The Queen's wonderful too.

**OPHELIA:** I expect they get on well together....Our home isn't a very happy one. You see, my father — you mustn't think I'm not fond of him, too. He's a real dear, in every so many ways, only he will hold forth. I've often wondered if other people notice.

The exercise is brought to an end by the news of Lady Polonius' death. Hamlet asks whether the King has been notified, is told that 'His Majesty is taking his customary rest in the orchard, my Lord,' and
starts writing a letter to Ophelia. Mercifully, novel vantage point adaptations of this unabashedly abysmal order peter out as the Bradleyan assumptions which lie at many distorted removes behind them. As will be discussed in somewhat more detail further on, practitioners of this approach show ever more embarrassment about its informing assumptions and rather more ingenuity in playing with them.

Somewhat favoured by British verse dramatists throughout the first half of this century, the novel vantage point adaptation of Shakespeare has never been peculiar to England's amateur theatre, but it has been particularly recurrent there. I expect that one cruelly practical reason for its popularity among playwrights specialising in the amateur market is that, as suggested above, it can be turned into a cheap and quick substitute for dramaturgy. At any rate, a consequence of its association with this market is that, once again, the frequency with which novel vantage point adaptations are attempted sharply declines in the 1950's when the British amateur theatre movement declines. They continue, however, to crop up as undergraduate games and as apprentice work scripts submitted to playreading services. More remarkably, in very recent years a few new British scripts of this sort have received professional productions — notably Richard Drain's *Caliban Lives* by Temba in 1976, Arnold Wesker's *The Merchant* at the Royal Dramaten in Stockholm in 1976, and C.P. Taylor's *Ophelia* at the Oxford Playhouse in 1977. For the sake of subsequent argument in this chapter, I would here simply draw attention to the association of two of these three scripts with the alternative theatre movement which has grown in England since 1968.
e. transposition

The category of adaptation with which this thesis will be most concerned is that of transposition. In this, any one or more of Shakespearean characters, situations, plots and dialogues are reconstituted in some modern equivalent or approximation of their originals. This is, obviously, a very loose definition: in a sense, all adaptations of Shakespearean scripts might be said to reconstitute their originals in terms contemporary with their respective adaptors. What exactly this category of 'transposition' covers is, I believe, most clearly established by means of a description of its several kinds. In specifying these I hope to make clear why this thesis will give more attention to transposition than to any other single type of adaptation. However, given that preponderance of attention in subsequent chapters, I do not propose at this point to illustrate my generalisations and discriminations to the extent that I have done for other types of adaptation discussed above.

There are in the first place numerous travesty transpositions. These have the slight merit of easy recognisability: since the whole joke depends on an incongruity between the type figures, activities and language of the 16th-century stage on the one hand and 20th-century life on the other, attention is always drawn to the Shakespearean side of the oxymoron. Apologies are sometimes offered to Shakespeare on title pages or in authorial notes, and the scripts themselves invariably assign Shakespearean names to the characters and usually quote from or allude to the Shakespearean dialogue. Titles, names, quotations and allusions are sometimes subjected to comic distortion, but this serves to emphasise, not to obscure, the fact of Shakespearean source. Travesty transpositions are as tedious as they are numerous, and this thesis will not linger long over them. However, as travesty
is occasionally instructive in what it offers as typical, there will be some scant attention devoted to a very few travesty transpositions in subsequent chapters.

What I would emphasise at this point is that in England most of the travesty transpositions are one-acts, most were intended for amateur performance, and most date from before World War II. Indeed, through the first three or four decades of this century, almost all the transpositions of Shakespearean scripts are travesties. One exception to this rule, Bernard Gilbert's King Lear at Hordle (1922), will be discussed in some detail in my fourth chapter. Scripts such as this tragicomedy are, however, very rare until some years after modern-dress productions of Shakespeare had become (re-)established as common theatrical practice. Modern-dress productions seem initially only to have given further impetus to the writing of Shakespearean travesties: A.P. Herbert's Two Gentlemen of Soho (1927) and George Brooks' Fortinbras in Plain Clothes (1928), for example, both make explicit allusions to the new theatrical vogue. Its implications for the longer run were sarcastically set forth by Herbert Farjeon. Reviewing Oscar Asche's modern-dress production of The Merry Wives of Windsor at the Apollo Theatre in 1929, he wrote:

If we are to have Shakespeare in modern dress, with telephones and cocktails and golf-clubs obligati, then the only thing to do is to rewrite the plays. A start in this direction has been made by Mr. Oscar Asche....The issue is clear. Either this modern costume business must be completely abandoned or the plays must be completely rewritten....The task confronting the modern costume apologists is to bring out a new edition of the Works of Shakespeare, in which the words of Shakespeare and the plots of Shakespeare are treated as just so much antiquated rubbish. But what will be fatal to their cause will be to remove the name of Shakespeare himself; for nobody would ever see these shows if they were not supposed to have something to do with him.
While sometimes disproving his predictions about potential popularity, a second kind of transposition meets Farjeon's sarcastic brief for complete rewriting. This kind might be called 'schematic transposition': the adaptor has isolated the basic curve of the action of a Shakespearean play and an essential configuration of characters and then has resituated these, with more or less suitable and more or less extensive adjustments to plot causality and character motivation, in a contemporary context. Judging by the European examples adduced as imitable in the article summarised in my introduction, I take this to be what Irving Wardle wanted British playwrights of the mid-1960's to undertake. That they do not seem to me to have followed his advice may indicate only that transpositions of this type can easily elude identification. It is above all in recognising and classifying them that I have been perplexed by the questions of influence which seem to me to have been ignored in Professor Cohn's Modern Shakespeare Offshoots: on what evidence does one recognise Shakespearean (or other literary) influence, and by what criteria does one distinguish it from the use of Shakespearean (or other literary) source? To isolate a curve of action and an essential configuration of characters and to resituate these in a contemporary context is to make a critical interpretation twice over—a translation first into an abstract scheme of events and relations and then again into concrete terms of contemporary reference. The analysis implicit in the first stage of translation may be one with which I do not agree, and the analogies drawn in the second stage may be ones which I fail to recognise. Failing critical agreement and/or recognition of analogies, I may well fail to see any Shakespearean influence, let alone source, unless the new dramatic text makes some direct and overt reference to a Shakespearean text. Fortunately for
me, such references are very often to be found; but the kinship claimed by them can still prove very remote, a matter of mere allusion only. Then, as also when such references are absent, I have had to make a kind of critical fiat, the only warrant for which is my acceptance, however tentative and qualified, of the adaptor's analysis of and analogies with a Shakespearean script as these stand in the adaptation. Thus, for example, my second chapter will devote considerable attention to Maxwell Anderson's Wintercoat because I accept the published text as a schematic transposition of Romeo and Juliet. On the other hand, I do not propose to discuss the derivation of Howard Brenton's Revenge from King Lear, nor to investigate the implications an echo of that Shakespearean text in Robert Ardrey's Thunder Rock, nor to draw parallels between it and Samuel Beckett's Endgame. The first has been attested to by the dramatist, the second has been remarked by a critic, and the third has occasioned both studies and at least two stagings. Neither externally evidenced inspiration by a Shakespearean text, nor the odd, internally demonstrable, quotation from one, has seemed to me to warrant paying a play any serious attention as an adaptation of Shakespeare. And even when (as with Beckett's Endgame) it has seemed to me that some more or less defensible parallels can be drawn between points in one twentieth-century play and points in one Shakespearean one, I have required that the overall shapes of the two as I understand them be at least approximately congruent (as Endgame and King Lear are not, in my opinion) before I was willing to treat the former as a schematic transposition of the latter.

Even at the risk of making them seem still more capricious than they have been, I draw attention to my criteria because schematic transpositions will be paid considerable attention in this thesis,
particularly in the first part of its second chapter. In the first half of this century, many of the more serious-minded attempts at adapting Shakespearean tragedy have been of this sort. It is among the schematic transpositions that one finds both attempts to approximate Shakespearean tragic effect and also more or less overt refusals to approximate that effect. In this respect, one can here speak of Shakespearean 'influence' as well as of 'source': through that double act of critical interpretation outlined above, Shakespearean tragedies become models of construction and characterisation — models which some adaptors have attempted to reanimate and others have rejected outright.

A third kind of transposition is so detailed and direct a translation of a given Shakespearean script that it poses no problem of recognition. The original is followed character for character, plot development for plot development, even line for paraphrased line. These will be given considerable attention in this thesis, notably in the latter part of the second chapter and in the first part of the fourth. As with the more schematic transpositions, these literal ones imply judgments about Shakespearean tragedy in relation to the twentieth century. Moreover, while such exact transpositions have until recently been very rare among English-language adaptations of Shakespeare, the 1970's brought a spate of them from more or less well-established British playwrights: Howard Brenton's Measure for Measure and David Edgar's Death Story in 1972, John Bowen's Hell Caesar and John Osborne's A Place Calling Itself Rome in 1973; Andrew Davies' Rohan and Julie in 1975; and Tom Gallacher's The Sea Change (alias Prospero) in 1976; and Steve Gooch's Back Street Romeo in 1977. Where Wardle in 1966 asked British playwrights to treat Shakespearean
themes as folklore, quite a few of them have instead set out to translate Shakespearean texts. And with the exceptions of Osborne's transposition of Coriolanus, which has yet to be staged, and Bowen's transposition of Julius Caesar, which was written for television and only subsequently adapted for production at the Midlands Art Centre, all of these scripts have been given productions in the post-1968 alternative theatre.

f. play-within-a-play

Common to many transpositions is the use of a play-within-a-play, which is also, albeit less often, to be found in texts from the other categories of adaptation outlined above. It is, moreover, virtually inescapable in plays about amateur theatre groups, and only a little less so in plays in which Shakespeare figures as a character. (It becomes more and more recurrent in the latter kind of play when, as will be remarked below, dramatists' attention came to centre more and more on Shakespeare as dramatist rather than as, say, rejected lover of the Dark Lady.) The inclusion of a Shakespearean play-within-a-play is, after all, an easy way to claim a Shakespearean connection, whether or not this assertion is confirmed elsewhere in an adaptation. It is also a safe and obvious way of supplying both some principle of dramatic order and some pointers to significance. The explicitness with which it is employed, and the duration through which it is sustained, vary greatly: at one extreme of allusiveness, there is John Van Druten's There's Always Juliet (1931), a West End romantic comedy whose only real connection with Shakespeare is that the suddenly enamoured hero and heroine pull the Temple edition of his works down from the bookshelves in a Mayfair drawing-room and read aloud from Romeo and Juliet's first
exchange just before the 1st Act curtain falls; and at the other, there is Harold Lang's *Macbeth in Camera* (1964), which consisted of actors playing Shakespearean actors in rehearsal, through which they argued the merits of Method acting. The most frequent form of the play-within-a-play within Shakespearean adaptations, however, is that in which the central figures are theatre people engaged in a Shakespearean production which holds the mirror up to the nature of their own enacted lives.

The play-within-a-play is a constant phenomenon in Shakespearean adaptations on both sides of the Atlantic throughout this century. However, as will be remarked again in the chapter on Hamlet adaptations (for which it has been particularly favoured), the use to which it is put changes very markedly. At the beginning of the century, it is consistently a means for confirming some equation between the 'real' world of the modern adaptation and the 'artistic' one of the Shakespearean play contained within it; from the end of the Second World War it is used to negate such an equation. The shift of critical balance is from Shakespeare for all time to Shakespeare of an age, which was not ours.

iii. Critical Connections

At one or two points in the preceding pages of descriptive classification of Shakespearean adaptations, I have referred to connections between vogues in adaptation and in criticism, and it is to such connections that this chapter will now turn. What I would note first of all, but do not propose to belabour in subsequent discussion, is that such connections are all more or less remote in time. It will have been obvious from the dates of my various examples
above that there is a striking time-lag between academic or even journalistic orthodoxies on the one hand and fashions of adaptation on the other. The latter have generally been informed by the critical canons of the previous generation. Richard Findlater's comment about the images of English national character which have been offered on British stages is applicable to the interpretations of the English national playwright which are implicit in adaptations of his plays: 'One of the curious facts about the theatre is that it keeps in circulation a whole set of...responses long after they have disappeared from the world outside.'

The critical response to Shakespearean drama which Shakespearean adaptations helped to keep in popular circulation long after it had fallen into academic disrepute (and indeed almost until its partial restoration to academic respectability) is that which is usually linked with A.C. Bradley. As I remarked above (pp. 44-45), the prizing of Shakespeare's plays as portrait galleries seems to me to have been the indispensable assumption of the bulk of Shakespearean adaptation until mid-century. That I term this 'a Bradleyan' rather than 'Bradley's' response is to acknowledge both that it is extremely, even distortingly, reductive as a summary of Bradley's Shakespearean criticism, and that it was hardly peculiar to Bradley, much as his *Shakespearean Tragedy* did to popularise it from 1904 on. The connection between this critical response and those many adaptations which require an audience to accept that a Shakespearean character has some enduring existence independent of the original dramatic text (let alone the dramatic text-in-performance) is, I think, too direct and obvious to require elucidation.

The connection may, however, bear some elaboration. One thing which has intrigued me in adaptations derived from a Bradleyan response
to Shakespearean characterisation — and especially in those adaptations which adopt a novel vantage point — is the increasing discomfiture of adaptors over the assumption on which their work depends. One can in fact roughly trace the curve of critical opinion about Shakespearean characterisation through prefatory (and occasionally, internal) apologia for some Shakespearean adaptations, especially those adopting a novel vantage point. Early in the century, it is accepted that Shakespearean characters do have some discrete existence, if only in the minds of audiences and readers. This psychological phenomenon is taken as evidence of the achievement of Shakespeare, which his adaptor is not attempting to rival, much less to outdo. In an afterword to Oscar Fay Adams' A Motley Jest (1909), for example, William Rolfe, an editor of late nineteenth-century schools texts of Shakespearean plays, writes:

It is a tribute of no slight significance to Shakespeare's skill in the delineation of character that we instinctively regard the personages in his mimic world as real men and women, and are not satisfied to think of them only as they appear on the stage. We like to follow them after they have left the scene, and to speculate concerning their subsequent histories. ... Some have gone back of the beginning of the plays.70

After citing various studies, including Mrs. Cowden Clark's Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines, for critical validation of this instinctive compulsion, Adams' apologist continues:

Others, like Mr. Adams, have made the experiment of continuing a play of Shakespeare in dramatic form. ... These sequels to the play are nowise meant as attempts to "improve" Shakespeare. ... Mr. Adams's Sixth Act of Merchant of Venice is an experiment not, as certain captious critics have regarded it, a fool-hardy attempt to rival Shakespeare. It was originally written for an evening entertainment of the "Old Cambridge Shakespeare Association". No one in that cultivated company misunderstood the author's aim and all heartily-enjoyed it.71

Sixteen years later, insistence upon merely playful intentions has increased in direct proportion to growing embarrassment over the
first move in the game. Introducing the second edition of St. John Hankin's Dramatic Sequels, Herbert Farjeon concedes that Hankin had not been unique in taking up the lives of the characters at the point at which they were left by their creators, and conjecturing, with an innocent and rather ridiculous gravity, the probable subsequent course of events. Now this is a flat flying in the face of the agreement implicit between an author and the public, under which the public contracts to accept as gospel the statements set down by the author. To continue, then, another man's story after he has declared it is over is to behave rather like a naughty boy who, while he insists on playing a game, refuses to keep the rules. And it is to the credit of Hankin's aesthetic perception that, when he turned his hand to these Dramatic Sequels, not for one moment did he pretend that he was playing fair. When, for example, he sought a reply to the question,

Did Hamlet's father haunt no more
The battlements of Elsinore?
— he knew perfectly well that he was out of bounds, and that, being out of bounds, he might as well buy and enjoy his two penn'orth of tuck....Granted a sequel, granted anything. All laws of time and space vanish into air.

The laws of time and space are abrogated with especially striking frequency, and some flair, in the sequels to the tragedies. When a Shakespearean play being adapted from a new point of time has ended with the death of its central character, it is for obvious reasons usual for the adaptor to combine a new point of view with a new point in time. The alternative is to set the play in some fantastic place and time, like that used for some of the out-of-place assembly adaptations, in which the survival of the hero is explicable. And here, in the practice of adaptors as above in the utterances of their apologists, the emphasis on fantasy increases in later adaptations. In 1916 Lincoln Phifer published a five-act play entitled Hamlet in Heaven, and in all seriousness claimed it to have been the work of a force that purported to be William Shakespeare and that operated through automatic writing. Less eccentric, and for my purposes more important, than the spiritualist beliefs stated in Phifer's preface
are the critical assumptions implicit there:

I did remember, when I was writing the play, that in the original Hamlet five or six characters had died or been killed, and that their human relationships had been such as to make their meeting in the future a peculiarly apt illustration, surpassing discussion, of conditions over there.73

'Over there' is, as the title suggests, where the play is set. In the first two acts, the place appears to be a sort of hospital, with Hamlet, Claudius and Gertrude in separate wards. It transpires, however, that 'over there' there are many mansions — a City of Light (something like a house of mirrors), Cloudland, and the Universal Ear (a place of entertainment) — into which the scene simply changes, no explanations being offered.

Three decades later, by contrast, explanations abound in Moray McLaren's One Traveller Returns, for which the setting is the mind of a patient in a rest home in Scotland. Because the action is the dream of a patient in a mental institution, and because the drama itself is set in the same institution, it is doubly guaranteed that anything can happen. Even with this security, however, McLaren found it necessary to write in various bits of dialogue rationalising how Hamlet could have escaped from Hamlet into the home's West Neuk — a sort of half-way house for patients where Sister 'could get nothing from them but words' and where everybody appears to be waiting. Into this state of suspended, but very verbal, animation comes the new patient Hamlet. He soon recovers from the amnesia in which he has arrived and is made to protest much too much in explanation of his mastery of modern idiom. This is at first ascribed to his own advanced age and experience (which also account for his familiarity with discussions of his own psychic condition), and subsequently to osmosis from generation upon generation of actors. McLaren goes so far as to make the other patients quiz Hamlet about Shakespeare,
which inquiry sets up the question of how Hamlet can objectively
know his creator. The answer — 'Precisely because I did come out
of him, because he is, or was, someone else' — continues with Hamlet's
self-description as one of those characters or persons (i) who
'comes right out of the frame the writer's made for them, takes charge
of the whole book or play or whatever it is in a way they hadn't
bargained for', as Osric had also done and as Rosencrantz and Guild-
en stern never would. 74

More elaborate games with the relationship of dramatic
characters to dramatist are played in James Richard Gregson's
unpublished Morocco Calf (1936). Borrowing lines from all over the
Shakespearean canon, this pastiche reconstructs the Casket Scene
of Merchant of Venice so as to make Morocco guess right. Indignation
having arisen among the ladies over this outcome, Shakespeare's
ghost turns up to deny responsibility in twentieth-century prose:

NERISSA: O, be thou damned, inexorable dog!
And for thy life let Shakespeare be accused —
(THE SHADE OF SHAKESPEARE appears.)

SHAKESPEARE: Not me! This is none of my doing!

MOROCCO: Who art thou?

SHAKESPEARE: Really?

MOROCCO: Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damned,
Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents /sic/ wicked or charitable —

SHAKESPEARE: That's quite enough. Besides, that's not in
your part. In fact you've all been making pretty
free with other person's /sic/ lines! ... I didn't
take much notice of this at first, until it struck
me that it was too smart to be the result of ignorance! —

MOROCCO: Speakest thou not in blank verse?

SHAKESPEARE: No. And you wouldn't either, if you knew how
ridiculous I've been made by that blighter Shaw
saying it was easier to write than decent prose!
MOROCCO: Hence, horrible shadow! Unreal mockery, hence!

SHAKESPEARE: Don't talk about shadows, for you are not even the shadows of a shadow. You are mere figments of my brain — hang it all, I have had a personal existence, but you — why you merely exist through my imagination and my power of creation.

The impasse being explained to Shakespeare, he proceeds to confuse Portia with the lady from his distant past on whom he modelled her, while she persists in her unwillingness to marry a black man. (We thus get her starting into a limerick about 'a young lady named Starkey' and Shakespeare cutting her short with 'Your original had a much spicier version — one that wouldn't pass the Censor nowadays, even for a Sunday Night Dramatic Society.' And Morocco is unwilling to return to Shakespeare's original arrangements:

MOROCCO: My author won't allow me!

SHAKESPEARE: Your author? You mean the young jackanapes who has been so free with the scissors and paste — making a bigger hash of my works than even my editors and commentators? Where is he? Bid him come here! Why don't you move?

PORTIA: Why don't you?

SHAKESPEARE: Because I can't. I'm stuck here in the middle of his impudence and nonsense — and he's stuck, too! He doesn't know how to cut the tangle he's got himself and us into! — Oh, yes, he does. Like the shiftless modern that he is, — but how I wish I could have done it! — he's dropping the curtain!

(And the Author does!) 77

An adaptation almost exactly contemporaneous with Gregson's is as stickily sentimental as that is pertly precious. Alex Atkinson's They Cannot Be Forgotten (1937) is a one-act assembly of Shakespearean characters — Macbeth, Marc Antony, Romeo, Lear, a Witch — that are not only displaced but also disembodied. Along on the stage, darkened except for centre spot, of an empty theatre, a stage-struck
girl is cued by mysterious voices speaking famous passages of
Shakespeare. She struggles against her thespian vocation, but
the voices assure her:

You cannot forget us; we cannot be forgotten:
Out of great darkness and the past we still come back
To this fantastic sounding-board, matrix
Of all our being, wherein we were formed.....
We are a vast, a spirit company.
We tread the dusted stage, faint memories;
There is a grandeur to us, and a splendour —
We are the Drama — come! — we are the stage.78

The most sophisticated of the Shakespearean adaptations which
attend to the assumptions about characterisation on which so many of
them are based is The Trial of Ancient Iago (1953). In 1947
J.I.M. Stewart had published a study of some of the major schools of
twentieth-century opinion regarding Shakespearean characterisation.79
Six years later, under his fiction-writing pseudonym of Michael
Innes, Stewart turned the polarities of opinion into a radio play, a
critical courtroom drama which is set: 'Place: the Overworld, The
Court: Supernal.' The defendant is Iago, charged that he does not
and could not exist. Pre-modern critics are given their directly
quoted say in the proceedings, with Aristotle for the Prosecution
and Samuel Johnson for the Defence. Hazlitt, Bradley, and the Voice
of Psycho-Analysis (an old lady so deaf that she keeps claiming to
have heard paraliposes of Freudian significance in the court proceedings)
also speak for the Defence. The real conflict, however, is between
two mid-twentieth-century witnesses for the Prosecution: Spirit of
Historical and Comparative Criticism, who speaks with an American
accent and manages to get some research done during the court sitting,
and Mature Sensibility, who is preoccupied with correcting proofs of
a severe article on Robert Browning's Men and Women. A typical passage:
JOHNSON (cross-examining MATURE SENSIBILITY): You agree with the Spirit of Historical and Comparative Criticism that Iago is not a person but a Convention?

MATURE SENSIBILITY: Certainly not. I find agreeing with people most disagreeable. Iago is not a convention; he is a mechanism.....

JURY (chorus): At the risk of being taken for dense
We rise to the lady's defence.
Though obsessions with Bradley
Have bitten her badly
In basis her case is good sense.

MATURE SENSIBILITY: Boohoo! (Weeps)

LADY CHIEF JUSTICE: Madam — compose yourself, I beg.
If Dr. Johnson has upset you —

MATURE SENSIBILITY: It's not Dr. Johnson — it's the Jury.
Public approbation is something to which I'm quite unused. I find it most upsetting. Boohoo!

JOHNSON: Come, come, my dear: sooner or later you must expect to be a big success.

Johnson's prediction was, of course, correct. However, the enthronement of Mature Sensibility is not so distinctly discernible in English-language adaptations of Shakespeare as is the longer and more diffuse hegemony of Bradleyism before it. This is hardly surprising. For one thing, where Bradleyan assumptions about Shakespearean character were diffused through newspaper reviews and popular periodicals as well as through academic discourse (oral and printed), the dissemination of the tenets and methods of the Scrutiny school was confined to the classroom, lecture hall, or dons' rooms, to more or less highbrow books and to journals addressed to readers less concerned about what play to go and see than about the state of contemporary British culture and/or Shakespearean studies. The breathless conditions of journalism are after all less accommodating to exercises in close reading of texts than to evaluations of character presentation. Moreover, even had journalists on the daily and weekly
press the time and inclination for such an exercise in the Leavis manner, few of them after 1939 had the space for it: paper shortages in World War II permanently altered the conventions of journalism and left reviewers less generous word allowances than their pre-war predecessors had enjoyed. Aside from this circumstance of more restricted (though by the same token, arguably more forceful because more concentrated) circulation, the critical approach of the Scrutiny school to Shakespearean drama seems to me intrinsically less likely to have left manifest marks on Shakespearean adaptations than that of Bradley and his followers had done.

Bradleyan criticism may, as more than one of its critics complained, have confused drama with the novel. Yet it was precisely this confusion — of dramatic characters with beings so near real life as to be amenable to treatment as such, and of dramatic plot with some slice of ongoing everyday events — which occasioned so many Shakespearean adaptations, especially those from a novel vantage point.

The orientation of the Scrutiny school to Shakespearean drama as a subspecies of poetry was neither so encouraging of dramatic foot-noting nor so easily encapsulated by it.

It is difficult to discern very much direct connection between English-language adaptations of Shakespeare and that Spirit of Historical and Comparative Criticism which was Mature Sensibility’s chief rival as claimant to the throne of Bradley in English-language criticism. As with the Scrutiny school, this is partly because the work of Stoll, Schücking, Campbell, Tillyard and their followers was less widely popularised outside academic circles than Bradleyism had been. However, that sector of historical criticism which studied Elizabethan stage conditions and conventions went into rather wider circulation than did Leavisism. Its influence upon editions and
schools texts becomes perceptible in the 1920's; and there are strong traces of it in the more overtly didactic radio adaptations of the 1940's and 1950's. If one compares the BBC's broadcasts on and around Shakespeare from the period 1941-1947 with those from the period 1950-1954, moreover, one finds that the contents of the latter contain more of historical scholarship and more of what J.L. Styan defines under the term 'stage-centred criticism', and less in the way of Shakespearean biography and Shakespearean adaptation, than the former. Moreover, even a cursory glance at any few of the swarm of plays in which Shakespeare figures as a character reveals a shift, across the first half of this century, away from hypothesising some biographical incident or personal idiosyncrasy to which the composition of a given Shakespearean play or group of plays is imagined to have been tied, towards showing Shakespeare as a playwright, at work in a playhouse and in competition with other playwrights, and to some extent as a specifically Elizabethan playwright. This change, which correlates with the difference between, say, Dowden and Greg as biographers, is so pronounced that one finds a prolific writer of such plays about Shakespeare claiming in 1964 that nothing would induce him to re-read the 1921 play with which he had begun the practice. But in the main, the historical school of criticism had a much less marked impact upon Shakespearean adaptation than it did upon Shakespearean production. Like the focus of the Scrutiny school upon the poetic medium and moral/political significance of Shakespeare's plays, the concern of the historical critics with the artistic conventions and the historical and intellectual contexts of those plays is neither obviously nor easily transferable to dramatic presentation.

Yet while neither Leavisite nor historicist criticism seems to
me to hang so palpably over British adaptations of Shakespeare as Bradleyan criticism did before them, I would suggest that there is indeed a connection between both of these more recent schools of Shakespearean opinion on the one hand and recent British Shakespearean adaptations on the other. The connection is remote, for it is mediated through changing fashions in British Shakespearean production. Being remote, the connection is also somewhat complicated and is proposed with some hesitancy. To outline it, I would return to that article by Irving Wardle which is summarised in the introduction to this thesis. Wardle claimed that the redefinition of Shakespearean texts in and for performance would not exist at all if writers were prepared to take Shakespearian themes and use them as folklore. The development of 'director's theatre' in this country has taken place almost entirely in Shakespearean production; and it has grown up largely because directors have been occupying a place left vacant by the playwrights. In other countries this has not been the case.

I will deal first with the last sentence of this quotation. What has in fact been the case in other countries, or at least those on the continent of Europe, is that dramatists' reinterpretations of Shakespeare in this country have not been undertaken in lieu of directors' reinterpretations of Shakespeare, but rather alongside, and indeed closely intertwined, with them. Wardle is quite correct in asserting the greater quantity and superior quality of Continental over British adaptations of Shakespeare up until the time (1966) when he was writing. The strategies for adaptations outlined earlier in this chapter have by no means been exclusively insular ones, and there are instances of European adaptors perpetrating precisely the same sorts of literary footnoting which British playwrights have doled out in such abundance to the amateur theatre. But on the whole, and until the 1960's, Continental playwrights have been more serious,
and more successful, than their English counterparts in sorting out new meanings in Shakespeare for modern audiences and in presenting these meanings in dramas staged in professional theatres. Wardle, it will be recalled, suggested two reasons for that difference which he (over)stated as a 'taboo' upon British playwrights: one was the working conditions of British theatres, and the other was that British playwrights are more intimidated by Shakespeare than are their Continental colleagues. I do not think that the second is defensible, for intimidation by Shakespeare could be just as easily asserted of European playwrights. Continental critics from the Romantics onwards have confronted Shakespeare with a reverence which if anything outdoes the English attitude of deference, and Continental producers have found good box office in the English national poet. (Shakespearean plays have, for example, been indispensable items in the repertories of the French regional theatres.90)

Theatrical conditions, however, are rather more rewarding of consideration, and they suggest some practical and embarrassingly basic reasons for the difference in the way Shakespeare was adapted at home and on the far side of the Channel until the 1960's. The first of these is the fact of translation. French and German theatres have recurrently had either to doctor the Romantic idiom of the nineteenth-century translations, or to do them afresh. It is very difficult to translate something without deciding what it means. The decisions have been taken by French and German writers of the first rank: Adamov, Anouilh, Audiberti, Brecht, Cocteau, Dürrenmatt, Frisch, Gide, Hacks, Hauptmann, Ionesco, Müller, Obey, Sarment and Zweig have all taken at least one turn with Shakespeare (or, more rarely, with one of Shakespeare's contemporaries) for various purposes of translation, adaptation, or fresh invention.91 In at least one well-documented case, the path away from Shakespeare can be traced along the scale of
dependence implied by these terms. And in most cases, the playwright/adaptor has taken his decisions in the light of a definite dramatic idiom and a known set of stage conventions, and usually with reference to theatrical production. This again is in part a function of the working conditions of Continental theatres: in Germany and Switzerland, the institution of the Dramaturg, the professional playwright more or less permanently attached to a company and responsible for preparing scripts for productions; in post-war France, the rise of the regional theatres under firm one-man direction; and in both countries, the acceptance into common currency, decades in advance of its general circulation in England, of director's theatre, wherein a production (particularly of a classic) is expected to have some firm interpretative axis, all aspects of production are to be co-ordinated with this line so that it may achieve maximum impact upon an audience, and it is ultimately the responsibility of the producer/director to ensure that this is done. As far as adaptations of Shakespeare are concerned, it is, I believe, the possession of some more or less overtly interpretative purpose, and the working out of this with reference to present and specific theatrical realities, which distinguish the majority of modern European adaptations of Shakespeare from the majority of the British equivalents up until the mid 1960's.

As for the assertion on which the argument of the passage quoted above depends, Wardle was quite correct to point out that producer's/director's theatre had got and maintained its foothold on English stages through Shakespearean production. I would emphasise, however, that the ascendancy was achieved over decades which, for the limited purposes of my argument here, may be crudely divided into two stages with distinct emphases. The first, beginning on amateur
stages with William Poel's fifty years of Shakespearean productions from 1881 and on professional ones with Harley Granville-Barker's productions at the Savoy in 1907-1914, continuing in the work of Nigel Playfair and Barry Jackson in the 1920's and carrying on through Harcourt Williams' and Tyrone Guthrie's productions in the 1930's to Michael Benthall's in the 1950's, was style-centred. The aim was to achieve a **mise-en-scène** best suited to the Shakespearean text under production, and that aim carried with it at least some measure of attention to the differences between Elizabethan/Jacobean stages and twentieth-century ones. The text itself was presumed worth producing because it was the work of Shakespeare, who had addressed the hearts, minds, and senses of humour of all men in all times (and whose success in so doing was evidenced by the survival, against all odds, of the Old Vic). The second and subsequent stage, beginning with Peter Brook's productions in the 1940's, carrying on through his work of the 1950's and some of Guthrie's in the same decade, and coming into its own in the work of Peter Hall, John Barton, Clifford Williams, and Trevor Nunn at Stratford in the 1960's and 1970's and that of Jonathan Miller in the latter decade, was theme-centred. Style was not by any means forgotten, but increasingly, the **mise-en-scène** came to be seen as serving a meaning which had been discerned in a text which was taken to be worth producing because in it Shakespeare had tackled problems and exercised ideas (or could be made to seem to have done so) which are still at issue. The stages overlap to some extent both in time and in personnel: the difference between them is, crudely, that directorial ambitions in the earlier stage were primarily aesthetic, and in the later, with its growing concern for the interpretation offered by a text in production, they
became increasingly intellectual.  

Wardle's argument that producer's/director's theatre productions of Shakespeare went on in lieu of productions of new British plays was new only in its self-restriction to Shakespearean adaptation. In 1953, analysing the British theatre of that time as *The Unholy Trade*, Richard Findlater had attributed the malaise of British dramaturgy to, among other more tangible causes, 'the curse of the Works' —

for three centuries the bane of the English drama, though they are the glory of English literature and the salvation of the English stage.....For generations the development of the drama was sidetracked by copyists whose unactable poems and unpoetic plays were sacrifices on Shakespeare's altar. Instead of attempting to create new techniques of expression to meet the changing pressures of taste and experience, instead of studying the theatrical background of his poetic drama, the aspiring dramatists stayed in their ivory towers...conjuring up the magic of the Bard. They were blind to his supreme gifts in stage management and production; they refused to relate the plays to the stage for which he wrote them; and they despised the Elizabethan audience and its amusement.....Moreover, in the dimension of Shakespearean drama everything, it seemed, had been said before, and all rebellions were over for good.....It is in this sense that his plays have been the bane of the drama, though their performance — however mangled and dishonoured — has kept the art of the theatre alive. It is in the Shakespearean repertory that actor, producer and designer best exercise their talent.  

To a senior British playwright in the 1950's, the exercise of theatrical talent in Shakespearean production appeared to be a misallocation of energies and monies. J.B. Priestley, putting 'The Case Against Shakespeare' in 1956, claimed that modern British playwrights were unable to get their works staged because producers were playing safe and mounting productions of Shakespeare, 'a dramatist who starts with every advantage of prestige, who is sound culture personified, who can demand audiences of school children to eke out the matinees, and who does not even ask for a royalty for his services.'
Priestley would seem to have thought Shakespeare entitled to
demand compensation for damages done his works by modern producers:

Most of the post-war productions...have done less than the
best justice to the plays as dramatic poems and have spent
far too much time and money turning them into spectacles and
pageants....This Shakespeare fashion is not only wrecking
contemporary drama, it is also busy wrecking Shakespeare. 96

One of the wreckers replied with rapidity and acerbity. Addressing
the question of 'Too Much Shakespeare?', Peter Hall wrote

that sooner or later an audience gets what it needs, and if
it prefers the Shakespearean to contemporary drama, the
fault, I think, lies not with Shakespeare, our managements
or our audiences, but with our modern dramatists.....who
for the most part have forgotten what the theatre can do and
who are out of step with the tastes of the present. 97

As Findlater suggests, it was largely in Shakespearean production
that British audiences (outside those small circles attendant upon
the minority drama of the interwar years) had been kept in mind of
'what the theatre can do'. And it was the producers/directors of
Shakespeare — not, until much later, the adaptors — who attended to
precisely those dimensions of Shakespeare whose neglect by generations
of copyists is noted by Findlater: 'gifts in stage management and
production...the stage for which he wrote... the Elizabethan audience
and its amusement'. In so doing they were dependent on the work of
those scholars who since the late nineteenth century had been
investigating the theatrical circumstances for which Shakespeare
wrote and who constituted a large sector of the school of historical
criticism. This dependency is a recurrent theme of J.L. Styan's
had, however, been noted and succinctly stated by Muriel St. Clare
Byrne in her 1949 resume of the most salient facts of British
Shakespearean production in the first half of this century:
Imprimis... the theatre is beginning to come to terms with Shakespeare's texts in their fullness... Secondly... we... have sought... by re-creating the original conditions of performance, to understand Shakespeare's dramatic technique in order fully to comprehend what it was the plays had to say. Thirdly, by reason of his increased understanding of this dramatic technique, typically the modern producer asks from his scenic designer the help of a setting which, without foregoing the... advantages of the modern stage and its technical resources, will at the same time provide him with facilities equivalent to those enjoyed by the Elizabethan theatre. Finally, it is the producer who will decide what it is he believes the play has to say and how he believes the dramatist tried to say it — who will, in fact, decipher and then make explicit by his control and co-ordination of casting, setting, costuming, balance, proportion and tempo that emotional-cum-intellectual statement and atmosphere which is real 'unity.'

The repetition here of the phrase 'what the play has to say' points on to the connection which I see between, on the one hand, British Shakespearean production in this century, and, on the other hand, both Leavisite criticism and also the sector of historical criticism that investigated the concepts and iconographies which inform Shakespearean texts. The findings of the latter critical school can certainly be said to have shaped particular productions, in whole or in part. Beyond individual instances of the indebtedness of a particular production to some discovery or theory of historical scholarship, however, there lies a general correspondence of concerns between directors and scholars, and I would argue that this correspondence obtains for the Leavisite critics as well. The link between the historicists and the Scrutiny school was their common concern with the meaning of Shakespeare. 'Meaning' meant different things to the two schools: to the historicists it was susceptible of documentation, extrapolation and reformulation, while to the Leavisites, it was ineluctable from (because immanent in) its particular incarnation in Shakespearean poetry. The accessibility of meaning was also variously restricted — to the informed mind in the case
of the historians and to the mature sensibility in the case of the Scrutiny school. And where the language which the latter scrutinised for meaning was purely verbal, the former came in time to look to visual language as well. But for all these (hotly debated) points of divergence, there remained the common assumption that Shakespeare's texts were to be analysed more as messages, as communications, as highly charged statements around a theme or themes, than as representations of human character-in-action. A Mechanism to the Leavisites or a Convention to the historians, Iago was of less interest to both as a life-like being than as a means and occasion of apprehension.

It is likewise a predominant concern with meaning which has been generally characteristic of the later of those two stages of British director's theatre productions of Shakespeare which were crudely distinguished above. After World War II, but especially after Peter Hall's assumption of control at Stratford upon Avon in 1960, the directors of Shakespearean productions in the major subsidised theatres of Britain became increasingly attentive to staging as interpretation, as communication of a theme, and to audience apprehension of the interpretation.101 This is the development which John Russell Brown has repeatedly castigated as conceptualised or intellectualised Shakespeare, a reduction and even obstruction of 'that human activity [which] was the centre of focus in Shakespeare's theatre,102 and which Kenneth McLellan has attacked, much more shrilly, in the penultimate chapter of his Whatever Happened to Shakespeare?103 It is not the only line to be traced in British Shakespearean staging in recent decades: side by side with what Stanley Wells has termed the 'interpretative style' of director's theatre productions of Shakespeare there has continued,
sometimes even within the work of a single director, what Wells terms the 'open style' and which I believe to be continuing the aesthetic emphasis of the earlier of the two stages of Shakespearean production outlined above. But for my limited purposes here, it is the interpretative style which matters. Its impact upon the present generation of British playwrights and adaptors is perhaps best summarised in the words of one of them, Pip Simmons, interviewed in connection with the 1978 première production of his version of

The Tempest at London’s Riverside Studios:

There was an intelligence at work in the Wars of the Roses that I do not find...now. The productions said that people who manipulate power are cynical, that that is their job and that that's the way it is. If I compare that with what I see now, sure, it's well performed in its way, but it's very much back to Acting...People speak the stuff with perhaps better voices but with half the intelligence of those actors in the mid-60s. With probably the best collection of actors you could get on a stage — Ashcroft, Holm, Sinden — I had a view of the world explained to me that I did not, at that point, understand. It made me look at things differently. And that is the least I expect of the theatre, that I am asked to work things out from the evidence placed before me.

That what was 'said' in the British director's theatre productions of the 1960's did not go unattended is suggested by the sheer number of Shakespearean adaptations which have been written in England subsequent to those productions. The connection which I see between these very recent British adaptations of Shakespeare and slightly less recent British productions of Shakespeare is similar to that which I have just proposed between post-war production and rather earlier scholarship and criticism — some specific instances of direct derivation, and a general correspondence of concerns. As to the former, Ruby Cohn has (as was remarked above, p.17) pointed to the ancestral link between Peter Brook's 1968 Tempest experiment and Steven Rumbelow's 1972 adaptation of the same play, while Tom Stoppard has made it
known that the seed of his Rosencrantz and Guildenstein Are Dead was first sown in a conversation with his agent about the production of Hamlet with which Laurence Olivier opened the National Theatre at the Old Vic in 1963. Whether their conversation centred on Olivier's interpretation of the text is not on record; but interpretation is quite obviously the point of convergence in other connections between particular productions and adaptations. In 1967, for example, Clifford Williams (taking over from John Dexter) staged As You Like It at the Old Vic for the National Theatre: the production used an all-male cast, which was both historically 'correct' and also emphasised sexual ambivalence in the comedy. Peter Gill's 1974 Stratford production of Twelfth Night for the Royal Shakespeare Company emphasised the same theme in a different way by having Orsino played as bisexual. And within a few years, the London Fringe had taken the emphasis to an extreme: a lot of scissors work and some selective casting turned both As You Like It and Twelfth Night, respectively retitled Touchstone and Jaques Are Missing and You Will WHAT?, into semi-serious studies of bisexuality. Again, Terry Hands' 1969 Stratford production of Pericles was distinguished by his doubling of the parts of Marina and Thaisa. Snoo Wilson promptly took doubling to an extreme in his 1969/70 adaptation, Pericles: The Mean Knight, a Portable Theatre production in which not only Marina and Thaisa but all the female parts were played by one actress.

These last three examples of direct indebtedness from a particular Shakespearean adaptation to a particular Shakespearean production are somewhat tentatively offered. I have simply remarked a similarity of thematic preoccupations and staging devices and then, without support
of any external evidence, reasoned post hoc, ergo propter hoc.
To that caveat I must add a concession: I cannot pretend that my
research has uncovered very many recent adaptations for which I would
propose, even so tentatively, a specific debt to a particular
production. What has emerged in that research, however, is that
the majority of British Shakespearean adaptations subsequent to
Wardle's 1966 article have been distinguished (as their predecessors
were not) by precisely those things which I have asserted as increasingly
characteristic of British Shakespearean production in this century —
attention to theatrical possibility and emphasis upon theme, upon an
intellectually apprehended interpretation. Because it obtains for
most adaptations, this general correspondence of concerns seems to
me more important than such specific (and possibly spurious) causal
connections as were suggested in the preceding paragraph. From my
discussion in the final sections of subsequent chapters it will, I
hope, be evident both that particular adaptations of recent years have
been distinguished by their attention to theatrical possibility and
their emphasis upon theme, and also that in the best recent work —
Bond's Lear is an obvious example — the theatrical concern pays good
service to the thematic one. Suffice at this point that the presence
of both concerns is the rule in recent adaptations, and that exceptions
to the rule are obvious because they are so rare and so at variance
with exactly contemporaneous work. For example, John Osborne's
A Place Calling Itself Rome, a turgidly verbose transposition of
Coriolanus published in 1973, is such an exception. Only in two
scene directions does it give any indication of the kind of stage
(a proscenium) for which it was written; and from another stage
direction it is clear that Osborne not only did not have a specific
number of performers in mind but was leaving staging up to the director.
of a production. (The play has so far failed to find one.) And as will be remarked again in a later chapter, A Place Calling Itself Rome fails to isolate some theme or themes in its Shakespearean original and interpret it or them in any intellectually apprehensible way. By contrast, John Bowen's Heil Caesar, a transposition of Julius Caesar written for BBC Schools Television in the same year, was distinguished precisely by its attention (at times inspired) to its medium of performance, and also, though to a lesser extent, by its dogged and detailed attempt to think through what a military dictatorship would mean in twentieth-century Britain.

I would propose, then, that a broad correspondence of concerns obtains across from historical and Leavisite criticism of Shakespearean texts through director's theatre productions of Shakespearean plays to Shakespearean adaptations in recent years. Yet I do not think that changes in critical fashion constitute a sufficient explanation for the changes in kind, quality and quantity among British Shakespearean adaptations since the 1960's. The first is, I believe, a necessary but not in itself sufficient condition of the second. A consideration of at least equal importance is the theatrical context. Adaptors who provide production notes such as the following —

MISTRESS BOTTOM and her neighbours should be presented not as stage types, but as flesh-and-blood women, and any temptation to burlesque the characters should be strongly resisted. A close study of the artisan scenes in A Midsummer Night's Dream will help producer and players to create the right mood and atmosphere....MISTRESS BOTTOM's little solo scene at the end calls for most careful thought and timing. The effect she tries to produce upon the audience should be a mixture of lump-in-the-throat, warm sympathy — and finally, laughter.

— give evidence not only of assuming Shakespearean characterisation to be psychologically realistic, but also of writing for the resources and expectations of an amateur theatrical situation. Again, when he
talked to an interviewer about his adaptation of *Pericles*, Snoo Wilson made no (published) mention of Terry Hands' Royal Shakespeare Company production of the play, nor of Derek Traversi whom Hands had quoted in a programme note, nor for that matter of Jan Knott having triggered directorial interest in images of sexuality in Shakespearean plays. What Wilson did discuss was how he had written that adaptation for a touring company of limited resources:

> I cut the text down to an hour — a Portable production needs a complete running down of a show till you just get what you absolutely need. For *Pericles* we abandoned music and props — and kept to the minimum costume changes necessary. All we had on stage were some prams. Gower brought on all the cast in their prams at the start. The prams could become boats, chariots or anything. Gower was a run down old tramp. He kept interrupting the play by leaping at the leading lady. This made the joy of *Pericles*' discovery of his daughter and wife at the end seem false. It was meant to be a black farce. I don't think the play is an extravaganza — I was interested in breaking the play down to its residue.\(^{113}\)

The final section of this chapter will attend to differences between the theatrical contexts for which the adaptors quoted immediately above were writing. It is the contexts respectively addressed by them — the amateur theatre movement which flourished from just after World War I until the mid-1950's and the professional alternative theatre (alias 'the Fringe') which has burgeoned since 1968 — which are most instructive for British adaptations of Shakespearean drama in this century.

iv. Theatrical Contexts

Within this century and country, the chronological and theatrical distribution of my various categories of adaptation is amazingly regular. As the formal description offered in the preceding section of this chapter has had to do too much leapfrogging across time and
contexts to make this pattern adequately apparent, I think it would be in order to offer a brief analysis of one of the appended tables wherein the twentieth-century English-language adaptations of each of Shakespeare's tragedies are listed chronologically. Of the long list of adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, twenty-one (just under half the total) have either originated in the United Kingdom or have been staged here. Of the twenty-one adaptations published or produced in this country, none is before 1923 but ten date from before 1950; and of these ten, six saw professional productions here. However, four of these six professionally staged adaptations are plays-within-plays but loosely connected with Shakespeare — one (*Romeo Coates*) a radio play adapted not from Shakespeare but from Edith Sitwell, and three (*Ivor Novello's Proscenium*, John van Druten's *There's Always Juliet*, and Terence Rattigan's *Harlequinade*) West End comedies connected to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* by but superficial use of allusions and quotations. The other two of the six professionally produced adaptations are both foreign imports — one (*Anderson's Winterset*) first staged at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and subsequently at London's New Lindsey Theatre during the brief postwar period when it ran as an arts theatre, and the other (*Anouilh's Romeo and Jeanette*, adapted by Desmond MacDonagh as *The Fading Mansion*) produced at the Duchess under Olivier's management. Of the other four pre-1950 adaptations, I have no record of production, but all are unimaginable on anything but an amateur stage — and one (*Herring's Harlequin Mercutio*) strains an imagination which would see it staged anywhere. Over the fifteen years from 1950 to 1965, only three adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* were to my knowledge staged or published in England; one West End comedy (*Ustinov's Romanoff and Juliet*), one American import of a musical (*West Side Story*), one last effort for amateurs
T.B. Morris' A Garden in Verona). The baker's dozen years since 1966, when Wardle expressed his hopes for great Shakespearean happenings, have turned up fully nine adaptations of Romeo and Juliet in England: only one of these nine (Treteaux Libres' Requiem for Romeo and Juliet) was a foreign import, and all but three were produced, not in the amateur theatre, but in the alternative theatre. Moreover, the three exceptions — Ewan MacColl's Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad, David Pinner's Juliet and Romeo and Tom Gallacher's The Scar — are radio and television scripts, the first by a veteran of the alternative theatre of the inter-war years, and the others by playwrights associated with the present-day alternative theatre.

The list of adaptations of Romeo and Juliet is atypical only in its length. Up until about 1960, the theatrical context with which the greatest part of Shakespearean adaptations is associated is the amateur theatre. There abounded travesties (ranging in length from monologues to playlets to three-act plays), out-of-place assemblies, and adaptations adopting novel vantage points. The adaptations not associated with the amateur theatre were generally: (i) West End productions of home-grown plays which, usually by means of a play-within-a-play, laced a few Shakespearean allusions into a more or less formulaic script; (ii) the offerings, again indigenous in origin but rather more varied in form, of the so-called non-commercial theatre, Norman Marshall's 'Other Theatre';

or (iii) Continental or American imports, very often produced in that 'Other Theatre'. In the last dozen years, however, the centre of gravity for Shakespearean adaptation has shifted from the amateur theatre to the professional alternative theatre, the 'Fringe' beloved of journalists.

In asserting that throughout the first half of the century most Shakespearean adaptations are associated with the amateur theatre, I can only most infrequently back up this claim by pointing to the
performance of a given adaptation by a particular amateur group. The
evidence for the attachment has varied from one script to another,
but it was usually one or more of: one-act format, which in this
century and country became almost entirely peculiar to amateur
theatricals;\textsuperscript{115} unisex (or predominantly unisex) cast; authorship by
a writer whose other work was demonstrably directed to the amateur
theatre movement; publication in one of the many series specialising
in the amateur, schools or study groups market; inclusion in lists
of plays recommended for amateur or schools performance; prefatory
materials in published texts; and notices on the title-page which
specify special arrangements for fees in the case of amateur performance.
These things recurred so often in my research that it seemed
increasingly advisable to examine the amateur theatre movement for
factors which might be argued to have influenced (or at least to
have been analogous with) the Shakespearean adaptations written for
and in that movement.

Such a search was to some extent obstructed by the intractability
of the British amateur theatre movement to academic research. The
history of the amateur theatre in this country has yet to be adequately
investigated and critically evaluated, and I suspect that the diffusion
and the minimal or non-existent documentation of the whole of the
movement may forever forbid such a study. Developments at amateur
theatres atypical for their excellence and their urban situation —
such as the Maddermarket Theatre in Norwich, or the Bradford Civic
Playhouse — have been well recorded.\textsuperscript{116} Also on fairly detailed record
are some less exemplary and more ephemeral undertakings dominated by
single figures who had both a knack for publicity and some reputation
for playwriting — such as Lord Dunsany's Shoreham Village Players
in Kent and L. du Garde Peach's Great Hucklow Village Players in
Derbyshire. Developments elsewhere, however, have not been charted, and the available evidence is usually biased by the joint facts of generation within the movement and address to it. There are a few more or less self-congratulatory chronicle histories, such as the British Drama League has published about itself and such as George Taylor has recently potted from such sources for the movement as a whole. There are a handful of periodicals (notably including that which Taylor edited) which are addressed to enthusiasts and are packed with announcements of productions and with leading articles analysing the present state of play in the amateur game. There are some clues scattered through the prefaces to collections of plays for amateur performers, and there are many books and pamphlets of advice to amateur and schools groups, a few of which publications are aimed at groups especially interested in staging and studying Shakespeare. And finally there are a number of plays which spoof amateur productions of Shakespeare: J.M. Bridie's *Midsummer Afternoon's Dream* (1944); Joy Anderson's *Poor Mr. Shakespeare* (1962); David Pinner's *Shakebag* (1976); and Entertainment Machine's *The Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Production of 'Macbeth'* (1976). Most of these are quite recent and are associated with post-1968 alternative theatre groups which attempt to be the antithesis of everything the amateur theatre has represented in this country. As such they would seem to be somewhat suspect as reliable images of amateur British performances of Shakespeare before the demise of the amateur movement in the mid 1950's; but in fact the images which they offer are surprisingly coherent, in outline if not in colouration, with those to be found in earlier scripts satirising amateur productions of Shakespeare.

While there is thus not much detailed evidence available on the
actual practice of specific amateur groups, there is a great deal
of evidence for prescriptions and presumptions across the amateur
theatre movement as a whole. And the picture which emerges from an
examination of this evidence is of a very depressing piece with that
indifference to dramatic coherence and that inattention to theatrical
possibility which are so appallingly apparent in Shakespearean
adaptations aimed at an amateur market. The professed aims of the
British Drama League are 'the development of the art of the theatre
and the promotion of a right relation between drama and the life of
the community' — which points toward a dichotomy between amateur
theatre as craft and amateur theatre as social service and occasion.
And if the occasional statements of the disenchanted are to be credited,
the latter generally streaked in miles ahead of the former. If this
was indeed so in practice, it seems to me that at least two reasons
for it can be inferred from the theory. One is that until very
recently the art of the theatre has been expounded to the amateur
as a craft — i.e., as a body of techniques imported from the professional
and geared down to the situation and resources of the amateur, rather
than generated by these. Over and over again, the pages of advice
to amateurs on organising a drama group, selecting a play, rehearsing,
acting, designing a set and costumes, arranging publicity, etc.,
in effect recommend a steady lowering of sights instead of aiming
elsewhere. Arguments and observations to the latter effect are not
altogether absent from the literature of the amateur theatre movement
in its interwar heyday, but they do tend to be marooned amid waves
of contrary assumptions. For example, the 9th April 1936 issue of
The Amateur Theatre and Playwrights Journal ran a shrewd article in
which Ashley Dukes urged the producers at small theatres to avert
their eyes from the West End and recognise that the size of their house
imposed
a special kind of contact between player and listener which, if rightly understood, determines the nature of the play itself and defines its outward form. The root of the matter is...that artistic conditions of the larger professional stage cannot be reproduced in miniature — which is what a producer seeks to do who mounts in a playhouse seating 150 to 250 people a West End comedy from a house seating 1200.

By some glorious irony, the same issue of this journal offered its readers their third and final installment of the text of Jack de Leon's and Jack Celestin's The Silent Witness, then playing at the Comedy Theatre. The publication of this West End script in a periodical addressed to amateurs was perfectly consistent with the editor's policy, which from the first issue had been to review 'professional productions from the point of view of their eventual performance by amateurs', to run a section of photographies of West End productions, and generally to attend to West End staging because 'the professional theatre has much to teach us technically.' But such policy is utterly at odds with Dukes' argument as quoted above.

The other thing that seems to me strikingly awry about all these more or less condescending recommendations for amateur theatricals is that only infrequently is it ever suggested that the amateur producer/performer might pause to think about the play, let alone about the interpretation of it which will be the play in performance. He is offered impressive lists of plays available for performance. And he is urged to give careful consideration to his selection, which is to be made according to a combination of local exigencies, abilities and tastes on the one hand, and universal artistic merit and ethical import on the other. But critical effort seems to be expected to cease there, at the very beginning.

In the case of amateur productions of Shakespeare in particular, critical effort need hardly operate that long. From its organised beginnings, the
amateur theatre movement in this country has accorded special status to the national playwright. (And of course, before that movement was organised as a whole, individual amateur groups — notably Feal's Elizabethan Stage Society and the British Empire Shakespeare Society — had been organised for the staging or reading of Shakespearean texts.) Roy Mitchell, for example, described his Shakespeare for Community Players as 'the outcome of many requests from amateur directors and players for advice on the stage presentation of Shakespeare.'

That was in 1919, the year of the foundation of the British Drama League, when 'the amateur player's serious invasion of the domain of the theatre was so recent that no library yet grown up for him'. Fifteen years later, by which time its membership numbered well over 3,000 and its library contained ten times that many volumes, the British Drama League published two lists of plays for unisex casts and paid Shakespeare the tribute of appending to both a special note on editions of and useful books about his works. One of the more recent accounts of English amateur theatre remarks that few amateur societies achieve a really stunning result from presenting Shakespeare or any of the great classical plays earlier than, say, Ibsen....It was the plays produced from Ibsen onwards that gave the amateur his opportunity of coping with characters he can recognize.

Yet the books of advice to amateur groups regularly urge to undertake a Shakespearean production just as firmly as they warn them off attempting the rest of the classical repertory, which is rejected as both too demanding of perfected technique and too foreign to the experience of amateur audience and actor alike! Indeed, one observer even claimed to have found amateur productions of Shakespeare more satisfying than professional ones precisely because the performers lacked 'technique':
It would seem that poetic drama is better suited to amateurs, and amateurs to poetic drama, while plays by Congreve, Sheridan, Wilde or Galsworthy are better handled by professionals. This would explain...the fact that Shakespeare is often more satisfactorily performed by amateurs than by professionals....The Shakespearean performances which I have found most satisfying, as doing most justice to the plays themselves, have been amateur....I do not think that Shakespeare profits from professional technique: the very perfection of Shakespeare's language and poetic music go so far beyond what an individual player can add to, that to me the plays come over with their greatest power and effect if they are presented with comparative simplicity by players of personality....Whether in producer or player, the essential to theatrical success of any kind is personality, and since personality is a gift of the Creator either the professional or the amateur may possess it, but by neither can it be acquired.

And the leader of one long-lived amateur group recommended Shakespearean production as the way to teach 'technique' to a rank novice of an amateur:

There is only one course which we must all pursue. Quite literally, a village company must begin with Shakespeare and 'work up' to The Farmer's Wife. A farmhand who would make an indifferent Miles Dixon will often make an effective Hamlet, and in the making he will learn the technique which will enable him to approach the task of creation itself.

Or as Ben Greet wrote in the course of a singularly impracticable article entitled 'I Believe in Shakespeare':

It is the practical use of Shakespeare that is really important. I do implore amateurs to go straight for the play. Read it together carefully, with a director who knows what he, or she, is after. The English, the scansion, the rhythm and the interpretation must be Shakespeare's. It's as easy as A.B.C.

Perhaps the choicest example of the exemption of Shakespearean texts from sanctions applied to other classical plays comes from a 1925 British Drama League publication on Plays and How to Act Them. In the course of three successive paragraphs it asserts:

Tragedies are risky even when not difficult. They require much rehearsing and elaborate care with scenery and properties. Translations of Greek tragedies are not to be recommended unless the Producer loves them dearly....Harm may be done to the unlearned by the disappointment of failure to enjoy what they are told is beautiful. They may come to the conclusion that beauty is not for them....
Shakespeare should be tried by every Group, especially every Village Group. The easiest plays for full-length production are Taming of the Shrew, As You Like It, Twelfth Night and Julius Caesar. They are easy because they go with a swing.

The 1926 Board of Education report on Drama in Adult Education includes some hints as to the reasons for Shakespeare's privileged status among amateurs:

There appears to be hardly any dramatic society of repute which does not give Shakespeare a prominent place. The new movement in drama has brought many thousands more in touch with his work and has given them the greater insight, conferred by actual participation in the plays, into their unsurpassed beauty of language, their high philosophy and revelation of human character and motives. On this account alone the new movement is entitled to the highest regard as an instrument of education.

While the phrase 'conferred by actual participation in the plays' points to educational innovations which are a large part of what J.L. Styan has recently described as The Shakespeare Revolution, the literary judgements which immediately follow it are (not surprisingly) clichéd formulae recognisable from Shakespearean criticism of the time.

Intimate exposure to rhetoric, philosophy and psychology was not the only advantage Shakespeare offered amateurs, however: he also inculcated approved ethics:

There are elements whose importance in education is often greatly underestimated. We refer to the elements of romance and tradition. It is a common fashion to deride these and to suggest that they induce affectation and false sentiment. We are inclined to think that a life of courage, endeavour and self-sacrifice has often taken its first inspiration from the "high heart, high speech, high deeds and honouring eyes" of a romantic novel or play. Moreover, such plays often induce a desire to study history.

Of more immediate social utility is the fact that amateur productions of Shakespeare can serve to keep a great number of people busy doing things they enjoy:
One of our witnesses pointed out that a modern play had generally few characters, little scenery, no music, and no dancing, while everyday costumes could be worn. The number of people interested in the production was consequently very few, and no one had any part in the production unless he could act. On the other hand a Shakespeare play had a great number of parts, and gave scope for musicians, singers, folk-dancers, craftsmen and dressmakers. He recommended Shakespeare productions on this account, apart from any other quality in the plays, and we are disposed to agree with this view.137

The concern of the Board of Education in making this report was, admittedly and understandably, for paedagogy rather than for aesthetics. Still, throughout the amateur theatre literature on the subject of staging Shakespearean plays, the emphasis is on the social purposes to which they can be put: any consideration of how the plays are to be put on stages is aligned with those purposes and sustained only just so far as will serve them. (This is perhaps most painfully apparent in manuals of advice for schools productions of Shakespeare, wherein it is more than once argued that the great advantage of massive excisions in reading or staging the plays is that the teacher can thereby 'cover' more of them in less time, without boring his students.) From there on, the text is expected to fend for itself in production.

In this connection one may note the fun made of the figure of the amateur producer in plays about amateur productions of Shakespeare. A tongue-in-cheek introduction to the earliest (1944) of these notes that

the excuse for reviving masterpieces by dead authors is, of course, the magnificent scope these things give for the expression of the regisseur's personality. While he was musing deeply on the manner in which Producers have managed to muscle their way on to the stage, the following short drama blew across Mr. Bridie's consciousness.139

The Regisseur blown across Mr. Bridie's consciousness is one Constance Plural, a lady of ten stones' weight and heartily middle-aged manner. Her first business in the play is to distribute cups of Bovril to
her rain-sodden company and her last is to sink into the arms of the local curate, Mr. Whitson, an amateur stagemanager to whom she declares her love when they both wander onstage in a thoroughly askew production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Nearly twenty years later, production and central figure find their twins in *Poor Mr. Shakespeare*, another amateurs' in-joke which hangs most of its humour on the figure of the Lady Producer. This one, Mrs. Gibbs, is almost preoccupied with making passes at the actress playing Oberon as she is with issuing orders to everyone else at rehearsal of The Little Wapping Women's Institute's production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The joke carried on into the 1970's. Entertainment Machine's *Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society's Production of *Macbeth*!* — a title which speaks volumes even as it fills them — also made fun of the figure of the amateur producer, but rendered her as a twittering, somewhat superannuated, incompetent rather than a middle-aged Brunhilde. (And, the play-within-a-play being staged as on the night of an amateur competition, even more fun was made of the figure of the Adjudicator, who stood at the rostrum and gradually adorned himself with transvestite gear and make-up as the disaster-ridden production of *Macbeth* wore on.) Spoof eventually aspired to become serious social statement about irresponsible bourgeois illusion versus cruel social realities: the producer got mauled by a group of toughs in the hall outside the auditorium, and nobody noticed them, or her. Yet another female producer figures in David Pinner's *Shakebag* (also 1976). This lady proposes to stage BOTH *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and to that joint end she keeps attempting to lecture her company, The Romeo Amateur Dramatic Society, on how 'the supernatural forms part of the infrastructure of both plays.' The rehearsal is, however, hopelessly obstructed by the various
obsessions (all of them irrelevant to the work at hand) of the performers. By rehearsal's end — i.e. closing time in the nearest pub — the 'production concept' is still the lone concern of the producer, who has conspicuously failed to move it one step towards concrete incarnation in production.

The above amounts to no more than the less than astonishing claim that producer's/director's theatre productions of Shakespeare were not encouraged in the British amateur theatre movement of the first half of this century. The work of Nugent Monck at the Norwich Maddermarket is an obvious and egregious exception, and his own public statements on the staging of Shakespeare are antithetical — in practical detail as well as in general spirit — to the theatrical mindlessness of some of the handbooks' comments on the same subject. Another exceptional recommendation for amateur policy may be found in a less likely-looking source: Mary Kelly's Village Theatre (1939). The author had extensive experience of amateur theatricals in rural districts: inspired by the efforts of the Kelly Village Players in Devon, she had in 1918 founded the Village Drama Society, which amalgamated with the British Drama League in 1932. She is strikingly less sanguine than her colleagues about the results of amateur productions of Shakespeare, although her arguments for the mere making of such attempts cover similar territory. Many village players, she writes, have taken to Shakespeare, many indeed now finding him the only dramatist worth acting. I believe that the story he tells is as important to his village players as the way he tells it, for the village has always loved a good tale. The countryman...likes to be up and doing; and Shakespeare certainly allows him that. The greatness of the plays does come through, too; and all the more because the Elizabethan idiom in Shakespeare and the Bible is less strange to dialect-speaking people than to townsfolk, so many of the words and phrases being still in use. One hears from all over the country of the release that is found in the mere learning of the magnificent poetry and in the rehearsals of the plays, and one hears, too, of original and interesting
interpretation given by people who know nothing of conventional stage methods. But for Shakespeare, as for Greek drama, a first essential is a producer who can act as interpreter. Without such a producer many a village has found the plays quite unintelligible, and has struggled through scenes for a drama festival because they had an idea that it was a good thing to "do Shakespeare," and that they would get high marks for "Choice of Play" thereby. Poor Shakespeare!

I cannot say from personal observation of British amateur productions of Shakespeare whether Kelly's sympathy was misplaced; but the secondary evidence sifted above suggests that, as regards the British amateur theatre movement as a whole, it was not.

A steadily growing concern from the end of World War I to the beginning of World War II, the British amateur theatre movement saw a brief period of efflorescence immediately after the second war and then went into a decline. The cause of the decline is a question which would not be pertinent here even if I were competent to consider it. The evidence that a decline occurred, however, is abundant. The amateur drama festivals, the raisons d'etre of so many societies and the occasions of much new playwriting, were in trouble from the early 1950's. The British Drama League, umbrella organisation for many amateur societies and efforts, met with a financial crisis in the middle years of the decade and was eventually (1972) reconstituted as the British Theatre Association, no longer exclusively concerned with amateur theatre. And if one reads through the issues of Drama — the organ of the British Drama League and the longest-lived publication for amateurs — for the 1950's and 1960's after, say, those of thirty years earlier, one has the sense of drinking very flat champagne. In the later years, there is a slightly higher proportion of advertisements and book reviews (no longer mainly of literature for amateurs) to feature articles; but the most striking thing is the change in the contributors to the journal. Or rather, the lack of change. The
contributors to, say, the first volume of *Drama* (1919-20) are a dazzling list: Frank Benson, Harley Granville Barker, William Archer, Ashley Dukes, Jaques Dalcrose and, in a number especially devoted to ballet, Tamara Karsavina. In the issues for 1955-6, one often enough encounters great names — Gordon Craig, J.W. Lambert, A.P. Herbert, Nevill Coghill, Ivor Brown, Roy Walker, J.C. Trewin, Richard Findlater, Norman Marshall, and even T.S. Eliot. These are, however, the names either of theatrical journalist-critics or of dramatists and producers whose contributions to the theatre had mainly been made in the 1940's or '30's or even earlier. That they were no longer active and important in British theatre is of course in part because of the nearly total evaporation, by the mid-1950's, of the little or 'other' theatre movement with which one associates the great names of the interwar years. But at the same time, it is striking that *Drama* in Fitzroy Square gets virtually nothing from the men who from 1956 were reshaping British drama and theatre at the Royal Court Theatre in Sloane Square. And in later years, the British Drama League would likewise be relatively isolated from the Fringe. With the exception of Charles Marowitz (whose status in the Fringe is somewhat maverick anyhow), no major figure of the Fringe has been, as far as I know, associated with the British Drama League and through it with what survives of the organised amateur theatre movement.

To recapitulate my argument thus far: until the mid-1950's, more British Shakespearean adaptations are associated with the amateur theatre movement than with any other single theatrical context in this country. And the salient characteristics of that movement are (i) an approach to theatre as a second-hand, somewhat substandard craft, geared down from the professional theatre; (ii) a special reverence for Shakespearean drama, which, by virtue of its status in British
culture, is exempted from taboos laid upon other classical drama; and (iii) a comparative indifference to the issues of interpretation raised by the production of Shakespearean texts. In all three respects, pronounced differences obtain in the present-day alternative theatre, which has become the principal theatrical context for Shakespearean adaptation in this country. Although the name with which journalists christen it goes back to the Edinburgh Festival in the late 1940's, the birthdate of the 'Fringe' is usually assigned to 1968, the Fringe equivalent to Geoffrey Whitworth's foundation of the British Drama League in 1919 being Jim Haynes' opening of the Arts Lab in Drury Lane in the year in which a new Theatre Act put an end to pre-censorship of the theatre by the Lord Chamberlain. Like the amateur movement, the Fringe very rapidly spawned a considerable quantity of self-addressed and self-referential literature: the 'Fringe Drama' listings in Time Out; Peter Ansorge's Disrupting the Spectacle, a survey which was derived from and retained the structural divisions of a five-part series of articles which the author had written for Plays and Players in 1972; and several directories which were linked to the new journal Theatre Quarterly by editor and publisher. There was, in short, a rapid definition and advertisement of the Fringe theatre movement despite an even more rapid turnover among its constituent groups: Ronald Hayman has pointed out that 'of the thirty-two groups listed in the first issue of Theatre Quarterly (January-March 1971) only sixteen were still in existence by the summer of 1972.

But where the amateur theatre movement had in its literature insisted that it was not competing with the professional theatre but rather supplementing it, the Fringe movement from the beginning undertook to be an alternative: it aimed not so much to attract audiences on their nights in between attendance at West End productions as to attract
new audiences. This aim is perhaps most evident in the introduction of alternative times (lunch-hour and late-night) and venues (pubs, touring circuits based on the new universities and the new regional arts centres, various converted sites ranging from cellars to attics) for theatrical production. Whether and in what respects these in fact attracted very different audiences seems to me to be debatable, and most debatable in London, which accounted for the greater part of Fringe activity, especially in the early years of the movement. But what was established was a rapidly turning-over market for new plays. In 1971/2, the year which saw the disappearance of one in two Fringe theatre groups, also saw the production of fully 480 new plays in Britain, 300 of them on the Fringe and 238 on the London Fringe. More recently, at least two playwrights have remarked how easy it now is, thanks to the existence of the Fringe, to get a new play staged. And like those playwrights who between the wars had (rather less promptly) taken to writing for the amateur theatre movement, Fringe playwrights have often turned to Shakespeare as a source of — or at least starting point for — more or less short-order scripts.

But they have not used Shakespeare in the same ways. It would be folly to generalise about Fringe plays in terms of dramatic kind. There are simply too many different kinds of drama being written for and within the Fringe for any generalisation to be at once useful and correct. (Indeed, the most one can safely say is that one of the ways in which the Fringe is an alternative to the West End is precisely in the generalisation-baffling variety of its dramatic offerings.) As for the whole, so for the part that particularly concerns me in this thesis. The out-of-place assembly excepted, every one of the categories of Shakespearean adaptation outlined earlier in this chapter can be exemplified from among work written for the British alternative theatre since 1968.
Some categories (transpositions and collages) are rather better represented than others (plays-within-plays and novel vantage point); but it is not possible accurately to describe some formal paradigm of an all-purpose British Shakespearean adaptation from the last fifteen years.

But while accurate generalisations about drama in the contemporary alternative theatre are impossible, one can make some sweeping but still defensible statements about staging and its impact upon writing style within the movement. In marked contrast to the stepped-down craftsmanship which I have noted in the literature of the inter-war amateur theatre, I have in scripts and productions alike unfailingly observed that in the contemporary alternative theatre, the human and technical limitations born of financial constraints are not only accepted but exploited. The exploitation is of course to a large extent simply part and parcel of the gradual spread, throughout the whole of contemporary British theatre, of non-realistic staging. Forty or fifty years ago it was a long way from the much-mocked rhododendron bushes and gauze curtains of the amateur theatre to the fourth-wall drawing-room sets of the West End. Today, however, decor, special effects, lighting etc. in the contemporary alternative theatre are not in kind so very different from those adopted for some productions in the larger subsidised theatres — differ though they may in quality and quantity. (This similarity of theatrical kind may be one reason why playwrights like Howard Brenton have been able to move with such rapidity and agility from the alternative to the major subsidised theatres, while others like Edgar have been able to straddle the two.) But where non-realistic staging is an option for the West End and major subsidised theatres, in the Fringe it has been, especially in the early years of the movement, a necessity consequent
upon limited resources, rapid turnover among a few personnel, and (for most companies) shifting venues. Howard Brenton has memorably spoken of this necessity and of the writing style which has in turn followed from it:

What made me a so-called fringe writer was not an idea that it was ideologically good to be underground...It was the fact that I found poverty of means a great help. It began really at the Combination when they were in Brighton in 1968 and we had very little money. And we began trying to adapt to this and derived great strength from it. 30 shillings was the average budget for a play, and for that you could only have two torches and a board. Ever since then, I've thought like that...You write not only the words, but for the place where the words are said. And the actors who say the words and the minds to whom they said. They are all the things that you write with. The discipline of poverty, I think, tends to rub out the difficulties of style....The true dialectic happens between the audience you address and the play itself. I suppose it's a very basic fringe idea. Portable was very conscious that, if you could take what was meant to be good from straight good writing and then put it into a context of an audience that hadn't heard of the Court, hadn't heard of any of this, hadn't even seen plays quite a lot of the time, then you get a new kind of relationship, which in a way is straight to the content of the piece.

In a theatrical movement distinguished by inventive minimalism in non-realistic staging, Shakespearean texts are obviously both apposite for production and instructive for playwriting. At another level, these same texts have much to teach a theatre seriously concerned to rethink audience-performance relations and a drama seriously concerned to set style in service to significance. To quote again from Brenton, a Fringe playwright who has adapted Measure for Measure, who has derived one play (Revenge) from King Lear and borrowed from A Midsummer Night's Dream for part of another (The Churchill Play), and whose play Fruit was received by Dutch critics as an adaptation of King Richard III:

Coherence within a play is not a matter of choosing to write in one style. That's just sameness, superficial neatness. Actual coherence means using many different styles, moulding them, a deliberate process of selection in order to express that whole in a play. Shakespeare did this all the time.
It is, I believe, in the contemporary alternative theatre that British playwrights are at last recognising and utilising the implications of that 'special kind of contact between player and listener' which Ashley Dukes saw as the common ground between the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre and the little theatres of his time, and which, in the article quoted earlier, he so unsuccessfully recommended to the attention of the amateur theatre movement. Moreover, whereas interwar playwrights who addressed the amateur theatre movement had had to have its physical and human limitations pointed out to them, Fringe playwrights have not needed to be prompted to take their cues from the circumstances for which they write. Their comparative alacrity in this respect is, I suggest, attributable to their greater proximity to these circumstances. Scripts by members of amateur groups excepted, interwar scripts intended for amateur production were offered to a generalised market. By contrast, many playwrights for the contemporary alternative theatre are or have been attached to the groups which stage their work, and most have first-hand familiarity with conditions on the Fringe. At the same time as Fringe playwrights are turning to Shakespearean drama for such lessons as are outlined above, the significance of that drama — 'that whole in a Shakespearean play' or 'the content of the piece' — definitely does not go without saying, and saying in production, on the Fringe. The Fringe's critical attitude to Shakespeare as the focal point of a whole cultural heritage is difficult to document in general, but specific instances of this attitude will be apparent in subsequent discussion of particular adaptations associated with the contemporary alternative theatre. At this point, I would refer to the never-failing preference of *Time Out* reviewers for Shakespearean productions which bear the traces of
firm direction along overtly interpretative lines. Beyond that I would note that in nine years of fairly frequent attendance at London Fringe productions, the last six of them concentrating on the Shakespeareana of the Fringe, I have yet to see a single production of a Shakespearean script or of a Shakespearean adaptation which took for granted that Shakespeare could speak for himself and that the audience would automatically understand what he was saying. (I have, I must concede, seen some productions which struck me as utterly uncritical in other respects.) I would here refer back to my earlier remarks about British director's theatre productions of Shakespeare and note that most Fringe playwrights are young enough that their memories of Shakespeare in the theatre are likely to be dominated by director's theatre productions of the plays. Beyond this, because the Fringe offers itself as an alternative theatre — indeed, in the case of some of the politically motivated writers and groups, an opposition theatre — it is not surprising that received assumptions about the national playwright and his plays come in for constant re-examination.

In conclusion, then: where the amateur theatre, offering itself as a supplement to the professional theatre, was embarrassed by technical and human limitations, the present-day Fringe, attempting to offer an alternative to other available kinds of theatre, has capitalised upon similar (though by no means identical) constraints and in so doing has developed a distinctive style of staging and to some extent of writing; where the amateur theatre exempted Shakespearean plays from strictures which it imposed upon most of the rest of the classical dramatic tradition and did so because of what those plays have long represented in British culture as a whole, the alternative theatre has both used and abused Shakespeare as one focal point in
its questioning of that culture; and where the amateur theatre
was indifferent to the interpretation which is communicated by the
production of a Shakespearean text, it is above all the significance
of Shakespeare — less what he intended than what is intended by a
production of a Shakespearean play today — on which centre the
Shakespearean efforts of the contemporary alternative theatre. These
three differences between theatrical contexts point back to precisely
those differences between adaptations respectively written for these
contexts which were noted earlier: degree of theatrical inventiveness
and effort at critical interpretation.
CHAPTER II

ACTION AND PLOT IN TRANSPOSTIONS OF ROMEO AND JULIET

i. Introduction

Romeo and Juliet, the earliest play in the Shakespearean canon which has regularly received attention from adaptors, recurs very often in the canon of modern English-language adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy.¹ I have, in fact, found more English-language adaptations of it than of any other Shakespearean text except Hamlet. After its sheer length, however, what is remarkable about the list of adaptations of Romeo and Juliet is on the one hand the repetition in it of a few of the formal categories of adaptation described in the preceding chapter, and on the other hand the nearly complete omission of another category. Surfeit and dearth are, I believe, both attributable to certain characteristics of the Shakespearean original.

Turning first to what is absent from the list of adaptations of Romeo and Juliet, I would suggest that the simplicity of the action of Romeo and Juliet, the completeness of its plot, and most of all the indispensability of its title figures for that action, have all combined to close off several of those approaches to adaptation which were quite commonly deployed in days dominated by a character-centred school of Shakespearean criticism. These approaches are those which I have described under the general category of 'the novel vantage point'. In striking contrast to their practices upon Hamlet, English-language adaptors have not regularly scoured the text of Romeo and Juliet for references to unenacted events and to figures omitted from the list of dramatis personae, and then set out to rewrite the play from the point of view of another character and to
represent the events at Verona as that character's tragedy: there is no Nurse's Story depicting that figure's twin losses of her charge and of Susan, no Judgment of Paris centring on the count's struggle to comprehend his fiancée's conduct and climaxing with his undeserved death at the moment of enlightenment, and no Both our Houses dramatising the decimation of two households and the decline of adult hopes from, say, the death in childbirth of another Capulet daughter (as hinted at I.ii.13-14) to the interment of Lady Montague alongside her son and his bride. Even when — and the English-language instances are extremely infrequent — adaptors have attempted to hypothesise and articulate the reactions of characters other than Romeo and Juliet, these reactions have remained peripheral: the shape and meaning of the adaptation is virtually always determined by its representation of the fate of the star-crossed lovers. For example, in an adaptation which I will discuss in some detail further on in this chapter, Andrew Davies gives several of the minor characters a single speech in which he or she directly addresses the audience with his or her reactions to the situation on stage. However, these reactions are never developed beyond bald reminders that the point of view held by Romeo and Juliet is not unique, however privileged it may be. Thus Davies' Paris, recast as a bank clerk, says to the spectators:

I dare say that by now most of you have formed the impression that I am a bit of a prat....I can understand. I'm a minor character in this little entertainment. Doomed to a bunch of unrewarding lines, set up as a sort of stooge. My dull solidity showing up in bright relief the flashing passionate natures of what I suppose you regard as the major characters. Well, I just wanted to point out that seen from my point of view, I'm the major character. And certainly not a prat.... My main bit of bad luck is that I happen to be in love with a girl who doesn't love me. I don't think that qualifies me for ridicule and contempt....Your friend Rohan [Romeo] was in just the same position not long ago.
Well, I suppose that's all I wanted to say, really. Thanks for listening.
This quotation comes from a very recent (1975), full-length script associated with the contemporary alternative theatre, wherein (as I will be remarking further on in this chapter) adaptations of Romeo and Juliet have in some important respects differed from earlier ones written for other markets. From such a source, the quotation may be somewhat suspect as evidence in support of a generalisation about English-language adaptations since the beginning of this century. However, if one turns to earlier twentieth-century adaptations of Romeo and Juliet in English, adaptations from a new or minor character’s point of view are conspicuously absent just where one would most expect to find them — namely among one-act scripts professionally written for amateur production between the end of World War I and the mid 1950’s, the market for so many adaptations of other Shakespearean plays from another character’s point of view. I know of only one amateur’s one-act adaptation of Romeo and Juliet which adopts this strategy, T.B. Morris’ A Garden in Verona (1954). This script brings seven Veronese women to the garden of Rosaline, who is infatuated with Mercutio and whom an authorial note proclaims "a fascinating character, in spite of the fact that Shakespeare never allows her to appear in the flesh." Yet however fascinating Morris may have found his Rosaline, at the end of the play he makes her problems and passions disappear amid anticipations of disaster for one of her guests, Juliet Capulet. A fight breaks out offstage in the town square, the ladies break into bickering along Montague-Capulet lines of division, and Juliet ends the play by declaring "(with difficulty) We — will not have —
these quarrels in our lives. We — will not... (in childlike desolation) It was my festival day.\footnote{5}

A Garden in Verona is also the only English-language adaptation of Romeo and Juliet in this century to adopt the strategy, common among adaptations of other Shakespearean plays (especially, again, of Hamlet), of showing events anterior to those dramatised by Shakespeare. Uninjured by the minor characters of Romeo and Juliet, adaptors have shown small interest in working out even the biographies and psychologies of the lovers themselves before their meeting in Shakespeare's play.\footnote{6} Their characterisations have, it seems, proved suggestive only at their points of intersection with each other and with the world of conflict that contains them. This is not merely because Romeo and Juliet are a celebrated pair: character-centred adaptors in the first half of this century were not overly sensitive about splitting up other Shakespearean couples and dramatising, say, Cleopatra's dealings with Herod,\footnote{7} or her amorous occupations in the weary nights when Antony was away,\footnote{8} or her activities in between her affairs with Julius Caesar and Antony.\footnote{9} It is rather that Romeo and Juliet's literary and legendary existence is exclusively as a pair, the figure of love which overwhelms all else and of lovers who have no significance without each other.

Nor are there many English-language adaptations of Romeo and Juliet set in a time after that of Shakespeare's play. As some adaptations of Hamlet give evidence, the difficulty of writing a sequel to a play whereof the principals are dead by the end of the original is not absolutely insurmountable. It seems, however, to have intimidated most twentieth-century adaptors of Romeo and Juliet, and the exceptions to this rule show signs of an impoverishment of
invention. One full-length pastiche, George Jean Nathan's
The Avon Flows (1937), is by its sub-titled account 'an editorial
variation', a fusion of three Shakespearean texts into as many acts.
Romeo and Juliet provides the first act, and Nathan gets around the
Shakespearean 'facts' by ending that act with Shakespeare's Act II,
scene vi. Another full-length play, Robert Nathan's Juliet in
Mantua (1955), and Charles O'Brien Kennedy's one-act Romeo
Passes By (1935) simply alter the Shakespearean 'facts' and
allow the lovers to live on. A fourth postscript adaptation,
Charles Samuel Levy's Romeo Comes to Town (1942), concedes the
'facts' but allots the lovers one of those mysterious resurrections
which have been wished on Hamlet by a few adaptors. Yet at the same time Romeo and Juliet has been regularly
subjected to adaptation by the strategies which I have discussed
under the categories of 'out-of-place assembly', 'play within a
play', especially travestied transposition. That this is so is,

I believe, because Shakespeare's
protagonists are less intriguing as full-fleshed and particularised
personalities than as types of young love, and the action of
Romeo and Juliet is, underneath the neat chain of coincidences which
constitute its plot, so timelessly simple. The typicality of
the protagonists of Romeo and Juliet has made it especially liable
to those adaptive approaches — the out-of-place assembly and the
travesty — which traffic in the typical and emphasise comic
incongruities sketched in crude and superficial lines. The same
typicality of these figures and, even more, the simplicity of the
action in which they are brought together, destroyed and stellified,
have rendered the play especially attractive for adaptation by those approaches — play-within-a-play and serious transposition — which depend upon analogies between Shakespearean script and twentieth-century situation and story.\textsuperscript{14}

The category of out-of-place assembly has in the preceding chapter received its full allowance of discussion in this thesis. The only point that need be added here is the unsurprising observation that the frequency with which Romeo and/or Juliet appear in the adaptations which I have classified under that category is an index to the familiarity of the play Romeo and Juliet. I will return to the category of play-within-a-play in my chapter on adaptations of Hamlet. This chapter is primarily concerned with texts which fall within the category of transposition. As was set out in the preceding chapter, this category is a very broad one; and it appears even more extensive in the case of dramatic adaptations of Romeo and Juliet. If one discounts out-of-place assemblies as too hybrid in Shakespearean source to be tallied under adaptations of any single play, one finds that over 40 adaptations of Romeo and Juliet have been written in English in this century. Between two-thirds and three-quarters of these adaptations — including the earliest and the latest ones that I have found, all of the full-length ones, and all those which have seemed to me to pose or point to problems pertinent to the shape and status of tragedy in this century — are transpositions.

As was outlined in my first chapter, the category of transposition may be subdivided into three kinds, one of which overlaps with the category of travesty. As I am centering this chapter on questions of action and plot, I think it need not be much concerned with
travesties: travesty's total dependence on the typical puts its centre of gravity primarily on the type figure. I will briefly attend to three full-length travesties of Romeo and Juliet, one of which (Ustinov's Romanoff and Juliet) very nearly escapes that category and approximates farce, but I intend altogether to ignore the one-act travesties. As will be apparent from the bibliographical appendix, the numerical losses from critical discussion are heavy, but I cannot pretend to regret them. The sheer number of travesties of Romeo and Juliet, like the frequency with which its title characters turns up in out-of-place assemblies, simply reinforces the point, itself hardly in need of proof, that the play is well-known and some passages of it well remembered. Most of the travesty transpositions are without any intrinsic interest whatsoever, and the issues for which they are of relative interest do not on the whole seem to me to be of any great pertinence to questions of tragedy, Shakespearean or modern. For example, the score of one-act Romeo and Juliet travesties intended for amateur production could be instanced in elaboration of those general considerations about adaptations for the amateur theatre which were raised in the preceding chapter. Moreover, with their dependence upon twentieth-century type figures and stock situations, the same texts might also be considered in some future study of courtship customs and/or domestic relations, a topic which falls well outside the provenance of this thesis. Finally, two travesties, one American (and not dramatic but prose fiction) and the other Australian, might be adduced in support of an argument that the reception of a cultural artifact can be qualified by geographical, as well as temporal and/or social, distance from its source: I think
this topic to be at least tangentially relevant to mine, but I have lacked both the evidence and the expertise to investigate it adequately.

The schematic transpositions of *Romeo and Juliet* do, however, invite extensive investigation. In the preceding chapter I defined this subdivision of transposition as 'the strategy which isolates the basic curve of the action of a play and an essential configuration of characters and then resituates these, with suitable adjustments in causality and characterisation, in a contemporary context.' Curve and configuration alike can be less doubtfully identified in *Romeo and Juliet* than in any other Shakespearean tragedy. At least, it is possible to abstract a consistent consensus among adaptors of *Romeo and Juliet* as to the minimum constituents of both curve of action and configuration of characters; and my own abstracted understanding of the original text conforms to the one which I have inferred from the texts of those transpositions which are not travesties. The essential configuration of characters in *Romeo and Juliet* is simply the intertwined pair of young lovers, though most adaptors have also included a Friar Laurence and/or Duke figure whose superior wisdom and/or power may be dwarfed by the lovers' embrace in death. And the basic curve of the story is simply the enkindling of young love at first sight against the background of an ancient and internecine strife which overcomes that love only to be resolved by it. Until quite recently, moreover, adjustments in causality have overlapped with, even collapsed upon, adjustments in characterisation. This convergence is, I believe, symptomatic of the inward migration of tragedy in this century, a direction which will be remarked again and again of particular Shakespearean adaptations in both this and
subsequent chapters. The first parts of this chapter will discuss two schematic transpositions of *Romeo and Juliet* which have attempted to resituate the action of that play in psychological dimensions; and my discussion of these transpositions will take account of their writers' ideas about tragedy as evidenced outside, as well as realised within, their respective adaptations.  

The third subdivision of transposition identified in my previous chapter was that which, unlike the schematic sort, pursues its Shakespearean original character for character, plot development for plot development, and sometimes even line for line. The latter parts of this chapter will discuss five such adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*. Of these five, all but one (West Side Story) are British in origin; and all but two (again, West Side Story, a Broadway musical of the mid-1950's, and also Ewan MacColl's *Romeo and Juliet*, a 'radio ballad' of the mid-1960's) were written for one and the same set of theatrical circumstances, namely, those of the post-1968 British alternative theatre. They thus form a relatively homogeneous group: in this respect they contrast with the two schematic transpositions which I will discuss, one of which (Anderson's Winterset) originated in the United States in the 1930's, and the other (Anouilh's *Romeo and Jeannette*) in France in the 1940's. (Both Winterset and *Romeo and Jeannette* have, however, been staged in England, and the latter was reworked by an Anglophone playwright for its production here.) I will be arguing that West Side Story attempts to approximate tragic effect by non-verbal means, as, to a lesser extent, does MacColl's 'radio ballad'. The other three (Edgar's *Death Story*, Davies' *Rohan and Julie*, and Gooch's *Back Street Romeo*) are all more literary and are all, at best, ambivalent about questions of tragedy.
The ambivalence ranges from embarrassment to outright rejection. I will suggest that it is particularly perceptible in the adaptors' respective revisions of the crucial coincidences in the plot of the Shakespearean original, and that it can be accounted for by reference to political ambitions, which are themselves most apparent in the adaptors' respective translations of the Montague/Capulet conflict into twentieth-century terms of reference.

While my account of the schematic transpositions will thus emphasize action, and that of the literal transpositions will emphasize plot, the questions with which I initially approached each of these very various transpositions of *Romeo and Juliet* were constant: how has the Montague-Capulet feud been redefined and perhaps also rationalised in a twentieth-century setting? what elements of this revised context are specific to our time? what is the relationship between the background of conflict and the lovers? are they shown to be functions of a situation or freaks within it? how is the relationship between them presented and is this force of mutual attraction given greater value than the forces of opposition? how are they brought together and made to meet disaster? are we asked to believe that some fatal force has generated these plot mechanics? if so, by what means is this suggested, do we credit it, and in any case are the suggestions coherent with the whole play? finally, has there been any attempt to invent twentieth-century equivalents of the lyrical riches of Shakespeare's text? if so, again, are these inventions of a piece with the texture of the whole play?
Having outlined the questions which shaped my inquiries for this chapter, I will conclude its introductory section by conceding that hardly any of them proved to be appropriate questions to ask of the first of the twentieth-century adaptations of Romeo and Juliet in English. This is Willis Stedman's A Juliet of the People, performed in 1901 but not published until 1919. Much briefer and much earlier than subsequent transpositions (the travesties excepted), it is of little interest in relation to them. A Juliet of the People is set in contemporary Verona, but the only contemporary thing about the place is the visible presence in the background of 'the ancient palace of the Capulets, fallen on evil days' (opening scene direction) while the dialogue is haunted by 'the lady of the ballad / who fell in love with Romeo at first sight' (p.19) and by her consort, 'that Romeo of whom the ballad sings' (p.26). The Shakespearean incarnations of the fabled and fated pair are assigned allusions less overt but hardly less obvious:

ROMEO: Tomorrow we will wed? Say you are glad.

GIULIETTA: It has been too sudden, but I love you, And I am glad.....

ROMEO: The moon is giving us benediction.

GIULIETTA: Yet see, she cannot light up all below. See that black patch..... Someone is there. (pp.24-25)

Lurking in the shadows and eavesdropping on this balcony scene is a Veronese idler, Tonio. His suit for Giulietta's hand has received a parental rejection in favour of the worthier Romeo, whom Tonio promptly assassinates at the end of the scene. The transposition is mainly one of social scale: Giulietta is the daughter of a Veronese saddler who altogether approves of Romeo, a Venetian gondolier, despite the suddenness with which he is about to become a son-in-law. The
question of the eligibility of the 'common man' for heroic service in tragedy was matter for debate as late as Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* in 1949.\(^{18}\) However, it is a dead issue, an assumed right of adaptation, for all the other transpositions of Romeo and Juliet to which I shall be turning. The background of conflict, so crucial to all of these, was omitted by Steell; and the adjustments (mainly linguistic) which he made in accordance with the lowering of social status do not seem to me to be of direct interest here.

**ii. Anderson's 'Winterset'**

Maxwell Anderson's *Winterset*, the earliest (1935) of the full-length transpositions of Romeo and Juliet in English in this century, is an intriguing anomaly in several respects. A ponderous (albeit imperfect) illustration in practice of Anderson's ideas about tragedy and verse drama, it was an enormous critical and box-office success in its day; the play made Anderson the first-ever recipient of the New York Critics' Circle Award, and the première production ran for nearly two hundred performances on Broadway.\(^{19}\) In its factual basis, its well-intentioned agnosticism about the intellectual issues it so extensively belabours, and its self-announced artistic ambitions, the play is very much the child of the American intelligentsia of the 1930's, and yet it has been revived in a wide assortment of theatrical milieux on both sides of the Atlantic as late as the mid 1960's.\(^{20}\) And finally, this first important English-language transposition of Romeo and Juliet is much the freest of them all with respect to its Shakespearean original. That the vengeance-minded hero of *Winterset* had a remote ancestor in the figure of Shakespeare's Hamlet was quite as obvious to one early reviewer as
was the Romeo and Juliet parallel, and the similarity has occasioned some critical discussion of Anderson's indebtedness to Hamlet. Nor am I the first to have remarked the comparisons which the Act II trial scene — complete with an intrusive rainstorm, a mad magistrate, and an otherwise gratuitous hobo — invites with King Lear. The analogies between Winterset and Romeo and Juliet can be traced at two levels: firstly, in verbal details (a predominance of light-dark imagery, some few parallels with Shakespeare's balcony scene in the lovers' first extended dialogue, and possibly also the hero's name, Mio Romagna); and secondly, in the overall shape of the action. The second level of analogy, which is inescapably evident, coincides with the self-described centre of the play. Anderson's presentation of the posthumous triumph of young love over conflict, his recasting of that conflict in a twentieth-century context and categories, and his attempt to incorporate conflict and triumph into what he took to be the universal and timeless pattern of tragic action, all seem to me to warrant an account of Winterset as schematic transposition of Romeo and Juliet.

The superficial parallel in Winterset with the family feuding of the Montagues and Capulets is that the close kin of each lover is or has been a mortal threat to the kin of the beloved. Miriamne Esdras, the Jew, falls in love at ignorant first sight with a man whose determination to clear his father's name jeopardises her brother, Garth, putting him at risk of death from the guilty party whom his silence had shielded, and at less immediate risk of prosecution by law for his own part in the crime for which the father of Miriamne's lover had been executed. Mio Romagna, the Italo-American, falls in
love, likewise on sight and in ignorance of the lady's identity, with the sister of the man whose silence had led to the unjust execution of his father, the mortal heartbreak of his mother, and the ostracisation of himself. By the time the play begins, Garth Esdras has abandoned crime for a musical career and the damage done the Romagnas is a thirteen-year-old fact. But the consequences of the fact are conflicts which corrode the skulls of the guilty and the innocent alike:

**GARTH:** Yes, and I'll say it! I was with a gang one time that robbed a payroll. I saw a murder done, and Trock Estrella did it. If that got out I'd go to the chair and so would he....

.....I say it because I've held it in too long! I'm damned if I sit here forever, and look at the door, waiting for Trock with his sub-machine gun, waiting for police with a warrant! — I say I'm damned, and I am, no matter what I do! These piddling scales on a violin — first position, third, fifth, arpeggios in E — and what I'm thinking is Romagna dead for the murder — dead while I sat here dying inside — dead for the thing Trock did while I looked on — and I could have saved him, yes — but I sat here and let him die instead of me because I wanted to live! Well, it's no life, and it doesn't matter who I tell, because I mean to get it over!.....

.....I've lived with ghosts too long, and lied too long. Goddamn you if you keep me from the truth! —

(He turns away)

Oh, goddamn the world! I don't want to die! 24

Meanwhile, Mio Romagna, still a social outcast, has reached the edge of adulthood with only one thing to sustain him:

**MIO:** .....For my heritage they've left me one thing only, and that's to be my father's voice crying up out of the earth and quicklime where they stuck him. Electrocution doesn't kill, you know. They eviscerate them with a turn of the knife in the dissecting room. The blood spurts out. The man was alive. Then into the lime pit, leave no trace. That's what they thought of the man that was my father.....

.....And, by their own living Jesus,
I will go back, and hang the carrion around their necks that made it!
Maybe I can sleep then.
Or even live.....
.....I've tried to live
and forget it — but I was birthmarked with hot iron
into the entrails. I've got to find out who did it
and make them see it till it scalds their eyes
and make them admit it till their tongues are blistered
with saying how black they lied:

(pp.22-23)

It is in pursuit of this life ambition that he has come to the New
York tenement dwelling of the Esdras household. So too have the
murderer Trock Estrella (conveniently released from prison, and
rejoined by three henchmen the day before the time of the play
begins) and the presiding judge, Gaunt (more than half mad but
somehow capable of finding his three-hundred-mile way down from
New England to just the right block in Brooklyn). All three are
seeking Garth Esdras on account of a recently published re-investigation
of the Romagna case. Their wildly implausible convergence sets up
a situation which the playwright — interminably assisted by the
rabbinical pronouncements of the elder and excruciatingly world-
weary Esdras — elaborates as a series of cameo studies in the
workings of guilt and justice.

Shakespeare does not account for the origins of the Montague-
Capulet feud; and, having established its continuance, he
concentrates on the origins and growth of young love and attends to
the background of conflict only as it impinges upon the romantic
developments. Anderson reverses these relative emphases. While
establishing a situation of psychological conflicts which are even
more complex than such an account as the above can suggest, Anderson
gives comparatively short shrift to presenting the relationship in
which the most important of these conflicts will be resolved. Line
for line, the lovers in *Winterset* get very little time to and for
themselves. And from their first encounter, the opposition enveloping them intrudes, much more insistently and obtrusively than in Shakespeare's play, upon the attraction between them. They meet when each is considering the old crime: Miriamne comes outside to weep over what she has just learned of her brother, and Mio, telling his companion Carr of a recent past of rejection and present intentions of revenge, passes by her:

MIO: .............(To Miriamne) What's the matter, kid?

MIRIAMNE: Nothing.
(She looks up at him, and they pause for a moment)
Nothing.

MIO: I'm sorry.

MIRIAMNE: It's all right.
(She withdraws her eyes from his and goes out past him.)

In their later and longer exchanges, love is allowed only moments of flickering among the ashes and coals of inherited injustice. The long dialogue which is the loose analogue of Shakespeare's balcony scene vibrates back and forth between personal tenderness and cosmic disgust:

MIO: ........When I first saw you, not a half-hour ago, I heard myself saying, this is the face that launches ships for me — and if I owned a dream — yes, half a dream — we'd share it. But I have no dream. This earth came tumbling down from chaos, fire and rock, and bred up worms, blind worms that sting each other here in the dark. These blind worms of the earth took out my father — and killed him, and set a sign on me — the heir of the serpent — and he was a man such as men might be if the gods were men — but they killed him — as they'll kill all others like him till the sun cools down to the stabler molecules, yes, till men spin their tent-worm webs to the stars and what they think is done, even in the thinking, and they are the gods, and immortal, and constellations turn for them all like mill wheels — still as they are they will be, worms and blind. Enduring love, oh gods and worms, what mockery! And yet I have blood enough in my veins. It goes like music
singing, because you're here. My body turns as if you were the sun, and warm. This mess called love in happier times, before the Freudians taught us to blame it on the glands. Only go in before you breathe too much of my atmosphere and catch death from me.

MIRIAMNE: I will take my hands and weave them to a little house, and there you shall keep a dream —

MIO: God knows I could use a dream and even a house.

MIRIAMNE: You're laughing at me, Mio!

MIO: The worms are laughing. I tell you there's death about me and you're a child! And I'm alone and half mad with hate and longing. I shall let you love me and love you in return, and then, why then God knows what happens!

(pp.36-37)

The dialogue oscillates along in this way until Miriamne learns Mio's surname and tries to send him away. Her efforts to ensure his safety are interrupted by the entrance of Trock and his henchman Shadow, and the offstage shooting of the latter. When the lovers meet again, in the Esdres apartment in Act II, the emotional extremes are even more exaggerated and the various principals in the old crime are closer at hand and quicker to interrupt.

Anderson thus presents the love between Miriamne and Mio as a relationship discoloured by the debris of antecedent actions; but the balance is to be reversed by the end of the play. The flame of fated and fatal love is made to purify the dross. Or rather, Mio's portion of the dross, for the essential action of Winterset is confined to the psyche of that character. The initial plot situation is never, strictly speaking, modified: the question of Garth's continued silence is as uncertain at the end of the play as it had been when it brought
everybody to Brooklyn at the beginning. Anderson is of course not at all interested in whether or not the principals in the Romagna case are left free to spin out their incriminated lives. His interest in the internal workings of their respective incriminations, moreover, is limited to their utility as foils for and reflections of Mio; they are shortcuts to extending the significance of his struggle out to the ends of the moral universe. Having supplied this service, Trock, Gaunt and Garth are not made to move a single synapse from their initial, internally torn, conditions as concealed criminal, criminally unjust judge, and criminally silent witness. Miriamne and Esdras are only slightly less static, and such shifts as they make all refer back to Mio. The words by which she brings about her own death over Mio's corpse —

MIRIAMNE: ·····You! There! You in the shadows! — You killed him to silence him! But I'm not silenced! All that he knew I know, And I'll tell it tonight! Tonight — tell it and scream it through all the streets — that Trock's a murderer and he hired you for this murder! Your work's not done — and you won't live long! Do you hear? You're murderers, and I know who you are! (The machine gun speaks again. She sinks to her knees....) (p.103)

— and Esdras' often-quoted epitaph over her body and Mio's —

ESDRAS: ·····To die when you are young and untouched, that's beggary to a miser of years, but the devils locked in synod shake and are daunted when men set their lives at hazard for the heart's love, and lose. And these, who were yet children, will weigh more than all a city's elders when the experiment is reckoned up in the end. Oh, Miriamne, and Mio — Mio, my son — know this where you lie, this is the glory of earthborn men and women, not to cringe, never to yield, but standing, take defeat implacable and defiant die unsubmitting. I wish that I'd died so, long ago; before you're old you'll wish that you had died as they have....(p.104)
— are speeches which, however spectacular the situation on stage and however overcharged the diction, only elaborate and expand upon the exchange which closes the domestic scene in which father and daughter are first introduced:

**MIRIAMNE:** Is it better to tell a lie and live?

**ESDRAS:** Yes, child. It's better.

**MIRIAMNE:** But if I had to do it — I think I'd die.

**ESDRAS:** Yes, child. Because you're young.

**MIRIAMNE:** Is that the only reason?

**ESDRAS:** The only reason.

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CURTAIN (p.15)

The motions assigned these figures meanwhile have been minimal, and only such as may motivate Mio's (internal) actions or establish something about them. Esdras' decision, too belated to be helpful, to help Mio escape even though Mio's safety endangers his own son is not rationalised with reference to plot or character: it is simply announced in order that Mio may be made to reflect upon it, another positive force with which his nihilism finds it difficult to cope.

The little we are given of Miriamne's psychology — youthful idealism in a world of intellectual agnosticism and social rejection — merely complements the full-scale study of her beloved's, while her description of what has happened to her anticipates, in simplified miniature, what will happen to Mio by the end of the play:

**MIRIAMNE**

....I love him.

I didn't know it would happen. We danced together.

And the world's all changed.

(p.65)

The interaction of love and blood-stained heritage, and the victory of the former, then, are focussed through the figure of Mio.
This is completely in accord with the working theory of tragedy which Anderson outlined to a Modern Language Association meeting in January, 1938, and which was published under the title 'The Essence of Tragedy'. Termed by Anderson a 'modern version of Aristotle', the theory is inferred from two (mis-)readings of the Poetics — the centrality of the tragic hero (which Anderson simply assumes) and the indispensable role of anagnorisis (which he asserts without argument or textual evidence) in the action of tragedy. From these points he assembles the following prescription for serious playwrights:

A play should lead up to and away from a central crisis, and this crisis should consist in a discovery by the leading character which has an indelible effect on his thought and emotion and completely alters his course of action. The leading character, let me say again, must make the discovery; it must affect him emotionally; and it must alter his direction in the play.

The revised direction, moreover, must always be seen by the audience as an upward bound: otherwise, according to Anderson, they will invariably reject the play. From this, further things follow:

When the flawed tragic hero makes his discovery he must change both in himself and in his action — and he must change for the better.....In other words, a hero must pass through an experience which opens his eyes to an error of his own. He must learn through suffering. In a tragedy he suffers death itself as a consequence of his fault or his attempt to correct it, but before he dies he has become a nobler person because of his recognition or his fault and the consequent alteration of his course of action. In a serious play which does not end in death he suffers a lesser punishment, but the pattern remains the same. In both forms he has a fault to begin with, he discovers that fault during the course of the action, and he does what he can to rectify it at the end.....From the point of view of the playwright, then, the essence of tragedy, or even of a serious play, is the spiritual awakening, or regeneration, of his hero.
I have already suggested that the axes of this account seem to me to depend upon misinterpretations of Aristotle. It may be further noted that Anderson is somewhat cavalier in how he on the one hand picks up and promptly drops elements which are in the *Poetics* (such as suffering), and on the other spends his argumentative time on elements (such as a distinction between tragedy and 'serious play') which are quite foreign to Aristotle. And finally, I have great difficulty thinking of a single Shakespearean tragedy, except perhaps *King Lear*, of which the above is an accurate abstract.

Yet it would seem to describe the shape of *Winterset* neatly enough. Anderson repeatedly emphasises that Mio has come to the Esdras household to satisfy the obsession with revenge and with the dead which is his tragic flaw, and that his continuance there is on this account rather than the attractions of Miriamne, who keeps urging elopement. He persists when he is warned away by Miriamne and he remains there to complete his enquiry when, at the end of Act II, he can count on a few safe minutes in which to escape from the neighbourhood and Trock's gunmen. In Act III comes Mio's crisis, 'the discovery which has an indelible effect on his thought and emotion and completely alters his course of action,' in that he rejects the long-awaited chance to clear his father's name. Anderson is nothing if not emphatic about the alteration: his friend Carr, who had been bidden farewell at the end of the first act, is brought back solely to offer Mio the opportunity which he rejects.

Even as Carr is coming onstage, Mio is proclaiming the hold of the dead upon his life and love:
MIO: ...if I should go on living we're cut apart by that brother of yours. A body lies between us, buried in quicklime. Your allegiance is on the other side of that grave and not to me.

MIRIAMNE: No, Mio! I love you!

MIO: I love you too, but in case my life went on beyond that barrier of dark — then Garth would run his risk of dying.

MIRIAMNE: He's punished, Mio. His life's been a torment to him. Let him go, for my sake, Mio.

MIO: I wish I could. I wish I'd never seen him — or you. I've steeped too long in this thing. It's in my teeth and bones. I can't let go or forget. And I'll not add my lie to the lies that cumber his ground. We live our days in a storm of lies that drifts the truth too deep for path or shovel; but I've set my foot on a truth for once, and I'll trail it down!(pp.93-94)

But on the next page, he drops the trail. When Carr remarks that he has passed Trock's henchmen en route, Mio neglects to mention his acute awareness that they are waiting for himself; and when Miriamne reminds him to send a message through Carr, Mio refuses.

Left alone again with her, Mio explains:

MIO: I tried to say it and it strangled in my throat. I might have known you'd win in the end.

MIRIAMNE: Is it for me?

MIO: For you? It stuck in my throat, that's all I know.

MIRIAMNE: Oh, Mio, I never asked for that! I only hoped Garth could go clear.

MIO: Well, now he will

MIRIAMNE: But you — it was your chance!
MIO: I've lost my taste for revenge if it falls on you. Oh, God, deliver me from the body of this death. I've dragged behind me all these years.... MIRIAMNE, if you love me teach me a treason to what I am, and have been, till I learn to live like a man! I think I'm waking from a long trauma of hate and fear and death that's hammed me from my birth — and glimpse a life to be lived in hope — but it's young in me yet, I can't get free, or forgive! But teach me how to live and forget to hate!

MIRIAMNE: He would have forgiven.

MIO: He?

MIRIAMNE: Your father.

(Another pause)

MIO: Yes.

(Another pause) You'll think it strange, but I've never remembered that.

MIRIAMNE: How can I help you?

MIO: You have. (pp.97-8)

She has done the trick indeed. Mio dies, having failed in his first and only attempt to escape to life, as ennobled as his father and quoting him:

MIO: ... I wanted to stay alive — because of you — I leave you that — and what he said to me dying: I love you, and will love you after I die. Tomorrow, I shall still love you, as I've loved the stars I'll never see, and all the mornings that might have been yours and mine. Oh, MIRIAMNE, you taught me this. (p.102)

The aftereffects of anagnorisis are unmistakable, and it is equally unmistakable that Anderson built WINTERSET around Mio's change of heart. But the anagnorisis is by no means the tidy psychological operation described in 'The Essence of Tragedy'; and the principal points of divergence from that model seem to me to derive from an uncertainty on Anderson's part about the role of fate in modern tragedy. On this subject the essay is signally silent;
but the model which it proposes leaves room for fate only as the creator of the situation in which anagnorisis occurs. In Winterset, however, fate trespasses on the territorial rights of psychological cause and effect.

In the first place, though the actual moment of anagnorisis is clearly located in the passage quoted above from Act III, the weight of that moment is somewhat diminished by a change which Anderson made in the end of Act II while Winterset was still in manuscript. This change is the insertion of Mio's attempt to convince the constabulary of the presence of Shadow's freshly-dead body in an adjoining room, the Policeman's unsuccessful check for the corpse, and Mio's retraction of the accusation when he registers that Miriamne wants him to do so. The entire incident seems to me an unfortunate addition: in the context of the surrealist mock trial sequence which dominates this middle act, the unexpected resurrection and reappearance of Shadow had been a stunning theatrical statement of the guilt which will not die. Anderson, moreover, carefully points the statement with his precise placement throughout the play of references to this figure, who is not finally and permanently laid to rest until immediately before Mio's abjuration of revenge. However, the effect is cheapened by this interlude of corpse-chasing.

More serious, at least as regards Anderson's specifically tragic ambitions, is the way in which the addition blurs the psychological action by introducing superfluous suggestions of sheer fluke. Given that the Policeman is presented as wary of being gullied again by Mio (as before in Act I, scene 3) and given that Mio's public baiting of him there had been self-described as a consequence of personal bitterness, one critic has praised the incident as exhibiting
'true classic irony' in that Mio's earlier conduct here deprives him of his one chance to ensure Trock's arrest. But in fact the Policeman does, under orders from the Sergeant, go off and look for the body in the room to which Mio directs him: he fails to find it there because, as we and Mio learn from Esdras after the policemen have left, it has fallen elsewhere. If any irony is conniving with the silence of Trock, Gaunt and Esdrases, it is not the irony of psychological cause and effect but rather the sort of happenchance upon which, as discussed below, the plot ever more self-consciously turns.

In the second place, Mio's anagnorisis is not, as Anderson's model explicitly requires it to be, induced by a suffering which is itself the consequence of a tragic flaw. It is occasioned by a love presented, ever more insistently, as fated. The knowledge which Mio obtains through his own embittered agency is but a confirmation of what he claims to have known all along — the innocence of his father. The knowledge which changes his course is the discovery that he cannot proclaim this innocence if the proclamation falls on Miriamne; and the causes of that crucial qualification are placed, in strong though suspiciously literary statements, outside his control. His reaction to his full recognition of Garth's entanglement in the original crime is such a statement:

MIO: ....The gods were damned ironic tonight, and they've worked it out..... The bright, ironical gods! What fun they have in heaven! When a man prays hard for any gift, they give it, and then one more to boot that makes it useless. (To Miriamne) You might have picked some other stranger to dance with!
MIRIAMNE: I know.

MIO: Or chosen
    some other evening to sit outside in the rain.
    But no, it had to be this. All my life long
    I've wanted only one thing, to say to the world
    and prove it: the man you killed was clean and true
    and full of love as the twelve-year-old that stood
    and taught in the temple. I can say that now
    and give my proofs — and now you stick a girl's face
    between me and the rites I've sworn the dead
    shall have of me! You ask too much! Your brother
    can take his chance!

Even at the exact moment of abrogating that oath, when he refuses
after all to communicate the truth to the world through Carr, Mio
is made to describe himself as a limited agent:

MIRIAMNE: You had a message to send —
          have you forgotten —?

MIO: Yes, I had a message —
    but I won't send it — not now.

MIRIAMNE: Then I will —!

MIO: No.
    Let it go the way it is! It's all arranged
    another way.

Also outside Mio's control is his death. Anderson's account
of tragedy requires this to be 'a consequence of his fault or his
attempt to correct it,' and distinguishes 'tragedy' from 'serious
drama' according to whether the hero dies or survives. The
specifically tragic (by this account) difference of Winterset,
however, is the consequence of neither Mio's fault nor his attempt
at amendment, but of chance. Revenge brings Mio to Brooklyn and
the dangers which the Esdras household holds for him and revenge
renders his life a threat to the little that is left of Trock's.
But Mio and Miriamne die when, as in Romeo and Juliet, the attempt
to escape goes awry by accident. She sends her lover up a path
which she believes to be unwatched. His sudden return, remotely
echoing Mercutio's last moments, is possibly the only understated moment in the last act:

(He slips out quickly between the rocks. There is a quick machine gun rat-tat.... MIRIAME runs towards the path. MIO comes back slowly a hand pressed under his heart).

MIO: It seems you were mistaken.

MIRIAME: Oh, God, forgive me!.....

MIO: I hadn't thought to choose — this — ground — but it will do.

(pp.101-102)

Anderson in fact took some trouble to ring about the last act of Winterset with intimations of the operation of change, and the suggestions strip his characters of control of their situation. The domination of chance over the act is established in the lengthy stage directions which open it and set Trock's thugs playing a card game which is all luck and no skill. Detailed prescriptions for stage business follow fortune through no less than four vicissitudes as the bulk of the cards shift back and forth between the hands of the First and Second Gunmen. Their game of chance is, very early in the dialogue, verbally echoed as a game of skill by the as yet unregenerate Mio:

MIRIAME: If it happens — it's my fault

MIO: Not at all, sweet. You warned me to keep away. But I would have it. Now I have to find a way out. It's like a chess game. If you think long enough there's always a way out. — For one or the other. — I wonder why white always wins and black always loses in the problems. White to move and mate in three moves. But what if white were to lose — ah, what then? Why, in that case, obviously black would be white and white would be black. — As it often is. — As we often are. — Might makes white. Losers turn black. Do you think I'd have time to draw a gun?

MIRIAME: No.

MIO: I'm a fair shot. Also I'm fair game.

(pp.88-89)
Or perhaps only a pawn in a greater game. After the anagnorisis and immediately before the escape attempt, the cunning of the chess move is replaced by the luck of the throw, and a prayer for loaded dice supplants confidence in self-sufficiency:

MIO: (Looking up) Now all you silent powers that make the sleet and dark, and never yet have spoken, give us a sign, let the throw be ours this once, on this longest night, when the winter sets his foot on the threshold leading up to spring and enters with remembered cold — let fall some mercy with the rain. We are two lovers here in your night, and we wish to live.

(p.100)

Though the removal of final causality from the psyches of the principal characters is accomplished only in the third act, Anderson, has made some advance arrangements for the transfer earlier in the play. In the second act, most of the Esdrases’ unexpected guests are made to remark the suggestive fortuitousness of the increasingly implausible assembly:

GAUNT: Sir, how I came here as I have said, I don’t well know. Such things are sometimes not quite accident.

(p.48)

MIO: (To Trock, who has asked his identity) Oh, I’m a half-wit, came in here by mistake.

(p.67)

TROCK: God, we are a gathering. Now if we had Shadow we’d be all here, huh? Only I guess we won’t see Shadow. No, that’s too much to ask.

(p.68)

By no means! He appears, dripping blood and river water, two pages later:

TROCK: (Backing away from Shadow) By God, he’s out of his grave!...Don’t! Don’t! I had nothing to do with it!...Honest to God —
SHADOW: What God?
The one that let you put three holes in me
when I was your friend? Well, He let me get up again
and walk till I could find you. That's as far as I
get, but I got there, by God!

(pp.70-71)

And finally:

MIO: .....Now I could almost wish
there was a god somewhere — I could almost think
there was a god — and he somehow brought me here
and set you down before me here in the rain
where I could wring this out of you! For it's said,
and I've heard it, and I'm free! He was as I thought him,
true and noble and upright...
.....Let the night speak fire
and the city go out with the tide, for he was a man
and I know you now, and I have my day!

(There is a heavy knock at the outside door. MIRIAM opens it...The Policeman is there in oilskins.)

POLICEMAN: Evening.
(He steps in, followed by a SERGEANT, similarly dressed)
We're looking for someone
might be here. Seen an old man around
acting a little off?......
(To Esdras) You know the one
I mean. You saw him out there. Jeez! You've got
a funny crowd here!

(pp.77-78)

Almost wishing for a divinely-dictated order of events is obviously
not equivalent to affirming its existence; but to aspire after it,
even in a chain of contrary-to-fact constructions, is to strain for
suggestions of a cosmic significance which is extraneous to Anderson's
somewhat shaky redefinition of tragedy as the interior crisis, self-
destructive but ennobling, of a flawed tragic hero.

Anderson's theory of tragic construction as the corollaries of
a neo-Aristotelian amagnorisis, then, may appear to fit the overall
dramatic movement of Winterset; but on close inspection it proves to
be at variance with the crucial issue of the causation of the hero's
death, and it cannot account for the metaphysical forces which are
clearly implied in the presentation of this bit of plot mechanics and are more or less tentatively suggested by various portions of the dialogue. That Anderson as playwright should have attempted to outreach the narrowly psychological limits of his critical understanding of classical tragedy is fair enough. What is not acceptable, however is the wobbling inconsistency of the attempt. The juxtaposition, in the last of the above quotations, of Mio's impassioned variation on the agnostic's prayer with the banal profanity of the policeman, well exemplifies a tonal pattern which Anderson works very hard in Winterset. The pattern is one of self-ironisation — the more or less unwarranted introduction into the dialogue of some pointer towards metaphysical significance and then the wryly self-conscious retraction of the invitation:

ESDRAS: How have I come to this sunken end of a street, at a life's end —?

GARTH: It was cheaper here — not to be transcendental —

(p.46)

Or the alternative interpretations offered in the first act for the first sounds of the storm which is to engulf the second and third:

(There is a faint rumble of thunder)

MIO: What's that? Winter thunder?

CARR: Or Mister God, beating on His little tocsin. Maybe announcing the advent of a new social order.

MIO: Or maybe it's going to rain coffee and doughnuts

CARR: Or maybe it's going to rain.

MIO: Seems more likely.

(p.21)

The point is not that such tentatively expansive utterances are but clumsily rationalised in relation to character and hardly at all in relation to situation. It is not even (though this is closer to home) that such moments of self-deflation only draw attention
the gaseous quality of the poetry on which almost all the high emotional moments of the play float. It is rather that these details in the dialogue are, in their small way, symptomatic of the muddle at the middle of Winterset, an intellectual impasse from which Anderson didn't manage to escape with his artistic integrity intact.

The obvious point of departure for any account of that impasse is Anderson's own apology for Winterset. In an essay which prefaced the first published edition of the play, he wrote that the playwright who looks, with at least one eye, upon the practise of his craft as the construction of enduring monuments will often hope that the public is ready for a theme only because he wishes to treat it — or for a dramatic method only because he wishes to employ it. I may have been somewhat guilty of this last misapprehension in Winterset, for I have a strong and chronic hope that the theater of this country will outgrow the phase of journalistic social comment and reach occasionally into the upper-air of poetic tragedy.

The ambitions born of that hope were considerable:

I had discovered that poetic tragedy had never been written about its own place and time. There is not one tragedy by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Shakespeare, Corneille or Racine which did not have the advantage of a setting either far away or long ago. . . . Winterset is largely in verse and treats of a contemporary tragic theme, which makes it more of an experiment than I could wish, for the great masters themselves never tried to make tragic poetry out of the stuff of their own times. To do so was to attempt to establish a new convention, one...to which I was driven by the lively historical sense of our day — a knowledge of period, costume, and manners which almost shuts off the writer on historical themes from contemporary comment.

One again setting aside the doubtful accuracy of Anderson's interpretation of his authorities, one may wonder precisely what
was the 'contemporary' tragic theme,' what 'the stuff of [its] own times,' and what the 'contemporary comment' that Winterset was supposed to be carrying off into the dramatic stratosphere.

Temporal particularities get precious little attention in Winterset. Although the play proclaims its factual source in the immediate historical past and although it snatches often enough after contemporary political and social significance, it promptly supplants these gestures with more or less direct assurances that such things matter little in the light of eternity — or even that of a lifetime.

The basis of Winterset in the Sacco-Vanzetti case is well known. One character, Gaunt, has an exact and much execrated historical counterpart (the presiding judge, Winthrop Thayer), while Trock and his henchmen are very free variants on the gang (the Morelli brothers) whom some thought guilty of the crime for which Sacco and Vanzetti were executed. The play is littered with allusions to the case — the specification of the crime as a payroll robbery in which a getaway car figured, the citation of the re-investigation of the trial which had been recently published by 'Professor Hobhouse' (Felix Frankfurter). Some of the geographical references, the major temporal ones, and perhaps even the specification (p.38) of Mio's name as a diminutive of 'Bartolomeo', Vanzetti's Christian name. Most of these stay on the surface of Winterset. Like the play's reference to the venue of the equally sensational trial in the Lindbergh kidnapping case, they served only to remind Anderson's contemporaries that some analogy was intended between events onstage and in their recent national past. The most important of the few topical allusions to be worked into the verbal patterns of the play makes free with the facts of the Sacco-Vanzetti case: this is the continual ringing of changes on the twin themes of electrocution (which is historically accurate) and burial in lime
pits (which is not). Only one allusion is both correspondent with
the Sacco-Vanzetti case and of any arguable weight in the movement of
the play. This exception is the insistence upon the gentle dignity
of the elder Romagna. The recurrent references to this point do
both echo the praise accorded both defendants for their conduct
during their trial and its six-year-long aftermath, and also supply
a moral norm which Mio achieves after his anagnorisis, finally
vindicating his father only by dying with equal charity and courage.

But though this highmindedness is at once both factually
supported by the Sacco-Vanzetti trial records and their published
correspondence and also dramatically serviceable to the psychological
plot, it is several removes away from the social and political issues
with which Winterset so often flirts. In his attempt to take the
American theatre of the 1930's past the 'phase of journalistic social
criticism,' Anderson did not eschew criticism but rather ensured that
it remained peripheral to the central psychological development and
even clouded it with caricature. That the elder Romagna had been
'an anarchist and a foreigner' (p.55), 'a very common labourer,/
confessed an anarchist' (p.76), is twice mentioned, but the fact pales
into insignificance alongside the shining light of his personal moral
worthiness, cited six times.41 That Romagna's champions are 'Reds'
and 'radicals' is likewise asserted often enough.42 What is not
established is the political significance of these loose and
generously distributed labels. Almost the only evidence for
their meaning is embodied in the figure, totally gratuitous to the
plot, of the Young Radical; and Anderson renders him so ridiculous
that one applauds Mirianne's good taste in refusing to dance with
him. The passages in which the Young Radical appears warrant
examination because they supply the most striking instances of how
Anderson in Winterset sets contemporary problems in motion and then
abandons them, unresolved, for the high road through the human psyche
to eternal issues. In the middle of Act I, scene 2, he presents the local populace protesting the Policeman's enforcement of legislation against piano-playing in the street:

PINY: Why shouldn't you make a living on the street? The National Biscuit Company ropes off Eighth Avenue — and does the mayor do anything? No, the police hit you over the head if you try to go through!

LUCIA: You got the big dough, you get the pull, fine. No big dough, no pull, what the hell, get off the city property!

(p.24)

The Radical comes to their aid:

RADICAL: And there you see it, the perfect example of capitalistic oppression! In a land where music should be free as air and the arts should be encouraged, a uniformed minion of the rich, a guardian myrmidon of the Park Avenue pleasure hunters, steps in and puts a limit on the innocent enjoyments of the poor! .. We don't go to night clubs, where women dance naked and the music drips from saxophones and leaks out of Rudy Vallee — we can't afford that... But we might at least dance on the riverbank to the strains of a barrel organ.....

POLICEMAN: Get down! Get down and shut up!

RADICAL: By what law, by what ordinance do you order me to be quiet?

POLICEMAN: Speaking without a flag. You know it.

RADICAL: (Pulling out a small American flag) There's my flag! There's the flag of this United States which used to guarantee the rights of man.

(pp.27-28)

Then Gaunt breaks in:

GAUNT: One moment, officer. There is some difference of opinion even on the bench as to the elasticity of police power when applied in minor emergencies to preserve civil order. But the weight of authority would certainly favor the defendant in any equable court, and he would be upheld in his demand to be heard.....You are aware, of course, that the bill of rights is not to be set aside lightly by the officers of any municipality.....I ask this for yourself; truly, not for the dignity of the law nor the maintenance of precedent. Be gentle with them when their threats are childish — be tolerant while you can — for your least harsh words will return on you in the night — return in a storm of cries!

(pp.28-29)
Finally, Mio takes a turn:

MIO: Listen now, fellows, give the badge a chance. He's doing his job, what he gets paid to do, the same as any of you. They're all picked men, these metropolitan police, hand-picked for loyalty and a fine upstanding pair of shoulders on their legs — it's not so easy to represent the law....There's only one drawback about working on the force. It infects the brain, it eats the cerebrum. There've been cases known, fine specimens of manhood, too, where autopsies, conducted in approved scientific fashion, revealed conditions quite incredible in policemen's upper layers. In some, a trace, in others, when they've swung a stick too long, there was nothing there! — but nothing!

(p.30)

The Radical gets purple prose of obvious satiric intent, and to some extent his rant discredits the less bombastic arguments of the local colour figures because it parallels them so closely. Gaunt gets prose in the legal terminology and the rhythms, variously official and fragmented, which the audience will come to recognise as the voice of shaken and guilt-ridden authority. The effect of his speeches is to turn attention away from political rights through legal procedures and towards the antecedents of his obsessive hysteria. What Mio says is a great deal more silly and petty than any of the earlier contributions; it has absolutely nothing to do with the questions at hand, and it is (as Mio himself points out further on [p.31]) motivated by old and private scores. But because personal bitterness is the core of Mio, and Mio is the centre of the play, his speech is dignified by blank verse and threaded with two of the image patterns — the autopsy and the brain — which Anderson has woven through Winterset.
The second image pattern is especially significant. Winterset announces often enough that its world is one in which the State will protect its judicial machinery at the expense of justice and big business at the expense of people's lives and livelihoods, and that it will suffer neither radical nor street pianists to disrupt an order in which only money and machine guns talk loud enough to procure their possessors' wishes. But for all its generalities about the State, the play is rather short on representatives of civil authority. We are given the Policeman (and his briefly seen Sergeant) and Judge Gaunt. In the presentation of both, Anderson deflects attention away from what they have done as servants of the State to what that service has done to their minds and souls. Whether they have been corrupt is less significant than that they have been corrupted: both civil officials are rendered passive as the political questions are skirted for the sake of psychologising. The taunt tossed up at the Policeman — 'working on the force... infects the brain/it eats the cerebrum' — is re-introduced in deadly earnest by Gaunt some two pages later:

GAUNT: (To the Policeman) Yes, but should a man die, should it be necessary that one man die for the good of many, make not yourself the instrument of death, lest you sleep to wake sobbing! Nay, it avails nothing that you are the law — this delicate ganglion that is the brain, it will not bear these things.

(p.32)

Throughout Act II the imagery of cerebral breakdown is elaborated as Gaunt's leit motif, but the broken machine characterises much more of the world of Winterset than the single mind of the mad magistrate. Gaunt's insane angst is aligned with the over-educated agnosticism of the elder Esdras, whose trouble is not a guilty conscience, but epistemological conundrums. The old
men are visually paired with each other onstage, and the stage directions prescribe business which emphasises the association; while their pronouncements (as, for example, on the inferiority of old age or on the purely relative nature of legal and moral justice) at times almost echo each other in content despite the differentiations in diction, tone, and frame of reference. Magistrate and rabbi are used by Anderson to establish that in Winterset authority — be it external or intellectual — is truly confident only of its own exhausted and discredited condition.

Nor are the lovers, for all their advantages of energy and relative innocence, exempt from awareness of existence in a moral vacuum and intellectual chaos. Presumably because their brief lives are supposed to be seen as filling that vacuum with human significance and imposing human order upon the chaos, the point is less overtly and unequivocally belaboured of them; and it is generally introduced in conjunction with the love which is to overshadow it. The most direct statement, in fact, is placed at the beginning of their long love dialogue in Act I, scene 3:

MIO: What do you believe in?
MIRIAMNE: Nothing.
MIO: Why?
MIRIAMNE: How can one?
MIO: It's easy if you're a fool. You see the words in books. Honor, it says there, chivalry, freedom, heroism, enduring love — and these are words on paper. It's something to have them there. You'll get them nowhere else.
MIRIAMNE: What hurts you?
MIO: Just that.
You'll get them nowhere else.
MIRIAMNE: Why should you want them?
MIO: I'm alone, that's why....

(pp.34-35)
It is, I believe, this aching and all-inclusive conjunction of radical uncertainties — and not the injustice done Sacco and Vanzetti nor the wider inequities which their trial was thought to typify — which Anderson was offering as 'the stuff of his own times' in Winterset. And it is for the sake of this stuff that Winterset is overwritten with turgid and imprecise generalisations about the meaning of life, the meaning of meaning, and the absence of either in any absolute sense. Anderson's ambitions as a navigator of the epistemological wastes were not matched by his abilities as a writer of dramatic dialogue. The play is less a poetic image of the confused condition of modern man than a cacophony of direct statements about that condition. Mio and the figures who are his magnifying echo chambers, Esdras and Gaunt, are made to spin so many agnostic *sententiae* out of every stage situation that the play approximates a palimpsest of negative propositions. The dialogue keeps skating up to the edge of nihilistic skepticism and then either (more often in the earlier parts of the play) retreating to the security of a banal wisecrack which restores the focus of attention to the specific stage situation, or (especially in the last act) vaulting the void and landing spot-on cosmic meaning and hopes for humanity.

The retreats may be embarrassing, but the leaps are damaging in that their sole sustaining force is their emotional appeal. For in the end, all the handwriting on the wall is there only to be dismissed, not decoded. I have argued above that Anderson's plotting of anagnorisis and its aftermath overreaches the narrowly psychological limits of his theory in encouraging the audience to feel that they are watching a fated action of universal import, and that
this emotional invitation in the last act has been reinforced earlier on by some passages of dialogue which draw attention to the plot. The dialogue in the last act explicitly demands that they feel this action to have demonstrated the triumph of their own kind. Esdras' epitaph is the obvious and ultimate instance of this appeal:

......On this star, in this hard star-adventure, knowing not what the fires mean to right and left, nor whether a meaning was intended or presumed, men can stand up, and look out blind, and say: in all these turning lights I find no clue, only a masterless night, and in my blood no certain answer, yet is my mind my own, yet is my heart a cry toward something dim in distance, which is higher than I am and makes me emperor of the endless dark even in seeking! (p.104)

I have earlier remarked Anderson's reliance in Winterset upon badly overinflated verse for emotional emphasis, and I have also noted his dependence upon overt, often ill-warranted, generalisations for establishing the widest possible significance of the actions onstage. The above quotation painfully exemplifies both debilities: cut from the original production of Winterset, this last leap for the poetic stratospheres has been a bit embarrassing to critics.46

And yet I do not think that the speech can be either written out or written off as a last piece of the pomposity peculiar to its onstage speaker. As the most heavy-handed of all of Anderson's last-act efforts to ensure that 'an imaginary hero...put to an imaginary trial...comes out of it with credit to the race and to himself,' the speech seems to me at once indispensable and insupportable, a paradigm of the paradoxical nature of Anderson's undertaking in Winterset. The author's interpretation of classical tragedy and
his attempt to re-animate it point to a conundrum which much concerned the critics of Anderson's time. On the one hand, there is an insistence upon the religious origins of Greek tragedy and the religious ramifications of Elizabethan tragedy, upon the communion of values assumed (somewhat naively) to have been absolute among antique and Christian audiences, and finally upon the ineluctable influence of context and common ethos upon the formal structure. (Hence Anderson's insistence, in rendering 'recognition' as 'spiritual awakening', upon the moral character of Aristotelian anagnorisis; and hence too his implicit assumption of equivalence between anagnorisis in the form and catharsis in the audience: the essence of tragedy becomes the ennobling of a central character and of the audience through that character.) On the other hand, there is an insistence upon the dearth of religious confidence in the critic's world, upon the ever-widening recognition that hierarchies of values are no more absolute than other social conventions, and finally upon the jeopardised situation of tragedy, a form now bereft of informing certainties. In this connection the crucial loss of faith, the missing lynchnpin in the shape and operation of the tragic argument, is that of belief in man as the measure of all things. 'If tragedy,' wrote Anderson's contemporary and admiring critic Joseph Wood Krutch,

is not the imitation or even the modified representation of noble actions [because actions can now no longer be said to be noble in themselves,] it is certainly a representation of actions considered as noble, and herein lies its essential nature, since no man can conceive it unless he is capable of believing in the greatness and importance of man....and the essential thing which distinguishes real tragedy from those distressing modern works sometimes called by its name is the fact that it is in the former alone that the artist has found himself capable of
considering and of making us consider that his people and his actions have that amplitude and importance which makes them noble. Tragedy arises then when...a people fully aware of the calamities of life is nevertheless serenely confident of the greatness of man, whose mighty passions and supreme fortitude are revealed when one of these calamities overtakes him. 47

Krutch thought that such confidence could be but vicariously and partially reconstituted by a reversion to the art of earlier ages: all his contemporaries could achieve was a temporary suspension of disbelief by means of imaginative participation in antiquated assumptions, the full import of which would inevitably elude a less innocent and optimistic age. 48 Anderson, however, offered Wintererset in anticipation of beliefs yet unborn and in confidence of the coming creation of new communal confidences:

It is incumbent on the dramatist to be a poet, and incumbent on the poet to be prophet, dreamer and interpreter of the racial dream. Men have come a long way from the salt water in the millions of years that lie behind them, and have a long way to go in the millions of years that lie ahead. We shall not always be as we are—but what we are to become depends on what we dream and desire. The theatre, more than any other art, has the power to weld and determine what the race dreams into what the race will become....Those who have read their literary history carefully know that now is the time for our native American theatrical amusements to be transformed into a national art of power and beauty. It needs the touch of a great poet to make the transformation, a poet comparable to Aeschylus in Greece or Marlowe in England...and he must come soon, for these chances don't endure forever.

I must add, lest I be misunderstood, that I have not mistaken myself for this impending phenomenon. I have made my living as teacher, journalist and playwright and have only that skill as a poet which may come from long practice of art I have loved and studied and cannot let alone. 49

In the retrospect of later literary history, passages such as this sound rather like the voice of a John the Baptist crying out in the wilderness for a Christ who never came, and the only part of the prophecy to have proved true is Anderson's assurance that he
himself is not the saviour. With the significant exceptions outlined above, his dramaturgy in Winterset is deft enough for him to have approximately realised his interpretation of Aristotelian tragic action. But his abilities as a poet were not up to the full measure of his tragic ambitions: they suffice to make obvious the extent of Anderson's undertaking, but they do not come near its realisation as drama. The London Times reviewer of the Broadway première mused:

'It is never quite clear how the play rises to truth and beauty, but it does.' This judgment is defensible, I think, only for those parts of the play which are primarily non-verbal in their overall operation and effect: for example, the Bridge which arches over the external sets and is at once an image of fate, part of a Brooklyn tenement set, and a convenient wall for leaning on; or the figure of Shadow, who is at once an eponymous image of retribution and guilt, a B-film gangster, and (through the first two acts) Trock's black shadow. In such instances, Anderson did manage to establish the ambiguity of meaning which was essential to the enterprise of showing man to be emboldened even while insisting that 'nobility' is relative to men in particular places and times. But in the dialogue, he was on the whole unable to suggest a complex of mutually irreconcilable meanings and was, a fortiori, unable to suggest their resolution in tragic conflict. To those who do not necessarily share Anderson's (and the Times critic's?) anti-rationalistic bias, the ascent of Winterset to truth and beauty must in the long run seem somewhat specious.

iii. Anouilh's/MacDonagh's 'Romeo and Jeannette/The Fading Mansion'

Published in England in 1938, and staged at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in 1940, Winterset was not professionally
produced in London until 1948. The following year brought London another, and very significantly different, attempt to transpose the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet's star-crossed love into terms accessible to contemporary audiences: Jean Anouilh's Romeo and Jeannette, written 1945/6, first produced in Paris in 1946, and adapted for production at the Duchess Theatre (under Laurence Olivier's management) as The Fading Mansion by Donagh MacDonagh. The success of the 1947 production of MacDonagh's verse play Happy as Larry at the Mercury Theatre had been one of the mid-1940's (ultimately misleading) signs of a renaissance of poetic drama. The prose play which he adapted, however, had no more aspirations to the lofty heights described under that term by Anderson and Krutch than MacDonagh's gleefully misogynistic verse play had had. Wintererset and Romeo and Jeannette are far apart as regards their authors' respective attitudes towards his material and their consequent formal solutions to the problems of transposition. If the Anderson play may be said to fall short of its own paradoxical ambitions on account of the author's limitations, the problem with the Anouilh play seems to be an ambivalence towards subject matter which leaves us uncertain about his ambitions.

The tidily apportioned plot of Romeo and Jeannette may easily be summarised for future reference. Frederic Lariviere, Romeo recast as a thoroughly banal young notary, comes with his equally ordinary mother and fiancée, Julia, to the anarchic household of his endearingly decadent in-laws-to-be, the Maurins. These include an indolent inebriate of a father, an embittered cuckold of a brother, and a part-time concubine of a sister, Jeannette. By the end of Act I Frederic is reeling from a fascinated first meeting with Jeannette;
at the end of Act II he elopes with her to a hut in the woods;
at the end of Act III he abandons her (she having just cut her arm
to prove her love) to succour Julia (she having just drunk poison);
and at the end of Act IV he runs into the sea to join Jeannette in
suicide. The conflict which renders their terrestrial union
impossible does not envelop the lovers but subsumes them. Their
love is not destroyed because it is bound about by opposition: it
destroys itself because it is between opposites.

The superficial level of opposition is between social
respectability and disrespectability, between bourgeois and
bohemian, even between a communal and an individualistic ethos.
Depicted by such a straightforward means as the contrast between
the appearances of Lariviere party and the Maurin house, this level
dominates the first act, culminating in the entry of Jeannette in a
fury that her pet cockerel has been sacrificed to supply some lunch:

JEANNETTE: Who is this woman? What is she doing here with an
apron over her stomach and blood all over her hands? .....Who is this woman all in black with her low forehead and her
big eyes and her respectability? Who brought her here, with
her widow's weeds and her ear-rings and her strangler's
hands?......She had to eat well, didn't she, your mother-in-
law, so as not to let the family down? She had to feel
nice and smug over coffee, didn't she, and be able to belch
politely in her stays. That's hospitality.

(p.258)

The bourgeois-bohemian opposition subsides in subsequent acts, but it
is never entirely forgotten: the subsequent appearances of Lariviere
père and Maurin père serve mainly to keep it in operation and to
supply some pretty predictable comic relief in the process. More
importantly, because the opposition is integral to the characterisation
of the lovers, it recurs in their love débats, notably when in Act II
Frederic and Jeannette exchange memories of childhood as respectively boy scout and hellcat:

JEANNETTE: (murmurs) Even when we were small, we couldn't have been much alike.

FREDERIC: No.

JEANNETTE: Did you always come out top at school?

FREDERIC: Yes.

JEANNETTE: I can just see you, looking so tidy and clean with your school satchel over your shoulder. I was always dirty and tousled and covered with ink spots, with my hair falling into my eyes. I was always cutting school, to go and fight with the roughs.

FREDERIC: (smiling) I can just see that, too!

JEANNETTE: There used to be a whole gang of us. We called ourselves the Kings of Trumps. They even said we killed a boy one night by throwing clogs at him. We were terrible. We had ink tattoo marks and real sabre cuts all over us. And we had a charm, too — a bit of red paper that we chewed to make us strong. We called it Mininistaflia. And all the while, there you were — I can just see you — with your clean white collar!

FREDERIC: (smiling) I expect I pretended not to see any of you. I must have hated you all. We had a good crowd too. We called ourselves the Dauntless. We had a system of military ranks, and we'd made up our minds to rid the world of roughs....They used to steal fruit from our parents and show their backsides and pull our sisters' hair.

FREDERIC: We all agreed to put a stop to it once and for all and there was to be a big fight on the Fourteenth of July. We had a week's truce to get ourselves ready. Little bastards! They put knife blades on the ends of their sticks.

JEANNETTE: We had a big fight, too. One of the others got his arm broken. Ours was on St. John's Day. We'd been dancing around bonfires like savages before it started. I'd made myself an American knuckle-duster with some nails. I buried it in the seat of the deputy mayor, because they'd brought in their parents to help them, the cowards, when they saw we were winning!

FREDERIC: Our crowd only had sticks and stones. We fought in the open with fair weapons. But we aimed better than they did. You should have heard the yelling when we got one of them in the dark!
JEANNETTE: (softly) You threw a stone at me once. I've got a hole the size of a nut in my knee. (pp.287-88)

Critic have disagreed as to how much weight to give the social caricature in *Romeo and Jeannette;* but it seems to me obvious, even in the above, that the bourgeois vs. bohemian polarity interests Anouilh solely as a sort of dramatic shorthand and a means of entry into oppositions less local and less temporal. In *The Fading Mansion,* MacDonagh made the contemporary references clearer by introducing an urban-rural opposition and rendering the LaRivieres as Belfast townsfolk named Donnelly and the Maurins as wild men of the West named Joyce. But, as noted on the title page of this unpublished text and as repeated on the programme to its production, 'The time is any age, but is nominally the present.' The attempt to dramatise a timeless situation, the reliance upon literary myths for such situations, and the recasting of them according to the patterns of classic tragedy were described by Jean-Paul Sartre, in a well-known article published in 1946, as the common effort of what was then the younger generation of French playwrights. Sartre's account begins as a defense of Anouilh's *Antigone* (1942), with which — along with his *Eurydice* (1941) and *Medea* (1946) — *Romeo and Jeannette* has much in common.

In all four of these modern dramatic transpositions of venerable literary myths, Anouilh's principal interest lies in the exploration of states of existence which, in their mutual incompatibility and mutual indispensability, are presented as an almost Manichean symbiosis. The overriding opposition may be summarised as the polarity between an intense and impossible stretch for transcendence and permanence of self on the one hand, and on the other hand, subsidence into temporality and flux. The bohemian vs.
bourgeois polarity is but the accessible bottom rung of Anouilh's long ladder of oppositions. This ladder is articulated as a series of oppositions — adolescence vs. adulthood, female vs. male, unanswerable questions vs. false certainties, rejection vs. acceptance, and so ad infinitum — whose interconnections are assumed rather than argued. Philosophically speaking (which Anouilh emphatically isn't), the oppositions seem to me false: since both sides posit a perceiving self as the centre of the universe, the difference between them lies only in that self's emotional response.

More than one critic has seen Anouilh's entire dramatic output as more or less an externalisation of his own psychological conflicts. Dramatically speaking, however, the oppositions have to be affixed to separate characters if conflict is to occur. And since the dramatic traditions in which Anouilh worked required 'characters' to be constructed as selves whose emotional responses were sufficiently fixed to be plausible if not predictable, Anouilh's oppositions — however specious in logic — become irreconcilable and more or less absolute on stage. His 'stage humanity' has been described as 'three distinct categories of people' — the heroes, the mediocre race, and the compromisers. These correspond, it may be added, to a triad of ostensibly incompatible readings of selfhood: (1) a romantic imposition of self upon all other and across all time and space; (2) the passive and unquestioning reception of externally imposed sense experience and social convention; and (3) the compromise, which, appreciating both the impossibility of the first and the evanescence of the second, lives according to the latter while casting rueful looks at the former.

The second is of interest solely for the sake of establishing a lowest common denominator which the first and third respectively
reject or accept. Conflict is possible only where consciousness is present on both sides — that is, it can occur only between the first and the third. And that conflict, finally, is more appropriately embedded in an action which is a series of confrontations than in a chain of cause and effect actions and reactions. The fuller and the more coherent the presentation of the self-consciousnesses represented by the protagonists, the greater the gap between them, and consequently the inevitable dependence upon debate at the expense of mutual interaction.

In all four of his myth-based plays of the mid-1940's, Anouilh relies on a familiar story to supply and justify the minimal action he needs and constructs the plays as unfolding expositions of his opposed consciousnesses and their corollaries. In his Antigone and his Medea, the oppositions, if not inherent in the sources, can be made to adhere to them without doing violence to the original shapes and significances. Anouilh's alignment of the oppositions, moreover, is at once clear and consistent: Antigone (seconded by Haemon) vs. Creon (seconded by Ismene); and Medea (in the isolation which befits her order of being in Anouilh's world) vs. Jason (seconded by Creon). Lest we altogether overlook the attractions of unconscious existence, both plays have old Nurses who remind us and their leading ladies of all the tangible (if temporal) and certain (if only by a common fiction) benefits which are being cast aside in the doomed drive for the absolute. Antigone, further, has both a pair of soldiers who duplicate this function and a Chorus who spells out the significance of the onstage opposition and reads a short lecture on tragedy. The account — which is, as usual with Anouilh, really only a description
of a scene rather than a definition of a form — is presumably
purported to apply to the play:

CHORUS: The spring is wound up tight. It will uncoil of itself.
That is what is so convenient in tragedy. The least
little turn of the wrist will do the job. Anything will
set it going. A glance at a girl who happens to be lifting
her arms to her hair as you go by; a feeling when you wake
up on a morning that you'd like a little respect paid to
you today...; one question too many, idly thrown out over
a friendly drink — and the tragedy is on.

The rest is automatic. You don't need to lift a
finger. The machine is in perfect order; it has been
ciled since time began, and it runs without friction.
Death, treason and sorrow are on the march; and they
move in the wake of storm, of tears, of stillness.
Every kind of stillness... so that you think of a film
without a soundtrack, mouths agape and no sound coming out
of them, a clamour that is no more than a picture; and you,
the victor, already vanquished, alone in the desert of your
silence. That is tragedy.

That may not be Jean Anouilh's Antigone, in which silence is
conspicuous mainly by its absence (for all the author's attempts
to freeze his late-adolescent heroine into an artistic stasis)
and in which the uncoiling of the springs of action is secondary to
the coils of debate between actors. But at very least, the old
tragic action is not impeded or undermined by the new arguments.

In Eurydice and even more in Romeo and Jeannette, however,
the received story is not so submissive to ontological oppositions
of Anouilh's order. The above account of tragedy is elaborated —
quite characteristically — by opposition with a dismissive
description of melodrama, and this makes a better fit with these
plays:

CHORUS: Tragedy is clean, it is restful, it is flawless. It
has nothing to do with melodrama — with wicked villains,
persecuted maidens, avengers, sudden revelations and
eleventh hour repentances. Death, in a melodrama, is
really horrible because it is never inevitable....
tragedy, nothing is in doubt and everyone's destiny is known. That makes for tranquillity......Tragedy is restful; and the reason is that hope, that foul, deceitful thing, has no part in it......In melodrama, you argue and struggle in the hope of escape. That is vulgar; it's practical. But in tragedy, where there is no temptation to try to escape, argument is gratuitous; it's kingly.

(PP.201-2)

However well known the destinies of their protagonists may be, it is hard to exclude hope and its vulgar consequences from love stories. It is harder still if you are Jean Anouilh, whose thematic preoccupations and dramaturgical practices predispose you to present the love relationship as a force of attraction between opposites. Anouilh cannot exclude the possibility of change — and therefore the presence of hope — a long as he allows love to be a real and present connection between his opposed characters; and he cannot accommodate his dramaturgy of confrontation to such a connection, which entails interaction. Hope is indeed excluded from his Antigone and his Medea because no such connection exists between the principal protagonists. (In his Medea, the love relationship is lost in the past, Jason having already made the existential choice which divides him irrevocably from Medea. And in his Antigone, the relationship between Haemon and Antigone is peripheral to the central confrontation and is anyhow one of like-will-to-like, wherein change — and consequently hope — are not at issue.)

In these plays, the compromisers and the ladies who are absolute for death can only confirm, never change, the respective self-consciousnesses which they are made to articulate. But in his Eurycle and his Romeo and Jeannette, Anouilh has undertaken to dramatise a love relationship in the on-stage present and to use that relationship as the central axis of his thematic oppositions.
Hope here can only be excluded by proving the relationship unreal. And so it is: the link between opposites is posited only to be cancelled on account of utter incompatibility. Both plays thus devote three acts to depicting the development of a love relationship in such a way as to demonstrate the impossibility of any love worth the name in life's flux, and then turn in the fourth to ask us to accept the validity of the love fixed in death which their love stories dictate. In neither case does the play provide much of anything to substantiate the invitation, though it is clearly intended to be taken with some seriousness in the Eurydice, where the love relationship has been rendered unreal (and hope consequently excluded) inch by inch.

In Romeo and Jeannette, however, the love relationship is recognisably unreal from its inception. Frederic is simply shunted at the end of the first act from a love of his own mediocre kind — and the naming of his fiancée 'Julia' suggests, as does the little we see of them together, that the abandoned match was at least equally as appropriate as that with Jeannette — to an absolute obsession for an absolute egotist. Her response to their first encounter is the prompt posting of a rejection slip to her current lover. Critics who have managed to swallow her attraction for him have nonetheless choked on his attraction for her. Both, I suggest, are supposed to be preposterous. Subsequently, they refer over and over again to the loathing each entertains for what the other is. They are not made to say what, other than the mysterious workings of fate, is overruling the mutual revulsion. All rational causes being ruled out by the strength of the absolute opposition between them, it is worth looking at the lovers' sole sustained moment of equilibrium in the play, the Act II passage in which they surrender to passion without moving an inch.
DESMOND: How far away you are at the other side of the table. How far away you have been all day today.

JEANNETTE: What would have happened had you even brushed against me?

DESMOND: We have struggled all day long without even touching one another, without daring to meet eye to eye. We have wrestled limb to limb, while the others talked, not seeing a thing. Oh, how far away you are. And you will never be any closer.

NORA: Never closer.

DESMOND: Never, even in thought. And we must be strong, mustn't we? We mustn't even imagine ourselves in each other's arms.

NORA: Tomorrow, no. (Her eyes are closed) But tonight I am in your arms.

DESMOND: This is unbearable. Oh, don't stir. It is so wonderful it can be no harm.

NORA: Yes. It is wonderful.

DESMOND: It is cool and pleasant drink after long thirst.

NORA: I was thirsty too.

As one critic observes of Act II as a whole, 'The imaginative prowess of this couple is so acute that one would almost believe them destined to a lifetime of indecent bliss.' The MacDonagh translation, quoted above, is a pretty tame and incomplete rendering of the original, but even so the underscored lines were excised in production. If the sexual connotations of some of them weren't obvious enough, the context of the exchange offers a few clues. Throughout it the figure of the father is asleep, snoring open-mouthed on stage; and in the unlikely case of our overlooking his presence, Lucien is brought on, just before and again after the declaration-cum-imaginary-consummation of love, to point out that figure and gloss its double significance — as the image of death
and again as the image of the Almighty

Lucien: ..... You have to take advantage when He's not looking......

Frederic: Who?

Lucien: (pointing upward) That One up there. Every time anyone's happy, He gets in a frightful rage. Doesn't like it...... Cheat, old man. Cheat at everything. Above all, cheat yourself. It's the only way of getting the One up there to leave you alone. He's got a weakness for tricksters, or else He's short-sighted. Or maybe He's asleep. (He indicates the Father.) Like him, with his mouth open. And if you don't make too much noise, he won't interfere. ... But He's got a nose, a terribly keen sense of smell, and the whiff — just the merest whiff — of love, and He's on to it. And He doesn't like it. He doesn't like it at all. So He wakes up and starts taking an interest in you. He pounces on you like a sergeant-major. About turn! No good trying to be smart with me, my fine friend...... What's that? What? Not satisfied? You can die of it, then that'll teach you! Death! Death! Death! Death! You've read that little page at the back of your service certificate, where they promise you it served up in all sorts of different ways when you're a new recruit? That's love.

(pp. 278-279)

But this is not a play celebrating the triumph of sexual passion over death, time, God the Father, and all other obstacles to the endurance of ecstatic unions. In Anouilh's world, ecstatic unions are possible only in imagination. Even when, in the Eurydice, Orpheus and Eurydice are permitted a physical encounter which they both appear to have enjoyed, sexual satisfaction is appreciated less on its own merits than for its symbolic suggestiveness:
ORPHEUS: It seemed to me we were lying naked on a shore and
my tenderness was a rising sea that would little by
little envelop our two bodies where we lay....As if
it needed our struggle and our nakedness on this
tumbled bed to make us really two comrades.

(p.117)

That the physical union was illusory is recognized in the next act,
after the impossibility of profounder union has become inescapably
obtrusive:

ORPHEUS: It's intolerable to be two! Two bodies, two
envelopes, impenetrable around us. Each being complete
with oxygen, with his blood, whatever we try to do,
enclosed, alone, in this covering of flesh. We press
ourselves one to the other, we rub each other to try
to escape from this frightening solitude. A little
pleasure, a little illusion, but we quickly find ourselves
alone again, with our livers and our guts — our only
friends....For one moment I can enter into you. For
one moment I can believe we are two twigs growing out
of the same root. And then we must separate and become
two again. Two mysteries. Two lies. Two people.

(pp.146-147)

Where in Eurydice the spiritual validity of a physical union
is first posited, then denied, in images like this, in Romeo and
Jeanette even less is allowed the lovers. Their relationship
is presented from beginning to end as an act of imagination. The
lovers' embrace in Act II, quoted above, is but a shared fiction,
a moment of coincidence between their respective images of each
other. The fiction cannot be sustained when, in Act III, dramatic
'fact' finds them actually and briefly in privacy and mutual proximity.
Finally away from the Maurin household and alone for the first half
of the act, the lovers are made to continue their courtship as an
imaginative exercise. This is not a matter of authorial
embarrassment in representing a sexual encounter: it is rather
the only love relationship he is willing to allow his characters, and its development is charted as a collaboration of imaginative acts. The few moments when Frederic and Jeannette turn towards each other as real figures in the on-stage present are promptly etherealised by fantastic images. At the beginning of the act, Jeannette throws a blanket over Frederic's shoulders:

JEANNETTE: .....There! You look wonderful like that — like an old redskin chief. (He goes to take her in his arms, but she disengages herself almost imperceptibly, I'm frightened.

FREDERIC: (gently) I'm frightened, too.

There is a short pause. She smiles.

JEANNETTE: I'm frightening you with all my hair all wet like this. I'm so ugly.

FREDERIC: No, you're not.

JEANNETTE: They say I look like a mad thing when my hair's wet.

FREDERIC: Who are 'they'?

JEANNETTE: The others. (Correcting herself.) People.

FREDERIC: You look like a wood nymph.

JEANNETTE: I'd like to have been a real wood nymph, sitting all by myself up in the branches, with my hair all tangled, shouting insults at people. There were never any real ones, though, were there?

FREDERIC: I don't know.

JEANNETTE: (raising her eyes, suddenly serious) Anyway, you probably like girls with their hair all tidy; the sort that brush it for ages and ages every morning in the bedroom..... I don't seem to have brought a comb with me. I'll buy a brush tomorrow..... And I'll tidy my hair, properly, and make it smooth — the way I hate it and you like it.

(pp.282-283)

At the end of the act, Jeannette's great gesture of love — playing Roman matron by putting her arm through a glass window and protesting 'Non dolet' — is likewise a game of imagination. It is, moreover, inspired by an engraving, an image, on the wall; and
(mirrors within mirrors) that engraving depicts an imaginary incident centering on one Poetus, supposedly a Roman condemned to death by Nero (p.296), but so suspiciously eponymous that I assume him to be Anouilh's invention. Most of the love discourse in between, and in their exchanges in the other acts, is conducted in the hypothetical future and the (probably) contrary to fact past, as the lovers exchange autobiographical excerpts and fabricate their futures. (The imaginative tenses get quite complex when Anouilh goes so far as to make Frederic describe the wife whom he had, as a child, envisaged for his adulthood. That this imaginative construct is the antithesis of Jeannette is, predictably, given explicit emphasis.) These projections and reports work as a series of prognoses on the attempts of each lover to contradict what he or she is and to become what the other wishes — or rather, is imagined to wish. And though some moves in the imaginative game get sustained longer than others, each is inevitably stymied by the intractable and intrusive opposition between would-be lover and beloved. Jeannette imagines herself as a wood-nymph, but Frederic prefers girls with tidy hair. Jeannette reconstructs her past and then, even in imagination, 'remembers' that Frederic threw a stone at her once. The prognosis is always negative; but there is nothing to stop the imaginative game — in which, loosely speaking, each move is more impossibly unreal than that which preceded it.

This representation of love as a collaboration — here successful for a moment, there inevitably a failure — of imaginations is more extensively worked out with reference to Jeannette, because she is the source and focus of most of the fictions. A prevaricator,
a slut and a slattern, she spends Act II alternatively denying her past behaviour and throwing it as a challenge in Frederic's face, and Act III alternatively resolving to redo her past and reveling in the latest of various renditions of it. By Act IV, having literally married her past (in the person of the man who has kept her body but never been much on her mind), she has maneuvered herself into a situation wherein the only way she can stop being what she is is to stop being altogether. But this is the ultimate fiction, since — as Frederic has been made to observe early in the play and somewhat unnecessarily in the situation which then (p.245) obtained — people don't die of love. Frederic's end of the imaginative game is the question of whether or not he, a notary tossed out of his tidy universe into one wherein everything has been relabeled with question marks, will manage to credit and trust a beloved who is being proven, over and over again, constitutionally mendacious. Because Frederic is thus the passive partner in the imaginary relationship, the oscillations of his ability to believe and believe in Jeannette get less attention than do the manifestations of her powers of invention. These are more spectacular and more amenable to Anouilh's idiosyncrasies as a writer of dramatic dialogue. It is on this account that Frederic becomes so boring whenever Jeannette is around: we learn less about him when he is with his beloved than when he is arguing the theoretical merits of love with Lucien. (Even there, however, Frederic's discourse tends to be about as interesting as that of a man who is insisting upon the reality of a single optical illusion while a sharper-eyed companion is enumerating and describing all the things actually on the horizon.) Frederic's penultimate protestation of love is merely his strongest statement of belief in their collaborative fiction: when, at the climactic conclusion of Act III, she appears dripping blood from her self-
mutilation, he embraces her, stammering, 'Jeannette, my love . . .
forgive me. I'll believe you. I'll always believe you!' (p.301).
Act IV, however, brings the ultimate challenge to his love/
imagination; and in making Frederic reject it for sound reasons,
Anouilh ensures that we see the lovers' joint suicide as even more
fraudulent than Jeannette's play-acting:

JEANNETTE: .....I'm everything you hate again, and I can't even
be your wife! (She stops, and then continues in her small
voice:) But if you like, there is something I can do tonight,
so as to make it last forever in spite of everything and
that's die with you.
Pause.

FREDERIC: (in a hard voice, without looking at her) No.
That's too cowardly. We've got to go on living.

JEANNETTE: (softly) With all the ugliness and failure,
until we're old and hideous and finally die in our beds,
swearing and struggling like animals. The sea is so clean.
It washes everything with its great big waves.

FREDERIC: No. (Pause again.) The sea isn't clean. It
has thousands of bodies buried in it. Death isn't clean
either. It doesn't solve anything. It filches part of
you away, but it botches the job and leaves behind a great
caricature of a body that decomposes and pollutes the air —
an enormous, disgusting thing that has to be hidden
quickly. Only children and people who've never watched
over a dead body can still think of death as something to
adorn with flowers, something to call on at the first sign
of age or the first pang of suffering. People have to
get old. They have to grow out of the world of childhood
and accept the fact that things are not so pretty as when
they were young.

JEANNETTE: I don't want to grow up. I don't want to learn
to accept. Everything's so ugly.

FREDERIC: Maybe it is. But all this horror, this fuss about
nothing, this absurd, grotesque adventure that life is —
it belongs to us. We've got to live through it. Death's
absurd as well.

(pp.319-320)

Yet shortly thereafter, and at the last possible moment, he will run
out into the sea after Jeannette and embrace that absurdity,
encircled by her arms and the rising tide. For the benefit of
the audience, the onlooking Father and Lucien describe the...
in grotesquely emotive detail which only underlines the absurdity of the act:

FATHER: ........they'll have to run for it, good grief! They'll have to put on a spurt. Why the hell aren't they running?

LUCIEN: You can see what they're doing. They're talking.

FATHER: But it's insane! But... they must be mad! Why doesn't someone go after them and tell them? I'm too old! Holy Moses! This is no time for talking! (He begins to shout grotesquely /S3c/... Stop talking there, both of you! Stop talking!

LUCIEN: (in a low voice) Stop that or I'll strangle you! Let them talk. Let them talk while they can. They've got plenty to say to each other. (Pause, while the two of them watch, breathing hard and clinging to one another.) Now — do you see what they're doing, you old optimist? Do you? They're kissing. Kissing. With the sea galloping up behind them. You just don't understand it, do you, you scruffy old Don Juan, you old cuckold, you old rag-bag! (He shakes him mercilessly.)

FATHER: (at the top of his lungs, trying to tear himself free) The tide! The tide! Oh, Jesus! (Yelling helplessly, ridiculously.) Mind the tide!

LUCIEN: A fat lot they care about your tide or your bawling or Julia or that woman watching from the road or any of us! They're in each other's arms and they've only got about a minute to go.

FATHER: They shan't say I didn't do anything about it. I'm going after them by the Customhouse path!

(p.323)

If one bears in mind that at the centre of Romeo and Jeannette there lies an interpretation of love as mutual bad faith, the common acceptance of a lie, then the rationale for the play's improbable plot and implausible characters (both of which have much offended critics) becomes apparent, though not necessarily acceptable. We are supposed to see the relationship and its unravelling as contrary to fact, even contrary to the dramatic givens which are on-stage 'facts'. Lest we miss the point, Anouilh has interpolated a
system of transparently theatrical touches to remind us of his presence, pulling the strings on his marionettes and putting them through just enough plot paces to keep the confrontation of opposites going. One such touch in *Romeo and Jeannette* is Anouilh's trick of putting all violent happenings (the execution of the chicken, Jeannette's self-mutilation, Julia's suicide attempt, the lovers' deaths) off-stage, a trick in the best classical tradition. Another and related drawing of attention to himself is Anouilh's trick of withholding all clues as to the motivation of a particular plot development while it is in progress, and then overwhelming us with inside information later on. When motivation is reported in this way, after the fact and by a character whom we have been trained to distrust, it becomes suspect; and plot causality continues to appear as much a matter of authorial fiat as if no explanation were offered. The outstanding example of this trick is Jeannette's resolution, at the end of Act III, to abandon imaginative effort and return to what she is. We see her take that decision; but since the interior event is not exteriorised, we do not recognise it, and still less do we appreciate it as the turning point in the plot:

**...JEANNETTE remains alone, motionless, looking very small in her white dress with the wind buffetting her and her arms clasped around her. Suddenly she turns her head towards the open door.**

JEANNETTE: (*murmuring*) You can come in now.

A man appears like a shadow in the doorway, his coat streaming with rain. As the shadow advances into the room, the curtain falls.

(p.302)

At the beginning of Act IV, set one week later, the plot consequences of that decision are established onstage 'facts': Frederic has been
reconciled to his fiancée and a bourgeois life, and Jeannette is offstage getting married to the shadow. She returns from the wedding feast to provide an extensive post-mortem on the decision before suggesting suicide:

JEANNETTE:  (in her small voice) You shouldn't have left me alone.

FREDERIC: I thought Julia was going to die.

JEANNETTE: Yes. It was very sensible and very good of you to go to her at once, but it was just precisely the moment when sensible things and good things aren't quite fair any more. A bit earlier maybe, or a bit later, I might have thought 'Poor Julia!' too....But we were unlucky. That was just the moment not to leave me....Just at that moment I was like a bird in the topmost branches of a tree, ready either to fly away or to build my nest there.

(p.316)

And then again, a little further on:

JEANNETTE: I can tell you exactly when it finished. You hadn't even left the room yet. It finished when you took your arms from around me.

FREDERIC: What finished?....What was it that finished? I want to know.

JEANNETTE: ....If you like, it was the certainty that I felt, deep inside me, that I was stronger than your mother, stronger than Julia and all those Roman women; that I deserved you more than anyone else. That was what came to an end after you'd gone. I'd just put my arm through that window; I couldn't see my own blood running for you, and I was proud. You could have told me to jump out of the window, to enter into the fiery furnace, and I'd have done it. I could have been poor for always with you; I could have been faithful to you for ever. The only thing I couldn't bear was not to feel you touch me any more.... The very moment you took your hands away from me, I stopped being stronger....

FREDERIC: I want with everything I've got to believe you and understand you, but you must come a little way to meet me. Our chance of happiness together couldn't just have depended on that split second when I took my arms away. It's childish!

JEANNETTE: (smiling) We're so different, my darling. We really did have only the tiniest chance, and only once.

(pp.317-318)
Jeannette's decision, then, was the dissolution of her own belief in her own image of herself in a love relationship with Frederic. As the lady's imaginative capacities had been shown to be sturdy and well-exercised stuff throughout the first three acts, the audience may well share the incredulity of Frederic at this belated revelation of their fragility.

Frederic, it will be recalled, took his arms away from Jeannette when, at exactly the wrong moment, the Postman arrived. He and Lucien are present and pivotal in all the most self-consciously theatrical moments of Romeo and Jeannette. And, after the titular hero and heroine, they are the most important figures in the play. I have been arguing that the play represents a love relationship between opposites as intrinsically impossible and therefore illusory in its appearance, and that is structured as a series of confrontations in which the love relationship is developed as mutual acts of imagination. These acts intensify and accelerate by their own internal logic, but somebody has to provide the plot mechanics which set them in motion and at rest; and it is helpful to have some glosses and guidelines on all the imaginative fusions which occur between the protagonists. These are the respective responsibilities of the Postman (who is, as is noted on the list of dramatis personae in MacDonagh's adaptation, 'necessary in contriving curtains') and Lucien (whose interpretative role is so ponderous that one English reviewer expressed concurrence with Lucien's Act III \[.294\] complaint that 'It's a lousy part I'm playing in all this').

Obviously intended to remind us of their remote ancestors in Greek tragedy, messenger and chorus between them make things happen and make sure we appreciate the full import of what is said and done. The arrivals of the Postman with a telegram for Jeannette at the beginning of Act II and with a message for Frederic at the end of Act III
bracket the lovers' imaginary sexual union across the existential
abyss of oppositeness. And Lucien is made to throw ludicrously
portentous aureoles over the moment when the lovers first see each
other, at the end of Act I:

LUCIEN: .....The clouds are gathering round us. Listen.
I hear the gate grinding on the hinge; the pine needles
crackling beneath a footstep. Fate is about to burst
upon this house! It is going to burst, my children.
I tell you I have had a warning; it is definitely going
to burst!

JEANNETTE has appeared at the back. She stops as she suddenly
sees the chicken in the MOTHER's hand. They are all looking at
her, but she is staring at the chicken. LUCIEN is heard to
murmur in the silence.

There we are. It's burst. . .

(pp.257-8)

MacDonagh, it is interesting to note, domesticates the portents in
this passage. His Lucien, rechristened Hugh, heralds the entrance
of Jeannette, rechristened Nora, with a pastiche of lines from
Elizabethan tragedy:

HUGH: See where Joey's blood streams in the firmament. Ah,
rend not my heart for naming of my Joey. Dead brutally
murdered i' the Capitol. And we, like the audience at a
play, stand mute and helpless to avert the tragedy. If
you have tears prepare to shed them now.....
'And yesterday the bird of night did sit
Even at noonday, upon the market place,
Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies
Do so conjointly meet, let no man say
These are their reasons, they are natural;
For I believe they are portentous things. . .'

Nora enters.....

HUGH: They are portentous things.

It is likewise Lucien's tongue-in-cheek that lectures us and the
lovers on the ill-fated character of their encounter; that counters
their imaginations of shared bliss with images of cuckoldry and
infidelity, the compromiser's reading of love embittered by
experience; and that reminds us of the One Up There. It is Lucien,
too, who gets the choric last word in the play:
Lucien: .....(....looking far out to sea, perfectly still...)

Suddenly he says in a dull voice:) Love. Unhappy love. Are you happy now? With your hearts and your bodies and your romance. Haven't we still got jobs to do, books to read, houses to build? Isn't it still good to feel the sun on one's skin, to drink wine freshly poured, to have water running in the streams, shade at noon, fires in winter, snow and rain even, and the wind and the trees and the clouds and the animals, such innocent creatures and children; that is, before they get too ugly? Isn't that right, Love? Everything's good, isn't it? (He turns abruptly away from the window...He goes to the table, pours himself a glass of wine, and speaks softly, looking at the ceiling.) Well, there it is. Are you satisfied? That's the way it had to be. But I told them you didn't like the idea. (Pause. He pours another glass.) Forgive me, Sir, but you make me thirsty!

He empties his glass at one gulp. The Postman appears in the doorway, dressed in a dark cloak.

Postman: Children! Children!

Lucien: (makes towards him precipitately) Is it for me this time, at last?

He has snatched the letter from the old man's hands and opened it nervously. He scans through it and crams it in his pocket. Then...he goes to fetch his bag and hat from the stand.

Postman: Well?

Lucien: (turns to him and speaks gently) There are no more children, now. Good-bye postman.

He gives him a friendly little shove and dives out into the darkness without looking back.

Curtain

(pp.323–324)

Lucien's prayer is his first and last direct address to the One Up There; and in these final moments of the play, that offstage power, the Postman and Lucien converge for the first and last time. Their convergence coincides with the lovers' off-stage deaths, met in a manner more appropriate to Wagner or Maeterlinck than Anouilh. (Anouilh, moreover, having established in the first moments of the play
that there is a sea somewhere in the neighbourhood, pretty well
neglects to mention its presence again until time comes to drown
Frederic and Jeanette in it.) It has been suggested that the One
Up There represents Jean Anouilh rather than God Almighty; but
this, however plausible, seems to me to warrant no further consideration
than does the question of whether we are to construe the dark-
cloaked Postman as symbolising a classical nuntius or the Angel
of Death. The point, at once secure and significant, is rather
that Anouilh has followed up this spectacular (but unseen)
dénouement, redolent as it is with associations from the literature
of love, by throwing down his whole handful of theatrical tricks.
We are not so much invited to interpret them as enforced to
acknowledge their presence. We are being reminded once and for all
that, as we have seen in the unfolding of the Frederic-Jeanette
relationship, enduring and absolute love — the permanent and
perfect union of opposites — is a fiction, a construct of the
imagination. As for Frederic and Jeanette, so too for Tristan
and Isolde, Pelléas and Melisande, and of course Romeo and Juliet.
The final statement of the play has been variously interpreted as
vindicating such idealised pairs —

...the...sea of death [which we see in Romeo et Jeannette
...not only purifies their love but insures it against the
ravages of life and time.....It is life itself which
prevents the perfection of love.....Through Lucien's words
\[In his last long speech, quoted above\] the contrast between
the true couple and those people who go on living is
emphasized.....Life must go on with its little pleasures
and illusions....While love, sad love, requires of its true
devotees the sacrifice of everything that might have made
for a happy mediocre life.\]

— and as condemning them —
Romeo et Jeannette is not a paean of romantic love. We do not feel — as we do after Romeo and Juliet — that their love was greater than life itself, and that real love is in fact stronger than death. Yet Anouilh's title is no pointless parody but an exact signpost to the calculated, almost venemous attack on romantic values that the play is meant to be.  

I do not think that any such clear judgment can be extrapolated from a play which yet another critic has termed 'a continually altering series of patterns of romantic attitudes and confessions'. That series finally leaves us certain that Anouilh in Romeo and Jeannette regards romantic love as an illusion and that his romantic lovers, like their literary predecessors, can exist only as artifices; but we are not given grounds for saying whether Anouilh thinks that illusion and such artifices to be a Good Thing or a Bad.

This ambivalence towards subject matter in Romeo and Jeannette can be convincingly explained in terms of Anouilh's dramatic work. In at least entertaining the possibility that happy love and a compromised life may have something to recommend themselves after all, Romeo and Jeannette marks a turning point for Anouilh. The change of attitude — a maturation for which Anouilh himself has been uncharacteristically generous with autobiographical clues — is that between his Antigone and his Medea. In the 1942 play, Creon the compromiser gets the better of the arguments and survives the play, while the lady who is absolute for death and eternal adolescence carries the day; but in 1946, the titular heroine is both rationally wrong and emotionally repulsive. That Anouilh was re-evaluating his existential oppositions while writing Romeo and Jeannette is, I think, the fundamental reason for the failure of the play. Its structure, Anouilh's usual one, as a chain of confrontations is one which constantly invites an audience to judge — between
Frederic and Jeannette, between Frederic or Jeannette and Lucien, between Jeannette and Julia, between Lucien or Frederic and the Father — but in the end judgment is frustrated: there is no rationally or emotionally coherent case for the defence of any one side as against any other. What there is instead is a discomfort at all the self-conscious and overtly arbitrary artifice — much more overwhelming to the play than it is in *Eurydice*, where Anouilh was still firmly on the side of the illusory angels — which has been offered us in lieu of dramatic logic and coherence.

iv. Postwar adaptations: theatricality and pathos

Yet in the wider context of modern transpositions of *Romeo and Juliet*, and indeed of Shakespearean tragedy, *Romeo and Jeannette* is significant precisely for its frustration of judgment of subject and its concomitant emphasis upon the fictitiousness of theatrical representation. If one examines the various English-language *Romeo and Juliet* transpositions (amateurs' one-acts excepted) which litter the two decades after World War II, two threads can be traced: either tragic emotion is altogether forestalled by a happy ending, the unreality of which (and indeed of the whole play) is emphasised by an explicit insistence upon the artificiality of all on-stage figures and action; or it is replaced by a pathos which has been produced, not by patterns of verbally represented action and dialogue and their interrelations, but by the ancillary elements of drama: dance, song, music, mime. The first option is, I suggest, anticipated by Anouilh's *Romeo and Jeannette*, and the second bears some distant analogy with the way in which the external set for the
premiere production of Anderson's *Winterset* was more suggestive than the scripted dialogue.

The former category includes such eminently forgettable travesty transpositions of *Romeo and Juliet* as John Leister's *Overboard for Juliet* (before 1943), and Robert Nathan's *Juliet in Mantua* (1955). Leister's transposition is a sort of film-within-a-play. It begins with a film investor ringing up an alcoholic scriptwriter and persuading him to rewrite Shakespeare's script to suit his wife, a former chorus-girl named Mimi. 'Mimi,' he explains, 'has gone overboard for this Juliet...But the one thing to keep constantly in mind is a Juliet that will be Mimi..... Simply write down to what my Mimi can play.' And that, judging by the level to which *Overboard for Juliet* descends, isn't much.

The play is resituated in a present-day American 'New Verona,' where the usually solid Italian vote has been disrupted by fights between the supporters ('young gangster type Italians') of Tony Capulet, who manufactures spaghetti, and Mike Montague, who trades in olive oil. Both speak in heavy Italo-American slang, with the language of the numerous other characters likewise running to this and other stage idioms of ethnic and/or professional types — Irish cops, chorus girls, gangsters. The plot is not worth a synopsis. Suffice that at the end of the third act, love and order triumph when: Romeo's poison (procured from Brentano, keeper of *Ye Olde Apothecary Shoppe*) proves to be fusel oil bathtub gin left over from Prohibition; Benvolio announces that ballistics investigators (pressured by Governor Prince, who needs solid backing from local voters) have given Romeo evidence of self-defence in
Tybalt's slaying; Juliet throws a temper tantrum; and Mrs. Montague and Mrs. Capulet, drawing attention to the fact that the feud is not in their blood, lead the capitulation to peace. The conferring of the surname 'Montague' upon Paris is typical of the level of the dialogue; and the occasional insertion of a well-known passage from the original — such as the Queen Mab speech — does not anaesthetise the pain.

Nathan's transposition also begins with a prologue to remind us of the unreality of what is to come. Friar Laurence turns up to explain that Shakespeare, through Bandello's fault, got his story scrambled: the lovers escaped to Mantua. There they have devoted a decade to growing ever less romantic and ever more middle-aged while awaiting reconciliation with their still-quarrelling families. This is finally arranged by the Duke at the end of Act I, and in Act II the lovers return to Verona to face new trials: mutual suspicions of infidelity are aroused by Romeo's old flame Rosalind and Juliet's former suitor, Paris, who have likewise sunk into marital tedium. The ostensible setting in the Italian Renaissance is functional only in that it enables the husbands to challenge each other to a duel. The world of the play — wherein all domestic difficulties (overweight, in-laws, finances, and half-hearted gestures towards infidelity) are resolved by the unforeseen but long-awaited pregnancies of both brides — is, like its humour, proper to the contemporary American 'borscht circuit' for which the play was written.

A much better known comic transposition, Peter Ustinov's Romanoff and Juliet (1956), likewise draws attention to its own
theatricality and relies heavily on stage caricature of ethnic type for social satire. It does so, however, with some wit and finesse and a satisfying symmetry of silliness. Very much a one-man show, with Ustinov playing the principal role in both the West End and Broadway productions, it was a box-office success on both sides of the Atlantic and was subsequently (1961) made into a film.  

The conflict enveloping the titular hero and heroine of Romanoff and Juliet is the 1950's U.S.S.R.—U.S. 'cold war', here frozen at the level of diplomatic intermanoeuvring between the Russian and American ambassadors to 'the Capital City of the Smallest Country in Europe' (christened 'Concordia' in the film version). The ambassadorial offspring, Igor Vadimovitch Romanoff and Juliet Alison Murphy Vanderwelde Moulsworth, have fallen in love at first sight by the beginning of the play; and their respective rejected fiancés, Marfa Vassilevna Zlotochienko and Freddie Vanderstuyt, repeat the phenomenon (and a long passage of amorous dialogue) at the end of the play. Subsidiary symmetries are spun through alternating glimpses of diplomatic domestic affairs in the Russian and American embassies. Even from its introduction of the opposed forces, the script establishes a pattern, never to be varied, whereby a given sequence of business, speech or even line on one ambassadorial side is immediately mirrored and echoed on the other:  

(A window of the building on the audiences' right opens with a clatter. An angry man in pyjamas...looks out.)  

ANGRY MAN: Can't a guy get a decent night's rest round here?  
If it is not the cathedral clock, it's drunks.  

GENERAL: Drunks? I beg your pardon, Ambassador.
ANGRY MAN: Who's that? Oh, Mr. President — please forgive my outburst. It was a great party last night..... sure makes me wish you had Independence Day every day.

GENERAL: We do, but we can't afford to celebrate it more than ten or fifteen times a year.....

ANGRY MAN: Is that a fact? You sure live and learn.

WOMAN: (voice hooting): Hooper!

ANGRY MAN: Coming sugar.

WOMAN (voice): Are you crazy, standing in that window with your arthritis?

ANGRY MAN: (sheepish): Well, I guess you fellers heard. See you. (He disappears.).....

(The opposite window opens, and another angry man looks out.)

SECOND ANGRY MAN: Ppsst!

GENERAL: Ambassador! Good morning.

SECOND ANGRY MAN: He said something?.....

GENERAL: We woke him up with our singing. I hope we didn't do the same to you.

SECOND ANGRY MAN: I don't sleep..... May I congratulate you, Mr. President, on the reception last night, which perceptibly increased our solidarity?

GENERAL: I enjoyed it. I was the last to leave, and got rather drunk.

SECOND ANGRY MAN (without humour): Drunkenness in pursuit of solidarity is not a sin.

WOMAN: (voice, strident): Vadim!

SECOND ANGRY MAN: Da, golubchik.

WOMAN (voice): Paidi Suda!

SECOND ANGRY MAN (conciliatory): Sichas... .

GENERAL: You'd better go.

SECOND ANGRY MAN (suspicious): You understand our language?

GENERAL: I understand. . . the situation

(pp.11-12)
The predictability of this pattern is as much the source of the play's humour as is the satire of U.S./U.S.S.R. types which it carries; and the same unflagging symmetry is sustained in the movements and lines of two local soldiers, one a member of the Socialist Agrarian Reform Peasants Industrial Party and the other an adherent of the National Iron Fist:

**FIRST SOLDIER:** .....Our future lies in the abolition of frontiers. The day will dawn when the workers will tear down the customs sheds, demolish the road blocks, and extend the hand of friendship across the artificial guls imposed by nationalists and capitalist warmongers.....

**SECOND SOLDIER:** Our future lies in our discipline and in the cultivation of heroism in the very young. To my mind, every mother who has successfully borne five children should be given a free issue of toy bayonets by a grateful nation. (p.9)

The figures exempt from all the pair-bonding and countering of opposed types are the General and his two agents, one witting (the Spy who defects from the Russian camp) and another unwitting (The Archbishop, who conducts a ceremonial mock marriage which turns out to be the real thing). The General stage-manages the romance from just after its beginning until its connubial conclusion, reminds the audience that they're 'out there in the shadows! (p.3), and reads them lectures on the mysterious place

**GENERAL:** .....Good evening. You will find us only on the very best atlases.....usually a dyspeptic mint green, which misses the outline of the frontier by a fraction of an inch, so that one can almost hear the printer saying damn. Our population is so small that it's not worth counting. We have no cannons, we need no fodder.

(pp.8-9)

and time

**GENERAL:** .....The night is marvellous. .. because it is the time when the great powers are asleep, recovering their energies for the horrors of the ensuing day. ... and in that time of
magic and of mystery, our horizons are infinite. . . they
stretch not only to the north, south, east, and west, but
up towards the moon, down towards the centre of the earth.
In peace, and in harmony with nature, we send out our vast
battalions to colonize the imagination. . .When others
sleep, our Empire knows no bounds.

(p.13)

In this context the lovers are introduced; and in this context
we leave them — and the other pair of young lovers, plus two
second-honeymooning sets of parents — while the Soldiers continue
an orthographic game which had opened the play:

GENERAL (to the audience): It is the night. Our victory is
won. Do visit our country, if you can. The fare is as
cheap as walking to the end of the street to post a letter;
accommodation is magnificent. All you need to do is to
shut your eyes, and in the night, with tranquil minds and
softly beating hearts, you will find us here. . . the
realm of sense, of gentleness, of love. . . the dream which
every tortured modern man may carry in his sleep. . . our
landscape is your pillow, our heavy industry — your snores. . .

He retires in the darkness, and blows out the candles on the
Altar. The music is a lullaby. The four love scenes continue
in silence.

FIRST SOLDIER: D.
SECOND SOLDIER: R.
FIRST SOLDIER: D.R.E.
SECOND SOLDIER: A.
SECOND SOLDIER: M.
FIRST SOLDIER: One — love

CURTAIN

(p.72)

It hardly needs to be spelled out. The dénouement has been
accomplished by the replacement of two weatherbeaten dummies
(variably described in the stage directions as papier maché
\[\text{p.56}\] and wax \[\text{p.67}\] with young Romanoff and Juliet; and at the
centre of the symmetrical set, with the opposed embassies on either side, is 'an illuminated clock, on which a great many unsteady saints frequently appear together with Father Time, Death the Reaper, and other allegorical figures' (p.57), to whose steadily declining powers the dialogue repeatedly draws attention. In the original production, even the set was under the General's control; at the end of the IIInd Act, he simply pushed them off stage and out of his mind. 'This careless gesture of apparently Samsonesque strength,' noted Ustinov in his foreword to the printed text (p.47) 'added to the meaning of the play by its simple symbolism.' Though Ustinov was rather less tongue in cheek in describing his ambitions as satiric, and though some found Romanoff and Juliet excessively abstract, it is hard to see that all the stylised and ordered satire of the play amounts to any more meaning than the message that all men dream the same dreams despite national and political differences.

Romanoff and Juliet was described by one English reviewer as 'Romeo and Juliet brought fearlessly up to date and turned into a musical without any pop songs — without any music, for that matter, save for Mr. A. Hopkins' amusing settings to a brace of ballads.' The comment anticipates the Broadway opening, some fourteen months later, of West Side Story, which was to prove an even greater box office success in both New York and London. The musical — with book by Arthur Laurents, music by Leonard Bernstein, lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, choreography, direction and original conception by Jerome Robbins — is the first and best instance of a Romeo and Juliet transposition which evades the problems encountered by Anderson and his literary ilk by letting music, dance and
setting do most of the work in a representation of young love triumphant over fatal conflicts.

West Side Story transposes the Montague-Capulet conflict from blood feuds in the squares of Renaissance Verona to teen-aged gang wars on the streets of modern New York's West Side. As an intersection of 'the Puerto Rican problem' with 'the rising tide of juvenile delinquency', such fighting had much occupied American journalists in the mid-1950's. In West Side Story, Laurents' script tosses up clues as to the causes — economic factors, excessive explosions of unchannelled adolescent energy, deliberate brutality and/or incomprehending insanity on the part of the authority figures, and racial bigotry. These suggestions reflect popular discussion of the problems; but no single one is sustained through the play or even entertained for more than a few lines. Moreover, Sondheim's lyrics to 'Sergeant Krupke' make marvellous mockery of speculations about the causes of the situation. The claim of one academic critic that 'the basic difference between this play and Shakespeare's is: West Side Story is conceived as a social document, Romeo and Juliet as a Liebestod' appears to me a preposterous reading of Laurents' transposition.

Far from documenting and analysing the gang warfare, West Side Story insists upon its senselessness. At some crucial points, the incomprehensible and uncontrollable conflict works as a sort of modern Pater. The death of its Romeo/Tony, for example, is only semi-suicidal. Believing his Juliet/Maria to be dead, he deliberately courts and catches a bullet fired by Paris/Chino. That Tony exposes himself to death and that another boy is waiting
to deal it out are both consequences of the gang war, and specifically of Tony's attempts to arrest or at least escape it. As in the original, his mistake about his beloved occurs when a message goes awry; but here the message misfires on account of the continuing conflict rather than a fortuitous quarantine. Anita, girlfriend of the late Bernardo/Tybalt and occasional stand-in for Shakespeare's Nurse, is brutalised by the gang aligned with Tony/Romeo when she tries to take a message to him; and in anger she tells them to tell Tony that Chino/Paris has found out that his betrothed Maria/Juliet has been consorting with the opposition and has killed her. Likewise, Tony/Romeo is shot in direct revenge for Bernardo/Tybalt, whose life he had taken in circumstances much compressed from the original and with even more ironic reversal of good intent: Tony/Romeo does not chance across Bernardo/Tybalt but goes looking for him in order to stop a scheduled fight. (Few words grace this moment of ironic reversal, which was depicted mainly by choreography.) Standing over Tony's corpse and holding Chino's gun, Maria snarls:

......How many bullets are left, Chino? Enough for you? (Pointing at another.) And you? (At Action) All of you? WE ALL KILLED HIM; and my brother and Riff/Mercutio. (p.223)

Collectively, this may be true; but as individuals they are irresponsible. Laurents' libretto, dense with monosyllabic slang whose linguistic references is not to things and relationships but to actions and emotional attitudes, emphasises that the youngsters cannot even articulate their situation, much less comprehend it.

The relationship between the lovers is never examined, merely asserted: Puerto Rican immigrant girl looks at second-generation Polish boy and 'I saw only him' (p.155), while he knows he's in love
because...there isn't any other way I could feel' (p.180).

Such privileged perspicuity and knowledge are most minimally explained by characterisation: we know that Maria is younger, more innocent, and less accustomed to the urban jungle than the rest of her crowd, and that Tony is both steadier than his and trying to pull away from it because he senses the approach of an unknown alternative. This is virtually all we are told of them, but it is more than we know of most of the others, who are pretty much undifferentiated in the dialogue despite elaborate character sketches in the stage directions. A considerable amount of this characterisation was, however, conveyed non-verbally, through casting and choreography. The scripted exchanges of the lovers are undistinguished, falling very flat by comparison with the tough talk and slang cadences of the gang.

The development of the love relationship and the fatal forces of the gang war are both established by songs, dances and sets. To a man, the critics of the New York opening night remarked that Laurents' script had been, at very most, but an equal element in the collaborative effects of music, choreography and setting. The stark, aggressively urban, set, for example, was banished by lighting at the lovers' meeting (p.145), and even shifted off at the lyrical high points of their balcony scene (p.161), and 'wedding' night (pp.201-202). On the latter occasion, and again at the end, their love was supposed to be seen as vindicated by an harmonious ballet at the back of the stage amongst the gangs — first pacified in the lovers' imagination and then in onstage fact. Robbins' dancers and Bernstein's score, however, were even more essential in establishing
the forces of opposition than in ceremonialising its resolution: from the opening moments of *West Side Story*, choreography and music together dramatised what the script only asserts:

DOC: What does it take to get through to you? When do you stop? You make this world lousy.

ACTION: That's the way we found it, Doc.

For its representation of a destructive action and its expression of an emotional attitude, *West Side Story* had at its disposal two artists well established at the tops of their respective fields (Bernstein and Robbins), and a new talent who was heading for similar heights in his (Sondheim). With that kind of collaboration conferring force and substance upon a thin text, the absence of much literary merit in *West Side Story* hardly mattered to its audiences. A decade later, Ewan MacColl's *Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad* not only abandoned traditional literary values and structures but also did without the professional gloss which had made *West Side Story* sparkle. *Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad* was part of a series of 'radio ballads' which Charles Parker had introduced on BBC radio late in the 1950's. The first of these ballads, 'The Ballad of John Axon,' had initially been undertaken as a documentary about the February 1957 death of an engine driver in a railway accident in Derbyshire. Tape recording interviews with Axon's widow, neighbours, and workmates, Parker soon became less interested in the information they had to offer than in how they offered it. Consequently, instead of extracting facts and opinions from the tape-recorded material and reanimating them in a script of his own devising for performance by actors, Parker fused sections of the tape-recorded
interviews with pertinent folksongs. By his own account:

The programme almost shaped itself. A kind of threnody for the old steam engine driver emerged. The selection from the taped material we used for the programme was governed by two principles. As well as to the dramatic expression of the death of a man, we tried to give expression to the type of man....We were not only looking for the unique...but also for the typical of...railwaymen.

Later radio ballads in Parker's series included

The Big Hower (about coal) The Song of a Road (about the building of the ML) and The Travelling People (about nomads and tinkers); they depend upon the interaction between field recorded speech and studio performed music which provides the essential dynamic of the radio ballad form.

Parker's collaborators on the radio ballads were Pete Seeger and Ewan McColl, and the latter's 1966 transposition of Romeo and Juliet followed the pattern of earlier radio ballads in depending on an interaction between field recorded speech and studio performed music. There was, however, an important difference:

the field recorded speech of Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad was the result of improvisations by fourteen members of the London Critics Group, a group of folksingers who shared Parker's interest in developing new forms of theatre from contemporary speech idioms; and the improvisations were developed around/from a scenario which MacColl had devised from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

What resulted was a mind of multiform poem — a sequence of narrative and dramatic monologues, punctuated by sound effects, by some ten songs of various composition, and, mainly in the fights and the love scenes, by short stretches of dialogue. Its dramatic values are expressive rather than mimetic and tend to emerge mainly in the songs, which include MacColl's exquisite 'The First Time Ever I Saw your Face,' written some 9 years earlier and here put into service for the Shakespearean lovers' aubade. The dialogue
of the adaptation should be examined only in conjunction with these songs because that is almost the only way it can be endured. As with the libretto of West Side Story, the dominant idiom of Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad is that of a youth culture deemed inarticulate when judged by canons of standard English. However, where Laurents had at best selected and patterned monosyllables of minimal meaning into an expression of emotional and physical energies, the dialogue which came out of the London Critics Group's improvisations rarely escapes a banal and flat verisimilitude of linguistic deficiency. This, for example, is what collective improvisation devised for the passage in Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad which corresponds to the Shakespearean balcony scene:

RON (ROMEO): I'm Ron Montague.

JULIET: Montague.

RON: Yeah.

JULIET: So what.

RON: Til tomorrow. There's a jazz boat — going up the river. Back early on Sunday morning.

JULIET: Oh, I couldn't. I don't know how.

RON: Try the old baby-sitting lark.

JULIET: Wait a minute... Uncle Larry!

RON: Larry! Yeah! Of course! I'll see 'im down the Lane tomorrow.

JULIET: Will you?

RON: Yeah

JULIET: I must go.

RON: No. Not yet.

JULIET: Tomorrow

RON: Yes. I'll see Larry and fix it. 102

As an imitation of an action, Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad
fuels drastically to reconcile its debt to Shakespeare's plot with its locational in present-day London. As I have not examined MacColl's original scenario, I do not know how much of the trouble is to be traced to it and how much arose in improvisation. However, I would hazard a guess that in the improvisation sessions, some things were worked through in great detail and others were forgotten, for the problems amount to an imbalance in the presentation of the plot situation and a lack of necessary causality in its development. One notable problem is the way Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad flounders in setting up and sustaining the occasion of the Montague-Capley (Capulet) feud. The antecedents of the feud are taken far back in time, through the complicated history of a partnership as automobile dealers, to army days; and both the narrator and the lovers' go-between, Uncle Larry, are made to point to 'two old men quarrelling over a bit of what — land' (p.24) as the root of all evil. There is some attempt to parallel the old men's rivalry, which had been provoked by the senior Capley's double-dealing, with an opposition between the scions of each house: Verse 5 of a recurrent song proclaims:

The Montague boy's a highstepper
Easy come — easy go is his way;
Tim Capley's a driving go-getter,
Determined to win, come what may.

This recasting of Renaissance clan warfare in contemporary terms of reference introduces more social significance than the script sustains. That Ron Montague on a motorbike forces Tim Capley to swerve and crash a car has little to do with the facts that one is a highstepper and the other a go-getter, and less with their fathers' quarrelling over land, but a lot to do with the fact that Shakespeare's script requires such a manslaughter. The transposition runs even further aground
in an impossibly fast denouement, again because Shakespeare's 
Romeo and Juliet requires what Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad 
has not itself made necessary. We hear Julie slamming a door on 
her parents' unkind comments about Ron/Romeo, who is out on bail but 
to be prosecuted, and then we hear her taking an overdose of 
sleeping tablets. The narrator reports the outcome and his opinion: 
'What a waste, terrible, this is what their grabbing and greed has 
got them. They say she took the whole bottle of tablets, took her 
to the hospital but it was too late' (p.27). And finally we hear 
Ron/Romeo riding his motorbike at ever more alarming speed, singing 
the song which had adorned the lovers' night together on the Thames, 
calling for Julie/t, and crashing.

Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad invites a measure of attention 
as the first twentieth-century British adaptation which attempted to 
transpose Romeo and Juliet to an historically and geographically 
specific contemporary setting and to do so without taking shortcuts 
through stereotypical characterisations or allegorical action. It 
did seriously attempt to express what was at once unique and typical 
about being young and in love in the East End of London today, to build 
this expression upon the framework of a plot poached (however sloppily) 
from Shakespeare, and (perhaps least successfully) to link its 
expression of emotion with some intellectually apprehensible analysis 
of its contemporary setting. However, I think it would be both 
unfair and pointless to subject the script to further 
critical analysis as a detailed transposition of Shakespeare's 
Romeo and Juliet. As such, it was multiply disadvantaged by its 
form as a radio ballad. It was disadvantaged in the first place by 
its brevity: the radio ballads were designed to fill about an hour's
broadcasting time. It was disadvantaged in the second place by the fact that the radio ballads aimed for expressive effects outside those secured by traditional literary values and dramatic structures. (As one admirer of the form has written, "The vitality of this form comes from its reliance on people's personalities, rather than a literary recreation."\(^{103}\)) It was further disadvantaged by its evolution from one man's scenario through collective improvisation of the characters' speeches, to editing and splicing together with sound effects and with songs which are unevenly integral to the whole. And finally, it was not prepared as — and, as far as I am aware, has never been performed as — a work for live performance. Thus, while its existence ought to be noted, it does not invite comparison with later detailed transpositions of Romeo and Juliet, all of which have been (i) full-length scripts, (ii) conceived as dramas, as representations of an action rather than as expressions of an emotion or condition, (iii) written by a single playwright who had some ambitions of dramatic integrity for his adaptation, and (iv) intended to be staged, not broadcast over radio.

v. Edgar's 'Death Story,' Davies' 'Rohan and Julie;' and Gooch's 'Back-Street Romeo'

The American West Side Story and the British Romeo and Juliet:

A Radio Ballad, then, both secured pathos by means in which words play little or no part. At the same time, in transposing Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet into specific contemporary terms which were not mediated either through abstract psychological schema (as was the case with both Anderson's Winterset and Romeo and Joannette) or through national/ethnic type figures (as was the case with the comic
transpositions of the 1950's), both West Side Story and Romeo and
Juliet: A Radio Ballad anticipated the three British transpositions
of Romeo and Juliet from the 1970's: David Edgar's Death Story
(1972), Andrew Davies' Rohan and Julie (1975), and Steve Gooch's
Back-Street Romeo (1977). All three imitate an action, and
in all three the means of representation are primarily (although
not exclusively) verbal. As was noted in the introductory section
of this chapter, I am especially interested in how each of these
recent adaptors has rendered the plot of Shakespeare's Romeo and
Juliet. However, before examining the plotting and the particular
concerns and problems of each transposition separately, I propose
briefly to turn to them as a group illustrative of the claim, made
in my Chapter I, that recent British adaptations are distinguished
by a theatrical inventiveness which exploits limited technical
and human resources and which leaves its traces on dramatic style.

All three of these adaptations presuppose similar sets of
theatrical conditions, specifically those of the contemporary
alternative theatre. Perhaps the most important of these pre-
supposed conditions is a virtually bare stage on which lights,
sound effects and minimal furnishings and properties indicate both
the locale and often the environs of any given scene. A consequence
of this is that an adaptation can, like its Shakespearean original,
be constructed as a contrasting succession of more or less brief
scenes. Aside from the initial 'Actus Primus Scaena prima' in
the Folio, there is no indication of act and scene division in
either the Folio or the various Quarto texts of Shakespeare's Romeo
and Juliet. The division usually adopted is that of the New
Cambridge edition (1955), with 24 scenes distributed into five acts,
and Choral prologues to the first and second acts. Among the three recent transpositions of Romeo and Juliet there is considerable variation in the implicit working definition of what constitutes a scene. In the typescript for Gooch's Back-Street Romeo, scene breaks occur when the stage is cleared of actors. In Edgar's Death Story, which is scripted for a frequent use of blackouts, scene breaks occur when the imagined locale changes, with or without a clearing of the stage. In Davies' Rohan and Julie, the logic of scene breaks eludes me: most of Davies' scene breaks indicate a change of on-stage place, but a few occur when there is a re-grouping of characters, some or all of them continuously present across the scene break, within the same imagined locale. While the 'scene' as a structural unit is thus a variable entity across these adaptations, there is among them something of a direct proportion between degree of theatrical minimalism in staging requirements and total number of scenes. Gooch's Back-Street Romeo is the least unrealistic in setting: it has twelve scenes, seven of them requiring such substantial furnishings as tables and benches, and there is an interval between the seventh and eighth scenes. Edgar's Death Story has nineteen scenes, divided, between the eleventh and twelfth scenes, into two acts: seven of the scenes are unlocalised and another five are scripted to take place in a curtained upper area of the stage, presumably intended as analogous with the Elizabethan inner stage. Davies' Rohan and Julie has a prologue and fully thirty-five scenes, at least five of which are unlocalised and two of which were cut when the script
was first produced.

A second presupposition of two of the three recent transpositions is of a cast small in number and flexible in abilities. Edgar's script includes instructions for the doubling of its twelve parts among five performers, two female and three male. Gooch's script has sixteen parts, but, with two parts fused as one and several others doubled, was performed by eight men and three women. Davies' script bears traces of having been written for a large cast of uneven competence and was in fact first performed by a drama school. There are about 24 speaking parts and many supernumeraries, requiring (by my estimate) an absolute minimum of a dozen performers.

Thirdly, in all three transpositions, characters are made to address the audience directly with some analysis of the onstage situation and/or explanation of their respective roles within it. The presupposition here is of a small theatre and of an easy intimacy and flexibility in the audience-actor relationship — a marked contrast with, say, the presuppositions behind the lectures from Ustinov's General to an audience invisible in the blackness beyond the footlights. The other side of this scripted and spatially enforced ease, however, can be acute embarrassment; the final catastrophes of Gooch's Back-Street Romeo provoked audible giggles when I saw it in production.

Consequent upon these presuppositions about resources of staging, performers, and audience-actor relationship is the heterogeneity of style in all three adaptations. Davies' script, by its own account, has three levels:

Level 1 . . . scenes from Shakespeare's play.
Level 2 . . . adaptations of Shakespeare's action set in Belfast.
Level 3 . . . scenes in which we are aware of the actors as actors.
The last of these took the form of improvisations in the performers' own offstage idioms; the second is scripted in the adaptor's idea of Northern Irish idiom; and the first is direct quotation, although cut and with some emendation of proper names, to be spoken without a Belfast accent. Falling outside of these levels and into another idiom are the speeches of a Researcher, assigned running lectures which included readings from the latest news reports on Northern Ireland. Edgar's script includes: a running contest of dirty jokes; several sequences of extreme stylisation, variously surreal (Juliet's fantasy, in the last scene of Act I, of being tortured by her own kind for consorting with the enemy) and satiric (a final sequence of heroic couplets which replays the Shakespearean double suicide three times over); and songs.

Gooch's script is the nearest to naturalistic in its conventions, notably in its comparatively consistent preservation of verisimilitude in dialogue. Even it, however, includes the odd aside, plus several soliloquies addressed to the audience, and also songs. Only one of the songs, a number performed by a professional entertainer at the Capulet party, is rationalised within the onstage situation; and another, an exteriorisation of Romeo's thoughts, is sung by the actor playing the Benvolio figure immediately after that character is understood to have left the stage.

It is easily Edgar's adaptation which is the most imaginative and purposeful in exploiting both the limited resources available for staging and the stylistic freedom consequent upon them. His scene divisions (and with them, shifts of locale) are clearly indicated, either by changes in lighting (usually a blackout) or by the opening/closing of the curtains around a raised platform which his script requires. The scenes set in this upper acting
area are all domestic ones — inside the Capulet house, and all but one in Juliet's bedroom. In requiring every third or fourth scene to be played in the upper area, and in pairing some scenes (e.g. scenes 1 and 13 and scenes 2 and 12) across his act division, Edgar shows a much sharper sense of scenic rhythm than do either of the other two adaptors. (Davies might, however, be said to have achieved a different order of scenic rhythm through his less generous and less regular distribution of scenes in which his players step out of character.) Edgar also shows a shrewd imagination in the effects which his script specifies for indications of locale. For example, in Death Story the scene (No.5) of the Capulet ball follows upon one in the upper area. Juliet ends this by announcing directly to the audience and out of stage time, 'I was a poor little rich girl. Day after day, the same drab routine. Until the night when — it happened' (p.14). The opening of the scene of the festive occasion 'when — it happened' is signified by lights, music and the descent from the flies, first of a shower of flower petals, and then of a frame hung with streamers. Near the end of this new scene, when the atmosphere of the party turns nasty, lights change, music stops, the frame of streamers ascends back into the flies, and Tybalt briefly appears in the upper acting area to declaim hatred until the scene ends in a blackout. The flower petals remain strewn over the stage floor, where they will serve several functions in the next scene: they indicate that the lovers are in a garden; they occasion the introduction of the Friar Laurence figure, who, in a subdued allusion to the first appearance of his Shakespearean original, comes along with a broom, sweeps up the petals, and is identified by
Juliet as 'an old priest...[who] tends this garden' (p.21); and finally, they are of some long-range thematic significance, for, as will be remarked again below, their visible presence links the passionate discourse of Romeo and Juliet in this scene with earlier and later scenes in which corpses are strewn with flowers. Edgar's version of the Capulet party scene also well illustrates the dramatic capital which he — a dramatist with a well-earned but double-edged reputation as a parodist can make out of an interplay of different verbal styles. The Capulet party of Edgar's Scene 5 sets in relief two groups: Benvolio, Mercutio and Romeo on the one hand, and Rosaline and Juliet on the other. The former are carrying on a dirty joke contest which was started in the third scene and will continue until the eighteenth and penultimate. The latter address each other — and occasionally the audience — in heart-throbbling formulae from the worst imaginable pulp magazine for adolescent girls. The two groups speak and freeze in alternation. Romeo approaches Rosaline but is repulsed with further Teen Dream lines, echoed in asides from Juliet. Finally Edgar brings Juliet and Romeo together at centre stage, in a silence which is bracketed on the one side by the continuing obscenities of Benvolio and Mercutio and on the other by Rosaline's steady (and now rueful) stream of romantic clichés. This counterpointing continues for a page and a half, until the newly met lovers, still silent, kiss. It is at this point that the celebration sours; and there is one last shift in verbal tone in the high rant of hatred which Tybalt, in the final speech of the scene, declaims from the upper acting area.

In turning now to each of these recent transpositions of Romeo and Juliet, I will be treating three main considerations:
first, each adaptor's redefinition of the Montague-Capulet conflict and the situation which he assigns Romeo, Juliet and their love relationship within that conflict; second, each adaptor's version of the Shakespearean plot causality, and specifically of three cruxes which turn upon coincidence; and finally, the overall interpretative ambitions which may be inferred from the first and second considerations. For the schematic transpositions discussed earlier in this chapter, the second of these considerations would have been a rather impertinent one because both Anderson's and Anouilh/MacDonagh's adaptations operate at a level so abstracted from the Shakespearean original that the particularities of its plot hardly impinge upon theirs. For Laurents' West Side Story and MacColl's Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad, the same consideration becomes rather more important inasmuch as both adhere more closely to their original, but the formal peculiarities of both of these more detailed transpositions — and particularly the dependence of both upon non-verbal means for the creation of quasi-tragic emotion — discouraged me from developing considerations of plotting very thoroughly. For the three recent transpositions, however, it seems to me to be the key consideration.

The coincidental cruxes in Shakespeare's plot which particularly interest me here are those which bring about: (i) the meeting of the lovers in Act I; (ii) their separation in Act IV on account of the death of Tybalt in Act III; and (iii) their reunion in Act V. These three plot developments derive in whole or in part from coincidences. In the introduction to his edition of Arthur Brooke's 'The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet' as the 'main and perhaps sole source' of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Geoffrey Bullough points out that it was 'Brooke rather than Painter [who] led Shakespeare to stress the "misadventured piteous
overthrows" of the "star-crossed lovers". In Brooke's poem, however, the stress is exerted through the lovers' speeches and/or the narrator's comments: on their wedding night, for example, Juliet (lines 853-862) and Romeo (lines 864-888) both expatiate on Fortune until the Nurse comes in and reminds them to get down to business, at which point (lines 902-910) the narrator demurs full description because Fortune never granted him such delight as theirs. Shakespeare, however, builds the stress of Fortune more deeply into his play, etching it into its causal structure. The remote cause of the meeting of Brooke's lovers is that his Romeus, on the look-out for a new love, is in indiscriminate attendance everywhere that ladies are likely to be present. Brooke makes his Capulet issue invitations to his banquet both in person and 'by...name in paper sent' (line 160), but he does not tell how the occasion comes to the attention of Romeus and his friends, enemies of the host. (Nor is the point explained by the prose narrative of 'Rhomeo and Julietta,' in the second tome of William Painter's Palace of Pleasure, which Shakespeare 'surely knew.') Shakespeare develops Brooke's invention of the detail of a written invitation as the incident, both funny and functional in its fortuitousness, wherein Capulet's illiterate servant consults Romeo for help with the guest list for a supper at which Montagues are explicitly unwelcome. In Brooke's poem (as, again, also in Painter's prose translation of Brooke's source), the incident which occasions Romeus' banishment is a simple consequence of self-defence: Tybalt twice strikes at the would-be peacemaker Romeo
before the latter is finally incensed into fighting back
against his wife's cousin. Shakespeare intensifies the
crossing of benevolent intent in this incident by bringing
Mercutio into it. As Bullough summarises the change and its
consequences for thematic emphasis:

In Brooke Mercutio plays no part in the brawls...In
Shakespeare Mercutio thinks to purge his friend's
lost honour by fighting for him, and is killed
(ironically) through Romeo's attempt to stop the
fight. Thus the motif of the play, that even our
good deeds confound us when Fortune is against us,
is stressed in this new episode.109

The causal logic of the third crux of coincidences is the
same in Shakespeare's play as in the source(s): a message
about the truth of developments in the Capulet household is
obstructed by alarums of plague, while a report about
(appearances there gets through. Shakespeare does, however,
so reorder the representation of events as to emphasise their
unexpectedness: the audience do not learn of the fate of
Friar Laurence's message until after they have seen the
delivery of the false one and Romeo's purchase of his poison.110
And of course, throughout *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare both emphasises and drastically speeds up time. A history which develops over four to five months in the source(s) takes place in four or five days in Shakespeare's play. Up until its final act, the Shakespearean temporal references are frequent and self consistent; and the clock-watching in the dialogue is developed at several points in the structure by conjunctions of night scenes and morning-afters (notably, Act II, Scene ii with Act II, Scenes iii and iv; Act III, Scene iv with Act III, Scene v; and Act IV, Scene iii with Act IV, Scene iv). In the final act, the temporal references continue, and with them a sense of inexorability of time; but that the duration of the time scheme is no longer so clear as in earlier acts reinforces the sense of events beyond human cognizance and, in consequence, control.  

Of the three recent transpositions, Davies alone retains the Shakespearean emphasis upon coincidence. The situation of conflict in which Davies sets coincidences to work in his *Rohan and Julie*: *Romeo and Juliet Today in Northern Ireland* is a simplistic depiction of Ulster conflicts in terms of straightforward, unqualified religious sectarianism. The Capulets become Papist Caffertys and the Montagues become Orange Morrison (or 'Martens' at some unrevised points in the typescript which I have studied). The list of *dramatis personae* is divided into 'Catholics' and 'Protestants.' While that list also identifies Rohan/Romeo, Ben/volio and Michael/Mercutio as 'all unemployed shipyard workers' (p. 117), virtually the only point at which this information is functional within the
script is in Michael/Mercutio's description of Rohan/Romeo as 'Pale. Sleepless. Locking himself up for hours. It's self-abuse...self abuse, the curse of the unemployed' (p.6), an idleness which might further be argued as accounting for the acquaintance of the Protestant Rohan/Romeo with the Friar Laurence figure, Roman Catholic cleric who runs a gymnasium. The detail of characterisation does, however, rather run at odds with Julie/t's repeated praise of her lover's soft hands in an early exchange between the lovers: I presume that her insistent admiration of his hands is intended as an allusion to the Holy Palmers sonnet of the Shakespearean lovers' first meetings, but it seems to me a singularly ill-considered trait to be predicated of a shipyard worker, even an unemployed one. Juliet, in turn, is simply a schoolgirl eager for the sex education which is missing from her convent school but lurking in some of the texts studied there:

AUNTIE: What's this then, a play?

JULIE: Yes, it's Romeo and Juliet.

AUNTIE: Ah, that's a lovely story.

JULIE: We have to learn a great piece of it by Friday. It's really funny, it has all these bits about sex in it but the nuns won't explain them to us. I don't think that's fair, do you? I mean we have to know it for A level, it's their duty to explain it to us.

(p.12. Punctuation sic.)

The attraction between Proddie Rohan and Pape Julie is most minimally explained:

ROHAN: You're a Catholic.

JULIE: You're a Protestant.

ROHAN: Does it show?

JULIE: (shakes her head)....You look like a Rohan to me. (Pause)

ROHAN: What's your blood group?.....

JULIE: O.
ROHAN: So's mine.....It's very common.

JULIE: I know.

(They kiss.)

ROHAN: It's very rare. We're the only two who've got it.

JULIE: If one of us was hurt.....

ROHAN: The other one'd have to give the blood.

JULIE: I'd like that.

(p.32)

And that this attraction is love, and as such is to be taken seriously, is questioned only outside the transposition proper.

For example, in Scene 6 the actress playing Julie rebels at the triviality of what she is being asked to enact as if it were as important as the conflict in which it is set:

JULIE (THE ACTRESS): Look, I don't want to go on with this. It's all wrong.....It's a soap opera. I am a silly schoolgirl. My mother's a neurotic bitch. My aunt's a randy old faggot getting on everybody's wick.....It's all so trivial.

RESEARCHER: Juliet's life was trivial before she met Romeo.

JULIET: Listen. If I am Juliet. In Belfast. I'm frightened. Too frightened to argue, too frightened to love. I can't sleep at night.....

RESEARCHER: (after a pause) Fine. Get it in the play.

JULIE: There's no room for it in your play.

RESEARCHER: There is if you find it. And find room for Juliet in your performance. Because she's in Belfast. Do you think people stop falling in love when they're frightened? They can't wait. Love strikes across religious barriers even friendship persists.....Priests risk their lives trying to bring the two sides together. All I'm asking of you is that you look across the room at a party, see a man who attracts you, and fall in love with him.

(pp.14-15)
She obliges and is allotted no further objections in the nearly thirty scenes which ensue. (Davies' pre-production notes to the typescript [62]) explain that his intention was that the actress should become 'more and more identified with her role,' but they also enquire, 'Do we get the impression that the author has simply shelved the problems of Julie's objections to her role?' This is precisely the impression which one reader got.) In Davies' Scene 15 the Friar Laurence figure, having refused to perform a marriage ceremony for the lovers, gets talked down without even being made to drop character:

PRIEST: I'm not happy about what I'm doing here.....The marriage is impossible.

RESEARCHER: You make it impossible.

PRIEST: I make it impossible? ....You know these two families are two different countries. It would take years of patient, subtle, delicate negotiations.....

RESEARCHER: And in less than a year they might be dead. It's got to happen now. Married or not.

PRIEST: The whole thing is impossible.....

RESEARCHER: Don't you see, you're pushing them into bed together, you're the one that's causing the tragedy.....

PRIEST: So as a Roman Catholic Priest, I am supposed to encourage pre-marital intercourse am I? Sexual experimentation. What is a softer phrase? Trial marriage, I suppose.....A word we still use in the church is fornication.

RESEARCHER: Why not call it love?

PRIEST: Ah, well, love. In the Church when we talk about love we mean something a little more spiritual. That sort of love starts with human love — you can't have anything without human love.

RESEARCHER: Look — you've stood by and seen enough killing.....Stand by and see a bit of love.

(pp.30-31)
Earlier (Scene 13) the Priest has directly addressed the audience with his understanding of his part in the conflict — 'a role, you might think, somewhat analogous to that of a piano player in a brothel...Nothing to do with the real business in hand' (p.13); and later there come similar speeches in which the Officer/Prince (Scene 18), Patrick/Paris (Scene 23), and Mrs.Cafferty/Capulet (Scene 26) spell out their respective situations within the conflict. But the conflict itself is left unexplained. As Julie says in her first love scene with Romeo, 'No one could plan all this. It's got to be chance. If there's a God he's evil' (p.33).

Davies not only retains the Shakespearean emphasis upon misfortune but indeed even outdoes his original in packing two of the three plot cruxes with coincidences. That his Rohan/Romeo and his friends hear of the Cafferty/Capulet party is, as in Shakespeare's play, on account of a misdirected message. Davies' Scene 4 finds the senior Cafferty/Capulet in a pub. Fresh from the police station, he announces an open house-cum-street-party to celebrate his release from custody. In Scene 7 the publican passes news of the party on to Rohan/Romeo and his friends, and it is clear that in so doing he is turning a general invitation into a sectarian dare. Before the party has been mentioned by anyone, however, Julie/t has in Scene 3 happened to cross the stage and lock eyes with Rohan/Romeo, an incident which she reports to her aunt/Nurse during their Scene 5 conversation about sexual education and experience. For the death of Tim/Tybalt in his Scene 18, Davies follows Shakespeare's plotting fairly closely: however, Tim/Tybalt and Mike/Mercutio are already knifing each other before Rohan/Romeo enters, so the outbreak of violence, no longer centred on anything so specific as a defence of Rohan/Romeo's personal honour,
seems even more senseless than it does in *Romeo and Juliet*.

It is in the dénouement, however, that Davies seems seriously
to have set out to outstrip the fatal coincidences of Shakespeare's
plot. In Scene 29 Ben/volio, bearer of the priest's message to
Romeo about the suicide attempt which Julie/t has feigned as a
'cry for help,' is seen to have been picked up and interrogated by
the soldiers. As in Shakespeare's play, a message has gone astray,
but in the next scene this proves not to matter at all: the
message, and the delay, turn out to be superfluous.* Rohan/Romeo,
whom the audience have been led to believe was going to disappear
into the countryside after the Scene 22 *aubade* (reproduced verbatim
from the original), unaccountably comes along to the Cafferty house
just as the overdosed Julie/t is being carried off on a stretcher.

Schoolboys Greg and Sammy tell the hero that 'Julie Cafferty, she's
done herself in' (p.54). Rohan/Romeo in the next scene (No.31, which
was not performed in the London première) goes in search of weapons,
and in the next scene but one after that he descends upon the
intensive care ward of the hospital: all conceivable contingencies
are, it seems, being investigated. In the intensive care ward yet
another message goes awry, and this one matters: Rohan/Romeo
misconstrues a nurse's announcement that Julie/t is 'gone from here'
(p.55) and precipitately demands directions to the hospital mortuary.
There — i.e., somewhere just offstage in the next scene — he runs
berserk until a fellow mourner asks Patrick/Paris to restrain
Rohan/Romeo from tearing sheets off corpses. Patrick/Paris is
killed, a soldier enters, and Rohan/Romeo stabs himself and,
between the entrances in rapid succession of Ben/volio and the
priest, dies. Supported by her parents, Julie/t comes tottering
on and is soon followed by Rohan/Romeo's father. Julie/Juliet then manages to stab herself with Rohan/Romeo's knife in spite of the fact that there are by now at least eight able-bodied adults (supernumerary soldiers excepted) on stage to stop her. One soldier at least utters an apposite reaction: 'SOLDIER: Ah, shit.' (p.60).

Useless as they have been in the enacted events so far, the assembled multitude are put into service in the next and final scene. Davies here again reverts to verbatim quotation and borrows from Romeo and Juliet the last speeches of Capulet and Montague and the penultimate one of the Duke. This sequence of quotation is, however, uneasily counterpointed by the effects prescribed in the stage directions which immediately precede ('Im perceptibly the people on stage have formed themselves into a stylised grouping' [p.60]) and follow ('Morrison and Cafferty part, and the two family groups take up aggressively opposing stances on either side of the central group as the officer speaks' [p.61]) it. The Officer proceeds to speak the last speech of Shakespeare's play. What follows this final quotation leaves no doubt that it is being undercut:

OFFICER: ...never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

RESEARCHER: By pure coincidence, this happened on the day the IRA provisionals declared their ceasefire truce.
Love, as you know, being stronger than death.

(As she finishes speaking, a huge explosion and flash followed by gunfire. Actors take up yet more menacing, stylised positions of aggression and war and battle noises mount as darkness falls.)

THE END

(p.61)
In pre-production notes which Davies intended for distribution to members of the performing company with their copies of the script, the adaptor noted: 'Written at breakneck pace, this script probably starts a lot of hares without following them down' (p. 199). That I think it to have started a parade of unpursued hares is probably evident from at least the tone of the preceding synopses of segments of the plot of Rohan and Julie. The chaos of the dénouement seems to me symptomatic of a fairly serious muddle at the middle of this transposition. Even with the aid of his pre-production notes and even after allowances have been made for the fact that, as the notes insist, 'this is a rough text' (p. 199) on which the playwright sought the assistance of his performing company, I was unable to discern what Davies was attempting to achieve, other than a text for theatrical performance. Rohan and Julie cannot be taken seriously as an interpretation of a specific contemporary situation: it evokes sympathy for the human beings caught in this situation but does not earn/extend this emotion by any sustained effort at analysis. Nor does it offer an audience the occasion and means to work out such analysis themselves: the nearest it comes to doing so is — not surprisingly, given that it casts the Northern Ireland conflict in solely religious terms — in the priest's debate with the Researcher. She there, as elsewhere in Davies' Level 3 (i.e., 'Scenes in which we are aware of the actors as actors'), gets the last word and expends it in praise of love. For this she gets powerful reinforcement from Level 1 of the adaptation: the scenes extensively quoted from Shakespeare are those of the balcony and the aubade, two of the most lyrical representations of romantic love in English dramatic literature. However, at level 2 ('adaptations of
Shakespeare's action set in Belfast, and the level which by Davies' account in the pre-production notes tends to predominate, \( \text{p. (63)} \) pure coincidence reigns. And that it has reigned to no purpose seems to me to be the obvious inference to be drawn from that concluding passage which is quoted above.

If one were to posit as common terms (a) the plot of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, (b) a plausible application to contemporary Northern Ireland, and (c) the staging resources of the contemporary alternative theatre, and were then to set out to write two utterly opposed plays, it would be difficult to outdo the differences between Davies' Rohan and Julie and David Edgar's Death Story. Indeed, I think it possible that one may have originated as a riposte to the other.\(^{112}\) The differences begin with their titles: the subtitle of Rohan and Julie announces that Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet has been transposed to Today in Northern Ireland. The performed prologue to Davies' transposition was an improvisation, varying slightly from night to night, in which 'the actors came on during the darkness and spoke their own individual feelings about doing a play set in Northern Ireland' (p.1), after which Scene 1 opened with a reworked version of Shakespeare's first chorus:

\[ \text{RESEARCHER: Two households, both alike in dignity} \]
\[ \text{in Northern Ireland, where we lay our scene,} \]
\[ \text{From ancient grudge break to new mutiny} \]
\[ \text{Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean...} (p.2) \]

Edgar's Death Story nowhere names Northern Ireland: indeed, the typescript specifies that 'although the play is set in 16th century Italy, there should be no attempt to fix costumes or props in time. Basic costumes should be simple and timeless' (p.ii). Death Story opens with an unlocalised, general image of the play's world of conflict and the concerns which will be raised through it:
we see a corpse guarded by a soldier (who complains, in military jargon, of his own professional fate) and mourned by a woman (who bewails, in song, the subjection of mankind to passion and death).

The dialogue of Scene 2 specifies and analyses the antecedents of the image which has just been shown: we learn that the Capels are Verona’s management parvenus, who have wrested control of the means of production from the indigenous metal-craftsmen, the Montags, and whose usurpation of economic power and profits is backed by the army. We learn all this from an army Colonel, who also briefs a visiting Captain on local personalities — notably Tybalt the Capulet trouble-maker and Mercutio the unreliable agent of the authorities. The next four scenes follow Shakespeare from the beginning of *Romeo and Juliet* through its Act III, Scene iii. There are some changes in the *dramatis personae*: Juliet loses her Nurse but gains a friend named Rosaline, who is the epitome of adolescent sophistication.

There is also a suggestive change in the plotting — Mercutio is the Capulets’ invited guest at the ball. In Scene 7, after the party, Tybalt tells Mrs. Capulet of his resolve to ‘sniff him out. The pretty boy who pawed your daughter’ (p.24). At the beginning of Scene 8 a very drunk Mercutio agrees to undertake some unspecified work for the Captain, and at its end leads Tybalt off to find ‘the man who wants to get it up your Juliet’ (p.26). In Scene 9, Mercutio leads Tybalt to Romeo, then tells Tybalt he’s been trapped, pulls him off Romeo, and is himself stabbed by Tybalt, who is in turn shot by Romeo. In Scene 10 Juliet’s Mother tells her of Tybalt’s death at Romeo’s hands, whereafter the girl advises the audience of her reactions. The final scene of the act, like the
first, abandons event for image — a surreal sequence in which two men and a woman brutalise Juliet for her relationship with Romeo and force her to re-enact their first love-making.

Both the sexual encounter between Romeo and Juliet and the deaths of Mercutio and Tybalt are demystified early in Edgar's Act II. It begins with a scene in which the Captain explains to the Colonel about the backfiring of Tybalt's death. Civil war, anticipated in this scene, becomes audible offstage in the next, which is staged around Tybalt's coffin and dominated by the Priest's lecture to the senior Capulets on love as a weapon whereby to destroy one's enemies. Sotto voce, he also sends Juliet off to find Romeo in her bedroom. At the beginning of the next scene, Romeo is apologising for his failure to consummate the affair; and at the end of the scene, what is visible from the window is not the light of dawn but that of a burning city. The next two scenes give us the Priest offering his pacificatory services to the Colonel, and then Romeo discovering, starting to mourn, but instead turning to avenge, the body of the Montague woman who had opened the first scene of the play. He comes back to Juliet in the next scene (17), but only to tell her that she is his class enemy and he will never be back again: after his exit, the Priest enters to suggest a faked suicide attempt as the way to ensure Romeo's return to her side and to the path of reconciliation. He assures her that he has arranged that Romeo will be able to come, and go, without fear of arrest' (p.59). In Scene 18, Benvolio, acting as the Priest's emissary, comes to Romeo in hiding and with difficulty persuades him to go and visit Juliet in hospital 'as an act of common humanity' (p.62). In the final scene, she wakes up in
Romeo's presence — only to be rejected yet again as a class enemy and to watch from her hospital bed as the Colonel, double-crossing the Priest, springs an ambush on Romeo. Romeo fights his way out. The colonel having been killed and the Priest having fled, Juliet is left alone to whimper her way through several ineffectual attempts at suicide. A nun enters to report Romeo's escape, to which news, Juliet screams, 'I WISH WE WERE DEAD.' At this point, lights, verse and tempo switch into a mock tragic ending, wherein Shakespeare's double suicide is conducted thrice over in freezes, mime and heroic couplets.

Obviously, then, Edgar has redefined the Montague-Capulet feud as a conflict between working-class and bourgeoisie. The long military briefing which fills Scene 2 of Death Story extends the struggle far beyond two households, invents historical antecedents for it, and articulates it in socio-economic categories.

COLONEL: Animals, Capitain. Acting without reason. Anyway, I can tell you the history. (COLONEL points to the map) Verona. Main connection between Venice and Lombardy, and that's point one. Point two is that up until about 150 years ago, the place was run by the Montague family. They built up the town's main industry... Work in precious metals. Quality stuff. Engraving gold and silver. Goblets. Plates. Medallions. Armour. As I say, Montague was originally a family name, but now it means in effect anyone who was here before the others arrived.

CAPTAIN: The others being the Capulets.

COLONEL: Yes. You see, the Montagues have the reputation for clever hands but empty heads. In the sense of heads for business. Fine in the old days, but when trade began to expand, competition became more severe, Verona was losing out. And when the place was invaded, it'd be a couple of hundred years ago /i.e. in 1387/, by Gian/Galeazzo/ Visconti of Milan...he feels that Verona's industry could be better exploited....So he imported a gang of his friends from Milan, who became a kind of administrative class, bankers, merchants, people who were good with money. They were to run things in Verona...And that's point three. Montagues:
old established craftsmen. The new Milanese people: administrators and businessmen. And the leading immigrant family was called Capulet. Now, again, in a family sense, that doesn't mean very much now. Anyone who can claim an ancestor who came from Milan with Visconti, he's a Capulet.... The Montags cut up very rough about the whole thing, especially as the Capels seemed to be making most of the money, and they, the Montags, were doing most of the work. And the new broom tended to sweep aside many of the old habits and some of the old men. The Capulets bought big houses on the better side of town, and imported their own style of life, which tends to be on the opulent side. All of which helped to provoke the Montaguess. There've been sporadic outbreaks of violence for a hundred years. But things really hotted up quite recently, long after the place was acquisitioned by the Republic of Venice....about 30 years after Visconti moved in /i.e. in 1407/.

CAPTAIN: And it's because of the Venetian connection ....

COLONEL: That they shoved us in. Exactly. Industrial production was being severely dislocated by the violence. And Venice, being a place that lives and dies by trade, was feeling the pinch. Point four. Whenever the supply of metal-work dried up at source, Venice lost a bit more of the export market to other export centres. So the powers—that-be decided to take a firm line with civil disorder in Verona, and in we came.

(pp. 2-4)

Edgar, it may be recalled, is an ex-journalist who as a playwright shows a penchant for writing long lectures full of information and analysis into his dialogue. Having established the terms of conflict at such length, however, he does at least sustain them through the adaptation with considerable rigour. Religious sectarianism, the sole principle of division in Davies' redefinition of the Montague-Capulet conflict, is so irrelevant to Edgar's that the word 'sectarian' is not to be found in the dialogue of Death Story until its Scene 12, and there (p.41) it gets but a fleeting mention from one of the military figures. Edgar's Friar Laurence figure is simply the exponent of a mystifying ideology of fraternal love, and as such he is consigned to the ruling class, the Capulet camp.
Rosaline, the incarnation of an equally mystifying ideology of romantic love, is likewise tossed into the bourgeois dustbin. By the end of Death Story most of its *dramatis personae* have been similarly discarded on political grounds. The adaptation represents the radicalisation of its Romeo, who is the only one of the major figures required to speak with a working-class accent, a distinction which he shares with another Montague and a soldier, both of them nameless (p. 11).

Romeo starts out 'a lovelorn bookworm...pursuing the daughters of the leisured classes' (p. 10) and winds up leading armed insurgents against those classes. In the meantime he has been made to realise that all the other major figures among the *dramatis personae* are his class enemies. This he recognises of the maverick Mercutio only after his death: 'The worst thing I ever did was kill your cousin,' he says to Juliet, 'because I killed him in revenge for the death of someone who was worthless' (p. 56). Benvolio is in Scene 3 established as an entrepreneur who is opposed to the Capulets because 'I don't want my men to work to fill foreigners' pockets. But dealing out death's no part of my policy' (p. 10). He gets his turn to be dismissed when he brings the priest's message to Romeo in hiding:

**BENVOLIO:** Romeo. There comes a point...when...vengeance must stop leading on to more vengeance. Is there any point in tearing down the house when there is only the one house in which we all have to live?

**ROMEO:** How's business?

**BENVOLIO:** What do you mean by that?

**ROMEO:** All this can't be good for your business.

(*BENVOLIO doesn't answer*)

(p. 63)

Where Edgar introduces his Romeo as a traitor to the working class and transforms him into an activist on its behalf, he never detaches his Juliet from the class allegiances which he has posited
for her. The second line assigned her is a sublimely middle-class "Thank you, mummy" (p.13), and thereafter she, like Eliza Doolittle, is damned by every syllable she'll utter. Perhaps the most damning syllables are those assigned her on the intertwined topics of her love for Romeo and the violence around them:

JULIET: (...)direct to the AUDIENCE, very-matter-of-fact) When I first learned that my lover had killed my cousin, my immediate reaction was that life itself had been wounded, and I wanted no further part of it...But then I began to feel that somehow it was quite correct, what had happened, that the mess on the streets, the trickles of dead blood, the littleness of it all was a disguise, a blind, for something that wasn't small and messy, but big and very ordered, in which I must play a part. I have a feeling you see that it was meant to be like this, that our love which is so odd, so intense, so unlike anything real in the world, must have some sort of purpose, and if that purpose starts with blood rusting the streets then that is how it should be.

(p.30)

This speech, which ends Edgar's Scene 10, is immediately followed by the act-ending scene of sexual fantasy: Juliet here, like Mercutio elsewhere, is presented as a voyeur of sex and politics alike. The conjunction is reiterated in Edgar's version of the lovers' aubade:

(ROMEO gets out of bed, goes to the front of the platform, looks out. His face is lit red.)

ROMEO: The whole town's on fire.....Your people are burning our houses down.....

(JULIET gets up, goes to the window, looks out in fascination.)

JULIET: I was right. It does have a purpose. It's not an— arbitrary thing.....

(They kiss. After a moment, JULIET kisses ROMEO'S neck. He kisses her neck. JULIET bites ROMEO'S neck, hard. He recoils .....touches his neck, looks at his hand.)

ROMEO: (Surprised) You've drawn blood.

JULIET: (Deliberately) I'd like to die with you.

(BLACKOUT)
This wish is refused by Romeo within Edgar's transposition of Romeo and Juliet and rejected by the whole of Death Story. The play links sexual attraction and death from its opening scene, in which a nameless Montague woman shreds flowers over an also anonymous corpse and sings:

Man is indeed a poor thing  
Formed of dust  
Rich and poor alike are wretched  
Chained by lust

Misery and pain his portion  
Death his crown  
Pride and envy puff him up then  
Bring him down.....  

Later, in that previously noted scene whereof the garden setting is denoted by further flower petals, the Priest lectures Romeo:

PRIEST: .....It is no coincidence that the word passion has two meanings — the agony of love and the agony of suffering. The flowers that celebrate matrimony can also serve as mourners' wreaths. But when passion is turned to good account — to convert those now at war to peace, to build a bridge of love across the waters of hatefulness — then is it truly fine.....Some passions are too sacred for this unholy world. They are kissed, if you like, by death.

ROMEO: Don't say that!

(Pause, PRIEST...picks up a handfuls of petals, drops them in ROMEO'S lap.)

PRIEST: Guard them. I wish you joy. (p.23)

Romeo's escape, through his decision to act, from both orders of passion is also 'said with flowers'. It is verbally narrated by the Montague Woman whose corpse Romeo finds when he comes out from Juliet's chamber into the street violence. Face bloodied and wrapped in a Montague flag, she stands and recites how
MONTAGUE WOMAN: I speak to him as he wraps me in a shroud and covers my carcass with flowers.

(ROMEO mimes covering an imaginary corpse with a shroud and then shreds flowers on the ground.)

I tell him not to be horrified by what he sees because that is what my killers want. I tell him that not all the dead are...rubbish on the side of the road. Some are not props to hold up the past, but sacrifices to the future. I tell him that these things which he holds important, his love for his mistress, the dread he has for his God, are false alibis, sweet poison. I tell him that there are no easy absolutes, that choices have to be made...........

(p.54)

After she has told him a few more things of this order, Romeo is seen to make a choice:

(Enter an armed MONTAGUE to ROMEO.)

MONTAGUE: There's a group of them trapped inside the square. We're going in to get them. Leave that.

(ROMEO drops the rest of the flowers and leaves, following the MONTAGUE out.)

MONTAGUE WOMAN: Thus are the hard men made.

(p.54)

In the next scene, Romeo shows himself to be a hard man by informing Juliet that she is a class enemy, that killing is necessary and that

if you or I died for love, that would be a waste. If I died fighting a foreign war to protect someone else's interests, that'd be a waste as well. But if someone else dies in the cause of the common people —

(p.56)

Abandoned by Romeo, Juliet will repeat her wish in the last line of the transposition proper: 'I WISH WE WERE DEAD' (p.67). It is granted three times over in the appended sequence of mock-heroic
couplets, and there the final enactment of the lovers' suicide is accompanied by an epilogue, spoken by the Friar Laurence figure:

PRIEST: Our play's new-ended here with pity sweet
A finish tragic, comfortable and neat
So those who tempted are the world to change
Know that your passions we will rearrange
The iron fist must keep its velvet glove
(He smiles)
Better that everyone should die for love.

(PRIEST's smile stays, OTHERS freeze, as LIGHTS fade to BLACKOUT.)

END OF PLAY

(p.68)

Eric Shorter opened his review of the première production of

Death Story by asking:

Is it not yet realised by our aspiring playwrights that the plots of Shakespeare's plays are the least of their assets? Evidently David Edgar does not think so.

In Death Story at the Birmingham Repertory Studio he chuck out everything else from Romeo and Juliet — the poetry, the passion, the characterisation — and leaves us with the rickety melodramatic framework on which he tries to build a social message.

This is to the effect that blood will have blood, as Shakespeare himself says somewhere else, and that civil strife, social prejudice, and so forth are not a good thing. It is love which matters.

As Shorter's reading of Edgar's message could not be more exactly inaccurate, it is not perhaps not surprising that he did not remark what Edgar had done to Shakespeare's 'rickety melodramatic framework' of a plot. At each of those three junctures at which Shakespeare's plot turns upon a coincidence, Edgar plants a conspiracy. Romeo goes to the Capulet ball (and so meets Juliet) not because an invitation has gone astray but because one has gone to Mercutio, whom we know from the Colonel's briefing in the immediately
preceding scene to be

one of ours, theoretically...Kind of civil servant. But he tends to knock about with the Montagues. Irresponsible. Bit of an adventurer. Not quite sure where he fits in. Might be worth watching.

(p.5)

Edgar's Romeo does not happen to enter to an encounter with Tybalt nor to try to pacify him: Mercutio brings Tybalt to a Romeo who, unaware that he is bait in a trap, remains passive (because incomprehending) until after Tybalt has mortally knifed Mercutio. From the exchange between the Colonel and Mercutio in the immediately preceding scene, we know Mercutio to have been acting as the paid agent of the army, and in a subsequent scene the purpose of his activities is spelled out:

CAPTAIN: This man Tybalt, sir. He intended to kill a Montague. In cold blood. There'd been some business about the gatecrashing of a party, a small thing, but in this situation, potentially explosive. If he'd got away with it, there would have been a real danger of a Montague uprising. So it was decided to have Tybalt killed....I bribed Mercutio to kill him. It seemed essential, one, that Tybalt was killed and, two, that he was not killed in a sectarian incident.

COLONEL: But Mercutio didn't kill him.

CAPTAIN: No. It didn't work....But...if it had worked, if Tybalt had been killed by a known drunkard, a mereerdowell, as you said yourself, an adventurer...We could have moved him out, put it round that he'd been executed, he was perfectly happy about this, and we'd have ended up minus one troublemaker. A few apologies in the right quarter, a government-sponsored memorial service perhaps...It would have eliminated a major threat to order at very little cost to the prestige or credibility of the security forces.

COLONEL: You intelligence people....You live in another world with your spooky little operations. It was a total balls-up, Captain.

(Slight pause)

CAPTAIN: Yes, sir, as it turned out, yes.

(pp.40-41)
Perhaps not. At scene's end, a penny drops in the Colonel's mind, and the apparently unfortunate outcome of the operation comes to look very deliberate:

**COLONEL:** You're not a stupid man, are you, Captain?.....
I mean, it strikes me that it was a very stupid thing to do, what you did. Even for an intelligence officer. Even obeying orders.....Was there in your mind at any stage, or in the mind of your superiors, the intention, the hope, that if this plan misfired as it has misfired, the likely consequences in terms of disorder would provoke a change of government?.....Did you seek to provoke violence in order to make martial law inevitable? Was the plan meant to go wrong?

(Pause).

**CAPTAIN:** No, sir. Not as far as I know.

**COLONEL:** I'm not sure I believe you. I think you're in shit up to your elbows, Captain. I've no idea whether you were part of it or not, but I'm almost certain that your operation was even nastier than I thought.

(pp.42-43)

The denouement of *Death Story* is another nasty operation, but this time the Colonel's and on a smaller scale: Juliet's faked suicide and Romeo's promised safety in returning to her side are the prongs of a trap in which the army use the priest as an unwitting agent, and possibly also Benvolio as a witting one.

For Shakespeare's conjunction of fatal misadventures, then, Edgar has substituted conspiracies. Where Shakespeare's powers that be, be in heaven, Edgar's are somewhere on earth:

**COLONEL:** What was your part in this plan, Captain?

**CAPTAIN:** I found Mercutio. I set it up. It was not my conception.

**COLONEL:** And could you tell me whose conception it was?

**CAPTAIN:** No, sir.

(p.41)
However anonymous the source of the plans, the plans themselves are not inscrutable. The Captain, as noted above, promptly works out the full measure of that conception of unknown origin. The problem is that Edgar does not equip his audience to reach their own conclusions of this order. Edgar's rejection of tragedy in *Death Story* is overt. For Shakespeare's unexamined conflict between two houses alike in dignity, he substitutes a carefully articulated conflict between classes disparate in social status and economic power. For Shakespeare's lovers trapped by a chain of misfortunes, he substitutes a pair between whom 'love' is from the beginning somewhat suspect and one of whom is made to recognise his power to change the conditions of his life while the other is reduced to wishing for death. And for Shakespeare's costly resolution of conflict in the deaths of two households' living hopes, he substitutes a calculatedly cheap burlesque of such an harmonious resolution and in so doing attempts to confirm the truth of his representation of necessarily continuing conflict.' One may wonder, however, for what tragedy has been rejected in *Death Story*, and specifically what 'those who tempted are the world to change' will find in it to help them. Edgar's elaborate adoption of a sixteenth-century Italian setting seems to me to have been doubly obscurantist. Insofar as *Death Story* is to be taken — as it was taken by reviewers and as Edgar has not to my knowledge said that it should not be taken — as an analysis of a specific contemporary situation, that of Northern Ireland, that setting occludes analysis, or at least any analysis of the order that Edgar undertakes in *Death Story*. Beyond giving broad warrant for the inclusion of friars in the *dramatis personae* and for the references to their cells, to nuns, to confession, etc., in the dialogue, the historical truths of 'Fair Verona, where we lay our scene' and of
nearby Mantua are of no matter to Shakespeare's representation of an old story in *Romeo and Juliet*. Representing the same story in *Death Story*, Edgar constructed the required situation of conflict out of data from Renaissance Verona. The strategy may have been motivated by Marxist respect for historical specificity but the result is that *Death Story* loses sight of the historical specificities of both sixteenth-century Italy and twentieth-century Ireland. Edgar is not really much more interested in Veronese history than was Shakespeare. All of the factual information underscored in the long quotation on pp. 203-204 above can be found under 'Verona' in standard encyclopaedias,\(^{115}\) and the superficiality of Edgar's interest in his purported place and time is suggested by an exchange which I excised:

**CAPTAIN:** Why was it invaded?

**COLONEL:** Oh, I don't...at the time, everybody was invading everybody else. Places like this being passed around like chocolates after dinner.

(p.3)

Twentieth-century Belfast doesn't seem to me to have been very much better served by *Death Story* than trecento through cinquecento Verona. Davies may have been simplistic in reducing the conflict there to nothing more than religious sectarianism; but Edgar seems to me to have offered a less than complete analysis in drawing lines of division with socio-economic pointers alone. However, given that what is in question to the political impact of *Death Story* as a play, an enacted fiction, upon its audiences, a more serious consequence of Edgar's hedging upon the historical specificity of his adaptation is that the fiction itself does not give an audience adequate grounds for learning within — or in reflection upon — the experience of observing it. It does do this to some extent in
its presentation of the love relationship, a thematic thread which Edgar spins free of his sixteenth-century setting. But its presentation of non-sexual politics never adds anything to the Scene 2 briefing of the Captain by the Colonel. And even that ponderous lesson is eventually obscured by the introduction of those unknown powers that be — and that might, for all the audience are enabled to understand of them, just as well be in heaven as on earth. Death Story may not, as one antipathetic reviewer claimed it did, show even less 'understanding of human intercourse' than West Side Story, but as an analysis of a contemporary situation its abstractions are perhaps no more useful than either Laurents' or Davies' effusions of liberal, adult empathy with underprivileged or otherwise 'unfortunate' adolescence.

Originally titled A Working Class Romeo, Steve Gooch's Back-Street Romeo recasts the Montague-Capulet feud as a division within the working class of East London. Even from its prologue, the adaptation emphasises that the lines of division which it will present lead back to a common point of interest:

...we've changed a few names and places
Just in case someone tries to sue.
So here in the Borough of Enham
An old story is told anew
The clash of two rival class-cultures
For the many, and for the few
Both born from the same oppression
But taking a different view
If at times they're hard to distinguish
The answer may lie with you.

(p.111)

In their equivalent of the Shakespearean balcony scene, the lovers characterise 'the clash of two rival class-cultures' in the terms taught them by their fathers:
JULIET: Mean, dogmatic, dangerous losers.

ROMEO: That us?

JULIET: So my ol' man says.

ROMEO: That's what my ol' man is.

JULIET: What are we?

ROMEO: Flash, selfish, vicious thickies.

JULIET: Two faces of the workin' -class.

ROMEO: The heirs of history.

JULIET: That what your ol' man says?

ROMEO: When 'e's been readin'.

(p. 24)

Romeo's 'ol' man' is Monty/Montagu, a local Labour councillor and a trade unionist of three decades' standing. Juliet's is Rick Capulist: from the opening dialogue between two of his henchmen, Samson and Greg, we learn that he organises strike breaking. Much later we learn that it was over this activity that he and old Monty had fallen out, once and for all, some fourteen years earlier. Meanwhile we have learned that Capulist's principal source of income is in fact a protection racket blackmailing illegal immigrants resident in the neighbourhood:

CAPULIST: Where d'you think my livelihood comes from?.....
Illegality means insecurity, right? People wide open t' pressure. They need insurance. Protection. Welfare State can't provide that t'someone 'oo ain' supposed to exist.....
So I oblige.

(p. 38)

Unlike both Davies and Edgar, Gooch throughout preserves verisimilitude of idiom; and he nowhere directly quotes from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. He does, however, work in some
more or less playful allusions to it, principally through the names of his characters. The Shakespearean Prince becomes Princey, another local Labour councillor but no trades unionist, being an ally of Rick Capulist. Princey is also landlord of 'The Grave Beggar,' the pub in or above which five of the play's twelve scenes are set. His jurisdiction over banishment extending no further than the premises in which he is licensed to sell spirits, Princey as a figure of civil authority is seconded by the police in the person of Officer Tybalt. Friar Laurence becomes Larry, a Social Worker who runs the local youth centre and in its garden grows plants which are not medicinal but narcotic. Benvolio becomes Kindly and Mercutio Knocker. (Separate in Gooch's script, these two parts were fused in the premiere production at the Half Moon Theatre in London's East End.) The allusions get worked especially heavily when characters are being introduced to the audience. Thus the hero, whose 'real' name is Terry Montagu even though the script assigns his speeches to 'ROMEO,' is first met when being teased by the offer of a newspaper which Knocker/Mercutio falsely claims to contain a photograph of Julie Christie:

ROMEO: *(Looking in paper)* She ain' in 'ere.

KNOCKER: No?.....I coulda sworn.....

ROMEO: Muckin' me about eh. Takin' the piss.

KNOCKER: Now come on, Romeo.

ROMEO: Don' call me that.

(p.6)

The detested sobriquet is repeated in an exchange early in the scene of Capulist's fancy-dress party. By the time he introduces
his lovers to each other, Gooch can tell the joke in dramatic shorthand and underscore it by requiring his Romeo's version of fancy dress to be 'lace shirt and waistcoat, looking near-Elizab than':

JULIET: What's your name? (Romeo grins) What you grinnin' at?

ROMEO: Terry. See yer. (Turns to go, then turns back and kisses her)

(p.19)

Rick Capulist's mistress, Moll, is with her second speech established as standing in for both Lady Capulet and the Nurse. She and Juliet are first seen in Gooch's Scene 3, at the beginning of the party:

JULIET...is picking at food on table. MOLL comes in, dressed as Mae West, and watches her.

MOLL: You only just got your figure, honey. You want a lose it that bad?

JULIET: Oh! (Puts her mask up)

MOLL: (Normal) No use pretendin' with me, darlin'. I may not be yer mother, but I nursed yer long enough t'know it's you, mask or no mask.

(p.9)

And we are soon told of Dennis, son of Princey the publican

CAPULIST: Paris they call 'im now. 'Count of Princey sent 'im t' that French university. One that sounds like a posh a fters.

JULIET: The Sorbonne.

CAPULIST: Thass it. You could do a lot worse 'n 'im, Julie girl.

(p.11)

Paris later applies his erudition to Capulist's criminal activities:

PARIS: Is it more a crime to squeeze the lumpen proletariat—stroke—petty-bourgeoisie, or to squeeze the entire working class?.....What society glibly calls a criminal, Mr.Capulist, is a victim. A product of social relations. A scapegoat for the bigger crimes of the Establishment.....
CAPULIST: Oh really?

MOLL: They teach you that in Paris?

PARIS: I did sociology as a subsidiary.

CAPULIST: Fascinatin'!

PARIS: Without private property there wouldn't be thieves, just nuisances. All a thief does is slightly redistribute wealth which private property has already appropriated for itself. . .. If we didn't have private property — and people like you — we wouldn't need half the police and judges and lawyers. You represent a challenge to the stage apparatus. Give people a way of seeing what's right and wrong. . .. Without you films and TV would run out of subjects for programmes . . . . You also mop up unemployment and keep workers wages high by removing surplus labour from the market. . .. You're on our side, Mr. Capulist. . . . . You're virtually a pillar of society.

CAPULIST: 'Ow I've always seen myself.

MOLL: Not the same society that makes for all the violence though?

(Pause. PARIS hadn't thought of that. They all look at each other.)

(p.43)

Paris with his trendy radical cant cuts as ridiculous a figure in Back-Street Romeo as did the Young Radical with his bombast in Anderson's Winterset four decades before; but the issues raised in Paris' pseud sophistry are as crucial to this play as his distant predecessor's had been peripheral to the earlier one.

Where Edgar situates the conflict of Death Story between the working class and the bourgeoisie and so damn to eventual discredit both the love relationship and the lover to whom he assigns the misfortune of being born into the middle class, Gooch, positing the conflict of Back Street Romeo as within the working class, has no
trouble pushing his lovers into a union across those lines of division which he is concerned to show to be false and contrary to the interests of the class as a whole. All he has to do in order to account for the initial attraction is to establish both Romeo and Juliet as slightly at odds with the particular interests pursued by their respective fathers, and in both cases he takes his cue from the Shakespearean original. The youth of Shakespeare's Juliet becomes in Gooch's adolescent intrasigence and impudence. Refusing to wear a dress specially purchased for Rich Capulist's party, she says to her common-law stepmother

JULIET: Never mind if I don' fancy bein' shown off.

MOLL: Listen lovey, there's important people comin' t'night. Not as important as your Dad likes t'think, but 'e's got to 'ave some gratification for all 'is 'ard graft.

JULIET: An' graft's the word, ain' it.

(p.9)

The lovelorn distraction of Shakespeare's Romeo becomes in Gooch's Terry/Romeo the pursuit of starlets through the pages of film magazines, an occupation which keeps his mind off such hard realities as being unemployed and such ameliorative activities as the trades union work of his father and Kindly/Benvolio:

ROMEO: You're like everythin' else. Thrustin' at yer all the time....Tryin' a own me. If it's not free offers or an insult, it's join the revolution....All I wan' is, min' me own business. Get on quiet with me own thing.

KNOCKER: Right-'anded to a picture a Julie Christie.

ROMEO: Least I ain't botherin' no-one. Sayin' I know best. Tellin' people what t' do all the time.
KINDLY: Your ol' man's inside. Wants t' see yer.

ROMEO: I don' wan' a see 'im.

KINDLY: All right. No-one's twistin' yer arm.

ROMEO: Not in so many words.

KINDLY: Jus' wait till you got a job. Wife an' kids. Rent t' pay. What you realise then, you ain' got no own thing. Life twists yer arm.

(pp.6-7)

The rejection of parental values is reiterated in the only love scene which Gooch allows his lovers after their first meeting. Referring to the previously quoted characterisation of their parents, by their parents, they assure each other that they escape the descriptions:

ROMEO: Neither of 'em is any good to us.....Parents.

JULIET: They give me money.

ROMEO: I don' wan' it.

JULIET: You don' believe I'm selfish an' all them other things?

ROMEO: No.

JULIET: I don' believe you're mean an' that.

(pp.25-26)

Also reiterated is Romeo's insistence on privileged status within the world depicted by the play. To the Friar Laurence figure, the Larry of the local Youth Centre, he says of Juliet

ROMEO: .....She thinks what I think.....An' I think what she thinks. That's what love means. We ain' two, we're one.

LARRY: You'll be lucky. You are different people, you know..... Look at your families.
Gooch is at some pains to show that the lovers cannot "be — lucky" in the economic situation to which he attaches them and the political one which, as will be noted again further on, he unfolds in the course of Romeo and Juliet. But he does not discredit their love by thus depriving it of luck. Very much unlike Edgar in this respect, Gooch not only does not disenchant either lover, but indeed requires his Romeo to remain in what will prove mortal danger rather than default on a rendez-vous with Juliet for the second time in the play. Aside from that incident late in the play and some earlier speeches in which Moll recommends a romantic wisdom made of "steel an' paint" (p.10), Back Street Romeo barely attends to an examination of the relationship between its central characters. Indeed, after the equivalent of the balcony scene, Gooch never again brings them on the stage together until he comes to kill them off. He simply sets up that relationship as something assumed to be valuable in a context which is of much greater concern to him.

Gooch's versions of the three plot cruxes are intriguing. For coincidences he substitutes crimes: these are of varying degrees of seriousness but all might be said to have been committed under naturalist conventions, for they are plausibly motivated within the stage world and with reference to the characters established there. And for Shakespearean misfortune he substitutes, not Edgar's conspiracies among unidentified (and, for an audience, unidentifiable) powers—that-be,
but a specific and named historical phenomenon, the National Front. The Front is mentioned more than once in both of the first two scenes. Samson, who with Greg opens the play with some dialogue establishing them as the henchmen of Capulist/Capulet in petty crime, is a supporter of the Front. Everyone else who mentions it is worried about the Front's threat to Labour's thirty-year-old majority on the Council and so, in one way or another, to the security of everyone's jobs. At this point, however, the Front plays no part in Gooch's plotting of <i>Back Street Romeo</i>. The party invitations fall into the wrong hands because their bearer is — not illiterate, but — embezzling on a microscopic scale:

SCRUFF: .....Little 'gran' fer Ricky. Invites to 'is party, upstairs at the 'Beggar'. 'E gives us 'em 't' post. 'Ave a look through, see you'n, I can save the stamp money.

KNOCKER: (taking envelopes) Big do, is it?.....'Ere we are. (Takes two envelopes out.....To ROMEO) Thass your'n. KINDLY and ROMEO look at him, surprised. To ROMEO) Thass your'n.

SCRUFF: Two — thass 'alf a pint. Shockin' the post now. Cheers. (Goes off towards the pub)

(p.8)

Nor does the Front have any direct causal role in Gooch's version of the second plot crux, which is placed immediately before the end of the first part of <i>Back Street Romeo</i>. Knowing that Rich Capulist has put a gunman on Terry/Romeo, but unwilling to acknowledge this to the potential victim and his friends (who are already advised of the threat), Officer Tybalt tries to clear them off the street. Kindly/Benvolio moves along as instructed, but Knocker/Mercutio
remains to bait Tybalt, who shoves, struggles with, and finally
truncheons him:

TYBALT: Now look what you done. That was meant for 'is arm....Never does t' resist the law.

ROMEO: Is that all you got t'say?.....Knocker was right. Gapulist don' need no gunman if 'e's got you.

TYBALT: That was an accident, Terry. You're a witness.

ROMEO: Bastard! (He flies at TYBALT and knocks him over. TYBALT lies inert.)

(p.37)

It is in the intricate causal logic of its dénouement — which occupies almost all of Part II of Back Street Romeo and nonetheless seems confusingly cramped — that Gooch moves his adaptation farthest from the plot of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

After the interval, the National Front reap the consequences of the second plot crux and come into their own as the motive force behind events in the world of this play. Scene 8 is set some unspecified time after the street violence which had ended. Scene 7 and which has in the interim had its consequences for the local election:

CAPULIST: ......First [Terry] mugs Tybalt, so the papers cry out fer law an' order. Then they find out 'e's ol' Monty's son, so they start slaggin' the unions. Then it's 'TRADE UNION THUG WEDS GANS BOSS'S DAUGHTER'.....So the election comes, we lose two seats on the Council, one of 'em you, an' 'oo do we lose to?

PRINCEY: The Front.....We're still in the majority.

CAPULIST: ......Such a wonderful majority, 'alf the immigrants in the area 'ave moved out already. People the authorities never knew existed. Packin' their bags, closin' down their businesses, kickin' their lodgers out — even their relatives.

(p.38)

As the activity for which he engages their extortionist services is no longer profitable, Capulist fires his agents, Samson and
Greg. They leave him to join the immediate cause of his troubles but returns at scene's end looking for further trouble with him. To protect her interests with her own man, Moll sends them after Juliet's:

**MOLL:** It's that young Terry. Monty's boy. 'E's t' blame..... Feather in yer 'at if yer get 'old of that little Montagu. Took us all in good an' proper.

**GREG:** In 'idin' though, en 'e. No-one knows where.

**MOLL:** I know Terry's gone back t' Larry's. Julie goes t'see 'im there. Get 'er Romeo off our backs, we're all laughin'.

*(p.48)*

With Larry, Friar Laurence recast as a drug-addicted social worker, intimidation from Samson and Greg produces another betrayal of the lovers by a figure who had helped them in Part I. Immediate threats of violence induce Larry to volunteer his plans for the lovers' escape:

**LARRY:** There was one idea I had.....Crash my car out at Devil's Corner. Make out he was dead. So you stop chasin' him.

**GREG:** Very romantic.

**SAMSON:** Need a body for that.

*(p.55)*

Threats to cut off Larry's drug supplies raise the possibility of further betrayal:

**SAMSON:** ....Supposin' your crash idea 'appened. For real.

**LARRY:** Won't get me doing that.

**SAMSON:** We know where Rick gets your stuff. It was us used t'collect it for 'im. *(LARRY doesn't reply)* Disgustin' 'abit. *(Silence)* Take 'im out there. Pretend it's a joke. Push 'im over with the car. *(LARRY still silent)* 'E's a menace! Like all 'is kind.

**LARRY:** I won't do it.

**SAMSON:** Course you will.

*(p.56)
What Larry does do three scenes later is to lead Terry/Romeo into an ambush at Devil's Corner. There, after refusing the chance of escape arranged by his father and Kindly/Benvolio, he is kicked and beaten unconscious by Samson and Greg. Before they can pack him into the car and over the cliff, Juliet comes on to keep her appointment with Terry/Romeo and, as a potential witness, she is knifed by Samson and Greg. The other principals arrive, Samson and Greg run off: their flight distracts attention long enough for Terry/Romeo to revive, see Juliet and slit his wrists. There is no epilogue, but an epitaph is duly spoken near the end of the dialogue:

MOLL:  Shou'nt 'ave let 'er get involved. Now look at 'er.

MONTY:  They were involved anyway. So were we.

(p.71)

In order to emphasise that final responsibility for his lovers' deaths lies with the National Front's exploitation of a division within the working class, Gooch has found it necessary to insert two scenes, both without any Shakespearean antecedents, which rather obscure a causal chain of events that does not require anything enacted in them. In Scene 10, Samson explains to a Greg who is less than completely convinced by his claim that the Front is 'the final solution' (p.57) to their problems:

GREG:  We gone too far, Samson....Rick'll never 'ave us back now.

SAMSON:  'Oo needs 'im? The District Branch is right behind us.....That Montagu boy's made us for life. (GREG says nothing) Played right in our 'ands. (GREG is silent) This stir's the best thing ever 'appened to us.

GREG:  Why'd the Committee wan' a see you then?
SAMSON: 'Eap their congratulations on me......

GREG: Keep up the good work eh.

SAMSON: Only more so.......The danger is now, if we let the 'eat off 'im, there could be a rapprochement.

GREG: Oh really?

SAMSON: If Rick an' Monty 'ave the naus t' get t'gether on this, we lose our advantage.

(p.57)

Scrup the scrounger of stamp money turns up to sell, for the price of a pint, the news that such a conference is imminent. It occupies Gooch's Scene 11. All that accomplishes for his plot is that the announcement of it Greg and Samson on their way to Devil's Corner, which had already been established as their eventual destination by the end of their bullying of Larry in Scene 9. The conference itself is a fiasco. It ends with Capulist firing a gun at Monty, who exits quickly enough for the bullet to ricochet off the door behind him. Until that incontrovertible rejection of his terms of armistice, however, Monty has been urging Capulist that 'We join forces. Openly...... The only way. Otherwise the Front picks up the space between us' (p.61).

Gooch's treatment of Shakespeare's plot, then, reveals (beyond the changes necessitated by a relatively high degree of psychological realism in characterisation) a primary concern with demonstrating the consequences of internal division within the working class. It is not so much a tragedy as an admonition: the enactment of the lovers' deaths does not in the end seem to matter so much as Monty's observation that they 'were involved' in a situation which still finds Greg and Samson on the loose and the organisation egging them
in the ascent. Given its comparative lack of interest in the love relationship which is central to his source play, one may wonder why Gooch ever adopted the uncompromising combination of (a) dramaturgic adherence to naturalist conventions, (b) thematic ambitions based upon a Marxist analysis of the historical situation of a class, and (c) a source in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. The combination of (a) and (b) is easily accounted for if one looks to Gooch's other plays. Most notably in his Female Transport (which like Back Street Romeo premiered at the Half Moon Theatre), he manages better than any other present-day British playwright except Trevor Griffiths to depict individual characters as typical, to relate their activities to an analysis of history, and (what is rarest although not necessarily most desirable) to do so completely within the conventions of naturalist playwriting. By (c), however, I am baffled, and so too, I think, was Gooch. As I suggested above, David Edgar's Death Story seems to me to have baffled its own political ambitions by hedging on the historicity of its setting; however, Edgar's adaptation does manage an exact alignment of the love relationship carried over from its source with the socio-economic analysis dictated by those ambitions. Gooch, offering an analysis which although not co-extensive is correlative with Edgar's and working out all minor character motivation with his customary thoroughness, simply loses sight of his central relationship for the sake of examining the context in which he represents it.
CHAPTER III

THREE WAYS OF NOT BEING PRINCE HAMLET
AND ONE WAY OF NOT BEING

1. Introduction

In the final chapters of her study of Hamlet in France from Voltaire to Laforgue (1964), Helen Phelps Bailey describes a Prince Hamlet whose long reign began with the publication in 1887 of Laforgue’s Moralités Légendaires, a collection of prose narrative retelling the stories of such figures as Salomé, Perseus and Andromeda, and Hamlet. In ‘Hamlet, ou les suites de la piété filiale,’ she writes, Laforgue established a durable interpretation of the title figure of Shakespeare’s Hamlet as a symbolic figure undefined by time or space, a potential hero, haunted by the spectre of the absolute, harassed by cosmic doubt... the Kierkegaardian aesthete caught in an eddy of conflicting forces, striving to resolve his multiplicity, to project his unique personality, and abdicating when his presence and his task seem to have lost all relevance...In him, Shakespeare’s hero became the intellectual heir par excellence of the nineteenth century, and modern ‘Hamletism’ was defined.¹

This is that late nineteenth-century decadent whom T.S. Eliot’s Prufrock knew he was not. He has an Anglo-Saxon cousin who is eighteen years his junior, and whose problems are less immediately intellectual although his intellectual potential is equally great, in the shocked melancholic of Lectures III and IV of A.C. Bradley’s Shakespearean Tragedy (1904).

The pair long constituted a critical and cultural hegemony over twentieth-century assumptions about Hamlet, the character and the play; and on this account I think it justifiable to extrapolate them from their respective fictional and critical contexts. The Prince Hamlets of Laforgue and Bradley both outlived the literature and the theory in which they were, respectively, formulated. As Bailey points out, the specific literary style which had been the matrix for Laforgue’s Hamlet did not
survive the First World War, yet 'viewed as an aggregate of personality traits and as a way of life, Hamletism disappears more slowly.' Similarly, Bradleyan assumptions about the detachability of Shakespearean characters in general from their plays were, as might be inferred from my Chapter I above, long entertained without reference to (or indeed any knowing acquaintance with) the revised Hegelianism according to which Bradley worked out his ideas about the relationship of character and action in Shakespearean drama; and Bradley's insistence upon the ineluctable centrality of the psychology of the character Hamlet in the play Hamlet may also be accepted without any knowledge of the reductio ad absurdum by which Bradley argued the point and set up another, namely, the cause of Hamlet's delay as the key to his character:

Suppose you were to describe the plot of Hamlet to a person quite ignorant of the play, and suppose you were careful to tell your hearer nothing about Hamlet's character... Would he not exclaim: 'What a sensational story!..... If I did not know that the play was Shakespeare's, I should have thought it must have been one of those early tragedies of blood and horror from which he is said to have redeemed the stage'? And would he not then go on to ask: 'But why... did not Hamlet obey the Ghost at once, and so save seven... lives?' This exclamation and this question both show... that the whole story turns upon the peculiar character of the hero.3

I open this chapter with an introduction of critical constructs because they will be points of reference in its discussion of adaptations of Hamlet. The great number of adaptations of this play has meant that my discussion must be selective: what I have selected is three groups of English-language adaptations which seem to me to have tried to qualify, discredit and then finally demolish audience assumptions about Hamlet, and specifically (in the case of the first two groups) Bradley's Hamlet. I will then attend to one English-language adaptation which seems to me to have managed to escape the hegemony of Bradley's Hamlet by ignoring, rather than attacking, it.
I introduce a pair of critical constructs, Laforgue's as well as Bradley's, because the first parts of this chapter will pay more attention to French-language adaptations than is to be found anywhere else in this thesis. This variation of restrictions on the field of reference for my discussion is most tentatively adopted: my acquaintance with French-language texts is very much less extensive and very likely less representative than my acquaintance with English-language ones. Even with such risk of unreliability, I undertake some cross-referencing to French texts for two related reasons. In the first place, I wish to set an argument in tangent to one made in Chapter I: it was there (pp. 67-68) argued that the difference between British and Continental adaptations of Shakespeare in general was primarily explicable in terms of differences in theatrical circumstances and fashions. I would here suggest that a subsidiary explanation for the difference between English-language and French-language adaptations of Hamlet in particular may lie in the differences between the ideas about Prince Hamlet which were respectively dominant in both Britain and America and in France for much of this century. This leads to my second and more important reason for attending to French-language texts in the first part of this chapter: I hope by comparison with them to clarify how Bradley's interpretation of the character of Hamlet hedged in English-language adaptors of Hamlet until the middle of this century, and thus at least to suggest why more recent English-language adaptors of the play have shown such pronounced signs of straining against limits.
ii. The Hamlets of Bradley and Laforgue and the consequences for adaptations of 'Hamlet'

There is, it must be noted at the start, some methodological risk in pairing together the Prince Hamlets of Laforgue's novella and Bradley's lectures. Interpretation is explicit in the latter but must be inferred from the former, wherein the treacherousness of fiction is (as will be remarked again below in a slightly different connection) mined with ironies. That conceded, the interpretations seem to me to have some important points in common. Both posit the character of Hamlet at the centre of Shakespeare's Hamlet and both pose the question of why Hamlet delays as the key to that character. Both Hamlets would cease to be their respective selves if they were actually to carry out revenge: both, that is, are paradoxical figures of great potential which cannot become actual without negating itself. The conditions of both are unalterable and to that (limited) extent tragic. Both paradoxical figures, finally, were held as universal symbols of the condition of man, or at least (in the case of Laforgue's Hamlet) of intellectual man.

There are, however, important differences between the Princes of Bradley and Laforgue. Bradley's answer to the question of why Hamlet delayed his revenge posits an unfortunate conjunction of particularities — the impact of a traumatic event upon a psychological disposition — out of which he leaps for universals. That is, having established the centrality of Hamlet's character for his consideration of the play Hamlet, Bradley runs through various theories of Hamlet's delay: neither external difficulties, nor conscience, nor oversensibility can be predicated as encumbrances upon the personality that Bradley finds in Shakespeare's dramatic text. A fourth obstacle, the excessive reflection and speculation which Schlegel and Coleridge had argued as the cause of irresolution, is admitted only as an indirect cause
of irresolution. The direct cause, according to Bradley, is melancholy, which Gertrude's marriage to Claudius had triggered in Prince Hamlet's temperament of nervous instability. Bradley proceeds to develop this hypothesis in pages which read more and more like the psychological case history of an individual; but then, in the final paragraph of this his first lecture on Hamlet, he escapes the trammels of particularity and contingency by reverting to Schlegel and Coleridge:

I have dwelt thus at length on Hamlet's melancholy because, from the psychological point of view, it is the center of the tragedy...But the psychological point of view is not equivalent to the tragic; and, having once given its due weight to the fact of Hamlet's melancholy, we may freely admit...that this pathological condition would excite but little, if any, tragic interest if it were not the condition of a nature distinguished by that speculative genius on which the Schlegel-Coleridge type of theory lays stress. Such theories misinterpret the connection between that genius and Hamlet's failure, but still it is this connection which gives to his story its peculiar fascination and makes it appear...as the symbol of a tragic mystery inherent in human nature. Wherever this mystery touches us, wherever we are forced to feel the wonder and awe of man's godlike 'apprehension' and his 'thoughts that wander through eternity,' and at the same time are forced to see him powerless in his petty sphere of action, and powerless...from the very divinity of his thought, we remember Hamlet....Hamlet most brings home to us at once the sense of the soul's infinity and the sense of the doom which not only circumscribes that infinity but appears to be its offspring. (p. 109)

In his second lecture on the play, Bradley looks for his Prince Hamlet in the events enacted and dialogue spoken in Shakespeare's Hamlet — that is, he sets out 'to follow...the course of the action in so far as it specially illustrates the character' (p. 110). He also attends to Ophelia, Gertrude and Claudius, 'not less interesting' for all that they are 'minor characters' (p. 135) in Bradley's book. What is most interesting about them is that they can be unpacked, and their antecedents investigated, for further clues and confirmation of what has happened to Hamlet. Then Bradley moves on from the psychology of Claudius, the last of the 'minor characters' that he discusses, to the significance which he senses in it:
...in all that happens or is done we seem to apprehend some vaster power...our imagination is haunted by the sense of it, as it works its way through the deeds or the delays of men to its inevitable end. And most of all do we feel this in regard to Hamlet and the King. For these two, the one by his shrinking from his appointed task, and the other by efforts growing ever more feverish to rid himself of his enemy, seem to be bent on avoiding each other. But they cannot. Through...the very paths they take in order to escape, something is pushing them silently step by step toward one another....Concentration on the character of the hero is apt to withdraw our attention from this aspect of the drama; but in no other tragedy of Shakespeare's ...is this aspect so impressive. (p. 145)

With its leap from particular psychology to universal symbol, the last section of Bradley's second lecture on Hamlet is a stunning recapitulation of the argumentative structure of the conclusion of his first lecture.

Laforgue's Hamlet doesn't act because, the times and his abilities being what they respectively are, he can't be bothered. As Bailey puts it, 'He has...an irresistible vocation to be a Hero in an ephemeral world where all things seem mediocre and absurd'. Or as he puts it, and the narrator comments:

'Ah! que je fusse seulement pousse a m'en donner la peine!.....J'admetais bien la vie a la rigueur. Mais un héros! Et d'abord, arriver domestiqué par un temps et des milieux! est-ce une bonne et loyale guerre pour un héros?...Un héros! et que tout le reste fût des levers de rideau!......'

Le prince Hamlet en a comme ça long sur le coeur, plus long qu'il n'en tient en cinq actes, plus long que notre philosophie n'en surveille entre ciel et terre....

Where Bradley reconstructs a past cause for Hamlet's delay, hypothesising an historical conjunction between Hamlet's psychology and events anterior to those enacted in Shakespeare's play, Laforgue constructs a cause in the fictional present, representing a permanent disjunction between Hamlet's psychology and the world which it addresses. The psychology of Hamlet is equally central in both cases, but Laforgue's interpretation requires that that psychology be set in relief by something more than reflections from mirrors arranged around him — or, more precisely, that
the mirrors reflect discrepant images. Discrepancy is achieved in 'Hamlet ou les suites de la piété filiale' through a lavish distribution of ironic observations. The bulk of them, very deliberate indeed, come from the narrator, who notes, for example, that 'Hamlet, homme d'action, perd cinq minutes à réver...' (p. 50), and whose epitaph on the hero is 'Un Hamlet de moins; la race n’en est pas perdue, qu’on se le dise!' (p. 72); and from Hamlet himself, who addresses the skull of Yorick (revealed by the Gravedigger to be the Prince's half-brother) with, among many other things, the information that je l’ai gravé au mur de mon lit en un distique également rossard:

Ma rare faculté d’assimilation
Contrariera la cours de ma vocation.

Ah! que je m’ennuie donc supérieurement! (p.50)

and who in passing the local proletariat reflects to himself that ‘l’ordre social existant est un scandale à suffoquer la Nature! Et moi, je ne suis qu’un parasite féodal’ (p.42).

Subsidiary ironies abound within the novella, but perhaps the greatest irony of 'Hamlet ou les suites de la piété filiale' is the symbolic stature of its protagonist. He is assigned to a very particular time — the 14th of July 1601 — and place — Jutland. He is a figure of consummate quirkiness, perhaps most memorably illustrated by his daily ritual of twisting pins in the hearts of wax dolls representing his mother and uncle. He is in fact a mockery — here whimsical, there disgusted — which Laforgue, who repeatedly returned to Hamlet in the course of his own brief career, made of himself and of some of his Romantic predecessors. Idiosyncratic within the fiction that carries him and particular in application outside it, Laforgue's Hamlet nonetheless became the symbol of the consciousness of Western Europe, especially in the years immediately after World War I. As Paul Valéry
wrote in 1919:

From an immense terrace of Elsinore which extends from Basle to Cologne, and touches the sands of Nieuport, the marshes of the Somme, the chalks of Champagne, and the granite of Alsace, the Hamlet of Europe now looks upon millions of ghosts.

But he is an intellectual Hamlet. He meditates upon the life and death of truths. All the objects of our controversies are his phantoms; all the titles of our glory are his remorse; he is weighed down under the burden of discoveries, of knowledge, of methods and of books, incapable of renouncing and incapable of resuming this unlimited activity. He dreams of the email of beginning the past again, and of the madness of desiring always to create a new thing. He sways between the two abysses, for two dangers still threatens the world — order and disorder....

His terribly clairvoyant mind contemplates the transition from war to peace.... Peace is perhaps the condition...in which the natural hostility of man to man is expressed in...creative competition. And I, he says, I, the European intellect, what shall I become? ..... Peace is perhaps the condition of things in which the natural hostility of man to man is expressed in...creative competition, and the struggle of productions. But I, am I not tired of producing? Have I not exhausted the desire of desperate attempts, and have I not abused learned concoctions? Must I put aside my difficult duties and my transcendental ambitions? ..... Farewell, ghosts! The world needs you no longer, nor me. 7

The Prince Hamlets of Bradley and Laforgue, then, are both symbolic figures of paradox, great human potential fixed in inaction. Bradley's Hamlet, however, is paralysed by causes which have unfolded in hypothetical time; and in tracing the development of those causes, Bradley need never adjust his single focus on Hamlet's hypothetical psyche. The basic operation in Bradley's interpretation of Shakespeare's Hamlet is his hypothesising of the antecedents and inner workings of its title figure, his investigation of layers inferred behind and within a character that he at once constructs and also offers as ineluctably central to Shakespeare's play. Developing an argument from 'the psychological point of view' for the bulk of the two lectures on Hamlet, Bradley focuses on one thing, the character of Hamlet; and then, taking up 'the tragic point of view' at the conclusions of both lectures, he does not shift, but rather simply widens, that same focus, finding in
the story of his character (and of the Doppelgänger Claudius) the symbol of a tragic mystery in human nature' and an imaginatively apprehended sense of 'some vaster power'.

With the exceptions of numerous travesties and of a few plays about players of Hamlet, most English-language adaptations of Hamlet in the first decades of this century seem to me to have been tied to either or both of Bradley's lines of insight into Shakespeare's play and like Bradley to have focused on the character of Hamlet as its centre. Even when the figure of Hamlet does not appear among the dramatis personae of these adaptations, it is, in the last analysis, always the character of the Shakespearean Hamlet which is being expounded in them and which gives them a raison d'être — whether they set out to explain that character by inventing facts and figures which Shakespeare omitted from his presentation of events at Elsinore; or whether they extrapolate that character from Elsinore and expatiate upon his cosmic significance; or whether they, like Bradley, attempt to pursue both the psychology and the symbolic application of the character. I would not, of course, suggest that adaptors always or even usually set out to transplant Bradley's interpretation of Hamlet from his theoretical text to their dramatic ones: indeed, I would emphasise (what will be apparent as soon as I turn to some examples of these early twentieth-century adaptations) that the inventions and/or glosses offered in a given adaptation are very often wildly incompatible in content with Bradley's analytical hypotheses and imaginative response. The point is rather that these dramatic texts depend upon critical procedures like those practised by Bradley and that in them, as in Bradley's lectures although sometimes by very much more indirect routes, all things both proceed from the character of Hamlet and point back to him.
The adaptors' equivalent of Bradley's considerations 'from the psychological point of view' is the adoption of a novel vantage point. As will have been apparent from my remarks about and examples from this category in earlier chapters, this strategy is by no means peculiar to adaptations of *Hamlet*. Its recurrence there is, however, striking. Appendix III to this thesis lists some sixty dramatic adaptations of *Hamlet* written in English: something over a third of them fall, in whole or in part, into the category of novel vantage point. At least four adaptations enact events anterior to those presented in Shakespeare's play, ten subsequent, and nine in the interstices. *Hamlet* has been adapted from the points of view of Claudius, Horatio, Fortinbras, Ophelia, King Hamlet, the pirates, the English (in England, not on embassy), the players, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Yorick, and even Voltemand. The novel vantage point adaptations of *Hamlet* run a great gamut of length, theatrical inventiveness, dramaturgical competence and moral and/or intellectual seriousness. All, however, remain at once circumscribed by and centred upon, the données of the Shakespearean text.

A pair of texts which well illustrate both the range and the restriction of novel vantage point adaptations of *Hamlet* are Hugh Ross Williamson's *King Claudius* (1954-55) and Percy Wallace MacKaye's *The Mystery of Hamlet, King of Denmark* (1949), both of which represent events before the death of King Hamlet and both of which have his murderer as protagonist. Williamson's one-act script, fifteen pages long, is set, without change of scene, in 'the Armoury in the Royal Palace at Elsinore...about two months before the first act of William Shakespeare's play'. It enacts an explanation of why Claudius killed his brother rather than just continuing the covert enjoyment of the favours of his sister-in-law. (She is not adulterous but somewhat dangerously indiscreet, being
capable of leaving earrings enmeshed in her lover's beard after an embrace.) The motivation which Williamson assigns Claudius is as much national as personal self-interest. Business and dialogue in the opening of the play establish that King Hamlet (a) fences badly, (b) is prone to pomposity, and (c) has challenged the King of Sweden to a duel. Polonius and Claudius arrive with news that the throne of Sweden has a new occupant who is the best swordsman in Scandinavia. King Hamlet refuses to withdraw his challenge and exits. All that remains is for Polonius to tempt Claudius to regicide and usurpation in dialogue which cuts coy figures from Shakespeare's:

CLAUDIUS: If my brother is killed in this duel the King of Sweden will be entitled to annex the country. Those are the conditions, aren't they?

POLONIUS: Certainly. The conditions are identical with those which governed the duel with Portinbras of Norway, which laid the foundations of our great empire, when he so fortunately — slipped.

CLAUDIUS: Can you remember them?

POLONIUS: Certainly.

(He declaims.)

Our valiant Hamlet
Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a sealed compact
Well ratified by law and heraldry
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror,
Against the which a moisty competent
Was gaged by our king, which had returned
To the inheritance of Fortinbras
Had he been vanquished; as, by the same cov'nant
And carriage of the article designed
His fell to Hamlet.

CLAUDIUS: Surely, Polonius, as Lord Chamberlain you have only to censor official verses. You have no need to learn them.

POLONIUS: With your permission, Sir, I will entrust you with a secret. I composed that.

CLAUDIUS: Certainly, now that you point it out, it has something of your turn of phrase.

There is further, and even more tedious, toying with Shakespearean dialogue, including a fragment from John of Gaunt's patriotic set-piece
in *King Richard II*. Predictably, the final exchange between Polonius and Claudius, by now resolved upon crime, pulls one last verbal prank and in so doing points ahead to the problems of a Prince Hamlet who, though included in the *dramatis personae* of this one act, has not figured very importantly in the proceedings:

POLONIUS: Would Your Majesty permit that I...return to the Council Chamber to ascertain what orders His Maj...er...your brother may have for me before he goes to the orchard.

CLAUDIUS: The orchard?

POLONIUS: Ay, to sleep, to sleep...his custom always of an afternoon.

MacKaye's *The Mystery of Hamlet, King of Denmark* is a tetralogy. The constituent plays (*The Ghost of Elsinore, The Fool in Eden Garden, Odin Against Christus,* and *The Serpent in the Orchard*) are each of five acts, except for the first play, which is of four acts and a prologue. In the prologue to the first play, the conception of Prince Hamlet is verbally enacted. The last scene of the last play is the first court-scene of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: and its last scene but two dramatises that moment, hypothesised by Bradley, when 'the moral shock of the sudden ghastly disclosure of his mother's true nature, falling on him when his heart was aching with love' (*Shakespearean Tragedy*, p.101), poisoned Prince Hamlet's faith in humanity in general and Ophelia in particular. The scene so closely parallels Bradley's account of this moment anterior to events represented by Shakespeare that one could almost believe MacKaye wrote it with a copy of *Shakespearean Tragedy* at his elbow. By this point in the tetralogy, however, MacKaye has devised enough anterior developments to fill over 600 pages of published text and twenty-nine years, nine months, and some odd days of stage time. Not surprisingly, one invention has led to another. MacKaye is not content to introduce Yorick as playmate
of a seven-year-old Prince Hamlet, but also presents him as comrade of the Gravedigger Yaughan, as widowed husband, and as devoted father of an adolescent daughter who attends to Queen Gertrude in her lying-in. Nor are Claudius' crimes confined to the seduction of Gertrude (a long-term project which germinates from Act I of the first play until its realisation in the middle of the third play, by which time 29 years have gone by) and the murder of King Hamlet (accomplished in the last act of the last play, by which time His very high-minded Majesty has gone mad with grief over the fouling of Love, on which his soul is centred). Claudius is also responsible for the deaths of Yorick's daughter Angela, of Yorick himself, and of Ophelia's pet bird (a Valentine present from Prince Hamlet) named Amsel. Contrasted with a royal brother who seeks spiritual absolutes, Duke Claudius starts out a terrestrially minded cynic and winds up an incarnate principle of evil, the serpent to the Adam and Eve of King Hamlet and Gertrude.

Both in developing the psychology of his figures and in glossing their symbolic significance in terms of Christian mythology, MacKay works several devices very hard. The least remarkable of these is his conferring upon the figure of Yorick a power of second sight which operates only spasmodically but with splendid timing. Secondly, and at work across the whole of the tetralogy, there are great doses of material from Dante, medieval cycle plays, sixteenth-century Faust books, and St. Augustine. MacKaye sets up situations in which it is more or less plausible that such things should be introduced into the onstage fiction, and thereafter uses them as more or less plausible points of reference for subsequent psychological developments. At the same time he spins great cobwebs of symbolic statements out of the interpolated material. For example, a good point of departure for a much more thorough analysis of the tetralogy than my purposes and
patient warrant would be the play-within-a-play of the Fall from Eden, which is presented, at the beginning of the second play, at Prince Hamlet's birthday party and in which his uncle Claudius plays the serpent. A smaller scale instance of the insertion of such material should, however, suffice here. In Act III of the second play, Gertrude and Polonius' wife Cornelia discuss the names of their offspring, respectively seven years old and as yet unborn. Gertrude had been blessed with prenatal

\[ \text{GERTRUDE:} \quad \ldots \text{certitude} \]

He would be he. 'Ah, fiat filius!' Chanted my heart. 'Let it be Hamlet's — Hamlet!'

\[ \text{CORNELIA:} \quad \text{So was it — and your prayer made perfect.} \]

\[ \text{GERTRUDE:} \quad \text{Even} \]

As soon thine own shall be, in consummation Answering thy heart's: 'Fiat, O, filia' 'Let it be she — Ophelia'

\[ \text{CORNELIA:} \quad \text{What, so quick} \]

To guess my secret hope, aye, even to give it Girl-christening.

\[ \text{GERTRUDE:} \quad \text{Godmothering is easier} \]

Than mothering, and quicker than the moon's Slow calendar. — Ophelia. — Dost thou like The name? 12

She does, and many changes will be rung off it in subsequent dialogue. Finally and most remarkably, MacKaye sets about within some scenes to shift the setting 'from the visible to the invisible world'. In the printed text there are typographical indications which take 'the place of lighting effects through which a separate plane of action and thought is suggested to the audience.' A further aid to the audience's awareness of the passage to a new plane, and so to MacKaye's exposition of psychology and symbolism alike, is the appearance within these sequences of a figure, named Gallucinius, who represents 'inward communion of the character with himself' and who is made to advise his
interlocutors of his identity with their inmost selves.

For all its psychological elaborations and symbolic expansions, however, the sententiousness of *The Mystery of Hamlet King of Denmark* remains quite as parasitical upon Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as does the silliness of Williamson's *King Claudius*. Yet another 'plane of action and thought' in MacKaye's tetralogy is the playing out, as it were in preview, of passages borrowed verbatim from the original text. Many other passages are more allusively anticipated in the dialogue — for example, in Act III of the third play *King Hamlet* takes his wife, who is on the edge of adultery, to a mirror and lectures her on their image as

  Reflecting what we are — eternal mates,
  Surface and spirit substance......
  Mirror of outward form and fashion. 14

—and in the business — for example, in Act V of the second play the boys Laertes and Hamlet wrestle on the edge of Yorick's freshly-dug grave. In the reading at least, all these quotations and anticipations jar, but at the same time they stand as regular reminders that what MacKaye is doing at such great length is no more or less than a dramatised interpretation of Shakespeare's dramatic text in terms of psychological causes within the stage fiction and symbolic connections outside that fiction.

There are two early twentieth-century adaptations of *Hamlet* from a novel vantage point which show as much interest in the symbolic significance of the character of Hamlet as in its origins and intricacies. The way in which they present this significance is, moreover, pertinent to some points which I shall subsequently be making in another connection. These adaptations are a pair of one-act verse plays, both from the 1930's, which develop the Shakespearean figures of the *Players* in order to present events
in *Hamlet* from a novel vantage point. Mrs. J. Darmady's *The Mousetrap* (1931) is a backstage discussion among four footsore Players before, during and after their command performance at Elsinore. The principals of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* do not appear, nor are they named, but the Shakespearean identities behind references to 'The Prince' and 'that old lord —/ He that would tell us how at Heidelberg/ He once played Julius Caesar when a boy'\(^\text{15}\) are unmistakable. Equally easy to recognise are the encircling events: Darmady's play fills interstices of Shakespeare's from just after the first appearance of the Players until just after the death of Polonius. A consequence of this last incident is that the troupe are not paid for their disrupted performance, and a speech from the First Player makes it clear that the adaptor intends her title to apply to the 'real' situation in her play as well as to the artifice which her characters have been acting offstage in Shakespeare's:

FIRST PLAYER: ..... Why did Fate Deceive us, promising fortune? First, the message Sent by the Prince, the order to play at Court — Everything seemed to point at our advancement — Then the trap closes — snap! We poor mice hear it..... Is there any power that guides our thwarted lives?

THIRD PLAYER: I know there is some reason. There must be some plan, Too great for us to see the whole of it. We wander on and puzzle over the changes And chances of the road, and all the time A greater mind than ours is guiding us. A mind that sees our end and purpose — Something tells me this. Cold comfort it may be.

FIRST PLAYER: It is cold comfort!

THIRD PLAYER: Not so to me. If I can be the link, A little link in a worthy chain's enough, I do not ask to be the artificer.\(^\text{16}\)

Darmady thus conflates her 'real' characters and world onstage with both Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Hamlet's *Mousetrap* by presenting the situations of all three as traps sprung by a power inscrutable to
its victims. Ashley Dukes in The Players' Dressing Room (1936) makes a similar conflation by means of characterisation rather than situation. Again (and with rather more ingenuity in devising and distributing indications of place and time) the adaptor sets his play backstage during the performance at the court of Elsinore of Hamlet's adaptation of The Murder of Gonzago. Again there are four Players. One of them is from his first appearance set apart from the others:

The Player Queen, a young man in woman's dress but with the features of Hamlet has entered and stands in the doorway leaning against the lintel....He lets his royal gown slip from him and steps out in the figure of a young man in a black doublet.

With that kind of visual coding for an introduction, it is no surprise that the Player Queen proceeds to express concern for the well-being of their princely host. His fellows tease him with being love-sick, but it soon becomes apparent that his identification with Hamlet is deeper than infatuation:

PLAYER QUEEN: .......how great
The measure of the act in which we all
(Though supernumerary) play our part,
Tonight in Elsinore, to-morrow far;
Yet near, as all must be who once are drawn
Within the orbit of a destiny....
.....Because this night we tread
An inward court of life inviolate
Such as no player ever thought to know.
And in that moment, in that hour are cast
For immortality.

The meeting with Hamlet has, indeed, set off a crisis of professional and personal conscience, and the other Players ensure that the audience are not allowed to miss the similarities between unseen host and ranting Player, who has sensed something rotten in Denmark:

PLAYER KING: This man is mad!

LUCIANUS: Like the Prince Hamlet!
PROLOGUE: Lovesick first, then mad!

(The PLAYER QUEEN turns on them.)

PLAYER QUEEN: And do you never know the folk who sit
Before you in the house? ...How can a player show
A thing beyond himself, unless he seek
Those other selves, and deeply look within
Their spirit and his own? I see you now,
My listeners, my fellows of the play,
As mind sees action, movement, gesture, word,
The outer frame of life — but there's a key
Unlocks that rigid world, interprets all
That restless clamour...and holds
A promise that within the whole shall be —
(He comes nearer to them, and they shrink away from him.)
What shall it be?

PLAYER KING: Mad, mad!

LUCIANUS: Go fetch the lord
Polonius — he brought us here, and knows
The remedy for every ill!

PROLOGUE: That's true,
He is most wise!

PLAYER QUEEN: 'And look you mock him not,"
Said the lord Hamlet!.....
Aye, let him use his players as he said,
According to desert! 20

The numerous novel-vantage point adaptations of Hamlet, then,
seems to me to correspond in playwriting to Bradley's exploration of
'the psychological point of view' in criticism; but some, contriving
to extend the significance of Hamlet's condition to cover other
characters, the audience, or even (as with MacKaye's tetralogy) all
humanity since Adam and Eve, do in part also correspond to Bradley's
exploration of 'the tragic point of view'. Outside the category of
novel vantage point, there are early twentieth-century adaptations
which, barely bothering to establish an onstage fiction, go straight
for the Prince and his story as 'the symbol of a tragic mystery
inherent in human nature' and proceed to unpack and apply it. The
director, Michael Benthall has written that 'it is a platitude that
every generation sees itself in Hamlet. He is an Everyman coloured by the psychological problems of each successive period. 21 If the platitude needed proving, ample evidence could be found among adaptations of Hamlet alone. Indeed, an examination of some of them might lead one to conclude that Hamlet is a symbol only of paradox, the exact terms of which need bear no connection whatsoever with Hamlet the play. For example, O. W. Firkins' one-act The Undying Prince (1928) brings together nine actors, from Burbage through Betterton to Barrymore, to discuss their most famous role. Their conversation moves from a discussion of the psychological peculiarities of the protagonist of Shakespeare's Hamlet to the heritage earned for that role in the theatre: thanks to 'all the actors — from Shakespeare's time on — who have poured their life into Hamlet, Hamlet becomes a bank, a deposit of life.'22 After an excursus into the question of rewriting Hamlet — defended by Garrick and damned by Barrymore — they examine the bank's account as of 1928. In so doing, however, they disregard the accumulated deposits of thespian life and attend to the peculiarities of the role only in so far as they can be abstracted into critical paradoxes applicable to twentieth-century life:


BARRYMORE: The world wants him, Sir Henry.....

SOTHERN: We have had a World-War, Sir Henry — you may have heard?

IRVING: We know — it made our world populous.

BARRYMORE: Our world — the younger world — after the — the —

HAMPDEN: The fratricide.

BARRYMORE: Yes, the likeness holds even there — our world is almost in Hamlet's case. It faces impossible responsibilities with a death-chill at its heart.

HAMPDEN: The world has seen its own heart.
FORBES-ROBERTSON: ...And that — that is its spectre.

BOOTH: ...You suffer?

FORBES-ROBERTSON: Yes, we suffer, God knows, but the worst is that the ideal in us seems to be helpless.

BARRYMORE: Helpless as Hamlet.

SOUTHERN: We are his kindred, you see — that's our consolation....

BARRYMORE: It was the ignominy of the sum of things — not this man or that fact — that overwhelmed him.

HAMPDEN: Exactly. The world was Claudius.

IRVING: A Claudius that he couldn't kill.

HAMPDEN: That made it useless for him to kill the individual.

BOOTH: And that explains why Shakespeare lets him be so harsh with Ophelia....The last faith that a man in a rotten world gives up is the faith in the woman he loves. Hamlet's bitterness to Ophelia is Shakespeare's way of telling us that his last defences have been taken.

GARRICK: (to the living actors as a group). You think, then, that the world of to-day is a sort of Hamlet?

HAMPDEN: Yes (The others nod.)

GARRICK: What part does your young America take in the tragedy?....

FORBES-ROBERTSON: America is the Fortinbras in the play.

BENTERTON: Shakespeare always leaves some hopeful person on the stage at the end of the slaughter.

FORBES-ROBERTSON: And the Shakespeare that runs the world seasons his justice with the same mercy. (There is a pause after this which no-one is eager to break.)

Analogy of this order are sometimes the heavy responsibilities of figures bearing Shakespearean names. Denton Jaques Snider's The Redemption of the Hamlets: Father and Son (1923) was mentioned in Chapter I above (pp.41-42) as an example of the otherworldly settings of some of the adaptations which I there categorised as out-of-place assemblies. The setting of this two-part play, it may be remembered, is 'Shakespearopolis', and protracted passages of both parts are devoted
to guided tours, conducted by a Dantesque guide for newcomers. In Part I the drama, if it can be called that, is the releasing of Prince Hamlet from misogyny and melancholy, born of a fear that he may be Claudius' son. Faithful Horatio lectures Perdita on the importance of rescuing his old friend:

HORATIO: That one idea which haunts me to action
Is the soul's restoration of Hamlet
From the clutch of the dread Destroyer.
Such is the burning task of this whole city
Which else of itself becomes tragic in him,
And sinks under the crash of his doom
Without the hope of its spirit's last ransom.
And the poet also must fall with his work
And become the victim of his own tragedy
Who is stamped with his soul's very impress.
If he destroy his mind's deepest personage,
And make himself perish in the one character
For Hamlet means not just this one Hamlet,
But you and me and man. So would I redeem
In Hamlet not the tragic Hamlet alone
But Tragedy human.

PERDITA: What an all-round conception of Hamlet's fate!

All-round indeed. But soon expanded still further by Horatio:

HORATIO: Grand is the stake as it rises before me:
The whole century, all civilization
Theat to topple down into the last abyss,
The gruesome graveyard of buried worlds,
So joined is it with the spirit of Hamlet
That it shall perish too in his tragedy,
For he is man's culture self-murdered
Unless retrieved from the blast of its doubt
And harmonized with the sovereign order.

Hermione, approached as redempstress, asks an obvious question:

HERMIONE: How can this one Hamlet be so expanded
That he can become everybody else
While staying just single and in himself?
You seem to make him the whole of our time
As if this one soul were the world-soul.

HORATIO: All the world is sick with Hamlet's disease;
Just now he rises the man universal
Tainted with the universal corruption
Which reeks everywhere, in mind, word, deed,
With mad destructive despair of the human,
Blasting man's ordered life with Hell's own curse.
And you as mother not be merely this one
Of your own daughter, Perdita blessed,
But in the creative depths of your own being
You are to re-bear Hamlet afresh;
Hamlet, man's largest representative,
Is to be the new-born through your spirit,
And thus you uprise the higher All-mother,
Bearing the seal universal of life.

(p.75)

Hermione is thus persuaded to participate in a play which Horatio,
taking his cues from his betters, proposes to stage for the moral
re-armament of the Prince. The play and the conversion it induces
are not enacted but reported successful by Hamlet in an epilogue.
In Part II, however, it emerges that the redemption of Hamlet (and
Shakespeare, and mankind, and civilisation) is but half accomplished.
The woman problem solved, there remains the world. Claudius having
conveniently died 'in a final kingly act of dissipation' (p.75),
Hamlet succeeds to the Danish throne. Straightaway the Ghost of
King Hamlet returns with 'a new command from beyond,/Grander, mightier,
yet more desperate,/ Tasking ambition's farthest fulfillment' (p.97) —
namely, world empire. The Ghost has even worked out a plan of attack:
first Norway, then Poland, then Germany, and so on to England.
Ghostly father and son debate the de/merits of war. Threatened with
disownment as Claudius' craven bastard (a topic on which he is still
sensitive), Prince Hamlet capitulates, dons armour, and resigns
himself to being 'incurably tragic' (p.129) and ever unredeemed of
soul. Horatio, however, urges him to see this condition as somewhat
self-indulgent, given that 'in thy tragedy thou, and I and man/
Perish in Shakespearopolis fate' (p.130). Hamlet doffs his armour,
and a few scenes later the Ghost is assigned a mime sequence which
enables Horatio to recognise the symbolic stature of the senior
Hamlet as well:
The Ghost faces Horatio......The Ghost moves writhing......Ghost tugs at its armor......The Ghost groans......The Ghost departs.....

HORATIO: Thou, Ghost, hast forshown me the spirit of war
Its revenges personal, national, universal,
Till its own savage Nemesis darts whirling around
Bringing back to the doer his dead infernal,
And plunging him into his self-made Hell.

(pp.144-146)

The Ghost does, however, return some scenes later, remaining just long enough to announce that he has resolved for peace and so unmade his hell and transformed himself into a Spirit of Peace.

The logic by which Snider makes his Hamlets, father and son alike, into such magnets of significance is, obviously, mainly by drawing analogies between both figures and 'all the world...just now...
tainted with the universal corruption', and then also, in the case of Prince Hamlet, by assigning the entire weight of human consciousness to the skull of William Shakespeare. (The Guide’s running commentary on Shakespearopolis includes, for example, a claim that the place represents a happy marriage of the Latin and Teutonic worlds "pp.138-140/. The former, the extended use of extremely broad analogies, is not far from the sort of schematic transposition which works Hamlet, and sometimes other of the dramatis personae of Hamlet, into an allegorical scheme. I have earlier (pp. 42-43 above) mentioned Robert Herring's Harlequin Mercutio (1940/1), in which 'Hamlet' is the name assigned to conscience, which with spirit, to which Mercutio gives the name 'Mercutio', constitute the Ego. Of the same order is Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie's Hamlet Unmasked: A Condensation, Systematization and Focussing of the Shakespearean Play (1972). The (occasionally unstable) significances which Guthrie assigns the dramatis personae of the Shakespearean text in his exceeding schematic adaptation are as follows: Hamlet becomes the
Soul of Man; the Ghost, Hamlet’s higher self, varied as ‘Conscience’ and ‘Truth’; Gertrude, the Ghost’s kingdom, eventually specified as ‘Nature’ and ‘Immortal Life’; Claudius, Tradition, varied as ‘Force’; Polonius, Statecraft; Ophelia, Ecclesiasticism, varied as Love; Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Worldliness; Osric, High Finance; and Laertes, Ambition. The prologue, which is spoken by yet another allegorical figure, provides a convenient and concise summary of the plot:

I am the Bell-Ringer of the Future Age
And act as the Prologue of our little play
Whose object ’tis old Hamlet to unmask,
Trumpeting to the Universe its chief significance,
A Reformation of the Whole Wide World.....
For your convenience, Friends, ’tis all condensed
In five short scenes which you must understand
As first, the Awakening of the High Self,
Second, the three Distractions from the Path,
Third, Dramatization of the Conscience-Struggle,
Fourth, is Attack on Tradition’s throne-supports,
Society, Finance and Ecclesiasticism,
Ambition and the World. Last is the scene
In which Tradition is killed; but not before
He martyrs the soul, which shall however resurrect.

The resurrection is hailed at the end of the play. Gertrude announces that, Hamlet having sown in her the seed of Conscience, she is ‘pregnant with a future child/ In which a newer Hamlet shall arise/ For

Reformation of the Whole Wide World’ (p.67). And then

GHOST helps HAMLET to rise, and light shines on his heroic figure as, supported, he extends his arm, brandishing his sword.....From the wings are heard/ the opening strains of Flemmings Integer Vitas. Singing its first verse enter the four Nature-Spirits of Earth, Water, Air and Fire. They group themselves around the dying Hamlet, who gradually collapses in the Queen’s arms. At its last word he struggles up, shakes his sword, and cries with a cracked voice.

HAMLET: Shaking the spear, hurray for Humanity!
Who will follow me?

GHOST: Those who will allow dying Hamlet’s spirit to fall on them, and who will cooperate for Humanity’s progress, by curing it of suicide in a Reformation of the whole Wide World, will stand up, and join our repetition of that song of Horace’s.

(pp.67-68)
All oblige with the Horatian ode, until

HAMLET: (reviving) Thank you! I do not die in vain! Thank you!
As he dies in the Queen's arms, and the Nature-spirits throw over him a rainbow-colored shroud there is heard a chime)

(p.68)

I do not draw attention to such texts solely as indices to the depths of tedium and heights of pretentiousness which may be found in twentieth-century adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy. The point is, in the first place, rather that, Hamlet being construed as a drama of human consciousness, it was obvious game for adaptors in those generations of this century which were disposed to internalise dramatic, and especially tragic, events; and, in the second place, that the figure of Shakespeare's Hamlet being construed as an eternally and universally accessible paradox symbolising the condition of human consciousness, that figure could become a cipher — or rather an 'X'.

The adaptors who wrote these transpositions, so schematic that they edge into allegory, used Shakespeare's dramatic text as an algebraic equation whereof the terms were waiting to be filled with significances from the adaptors' time. Both points may be discerned in a boast made in the preface to a 1905 adaptation, too problematic for me to undertake any discussion of it, entitled The Overman: being the serio-comic history of a twentieth-century Hamlet: 'If Shakespeare held the mirror up to nature, I apply the X-rays to the minds of men and women. This is probably the first mathematical play ever written.'

The qualitative difference which I discern between English-language adaptations of Hamlet such as I have described above and the French ones which I will now discuss very briefly may indicate only the quantitative difference in my acquaintance with relevant
texts, and particularly my total ignorance of French adaptations (such as there may have been) for amateurs. As I pointed out in my first chapter (p. 63 above), one broad difference between English and Continental adaptations of Shakespeare in the earlier part of this century lies in the relative amount of attention which adaptors paid to the theatrical resources available to them. Adaptations of Hamlet do not vary from this pattern: most of the English-language adaptations in the years between World Wars I and II were written for amateur performance, and while some (like Dukes' The Players' Dressing Room) show some inventiveness in utilizing the resources of the amateur theatre, not a few (such as the schematic transpositions into allegory) are virtually unperformable. By contrast, the three French adaptations of Hamlet which I have examined from the same period all presuppose the conditions and conventions of the professional theatre of their time, and actually received production. 28

Beyond this difference in degree of theatrical awareness, a difference discernible across the whole field of Shakespearean adaptation in general, there is, I believe, a further difference between early twentieth-century French and English-language adaptations of Hamlet as drama. Crudely, the difference is that in the French-language adaptations of this play, the Hamlet figure who stands at the centre of the drama is there criss-crossed with ironic tensions which do at least command interest, but in the English-language adaptations that same figure, be he psyche or symbol, is virtually always presented without irony and the plays which so present him not infrequently become exasperating bores. I would very tentatively suggest that this difference in the presentation
of figures of Hamlet may be ascribable to a line of descent from
Hamlet via Laforgue rather than via Bradley. As was summarised
above, Laforgue's Hamlet was, like Bradley's, constructed as a
fixed paradox and was long accepted as applicable to Western
consciousness in general. But in constructing his figure of
Hamlet, Laforgue did not, as Bradley would do, maintain a single
focus. The causes of delay by Bradley's Hamlet are explained
by the impact of antecedent events upon psychological disposition,
and that figure is constructed in hypothetical time. The delay of
Laforgue's Hamlet is represented as the paralysis of a consciousness
between awareness of an heroic vocation as Hamlet, and indifference
to the world in which he has to realise his calling. Laforgue's
Hamlet is constructed in, as it were, fictional space. His
consciousness is not so much investigated in relation to what it
had been in times past as created in an intersection between the
content and the context of consciousness: the concept of revenge,
for example, opposed to wax figures in which pins are twisted.
Moreover, there is a constant play between the two voices — the
narrator's and Hamlet's — which speak this consciousness. From
any point in the novella, the ironies multiply, a sort of geometrical
progression from two foci. As Laforgue's Hamlet — stabbed to the
heart by Laertes in revenge for Polonius and Ophélie while fleeing,
in company with an actress whom he calls Ophélia, revenge for his
own father — says in his dying breath: 'Ah! Ah! qualis... artifex... pereo!' (p. 70).

The above merely elaborates the obvious: Laforgue's Hamlet
was the fictional construction of an incorrigible and accomplished
ironist writing a short story, while Bradley's Hamlet was the critical construction of an earnest and lucid academic writing a series of lectures. Still, the obvious difference is, I believe, of some consequence for adaptations of Hamlet. The greater dramatic potential of the construct that Laforgue called Hamlet is evident in one early twentieth-century French adaptation of Hamlet from a novel vantage point. This is Jean Sarment's Le Mariage de Hamlet (1922). Its direct descent from Laforgue's novella is, I think, indubitable: the points of coincidence are too exact to be fortuitous. The play opens with a prologue in which God the Father confers with Abraham and resolves to restore Hamlet, Ophélie and Polonius, who have been awaiting judgment for seventeen years, to their respective ages at the end of Shakespeare's Hamlet and to send them off to live in a little house on the edge of the Danish forest. Polonius and Ophélie promptly forget their previous existences, father becoming embroiled in village politics and daughter attracting the attentions of village swains and growing somewhat shrewish. Hamlet, however, cannot forget his past: he keeps (mistakenly) thinking himself to have been recognised by the local populace, demanding that Ophélie address him as 'Seigneur' even after their marriage, longing to hear a few words of equivocation, and speaking of his new peace and happiness in terms which make quite clear that he is finding them very tedious. His family begin in turn to find him boring and, eventually, embarrassing: rumours of lunacy arise when he entertains the guests at his and Ophélie's wedding with the story of their past. Only the servant girl Ophélie recognises his stature; and, tricked by villagers into thinking that there is
still some familial revenge to be done in Elsinore, he carries her off with him to Fortinbras' court at the end of Act II. They return chastened in the next act: Hamlet has discovered that his father was not a king but a groom. Rather more subdued by the news of bastardy than Laforgue's Hamlet had been, Sarment's seeks asylum with Ophélie and Polonius, who make him their swineherd. At the act's end, however, he returns to Hamletic form by killing Polonius when the old man threatens Ophelia's honour and proclaiming 'Je suis Hamlet, Prince de Danemark!' (p.23). He and the true Ophelia are then stoned to death, but they die with royal dignity:

..... Ils se mettent à genoux tous les deux, arc-boutés l'un à l'autre, épaule contre épaule.


OPHELIA: Oui, Hamlet, je vous aime..... Mon roi!

(p.24)

It should be obvious merely from this synopsis that it is not the plot of Le Mariage de Hamlet which invites audience attention, any more than it is the plot of 'Hamlet, ou les suites de la piété filiale' which holds the reader's attention. Sarment's play, like Laforgue's narrative, is animated by the ironies in the characterisation of its central figure. The consciousness of Sarment's Hamlet is caught between the heroic vocation which is the relic of his past and the bucolic banality which is his environment in onstage present. The content of his consciousness, considerably less learned than that of Laforgue's, is simply his Uhr-existence in Shakespeare's play. The context in which he finds himself is populated by other consciousnesses which are ignorant of the contents of his. As one of the villagers tells him: 'Oh! en Danemark, nous avons eu bien des rois tués. Mais je ne connais pas cette histoire-là et je crois bien que nos derniers rois n'avaient pas de fils' (p.6).
Writing a drama, Sarment is rather more emphatic (although arguably less subtle) about the ironic development of contradictory voices within his onstage fiction than Laforgue had been within his fiction written in narrative form. Sarment does, however, show the want of Laforgue's narrator. Both in the mildly malicious omniscience of God the Father and in Abraham's reading from the heavenly record books, the Prologue is an obvious, if clumsy, attempt to secure something of the same effect within dramatic form. The principal locus of irony in the play, however, is those speeches in which, partly by direct statement and partly by verbal echoes of the Shakespearean text, Sarment's hero articulates the disjuncture between his calling and his context:

HAMLET: "Être ou non pas Être" la question n'est pas là du tout. Mais, Être ce que l'on est, tu comprends?

WALDEMAR: Non.......

HAMLET: Chers amis, j'avais espéré dans une second vie me distraire un peu plus que dans la première. Mais, j'ai beau faire, je ne trouve point de distraction correspondant à ma nature, à mon état, à ma Naissance.

(p.12)

Even in an adaptation which is not so directly linked to Laforgue's 'Hamlet ou les suites de la piété filiale' as was Sarment's Le Mariage de Hamlet, one can find ironies wrought around another early twentieth-century French Hamlet. Possibly cued by Laforgue's construction of a tension between Hamlet's heroic role and his world, French adaptors seem to have been rather quicker than their English-language colleagues to exploit the ironic possibilities of a Shakespearean play-within-a-play derived from a Shakespearean play. As will have been evident in my previous remarks about two British one-act plays about Shakespeare's players, and as will be developed, in a slightly different connection, further on in this chapter, when English-language adaptors early in this century set dramas inside or
alongside their own, they did so for purposes of sentimental conflation, not ironic contrast. Such a contrast was, by its author’s account, the point of departure for Saint Georges de Bouhélier’s *La Célébre Histoire* (1928):

Un jour, me promenant dans le Parc de Versailles, j’y rencontrai une troupe d’acteurs qui y était venu tourner un film. Habillés de costumes voyants, ces comédiens m’attirèrent... Les opérateurs manœuvraient leurs appareils. Le metteur en scène indiquait les places. Les acteurs, le visage enduit d’un blanc macabre, prenaient des poses sous l’objectif, en exhalant des plaintes vagues... Un certain comique émanait de leur aspect. Se mêlant au tragique de l’histoire qu’ils tournaient, il lui conférait une saveur curieuse. La pensée me vint d’employer ces figures-là. J’aime les contrastes.

It is just such a contrast which animates de Bouhélier’s *La Célébre Histoire*, a Hamlet transposition of the sort which I have designated ‘detailed’. In the first and last of its three acts, a company filming *Hamlet* in the grounds of a chateau present just that picture which had commanded de Bouhélier’s attention in the park at Versailles. These sequences (which would fascinate anyone studying the early history of the cinema) include some fine moments of comedy. One of which I am especially fond contains a reminder of how often producers of *Hamlet* have, like critics of the play, seen it solely in terms of its title role. The actor playing Claudius is being scolded by the director for taking himself off from the filming when not needed before the camera:

BORIS: Vous ne vous occupez que de vos propres scènes. Comment voulez-vous comprendre l’action? Les sentiments qu’Hamlet exprime, les circonstances où il se trouve commandent vos actes...

LE ROI: Voilà 25 ans que je joue le Roi. C’est assez dire que je comprends mon rôle.

BORIS: Voilà 25 ans que vous jouez le Roi, mais il y a des parties dans *Hamlet* que vous n’avez même pas vues...
Boris is working to 'improve' Shakespeare's play, in which he finds traces of barbarism — notably, the Ghost of King Hamlet. Around Boris' film company, however, a modern melodrama of Hamlet, complete with a paternal ghost who is visible to the theatre audience, is being acted out in onstage 'real' life. The central character, Jacques Tessler, has, upon the death of his father broken off his theological studies in Germany and come home to the family chateau. The day of his father's funeral happens to be the day on which filming had been arranged to start. Jacques thus alternates between, on the one hand, investigating both the death of his father and also the relationship between his mother and uncle, and on the other hand discussing Hamlet with the director and the leading actor. This being a silent film, some of the discussion goes on while the film is actually being shot; but in all of it, Jacques plays purist to the Philistine director who finds Shakespeare in need of amendment in modern times. The first level of irony in La Célébre Histoire is that while its hero constantly sees himself as Shakespeare's hero, the director never makes the connection, not even after Jacques has killed his uncle.

There is, however, a further ironic twist which is unfolded in the course of the play. Jacques, who describes himself as motivated only by an instinct for truth, decides to kill his uncle on the evidence of (i) a journal kept by his father in his dying days, and (ii) the opinion of the local curé that his mother is under his
uncle's domination. But he had misconstrued the words spoken by his father's ghost:

LE PERE: Mons fils, aie pitie....Il faut pardonner.

JACQUES: Pardonner? A qui, mon père? (ici le fantôme disparait. Jacques a l'air égaré) Que voulait-il dire? Mon malheureux père? De qui faut-il que j'aie pitié? N'est-ce pas de lui? (pp.71-72)

Not at all, but not until the final scene, by which time the uncle is dead and Jacques has gone mad, does the Ghost return to say that he meant what he said: 'Il faut pardonner,' something he himself had signally failed to do in his own life. The film director's belief that some of Shakespeare's Hamlet is barbaric has been, in the end, confirmed by de Bouhélier through the words of a Ghost whose existence that director holds incredible and through the final straitjacketed condition of an Hamletic hero whom the director had failed to recognise.

iii. Three Ways of Not Being Prince Hamlet

I have in the preceding section both (i) attempted to draw parallels between the bulk of early twentieth-century English-language dramatic adaptations of Hamlet and Bradley's critical interpretation of the play, and also (ii) by comparison with the interpretation offered in Laforgue's novella and in two French adaptations contemporaneous with the English-language ones, to draw attention to dramatic (specifically, ironic) possibilities which were excluded from the English-language work. The rest of this chapter will attend to the opening up of possibilities in English-language work alone. This part of the chapter will examine three ways in which English-language adaptations of Hamlet since around the time
of World War II have manifested a reaction against that Bradleyan interpretation which posits at the centre of Hamlet an inalterable and symbolic figure of paradox. This paradox, a potential which cannot be actualised without destroying itself, is so constructed that it cannot be tampered with, and yet its terms are so generalised that it can be predicated of everyone. The interpretation, in other words, emphasises the Hamletic condition as inevitably tragic and as universally applicable.

a. psychoanalysis

It is only the former emphasis which is challenged by the group of Hamlet adaptations to which I will turn first. These are the more or less detailed transpositions, most of them dating from the late 1940's and the 1950's, which set out to psychoanalyse their Hamletic heroes—to search out the causes of a Hamletic condition and thus to render it comprehensible, and in some measure controllable. That is, they accept with Bradley that the condition of Shakespeare's Hamlet is a universally applicable and accessible image of the human condition, but at the same time they undertake to show both condition and image to be alterable. The interpretation at work in these transpositions is a Freudian one; and in the first of them it is specifically that which Ernst Jones, proposed in an article in 1910 and elaborated in a book published in 1949. Like Bradley, Jones saw the psychology of Hamlet as central both to Shakespeare's play and to human consciousness: Hamlet's 'universal appeal shows that its inmost theme must contain something to which the heart of mankind in general reverberates, and there is little doubt that this resides in the personality of the hero' (p. 20). Again like Bradley, Jones took the 'central mystery' of Hamlet to be 'Hamlet's hesitancy in seeking to obtain revenge for his father's murder' (p. 22). However, where what interested Bradley was the (in)activity of hesitation,
Jones was intrigued by its object, by what Hamlet delayed doing. And
where Bradley explained the 'fact' of Hamlet's delay by hypothesising
a psychological change induced by the Prince's loss of his father, Jones
explained Hamlet's 'specific abulia' by hypothesising a psychological
stasis — namely, an Oedipus complex. The child's desire for exclusive
sexual possession of the mother, and so for the death of the father, had
been carried out by the uncle. Hamlet's wish for incest and parricide
having been enacted by Claudius, 'his uncle incorporates the deepest
and most buried part of his own personality, so that he cannot kill him
without also killing himself' (p.88 \[\text{[52]}\]). However, while the Freudian
'Hamlet at heart does not want to carry out the task' (p.45) assigned
him, he is not conscious that what has been enjoined upon him is symbolic
suicide: 'Hamlet is suffering from an internal conflict the essential
nature of which is inaccessible to his introspection' (p.52 \[\text{[56]}\]).

Among English-language plays, the most thorough-going dramatisation
of a Freudian interpretation of Hamlet along the lines argued by
Ernst Jones is Elmer Rice's Cue for Passion, which was staged on Broadway
in 1958. Cue for Passion is set in contemporary Southern California and
resolved on psychiatric advice. The source of psychiatric advice is
a character named Lloyd Hilton, who, being a professor of criminology and
ten years older than the Hamletic hero, Tony Birgess, is only just
recognisable as a remote descendant of Horatio — and also, having been
summoned by the hero's mother and stepfather, of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.
Lloyd extracts quite a lot of information about domestic developments
from a housemaid who has no ancestor among the Shakespearean dramatic
personae. Moreover, he is aware that 'figures of speech usually aren't
accidental' \[36\] but indeed imply things which were never dreamt of in his
original's philosophy. Once Lloyd sets out to unpack one such figure of
speech, the final scene of Cue for Passion exorcises infantile ghosts and
guilts almost as rapidly as the final scene of Hamlet heaps up bodies. The hero is rapidly induced to acknowledge that he'd almost hated the father whom he has been purposing to avenge, that the news of his father's death (in somewhat suspicious circumstances) had provoked guilt pangs as if he had killed him himself, that the suspicion that his stepfather had killed his father and the knowledge that he had married his mother had exacerbated the guilt because it meant someone had done what he'd always dreamed of doing, and that he'd taken inaccurate aim at the figure he thought to be his stepfather — actually the Polonius figure, and only superficially wounded — because he was unable to shoot himself as personified in that guilty stepfather. Whence springs hope for the hero:

LLOYD: .....Which means that you really didn't want to commit suicide after all.

TONY: Seems so, doesn't it?

LLOYD: Hold that thought, Tony, it may be your salvation. (p.117)

All this is sorted out in the course of two pages of dialogue. In context it is not quite so indigestible as it must appear in précis: Rice, a veteran playwright past his prime, was nothing if not thorough in working the Freudian interpretation of Hamlet into line after line of Cue for Passion. The instrument of the hero's father's death had been a bronze bust which the Claudius figure had sculpted of the hero as an early adolescent. That its descent from the mantelpiece onto the skull of the hero's father had been the work of the Claudius figure rather than, as reported, an accident attributable to an earthquake tremor seems to be generally accepted onstage by the final act. By then, however, the 'facts' of the father's death have been rendered alongside the hero's wish for that death. In the third scene of the play Rice even requires his hero literally to enact his identification with both the father whom he would avenge.
and the uncle who would be killed by such vengeance. Drunk and sulking over the loss of his Queen at chess (a game which his uncle and father had been playing moments before the latter's death), Tony/Hamlet bends over the hearth and asks the housemaid to push that same bronze statuette off the mantelpiece and onto his own skull. Elsewhere he lectures the Ophelia figure on what he, an anthropologist, has learned in the jungles of Sumatra about

TONY: .....the malignant forces that infest the world. Do you think that by cutting through the jungle we annihilate pestilence and ferocity? No! We merely ingest them, take them into our hearts and minds, absorb them in our bloodstream. Not just the big killers — the tigers and the leopards — but the jackals, the hyenas, the vultures and the buzzards. All the miasmas too, and the poisonous fruits, the strangling parasites, the lacerating brambles. We sweep away the outward semblance and persuade ourselves that the substance has been destroyed. But within us it festers and proliferates, all the more deadly for being hidden behind a facade of smiles and decorous behaviour, of holly wreaths and mistletoe and tinsel. .....Evil came I out of my mother's womb and evil shall I return thither.

(pp. 54-55)

Rice's presentation of the Freudian interpretation of Hamlet is not conveyed solely through the Oedipal hero whom Jones (cued by Freud) sets at the centre of Shakespeare's play, but is duly worked out through other characters. Rice's Gertrude and Ophelia figures, for example, are introduced to the audience together. As soon as they have the stage to themselves, Grace/Gertrude announces that 'in bed, I think about man-eating tigers and the bubonic plague' (p. 5) — i.e., about her absent son and what could be happening to him on his anthropological expedition. She then proceeds to ask Lucy/Ophelia whether she had ever slept with Tony/Hamlet. Lucy/Ophelia, we learn, had rebuffed the hero's sexual advances (and lived regret it). At the end of Rice's prolonged and ponderous equivalent of the scene which Shakespeare sets in Gertrude's bedchamber, mother reminds son of the traumatic occasion in his childhood when she had refused to let
him continue to come cuddle up with her in bed every night. His response to the reminder is to kiss her passionately, but she, having just been lecturing him about his jealousy over her relations with all other men, breaks away. In other scenes, mother and girlfriend not only elicit virtually identical treatment from the hero, but they also exhibit virtually identical reactions to his behaviour. The housemaid and the Polonius figure are both made to supply reminders of birth trauma by their otherwise gratuitous observations that they have known the hero since the day he was born, while he himself is required to point out that he'll never see another day like that one again. Such details are almost embarrassing in the exposition, but they are evidence of the care with which Rice worked out a coherent Freudian psychology for his hero, articulated it in terms of that interplay amongst other coherent characterisations which constitutes his dramatic situation, and then reconstructed the action of the play as a series of psychological adjustments.

The same pattern is discernible, though clinically less exact and dramatically less predictable, in other transpositions of Hamlet written in English in the 1950's. Another late-in-life work of a major theatrical figure, Ashley Dukes' Return to Danes Hill was published in England in the same year (1958) that Rice's Cue for Passion was produced, and also published, in the United States. Dukes' script differs from Rice's in (among other things) retaining Shakespearean nomenclature, or something recognisably close to it, for all figures except his hero. Like Rice's script, however, Dukes' brings a young man back from an exotic expedition to a Hamlet-like domestic situation. His widowed mother has been married again, to the brother-in-law with whom she had been having an affair and who had more or less killed her husband, his brother, with the knowledge of it. The Norwegian wars of Shakespeare's Denmark become
at Danes Hill a parliamentary campaign, while Claudius' usurpation of his nephew's throne becomes the destruction of a line of trees planted by his brother and, more seriously, the illegal sale of books from his brother's library, before the estate had been valued, in order to subsidise his standing for parliament. Into this situation and on the eve of the anniversary of his father's death, the hero returns from a scientific expedition to the Arctic. There he had been having both extrasensory perceptions, all of them pertaining to his father, and also intimations of cosmic evil, rather more refined than those encountered by his American contemporary in the Sumatran jungle. As he explains to the Ophelia figure:

ANDREW: ..... In those years I found that almost any action, even as simple as the reading of an instrument, could bring with it a disturbing sense.... One might almost call it a sense of guilt. An awareness of taking part in the world's action, foreign and hateful because it was action, contrary to the purpose of pure knowledge. A consciousness of being a cog in the machinery of power, interest, ambition, the competing forces of mankind. 37

Where Rice required the services of both a professor and also a sharp-eyed and loquacious housemaid in order to point up the Freudian significance of the character interrelationships which he had adapted from *Hamlet* via Ernst Jones, Dukes proceeded somewhat more subtly. In the first place, he planted more Freudian clues in the dialogue and stage settings of *Cue for Passion* than any critic in search of sexual symbolism would ever dare dream of finding in an English drawing-room tragi-comedy. Stage directions require frequent use of the doors prescribed for the set. This might be ascribed to no more than a reading of well-made plays: however, behind one door, which is locked, the secrets of the father's estate lie hidden in his library; and around either this door or one leading onto a terrace, Dukes blocks all the mother-son encounters with which (as will be remarked below) he ends every scene of *Cue for Passion*. Moreover,
and more obviously, the principals are associated with symbolic objects, glosses on which are laced through the dialogue. From the exchange which opens the play, the audience learn that the late Sir Andrew Dane had cultivated trees and collected books, that Gertrude Dane tends roses, and that Claude Dane raises bulls and asparagus. Sir Andrew's hobbies will serve some plot function, but Gertrude's and Claude's seem to have been introduced solely in order to occasion such speeches as:

GERTRUDE: ......I did warn you to limit your felling to asparagus.

CLAUDE: That stuff pays a damned sight better than timber.

GERTRUDE: Succulent plant, sprouting from its bed in phallic innocence. A glutton for manure, I mean top dressing. Dissolving finally in a green mist of age that only looks like youth. The end of manly pride.

CLAUDE: My darling, why these details? (p.2)

One might well ask: as Freud remarks in The Interpretation of Dreams, 'No knowledgeable person of either sex will ask for an interpretation of asparagus.' Again, various speeches (mainly from the Polonius figure, Archdeacon Jasper Pollen) characterising Dukes' Gertrude as 'an instinctive woman driven by her appetites, one especially' (p.13) cohere around the Horatio figure's description of the rose which Gertrude has developed and which bears her name:

GERTRUDE: ...you shall help me with the garden...Do you know anything about that?

HORACE: The only bloom I recognize is the Gertrude Dane rose.

GERTRUDE: Flattering, if you were able to describe it.


GERTRUDE: English for voluptuous. I suppose I ought to thank you, Horace.

ANDREW: We shall make a botanist of him yet.

HORACE: Yours is not the only mother with a rose-garden. (p.46)
Inventing an anterior (and frustrated) relationship between
Gertrude and the Polonius figure, introducing and emphasising a
resemblance between Olivia/Ophelia and her late mother, and leaving no
doubts about the sexual consummation of the relationship between
Olivia/Ophelia and the younger Andrew/Prince Hamlet, Dukes plays
multiplication games with sexual triangles involving parents and children.
(It is, indeed, almost a relief when, in the middle of Act II, Horace/
Horatio and Olivia/Ophelia are sent off through the terrace door to
cut asparagus together, and it becomes clear that the younger generation
of the *dramatis personae* are about to form a complete triangle of their
own to match that of father Andrew — mother Gertrude — brother Claude.)
The most important of the triangles remains, however, that Oedipal one
which is drawn among the senior and junior Andrews and Gertrude. At the
end of every one of the four scenes of *Return to Danes Hill*, Dukes
brings the curtain down on a highly charged encounter between mother and
son; and in the dialogue of all four encounters, he more or less
immediately draws attention to paternal competition. Dukes' first scene
establishes, along with some plot exposition and quite a lot of character
presentation, Gertrude's determination 'to know Andrew his father's son,
the man of single purpose. How much of him is mine?' (p.9), and ends
with Andrew his father's son making his first entrance and flying into an
embrace with his mother. The second scene of the same act ends with
Gertrude working out the answer to her own question and not liking it at all:

**GERTRUDE:** The other Andrew....you are your father's son already!

**ANDREW:** No more than yours, Mother.

**GERTRUDE:** His shape of mind and body is yours. I hear his voice in
yours. I feel the searching of his judgement through your
eyes, his will, his solitary self-sufficiency!.....The scholar,
saint, contemplative, the gainer of himself and loser of the
world! Oh, Andrew, let him not rule you! Break loose while
there is time! Give yourself back to me! Living love has
power as well! Living love is possession too! You are mine!
You! You! He must not live again!
ANDREW: What are you saying?
GERTRUDE: He must not! Andrew! He must not! (pp. 38-39)

But he does: at the end of the single scene of Act II, Gertrude faints at the sight of Andrew emerging from his father's library and locking the door behind him. And at the play's end, Andrew, having abandoned Olivia/Ophelia to Horace/Horatio and apologised for having intruded upon Gertrude and Claude, becomes most like his father in setting out for a stint on a research ship and service to the only mistress who ever commanded the devotion of either father or son:

GERTRUDE: ....Not a woman, I imagine?
ANDREW: Not a woman, as generally understood. Though ships like this one are feminine.
GERTRUDE: But a bitch all the same, on any ocean. This science of yours, this eternal mistress!
ANDREW: She and I need each other. Until now, I never knew how much.
GERTRUDE: Father to son. His son and mine.....
ANDREW: Mother.
(They embrace in silence.)
GERTRUDE: Andrew. His story. Return to Danes Hill.

(ANDREW turns to shake CLAUDE's hand. Then he goes... GERTRUDE seats herself at her piano and begins to play with increasing tempo. CLAUDE stands listening.)

THE END (p. 86)

While it is obvious that Return to Danes Hill puts great structural emphasis upon a possessive relationship between mother and child, it is equally obvious that the would-be possessor in the passages quoted above is primarily the mother rather than the child, and that the competition is not between father and son for mother, but rather between mother and (absent) father for son. In the final act of the play Andrew Dane abandons both his mother and his heritage to his uncle quite as cheerfully (and in almost the same moment) as he obliquely congratulates Horace/Horatio...
upon the acquisition of Olivia/Ophelia. In both cases, he simply surrenders to dispossession as soon as he understands it.

It is here that the hero of Return to Danes Hill is at once closest to and yet finally farthest from the Hamlet of Ernst Jones' interpretation. Jones' Prince, fallen into a conflict between a command of which he is acutely conscious and a wish of which he is unconscious, is trapped there by 'that intellectual cowardice, that reluctance to dare the exploration of his inmost soul, which Hamlet shares with the rest of the human race' (p.91). Duke's scientist is made to fact the domestic and, by extension, universal guilt which extra-sensory perception has already given him advance, albeit obscure, notice. Not only did such perceptions anticipate wires announcing his father's death and then his mother's remarriage, but they also advised him of the felling of his father's trees and the illegal sale of his library. The perceptions had been cast as symbols, the latter two being respectively 'the sound or thought of a falling tree' and 'the image of a dust sheet over shelves' (p.38). Returned from the Arctic, he finds out what these symbols signified and — reversing plans to remain at Danes Hill and build there, in memory of his father, an international institute for research into extra-sensory perception — he simply goes away again. The dramatic logic of Return to Danes Hill, that is, is a kind of corollary to Jones' implication that Hamlet would not have been paralysed if conscience did not make intellectual cowards of us all.

The great divergence of Dukes' hero from Jones' interpretation of Hamlet — and, in my opinion, the reason why Return to Danes Hill is memorable only as craftsmanship — is that there is no conflict in him, nor for that matter anywhere in the play. Gertrude is, after all, contending with an absence, and anyhow her cause is clearly doomed from her early references to 'Andrew his father's son'. Andrew, unlike Jones' Hamlet, has no unconscious wishes; and, having nothing to hide, he
has no occasion for intellectual cowardice. Indeed, his only wish is for intellectual knowledge. Even carnal knowledge of Olivia/Ophelia is by him transmuted into science:

ANDREW: Olivia, it was complete and lovely.

OLIVIA: Complete, yes. I felt you might say that, without quite hoping for the word. It is so very like you, man and scientist together.

ANDREW: But completion is lovely, always. And science is knowledge of people as well as things. Elation, enrapturement by the pattern of experience.

OLIVIA: Amoeba, crystal or woman... But thank you for the enrapturement. There's a part of your nature turning all action into thought.

(p.23)

Nor is there any conflict within the hero's consciousness. Knowledge from extra-sensory perception and that from direct observation or information are not at odds in the mind of a man who can proclaim, as does Andrew the scientist, 'All secrecy does harm. Phenomena of any kind require to be made known' (p.45). Return to Danes Hill makes quite a lot of play with how phenomena are made known: beyond the primary presentation of his hero's concern with scientific investigation, Dukes discreetly but discernibly lards his script with reminders of the extent and intricacy of the means by which scientific (and other) findings are communicated, misrepresented and so debased. A press reporter who has no plot function is brought into the first and last scenes, and in between there have been far more wires and telephone calls than are necessary to keep events moving. Most importantly, there is Andrew's long and distressed account of a press conference at which his mention of extra-sensory perception had raised interest only in its potential for journalistic sensation, not scientific investigation. All these points have bearing on Dukes' presentation of his hero as pure scientist. But in the last analysis, Dukes' hero is Jones' Hamlet *manqué*: for all the resemblance between the
situation at Danes Hill and the home life of Jones' prince, and for all that Return to Danes Hill occasionally quotes from or alludes to Shakespeare's Hamlet, Dukes has deprived his hero of the vice (and reason thereto) which is essential to that Freudian reading of Hamlet. This may be why he alone of the dramatis personae bears a name nothing like that of a Shakespearean character; but why Ashley Dukes invented in Andrew Dane a hero whose initials were identical with his own, I cannot say.

Where Stewart's Hamlet is held up by a psychoanalyst, where Rice's Hamletic hero is rescued by the psychoanalytic services of the Horatio figure, and where Dukes' (ultimately not Hamletic) hero is too dispassionately knowing to need psychoanalysis from anyone, the title figure of Philip Freund's Prince Hamlet (1953) has two advisors, father and friend. After an interview in which a Ghost who knows his Freud has accused Prince Hamlet of hypochondria and misdirection of energies, Freund's Horatio protests:

HORATIO: ...This ghost tells you nothing that I have not been telling you these past five years.

HAMLET: You are not abstract. You use different words.


What this Prince Hamlet is made to understand is that terms such as these, and the moral problems crystallised around them, are but camouflage. All that is at stake is power. The adaptation is a transposition to twentieth-century categories rather than to a transposition to a twentieth-century setting — there are no scene or stage directions, and no specifications of place or time. It is indeed not so much a play for performance (which may be why it had failed to achieve one by 1965) as a series of dialogues which play variations on a theme of moral nihilism and cosmic cynicism. To this end Freund introduces a Lord Bishop who in Scene vi
is tricked by Hamlet into self-betrayal: the inquiries of the self-professed atheist Prince Hamlet about orthodox opinion on the subject of ghosts lead His Grace to believe that Hamlet has already killed Claudius and to betray his own ambitions for power by pegging the price of absolution — 'revocation of the right of investiture... and perhaps a cathedral to house my episcopacy' (p.31). Even Hamlet's speech to the Players is transformed into an expatiation on a theme of naked self-seeking:

**HAMLET**: All that I ask you, as players, is that you shall act your parts in subservience to the author's command, in tribute to his vanity, and not to expose your own vanity. (p.39)

As usual in these adaptations which require Hamlet to confront his own inner condition, the equivalent of the scene which Shakespeare sets in Gertrude's bedchamber contains the key confrontation. Gertrude informs Prince Hamlet that he was not begotten by King Hamlet, whose murder she herself had arranged on behalf of her son 'against a weak and spiteful man who could not beget Denmark a rightful heir....You are the usurper. You will be grateful and hold your peace' (pp.48-49). Prince Hamlet is permitted to point a moral — 'Claudius, Gertrude, Hamlet, all bearing the same guilt? Three hands reaching for the contaminated sceptre?' (p.48) — before introducing doubts about the truth of the story and then persuading her to kill herself in any case. She duly does. Claudius, who also is not certain whether or not Hamlet is his son, proves equally obliging. The following exchange suffices to induce him to offer the heir apparent advice on kingship:

**KING**: How shall you murder me?

**HAMLET**: By words. And by reminding you, your queen is dead.... I merely beg you to do it in the name of morality...and make a nice end to our unpretty story. (p.60)
Laertes and Hamlet having agreed to set up a rule of reason, the end finds Prince, now King, Hamlet enthroned.

Despite the unlocalised setting and the dialogue which doles out more moral and political sententiae than I have thought fit to quote, Freund's Prince Hamlet is much closer to detailed transpositions like Rice's Cue for Passion and Dukes' Return to Danes Hill than it is to those excessively schematic transpositions of Hamlet which were described earlier in this chapter. In all three, an Hamletic psyche has been exposed, layer by layer. Coherence and consistency are conferred upon a central figure who is further rationalised in audience understanding by his being characterised in his present relations with other figures. There is no need to hypothesise antecedents and inward workings: the adaptors make their heroes tell (or be told) quite as much as is necessary to account for their conditions and conduct. Moreover, though less markedly, the other figures are themselves established, developed and to some extent interrelated in psychologically plausible ways. In all three, the paradigms of the dramatic situation are not much soliloquies as may survive in some form from Shakespeare's Hamlet but rather scenes of confrontation, the equivalent of the Shakespearean bedroom scene always being built up into mutual revelations and recriminations. And in all three, the outcome, if not both happy and bloodless, is not the result of chance in the plot or sudden change of direction in the central character, but rather the plausible, almost predictable, outcome of the psychological interaction which has been represented.

In all three of these transpositions from the 1950's, the key which unlocks that paradox which was Bradley's Prince Hamlet is knowledge. Knowledge of self and knowledge of situation are, in varying proportions, acquired by the heroes of these transpositions and enable them to acknowledge and, perhaps modify, the psychological interactions in which they have
been trapped. That much knowledge would have solved Hamlet's dilemma is, as was noted above, suggested in Jones' interpretation of Shakespeare's play. It is thus gratifying to note, by way of postscript to my account of these three psychoanalytical transpositions, that Jones' interpretation had been stood on its head in a novel vantage point adaptation which preceded the earliest of them by some five years. This is J.I.M. Stewart’s 1948 radio play, graced by the same wit which would distinguish his later Shakespearean work for the BBC, The Hawk and the Handsaw. The play is set in the castle at Elsinore some 40 years after the end of Shakespeare’s Hamlet but moves back into the interstices of events represented in that play. To the question 'Why did Hamlet delay?' The Hawk and the Handsaw replies, 'Because he was being psychoanalysed.' The central character of the adaptation is a court physician, Dr. Mungo. He is a Scot who, after failing in his ministrations to another royal mind diseased in his native land, had come across the North Sea during the reign of King Claudius, only to fall into disfavour during the long reign of King Fortinbras. In a nice touch, Stewart introduces Mungo as reading Bright's Treatise of Melancholy in his old age, but then reveals that he had been practicing Freudian psychoanalysis in the troubled time of the previous reign. This is revealed in part by flashbacks and in part by the old man's recollections for the benefit of King Fortinbras and his chamberlain Horatio. Their memories of the bad old days have been stirred by a performance, audible in the background, of Hamlet by a visiting troupe of English players. First meeting Hamlet on the battlements of Elsinore, Mungo attempts to persuade the Prince that the paternal ghost he claims to have spoken with there is but a projection of his own infantile fantasies. He succeeds to the limited extent that hesitation, and a prompting to inquire within himself, took issue with that brisk resolve to yerk his uncle through the ribs forthwith. And thus, at least, had I gained time.....yet
that was little. For I knew well how strong are such depraved conceits as the prince was urged by, and what deep currents move then. I made a tryst to meet him there on the platform on certain following nights. 42

The nature of Hamlet's fantasies is made clear to him in another flashback, this one to an interview between Mungo and Hamlet immediately after the stabbing of Polonius. As the incident clearly indicates a crisis in his patient, Mungo prods Hamlet into remembering a childhood trauma: running one day into the king's walled orchard, the Prince had discovered his father fast in post-coital sleep with a young girl whom the boy had idolised as 'a goddess...and all women too — yea, sister, mother.....for at night she and my mother would mingle in my sweetest dreams.' 43 Awakened and ashamed, the girl had given young Hamlet a copy of The Murder of Gonzago to take his mind off what he had chanced to see; and she herself would be married off to old Polonius quickly enough for the paternity of Ophelia to be ascribed to him.

Once again, an interview with Mungo prompts Hamlet to set aside his resolve for immediate revenge and to plan instead to ponder the findings of the psychoanalytic session:

I am for England, Doctor, as they plan. It may be the salt breath of ocean will blow from my bewildered brain one mist or the other, my Ghost or your sunk memories. It may be that in some casual need for action — and I know not their drift of policy or how it may require quick counter — I'll find relief from these distractions which you have wrought me to.....But on all this, Doctor, I pledge you I will think. 44

As the analysis which he had undertaken does not look to have been a terminable one, it is in a sense fortunate that Stewart's Mungo then betook himself off to a patient in the country and had not returned thence by the time the Prince came home from England!
b. role-playing

The three transpositions described above differ from Bradley's Prince Hamlet in that they show the story of Hamlet to be adjustable in the light of character analysis. They manage to tamper with Bradley's figure of paradox by enacting and expounding it in the present tense and in present-day terms. In a sense, however, the adaptors who wrote these transpositions were not so much acting against Bradley as reduplicating, in dramatic form, his critical procedures 'from the psychological point of view' and proving that, as he had already pointed out, 'the psychological point of view is not equivalent to the tragic'. Moreover, they continued his (and many others') assumptions that the psychology of the character Hamlet—Shakespeare's Hamlet or an adaptor's Hamlet—is the centre of a Hamlet play, and, more importantly for my purposes, that this psychology is an accurate image of the workings of a human mind. No longer tragic, no longer a self-destructing paradox, the Hamlet figure is still detachable from a Hamlet play and still universally applicable as a paradigm of human consciousness and behaviour anytime, anywhere. It is this last point which is prodded in a second group of English-speaking adaptations, which I shall call theatricalist transpositions. Where the psychoanalytical transpositions concentrate on rationalising the character of Hamlet, the theatricalist transpositions set out to deny that any character deserving the name of Hamlet and any events in which anyone so named might be involved have anything to do with the world of twentieth-century audiences. Such transpositions are constructed in order to be demolished: analogies of character,
plot and dialogue are introduced only to be dismissed as invalid. Their artifice is incompatible, their form does not fit, with the 'real' world which the play purports to present.

The mode of dismissal generally duplicates Shakespeare's dismissal of the world of an Elizabethan stage Troy from the world of Elsinore in Hamlet. As was noted above, the inclusion of a troupe of players did not escape the attention of English-language adaptors of Hamlet in the earlier part of this century. There are also several pre-World-War-II adaptations of Hamlet which confer dignity and significance upon their present-day characters and situations by arranging them around a performance of Hamlet. In The Heart of his Mystery, an obscure one-act with which Frederick C. Lewis toured the United States in 1911, for example, the central character is an old Shakespearean actor named Barry who, degraded by drink and women, has remained in the theatre only by working as a night watchman. In this capacity he observes a performance of Hamlet, the last scene of which opens this adaptation, and, after the company have left him to his empty theatre, he goes onto the stage (left set up for an early morning rehearsal), plays with the properties, goes into the role of Hamlet, and then, with the timing of a veteran trouper, drops dead on the line '...he has my dying voices; the rest is — '. Finding his corpse in the morning, the company work out at what point in the script the old actor had been interrupted and finish the scene for him — thereby ending the adaptation as it was begun. Somewhat similarly, Earle Grey's 1936 radio play The Goddess Fortune has for protagonists a successful actor, John Vernon, and his hapless young understudy, Hopkins. On the night he is to open in the title role of Hamlet, 'Lucky Jack' collapses in his dressing room
with an ailment requiring immediate surgery. In his delirium, Vernon can speak only quotations from Shakespeare. Sequences in his dressing room and then in hospital are played off against sequences (some of them voiced-over) from the performance of Hamlet in which Hopkins has taken over. Both Vernon's delirious quotations and the intercut passages from Hamlet are distributed with an eye for their appositeness unto the central character's situation. For example, the 'To be or not to be soliloquy' follows directly on Vernon's wife's consent to an operation of which the surgeon gives warning that 'the best I can say is while there's life there's hope.'

Philip King's Without the Prince (1939) again emphasises a fusion of its central character with the central role of Shakespeare's Hamlet. The central character of the adaptation is one Beverley Elloughton, an actor who in a fit of amnesia has wandered out of Her Majesty's Theatre in London on the day before he is to open there in the title role of Hamlet, and into a farmhouse in the village of Upper Netherwick, where the local dramatic society is staging the same play on the same night and where the title role has likewise fallen vacant on the eve of opening night. That the amnesiac stranger is the man to fill it is evident from his appearance at his first entrance:

A tall man in a long dark cape and a black hat....about thirty years of age. Tall, fair-haired and slim, with a lean, handsome, pale and sensitive face....he is very distraught. His thoughts wander and often a far-away expression comes into his eyes. Sometimes he pauses in his speech and a look of complete bewilderment comes over his face, and it is only with a gigantic effort that he gets back to the thread of his conversation. He has a nervous trick of passing his hand over his brow when speaking. His voice is really beautiful and his diction perfect.
At the end of the first act he reveals to the villagers that he doesn't know his own name. At the end of the last act, his memory having been restored and his impresario and actress-mistress from Her Majesty's Theatre having caught up with him, he announces to the Londoners that he will play Hamlet in the village production rather than the West End one because

STRANGER: ......Beverley Elloughton as Hamlet may mean something to those people sitting in their comfortable stalls in London, but Hamlet, Prince of Denamrk, means a great deal more to...Upper Netherwick. I have given my promise and I'm not going to break it now.49

What has restored 'The Stranger' to his identity as Beverley Elloughton ('Sammy' to his friends) has been the role of Hamlet. In Act II, his unaccountable picking up of cue lines spoken by the village amateurs prompts them to ask him to take over the part from the local Squire's son, who, incapacitated with a hang-over, never appears in the play other than by name. In Act III, and in costume as Hamlet, Elloughton is practicing the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy when he first meets the actress who has come up from London in search of him. She takes up her cues, and it is in the roles of Ophelia and Hamlet that he recognises both her and, at last, himself:

MADELEINE: 'Good, my lord,
How does your honour for this many a day?'

(The STRANGER has spun round as she speaks, but only pauses for a second before answering.)

STRANGER: 'I humbly thank you; well, well, well.'

MADELEINE: 'My lord, I have remembrances of yours,
That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you, now receive them.'

(The STRANGER is now staring at her...an almost frightening look in his eyes. He speaks the next lines automatically in a curious, detached voice.)
STRAngER: 'No, not I; I never gave you ought.'

MADELEINE: (looking him full in the eye through all this) 'My honour'd lord, you know right well you did.' (The STRANGER now clutches her shoulders, holding her at arm's length, his eyes dilated. MADELEINE delivers a few more words.) 'And, with them words of so. . .' (Her voice trails away. They stand staring at each other. After a long pause, MADELEINE speaks... as if to a little baby.) Hello, Sammy.

STRAngER: (the past fighting through) Hello... Madel... (He crashes to the floor at her feet, in a dead faint.)

On recovering, he is at first unable to recognise the villagers. Without the Prince makes some attenuated play with arranging them, who account for seven of its ten dramatis personae, in relationships which correspond to those assigned them in the play-with-a-play. For example, the village girl, who plays Ophelia has been flirting with the amateur actor of Hamlet, the unseen son of the Squire, and is reproved by her father and brother, who don't approve of the production. She is also attached romantically rather than filially — to the local police constable who plays Polonius.

Such arrangements are of minor matter in King's script. They are, however, worth remarking because it is an adaptation exactly contemporaneous with Without the Prince — and, like it, one intended for amateur performance — that one begins to find English-language adaptors making detailed transpositions of Hamlet to a contemporary setting and, while not travestying the transposition, ultimately rejecting the analogies which they introduce. This adaptation is Nora Ratcliff's Hamlet Wears Homespun.
(1938), a one-act set in rural Yorkshire. The play presents an eighteen-year-old boy's adjustment to his widowed and attractive mother's second marriage, to a former suitor distinguished by obtuse, kindly self-assurance. There is also an Ophelia figure in the person of a high-strung sister, and the presence of an old gossip in the dramatis personae could be accounted the inclusion of a Polonius figure, though her principal function is to offer and elicit information. The boy wants to get his hands on the family inheritance, or at least on a watch which had belonged to his father — who, it is suggested, had been a strange man. Both the boy and his dog are rude to the mother's second husband. Domestic crisis breaks when stepfather addresses son as 'Hamlet' because 'tho looks glum enough' and proposes to sell the dog. The boy loses his temper and goes off, threatening dire action, but what he does is to shoot the dog himself, returning to say 'Thanks, Father' to his stepfather.

The suggestion which Ratcliffe introduces is that the boy who looks glum enough to be Hamlet is trying to take on a role which neither fits him nor tallies with the 'facts' of the situation in which he is presented: he can only come to terms with that situation by abandoning his Hamletic pretensions. The same point is made, and put to the same purposes of bittersweet laughter, in Terence Rattigan's Love in Idleness (1944). Rattigan's play is a three-act romantic comedy which is set (for the first two acts) in a Westminster drawing-room and which was a vehicle for the Lunts in the West End, and Ratcliff's is a one-act domestic comedy which is set in the sitting room of a Yorkshire farmhouse and which won first prize in an International One-Act Theatre
Competition; but the identity of dramatic logic between the two plays is striking. Rattigan's Hamletic figure is another late adolescent boy disturbed by the mature sexual activity of his widowed mother, in this case a liaison with a married, titled and wealthy Cabinet Minister of whose politics he disapproves and to whom he takes an instant dislike. With three acts to fill, Rattigan makes rather more elaborate play of the discrepancy between Hamletic pretensions and the "facts" of character and situation as he has established them. The boy's role-playing is the central joke of Act II of Love in Idleness, and, as in Hamlet Wears Homespun, it is the Claudius figure who spots the signs of role-playing and decodes them in the best of good humour. After the boy has made a brief and sulking appearance in a black tie and with a book about poisons under his arm, his elders comment:

JOHN: ....He's having the time of his life.....He's playing Hamlet.

OLIVIA: Hamlet? What do you mean?

JOHN: Haven't you noticed? You watch him.

OLIVIA: I have noticed an odd look about him at moments. Do you think that's what it is?

JOHN: Certainly. That's his 'antic disposition'.....And then what about that black tie?.....That's his 'inky cloak'.

OLIVIA: Oh, John! Then he must be upset about it.

JOHN: Nonsense. You told me yourself he never cared for his father. Besides, it's well over three years since he died. It's just sheer play-acting — for our benefit.

OLIVIA: Come to think of it, I believe his school did do Hamlet once.

JOHN: (Triumphantly.) There you are! And I bet he played the Prince.

OLIVIA: No, I don't think so. I think he played a lady-in-waiting.
The joke is woven through the dialogue and business of the act for some pages. Then the boy's pretensions as investigator and avenger of an Hamletic situation are undercut before his own eyes as it is made clear to him that he has misread the situation. At his summons, the estranged wife of his mother's paramour arrives, informs the boy that she has no interest in recovering her spouse, and exchanges civilities with Olivia and Sir John. Then Olivia explains to her son how she had fallen out of love with her late husband, an unsuccessful doctor, in Baron's Court, and into love with Sir John and the elegant life which he subsidises for her in Westminster. The play could have ended there, with the boy brought to an intellectual apprehension of the facts of the situation. However, Rattigan removes mother and son to Baron's Court for a final act in which, under the combined influences of self-enforced poverty and a love affair of his own, the boy is brought to an emotional acceptance of those same facts while some subsidiary plot developments enable Sir John to make an honest woman of Olivia.

In Hamlet Wears Homespun and in Love in Idleness, analogies of character and situation with Shakespeare's Hamlet impose an edge of amusement and sentiment on more or less formulaic plots of domestic (and, in the case of Love in Idleness, romantic) disruption followed by reconciliation. The analogies must be discredited and discarded before the reconciliation can occur. The pattern recurs in later transpositions of Hamlet which establish their central figures as shocked melancholics in the manner of Bradley's Prince and then proceed to make them look very ridiculous.
indeed. However, in these later transpositions, the analogies became even more important, almost operating in lieu of plot rather than causing a temporary complication or obstacle within it.

In Bernard Kops' *Hamlet of Stepney Green* (1958), for example, Shakespearean analogies of character and situation hover as an ironic way of distancing and ordering autobiographical material. Kops, by his own account, sees such material, his audience's concerns, and major works of the Western dramatic tradition as intersecting in one big (un)happy family:

> If I write about my family, I hope I'm writing about other families... I happen to think that *King Lear* is a play about a father and his three daughters; that *Oedipus* is a play about a family. And that we want to know whether we are in a similar situation, and whether we may possibly escape. But whether I get through to other people is less important to me than understanding my own situation.54

The *Hamlet of Stepney Green* was Kops' first attempt to understand his own situation, and one may wonder how much understanding the play offers anyone: as one critic has put it, its main strength is 'naive sentimentalism, unspoilt by any overstrain or inconsistency of intellectualising.'55 Kops' hero, David Levy, is a would-be pop-singer and poseur, aspiring to be 'prince of song, a prisoner of seasons, a disciple of dust'.56 His father, Sam Levy, King of the Herring Vendors of London's East End, spends a long Act I worrying about his son's lack of practicable prospects and dying (by choice) in his own garden, poisoned only by the souring of his marriage and the sense of having missed out on life in the living of it:
SAM: My heart is jumping, all the bitterness of years I can taste in my throat. I've been poisoned by someone or something. What's the odds? By my life or my wife. But my wife was my life; so my life poisoned me, so my wife poisoned me.

DAVID: She? Poisoned him? My mother?

SAM: What do I care? I don't want to live another day; die quietly, Sam, let no shame come on the name of Levy..... So here — goes — Sam — Levy poisoned by his wife or his life; a smalts herring dealer of Wentworth Street — mourned by his...crazy crooning son. Oy, oy, Shema Yisroel — Dead Mother keep me warm.

(He dies.)

DAVID (rushing around the stage): Hi, there, everyone; come out, come out, my father is dead; he is dead; he's been poisoned; for God's sake let's have some light, lights — lights...

(pp.124-126)

Invisible to all except his son, Sam comes back as a good-tempered Ghost to observe the arrangements for his own funeral and offer paternal advice which David quickly accommodates to a new princely ambition:

SAM: ....You must grow up. You must become yourself.

DAVID: I've got it! At last! There's someone I will become.

SAM: What do you mean?

DAVID: (excited): Everything fits together..... You're my own special ghost. Before, you were only my father — now! Nothing can stop us — we're going to have a marvellous time. I've got it all worked out.

SAM: Davey — Davey — calm down — take it easy. What can I do with him?

DAVID: Don't worry Dad — I am doing this for you. To avenge your death — your murder.

SAM: Where do you keep on getting that idea from — I wasn't —

DAVID: (very excited): Listen — Shush! No time for argument — you're right — I must become myself — I must become a crazy prince to the bitter end. I can hardly wait for all that murder and chaos at the end.....I'll wait until I have all the evidence and I'll strike! When everyone is dead I'll live here all alone — just crooning to the cobwebs.
SAM: Oh — I see — Oy-vay — smir — I'll have to go along with him — otherwise — Please, Davey, I must hand it to you — a wonderful scheme — but please — take your time — and let me arrange the killings — after all, they can't hang a ghost.

(p.135)

What Sam arranges is the rapid remarriage of his widow to the Claudius figure and then, in the final sequence of the play, the even more sudden infatuation of his son with the Ophelia figure, to whose charms the son had so far been indifferent even though the father's fancy for her was apparent on his deathbed. Conniubial celebration thus supplants slaughter; and although David's ambitions for princely revenge have been baffled by love, he does get, out of nowhere, an opportunity to realise his earlier ambition to become prince of pop singers. This plot, such as it is, simply occurs in the interstices of the songs, comic routines and cross-wiring of dialogue which it exists to occasion. The jokes most important for my purposes here are the many which show up the silliness of David's posing as Hamlet. For example, before pretending to capitulate to his son's resolutions for revenge, the paternal Ghost tries (and fails) to explain to David that 'poison' had been a figure of speech:

SAM: ....Listen Davey...
for years I told you I was going to die. Well, here I am, or rather, here I am not.

DAVID: You're hedging — poor ghost.

SAM: 'Ere, cut that out. Don't you poor ghost me. And don't sulk....Come on Davey — don't mope — you're only young once — let's be gay.

DAVID: Look — how can I? Especially now — don't you see you were killed — we've got to avenge your murder.

(DAVID wanders around the room wrapped in thought.)
SAM: Murder? Oh, what's he on about now? Oh, well — listen — even if I was killed, I don't want revenge for that, whether I was poisoned, gassed, burned, or struck by lightning. I want revenge for the way I lived — for the self-deception, the petty lies and silly quarrels. Anyway, what do you mean murdered?

DAVID: Come off it — you know perfectly well that you were poisoned.

SAM: Oh, Davey — you've got it all —

DAVID: I heard you on your death-bed.

SAM: Oh — listen — I meant —

Likewise, the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy is doubly deflated — first by being recast in Yiddish slang, and then by being interrupted with the talk of card-players whose game it fails to disrupt:

(DAVID sweeps around the stage and booms out...)

DAVID: To be or not to bloody well be, believe me, that is the question! Whether it is better to me a bisle meshuga —

WHITE: Twist.

DAVID: Or to take alms for the love of Allah. To kick the bucket or to take forty winks.

(All look entranced at the boy.....)

STONE: He should have been an Hector.

BLACK: BUST!

GREEN: Pay twenty-ones — five cards and pontoons only.

WHITE: Pay me, then.

DAVID: To take forty winks no more and by Ali Abracadabra to end the sourous and the hire purchase, please God by you.

(BESSIE /GERTRUDE/ and SEGAL /CLAUDIUS/POLONIUS/ are flirting in a corner.)

DAVID: There are the consumer goods for the frum yids. To kick the bucket, to take a nap at the race-track — ah! there's the snag, for on that slip of paper what names were written — blown away by the wind — blown away, etcetera, you should live so long.
STONE: Davey! I've got it all worked out. You team up with Prince Monologue and together you sell tips and sing your philosophy to the boys down the lane.

DAVID: Oh, pipe down!

(p.143)

Obviously, a speech like this comes very close to travesty. However, where travesty works by overt disjunctures between a Shakespearean text or texts on the one hand, and on the other, types (of figure, situation, and/or idiom) which are scripted to obtain across the whole of the stage, here the discrepancy is confined to the central character and his Shakespearean antecedents. And the more ridiculous he is rendered by the discrepancy, the more 'real' becomes the rest of the onstage world — even when it too is, as the colourful names of the card-players suggest, cast in types.

Jokes, songs, and type-figures abound again in a very recent transposition of Hamlet emphasising the fictitiousness of Hamlet's role. This is Adrian Mitchell's Mind Your Head: A Return Trip with Songs (1973). One can almost work out the setting and most minimal plot from the title and subtitle: in Act I a London bus (No.24) goes from one terminus of its route to the other, and part way back again in Act II. Meanwhile, a joking Hamlet is played out among the London Transport employees on the bus. The Conductress enters, hungover and wearing a bridal veil over her uniform, and is greeted by the Driver:

DRIVER: Hello Mother.

CONDUCTRESS: I can't remember drinking but I must have been drinking....Owen! Haven't you noticed anything?.....

DRIVER: Yes, we've got one of those new open plan buses.....
CONDUCTRESS: Owen. I'm not only your conductress, I'm your mother. Look at me.

(Takes off veil. DRIVER looks, walks over, brushes off confetti.)

CONDUCTRESS: (stepping dramatically on to platform) I got married. Again....

(DRIVER, outraged, runs to mother and thrusts out and taps the mourning band on his arm.)

DRIVER: You're not meant to be marrying, you're meant to be mourning. Dad only shuffled off his mortal a month ago....

(DRIVER rushes back to cab, grabs snap tin...opens tin, produces skull.)

DRIVER: (to skull) There she is Dad, in all her gory glory. What about it Dad? Are you going to bless the bride?..... And who's the lucky maniac?.....Whom have you married, mother? Whom? Whom? Whom?

CONDUCTRESS: Your own dear father's brother. Your jovial uncle —

DRIVER: Claud?

CONDUCTRESS: Claud.

DRIVER: CLAUD. (Addresses audience.) My name is Owen Stubber. I live two doors away from my mother in the cockney-Welsh ghetto of Kilburn. I'm a driver on the number 24 route from South End Green, Hampstead, to Pimlico and back again....And so was (Putting his cap on the skull) my late father before me. And the Inspector on this Route is my clammy Uncle Claud....Another busman, but no more like my father than Stirling Moss to the late Sir Gerald Nabarro.....I am seized up with psychic agony, but if I must be seized up with psychic agony, I would rather be seized up with psychic agony in the postal district of North West Three than anywhere else on earth — because...

And so into a song about Hampstead. The father's ghost duly appears to his son and, being able to communicate only by mime, does charades identifying himself and enjoining revenge upon an Uncle Claud whose make-up, costume and mien make him resemble Hitler. The Hamlet joke — including the 'To be or not to be'
soloquy as spoken by Uncle Claud in the manner of Frankie Howard and addressed to a man who joins the passengers — is developed by fits and starts through the Driver's hesitations about running his uncle over with the bus, to the Driver's and the Conductress' recognition that they are in love with each other. The analogies with and allusions to Hamlet are not necessary to keep the show, as it were, on the road: the Conductress' calling out of the stops on the No. 24 London Transport Bus routes provides as much order as Mind Your Head needs. They serve rather to confirm, by their emphatic absurdity, the truth of a succession of wildly improbable passengers — a defecting ballerina named Scotland Yardbird, a Freak who sings headlines from Oz magazine, a Civil Servant who sings that his job is torturing people, Gluepot Oliver of the National Organisation of Extremely Stupid People, and even 'QUEEN ELIZABETH II on REGAL PANTOMIME HORSE, dragging stuffed corgis on wheels' 58 who get on and off the bus and who are offered by the playwright as 'conflicting images' in a show which the author described as being like both 'a truthful colour supplement' and also

a patchwork quilt being waved vigorously like a flat. Some of the squares are dark, some are cheerful. They're sewn together with two of our best known legends, Hamlet and Hitler. 59

With Mind Your Head, and to some extent with The Hamlet of Stepney Green, one is dealing with playwrights whose working assumptions about dramatic form and artistic truth are closer to those operative in the group of adaptations to which I am about to turn than they are to those of Nora Ratcliff writing for the interwar
amateur theatre or of Terence Rattigan writing for the West End of a few years later. With that considerable concession, I think it possible to trace a recurrent question across the theatrical transpositions of Hamlet written in English since about 1939. The question is Hamlet’s own ‘What’s Hecuba to him or he to her...?’ The question can be pointed in very different directions — towards reconciliation with the ‘facts’ of twentieth-century existence in both Ratcliff’s and Rattigan’s plays, towards a celebration of those facts in Kops’ or Mitchell’s, or even (as I shall be suggesting further on) towards that tragedy which is the impossibility of formal tragedy in Stoppard’s Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead.

Equally variable are both the emotional insistence and intellectual precision with which the question is put, and also the extent to which the posing of it is integral to the play which carries the role playing or merely an ironic distancing device in lieu of any real order. But the question itself — whether received dramatic images of human character can accommodate contemporary fact and feeling without falsifying them — remains constant. Almost equally constant is the posing of the question in some provincial backwater or ethnic ghetto wherein the received images are bound to be a bit out of true. And when, as in all the theatricalist transpositions discussed above, the answer is negative, there arises a second question, memorably posed by a 1954 Hamlet de Tarascon: ‘Être ou non pas être ridicule, c’est la toute la question.’ It seems appropriate to borrow the formulation from a French playwright (Jean Canolle), as the question had effectively been posed, long before it would get much consideration among English-language adaptations, in Laforgue’s...
novella and Sarment's play — both of which seem to me to have been more successful in leaving the options open than most of the English theatricalist transpositions have been.

c. collage

Even though they conserve far more of Shakespeare's text than do either of the orders of transposition described above, the third group of adaptations of Hamlet which I will discuss in this section of my chapter are much the most direct and emphatic in reacting against an interpretation of Prince Hamlet as a character paralysed in paradox. These are the adaptations which my Chapter I cited (pp. 34-35) as the category of 'collage,' and they are the work of adaptors who might be designated 'disintegrators'. Where the psychoanalyst and the theatricalist transpositions both exploit audience preconceptions of the character of Hamlet, showing it to be alterable in the one case and no longer applicable in the other, the collages attack such preconceptions from the start. Adaptors writing psychoanalyst transpositions offered Hamlet-like central figures who came to control and change their fates (and so, the actions of their respective plays) once they were made to construe their characters and situations in the same terms as these had been constructed for the audience — i.e., as post-Freudian models of the human psyche in its interaction with others. Adaptors writing theatricalist transpositions offered central figures who were brought to understand that their constructions of themselves as Hamlets and their situations as Elsinores were fraudulent roles. The disintegrators, however, attempt to banish the traditional Prince Hamlet from the text-in-performance of Hamlet, and they do so by tearing Shakespeare's text apart and
reordering it, often with interpolations of non-Shakespearean material and always in counterpoint to wildly untraditional visual effects.

The Prince Hamlet whom the disintegrators would refuse even a first foothold in their adaptations is, strictly speaking, not so much that figure constructed in Bradley's interpretation of the play as a lowest common denominator of the critical and theatrical heritage of Hamlet. The antipathy of these adaptors to such a Prince Hamlet is pronounced. Perhaps the mildest statement is the most recent. In a programme note to the 1975 revival of his 1972 Hamlet for the Triple Action Theatre, Steven Rumbelow objected to 'the very neat and sickly archetype we are accustomed to' and proclaimed:

Once again there has been no attempt in making changes to pander to the traditionalist or to those who would that their image of the pale prince in black, carrying skull and notebook and speaking nicely were the only Hamlet.61

Joe Papp, defending the so-called Naked Hamlet which was first staged at his New York Shakespeare Festival in 1967, objected to a nineteenth-century Hamlet 'left to posture on a mantelpiece into the twentieth-century, a petrified figure with a skull in his hand' and to 'pseudo-psychological interpreters of Hamlet...who dwell on love, melancholia and self-pity, substituting molasses for the hard, clear-cut facets of a brilliant gem', and proclaimed:

This production attempts to aim radioactive iidium 192 at the nineteenth-century forgery and by gamma ray shadowgraphing to reveal the authentic veins lying beneath the petrified fat that for years has been taken for the genuine article. We seek to fire away at the accumulated layers of dark, reverential varnish to discover the fresh, bright colours of the original.

And finally, Charles Marowitz, asked in a 1972 interview whether the prime objective in his Hamlet Collage had been 'to debunk the notion of the romantic hero,' replied:
That was part of it. The prime motive was to try and show audiences that the Hamlet character, whom people have often venerated as being too sensitive to commit murder, was in fact a very disreputable person. 63

Nearer the time (1964) of the original collage, he recorded rather more maliciously-phrased motives:

I despise Hamlet.
He is a slob,
A talker, an analyser, a rationalizer.....
He is, quite literally, a mess; compounded of distortions, exaggerations, contradictions, all put through the strainer of time and delivered to a twentieth-century sensibility which is itself as complicated and contradictory as the long history the character has passed through. 64

Rumbelow, Papp and Marowitz, then, all undertook their adaptations as attacks on a traditional Prince Hamlet. I will attend in a moment to the obvious point of the variance among them as to who or what they respectively took that figure to be. Here, however, I would simply emphasise that they all situated him, not in Shakespeare's text, but in the minds of their audiences. All three adaptors are also directors; and all three were concerned with the text as performed in the theatre and concentrated their attentions on the audience's experience of a production rather than upon the intellectual patterns of a play script. Moreover, all three of these collage Hamlets were in some sense conceived as theatrical experiments: Rumbelow's was devised for production by his Triple Action Theatre group, a company which follows Jerzy Grotowski's recommendations for performing and staging; Papp's started out at Yale in 1967 'as an experiment...to test the play to its outer limits'; 65 and Marowitz' was devised for a 1964 experimental workshop and season at which he, Peter Brook and twelve members of the Royal Shakespeare Company tried out new production methods, with special attention paid to the ideas of Antonin Artaud. 66

Moreover, all three underwent modification in rehearsal and even in
production, after observation of audience response.\textsuperscript{67}

Although I have not seen a staging of Papp's collage, I think it fairly clear that by thus keeping their eyes on audience response to a dramatic text in performance, all three adaptors did succeed in their attacks upon Prince Hamlet. They did not do so by, as the transpositions discussed above had done, tinkering around with the inner logic of character-situation-action or toying with and testing the applicability of that interpretative triad to the twentieth century. Rather, all three adaptors went back to the original text and so disarranged it as to shortcircuit any and every received interpretation which might limit audience experience of that text in the theatre. They cut the text, redistributed it, inverted it, and (in the case of Rumbelow and Papp) interpolated it. Their incursions upon the text, moreover, were reinforced and shaped by shocks from every element of theatrical production — setting, costuming, lighting, blocking, business, line delivery and sound. All three were especially strong in their use of visual effects: to some extent, they could each be described as a sequence — ranging from the random in Papp's \textit{Naked Hamlet} to the rigidly ordered in Rumbelow's \textit{Hamlet} — of stage images accompanied by various sound effects, many of which were lines from Shakespeare's \textit{Hamlet}.

\textbf{What is less clear to me is exactly what, if anything, was being offered in lieu of the detested Prince Hamlet and how successfully was the substitute established. From the quotations on page 294 above, it is clear that both Rumbelow and Papp attacked the traditional figure of Hamlet as an image and not as a critical interpretation, an hypothesis inferred behind Shakespeare's text on the basis of evidence within it. It is also clear from the surrounding statements that both purported to be countering the old image with a new one.}
Papp offered an image which itself recedes into another image:

'In this production Hamlet is the Phantom of the Opera of the silent film.' He might as well have called him that as anything, for, on the evidence of the printed text, the whole point of this production seems to have been to bring the audience inside the distracted brain of Hamlet, wherein all options would be open and anything could happen:

Once the decision is made that distraction is the norm, then all the psychological questionings — the why’s — become totally irrelevant. This conclusion begins to serve as a liberating force which cuts the play from its nineteenth-century moorings and sends it aloft, free-floating in twentieth-century outer space.... Questions of action or thought are meaningless..... With the eradication of the "why," the work process was dictated by "what" and "how." If inadvertently an actor would raise the "why," it was easy enough to strike the questioner dumb with "why not" or "because." This reply may have sufficed to squelch the Method-Acting instincts of a New York cast, but it is an adequate answer only within a production which has set out, as this one did, to present Hamlet, the observing audience, and the contemporary world around them as mad. Given that interpretative ambition, any image will do, for all are equally empty.

Rumbelow countered that 'very neat and sickly archetype' of Hamlet with a 'figure caught in a web of circumstances that tunnel him in one circular direction — from and to Fortinbras.' The image of the web was, in production, inescapable: a latticework of rope hung over the stage and, picked out with lights, the performers were here enmeshed in it, there dangling from it. The connection with Laertes entirely eluded me: that figure was cut from the dramatis personae. At least one member of the audience, in other words, registered the image (and applauded the technical brilliance with which
it was developed) but failed to apprehend the full significance intended by it.

With Marowitz the question is somewhat more complicated. In the judgments upon Hamlet which are quoted above (p. 295), he is neither attacking an image nor offering one. He appears, rather, to be counteracting an interpretation with an interpretation of his own. His own is developed and defended in the long essay which is prefixed to the published text of the third version of his Hamlet collage. Parts of this essay proceed in the mode (although hardly the manner) of Bradley's inquiries 'from the psychological point of view':

Marowitz constructs a character out of a conjunction between psychological constitution and antecedent events, both more or less hypothetical. What they construct even bears a faint resemblance to the Hamlet of Laforgue as seen by the socially sensitive:

Hamlet, like many contemporary intellectuals, equates the taking of a position with the performance of an action.... Like these armchair-commandos, Hamlet brilliantly defines his private and public dilemma...The paralysis which ensues is delightful because it enables him to indulge both his fantasy and his masochism.

(p. 18)

The phrasing of Marowitz' inquiry into 'this watery Wittenberg intellectual' (p. 21) long anticipates its findings and betrays that these parts of the essay are merely elaborations upon the announcement made near the beginning: 'I despise Hamlet.'

Marowitz' account of Hamlet and its central figure is, I would suggest, not so much an interpretation as an emotional response. As such it is, I believe, exactly suited to the collage technique by which he communicates it in his adaptation. Among English-language adaptors of Shakespeare, Marowitz is probably the most publicised and possibly the most extreme exponent of the collage technique. His
Hamlet was followed by his Macbeth, Othello, Taming of the Shrew, Measure for Measure and The Merchant of Venice. In sheer number, this leaves him slightly behind Rumbelow's record of seven collage adaptations; but a comparison of their respective Hamlet collages shows Marowitz' disruptions of the Shakespearean text to be far the more radical. Rumbelow and, to a far greater extent, Papp both retained the main lines of Shakespearean sequence and, consequently, story. And it was this that Marowitz set out to eradicate from Hamlet by making a collage of the play:

it is this relentless narrativeness, this impregnable closed circuit of story-lines, which constricts the power and suggestiveness of what the play has become. Once the narrative sequence is broken, one had direct access to the play's ambience.

(p.13)

The 'ambiences' to which access is thus given are those proper to expressionism. Collage work, being essentially a sequence of discrete and more or less discordant images, seems to me to be exactly appropriate for imitating and communicating emotion and for imposing abstract pattern. Marowitz has defended the use of the collage technique in drama on the grounds that it is imitative of experience — variously, audience experience of reality, audience experience of Hamlet and even Hamlet's experience of Hamlet. Only the second seems to me to be a serious proposition, and in any case, all three return the technique to the subjective terrain of expressionism. The more thoroughly the technique is practiced upon a dramatic text, the more nearly are the dramatis personae of that text supplanted by the personal drama of the adaptor. Irving Wardle, reviewing a 1975 revival of Marowitz' Hamlet collage, noted that 'this adaptation has increasingly struck me as an intensely personal piece, belonging to the line of work ...wherein the dramatist pours scorn and loathing on his chosen occupation.'
Also in 1975, a reviewer of the premiere of Measure for Measure wrote: "The Marowitz adaptations are, in effect, dramatised interpretative essays (lit crit in dramatic action) in the form of expressionist collages which function as critical light shedders on the original Shakespeare." I think that the phrase 'interpretative essays...in the form of expressionist collages' is an oxymoron. This judgment is confirmed by a comparison of the two published versions of Marowitz' Hamlet in conjunction with a comment from the adaptor: 'In the later, expanded 85-minute version... the style was better assimilated, the play had more intellectual content and was at the service of a clear-cut interpretation.' But it is also less of a collage as defined by Marowitz: the Shakespearean text may be broken up into even smaller fragments than it had been in the earlier version; but there is a clearer story line, and there are also both more rationalisation of character and, in the addition of a proportionately long trial sequence near the end, a concluding summary of connections made. In Marowitz' subsequent adaptations, narrative line grows more important, while collage is used more sparingly.

Marowitz would explain this access of narrative by arguing that the stories of TAMING OF THE SHREW and MEASURE FOR MEASURE do not, as he thinks his HAMLET and its immediate successors MACBETH and OTHELLDO, draw upon some collective unconsciousness to fill in narrative gaps. I would suggest instead that the revision of narrative-collage proportions is attributable to an access of interpretative ambitions, which turned OTHELLO into a parable of Black Power and the two comedies into studies of male-chauvinist-piggery.

The collage adaptations of HAMLET indicate both that the technique can express and evoke emotion, and also that its intellectually apprehensive import can be nil. Moreover, in that they trained attacks on some mythical Prince Hamlet in their own and/or their audiences' minds, all three simply testified to his power by reacting against it. I propose now to examine an adaptation which directed its attentions elsewhere.
iv. Stoppard's 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead'

When Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* first came to the attention of the British theatre-going public, in a student production on the Fringe of the Edinburgh Festival late in August of 1966 and then much more sensationally in a full-scale production at the National Theatre at the Old Vic in mid-April of 1967, it created quite a critical stir. The initial consensus did not predict a great playwriting future for its author. The play was too obviously flawed in structure, its appeal was too relentlessly intellectual, and over the preceding decade critics had been too often disappointed by the petering out of one after another New Hope for British Drama, for very many individual critics to dare to put money on Tom Stoppard's future career. Less cautious collectively than individually, the London reviewers did put Stoppard at the top of Variety's poll for Most Promising Young Playwright in August, 1967. By that time, however, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* had proved a clear box office success in Waterloo Road and was on its way to Broadway.

But while the eccentricities of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* scared critics off any premature placement of heavy bets on Stoppard's career to come, they did at the same time guarantee that the play was received as an innovation in mid-century British playwriting. Time and time again critics attempted to relate its novelties and the idiosyncrasies of its author to contemporary Continental writing:

80 81 82 83

Identical lines of analogy were used to support opposed critical judgments and prognoses:
on the one hand, Tom Stoppard's play revealed that English playwriting was finally catching up with the Continent's, and on the other hand, it indicated that insular dramatic inspiration was so impoverished that it could only poach across the Channel for models of playwriting and domesticate them by crossbreeding with the greatest English one, Shakespeare. And in this last connection, that of the use of Shakespeare's text as a point of departure for a new play, some critics located Stoppard's true novelty. Ronald Bryden, reviewing the National Theatre production, proclaimed that 'Stoppard has finally imported to Britain the Continental genre of modernised myth.'

Irving Wardle of the Times, reacting to the earlier production in Edinburgh in that article summarised in the introduction to this thesis, described Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead as taking its place alongside Goethe's Clavigo, Musset's Lorenzaccio, Chekhov's The Seagull, and Mrozek's Tango as 'another Hamlet variant but unlike any other I have ever encountered' and as giving evidence 'that Shakespeare can still activate original writing' by British dramatists.

In proclaiming Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead to be unlike previous Hamlet variants, Wardle seems to me to have quite right as concerns this short list of Continental titles with which he compared it. In relation to a very long list of deservedly obscure titles, English and Continental alike, of which Wardle appears to have been mercifully ignorant, the play does not appear quite so peculiarly unpredictable. Wardle was right about the uniqueness of the finished product, but wrong about its genesis. This is a subject on which Stoppard has been less than generous with information, and he has been positively miserly with the drafts, claiming to hope that they have been destroyed. But from the brilliant interviews which
he, a journalist who went from reporting to drama criticism because he couldn't believe in my own right to ask people questions, has given over the years since Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead made him a celebrity, one can piece together the path of the play from its conception to the text staged at the National Theatre.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead in fact started out as yet another look at Hamlet from another character's point of view and from another point in time. The earliest version of the play, entitled simply Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, a one-act burlesque comedy in verse which took the two gentlemen-in-waiting from their last exit from Shakespeare's Hamlet to their deaths in an England ruled by a self-denigrating old man named King Lear. This early version was written in the summer of 1964, when Stoppard and twenty other young American, German and English playwrights were the guests of the Ford Foundation at a four-month-long conference for young dramatists in Berlin. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern was performed there by actors from London's Questors Theatre, a semi-professional group, who subsequently staged it at their theatre in Ealing on 4 October 1964. Stoppard was not, however, satisfied with the play, and so in the autumn of 1964 I started on a new play set within the framework of Hamlet. The new play was to have a fairly complicated history. Stoppard had finished two acts of it by the early summer of 1965, when the Royal Shakespeare Company took out an option on them and, needing a new play to fill a gap in the company's repertory, commissioned a third. The Royal Shakespeare Company didn't like the results; and when their year option expired in June 1966, the play was passed on to the Oxford University Dramatic Society, and Stoppard shortened the text for production by them as a Fringe offering at the Edinburgh Festival.
Here, as remarked before, it created some stir among critics who had come up from London and in this way it came to the attention of Kenneth Tynan of the National Theatre. The following spring, when the National developed a gap in its repertory, Stoppard expanded it again for a rush job of a production there in April. And the following autumn, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, now an internationally acclaimed success, was cut in Act II by the playwright for the Broadway production, and there are also cuts indicated in the acting edition. What is to be noted here is the amount of rewriting that went on even after the Edinburgh premiere of the extant version. This accounts in part, I think, for the patchiness of the play, which in my opinion is about half an hour too long; but it also indicates how enforced attention to theatrical realities helped to save the play from the literary gamesmanship in which it had been conceived.

The principal change, however, was of course between the early one-act *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* in the summer of 1964 and the autumn of 1964 inception of what was to become the three-act *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. This change entailed halving the novel vantage points — removing that of time while retaining that of character. It was undertaken on grounds of theatrical necessity, specifically the literary ignorance of contemporary audiences. Stoppard has said that

the transition from one play to another was an attempt to find a solution to a practical problem — that if you write a play about Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in England, you can't count on people knowing who they are or how they got there. So one tended to get back into the end of *Hamlet* a bit. But the explanations were always partial and ambiguous, so one went back a bit further into the plot, and as soon as I started doing this I totally lost interest in England. The interesting thing was them at Elsinore.
Stoppard offered that explanation in an interview published in 1974. I think it worth interrupting at this point to note that since then, he has done a shortened version of Hamlet which gently mocks audience ignorance, supplying a jokey model of how confused and compressed is the play in the minds of those who have seen rather than studied it. Excepting burlesques, it may hold the record in short Hamlets, its 19 minutes outdoing even Charles Marowitz' original 28 minute exercise. Unlike that collage, the effect of which depended on juggling, Stoppard's excised version retains Shakespeare's order exactly, reversing only one line though necessarily reassigning many for performance by a cast of four males and two females. It consists of a 1-minute prologue, a pastiche of quotations from the play, spoken by Shakespeare; then a 15-minute run-through of the Shakespearean script; and finally a 3-minute encore which replays the 15-minute version in three minutes. The conclusion of the encore will suffice for illustration:

Enter A (Laertes)

A: The devil take thy soul.

Grapple and break
Exeunt
Flourish of trumpets
Enter B (Osré), A & D fighting, and all others

B: A hit, a very palpable hit!

C: Give him the cup. Gertrude, do not drink!

H: I am poisoned (dies)

A: Hamlet, thou art slain (dies)

D: Then venom to thy work (kills King)

The rest is silence (dies)

Two shots off stage

END
In many respects, Stoppard’s 18-minute Hamlet is simply a private joke among friends, for whom it was prepared and by whom it was performed on the Terrace of the National Theatre in the summer of 1976. This edited version of Hamlet, for example, consists of almost exactly the same number of lines from Shakespeare’s script as are interpolated in direct quotations into Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead, but only about six lines are duplicated. Moreover, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who brought Stoppard to fame, do not appear at all, and not a single one of their Shakespearean lines is used. There were very many silly sight gags, much ham acting, and a few mocks at the then still unopened building for the National Theatre — ‘If this be madness, yet there is method in it.’ But beyond these amusements for the initiated, there was a wider joke, and its point is to my purpose. The humour rests in the reduction of the playing time of this Hamlet from fifteen minutes to three: one realises amid the laughter that the diminishing relationship between the so-called play and its absurdly compressed encore is an image of how we all remember Hamlet — as a handful of unforgettable lines littered about an action of baffling intricacy.

In taking audience ignorance of Shakespeare’s play to be so great ‘that if you write a play about Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in England, you can’t count on people knowing who they are and how they got there,’ Stoppard’s point of departure was very different from that of those adaptors who wrote in reaction to widely diffused assumptions about Hamlet. Because he assumes nearly total ignorance in his audience, he aims neither to exploit nor to explode preconceptions. He works rather with audience ignorance, mirrored in the totally blank minds of his protagonists. Admittedly, the more thorough one’s knowledge of Shakespeare’s Hamlet, the more impressive Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
Are Dead becomes. Yet the audience need bring no more advance knowledge to Stoppard's play than what its title announces. Moreover, Stoppard's play obviously differs from transpositions of Hamlet to twentieth-century settings and of Hamlet to twentieth-century psyches. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern may be modern in idiom and concerns when they are puzzling over their appointed roles, but they are courtly Elizabethans when they play them out. That is, when they are not in Hamlet they are literally nowhere in place and time. (Stoppard is almost too insistent about their recurrent claims that they don't know where they are nor what time of day it is); but when they are in Hamlet, they are in an 'Elsinore' imagined on an Elizabethan stage and they are squarely within Shakespeare's time scheme.

With those large concessions of great difference in authorial preconception and purpose, there are, I think, some useful comparisons to be made between Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead and the three groups of reactive English-language adaptations of Hamlet discussed above. The comparison will reveal, I believe, a consistent pattern of differences which gives some clues as to the interpretation of this play, and these clues are confirmed by Stoppard's assertion that 'the chief interest and objective was to exploit a situation which seemed to me to have enormous dramatic and comic potential — of these two guys who in Shakespeare's context don't really know what they're doing.'

Some comparisons with those transpositions which present situation and action as adjustable through comprehension of character would seem to be invited by the observations that this is a Hamlet without a ghost, and that Ros and Guil spend the second half of Stoppard's Act I and the bulk of his Act II playing out their assigned parts in, and trying to make some sense out of Shakespeare's
Act II, scene ii through Act IV, scene iv. Both, but especially
guil, are relentless in their attempts to rationalise the evidently
irrational. They run through the evidence in each act:

ROS: To sum up: your father, whom you love, dies, you are
his heir, you come back to find that hardly was the corpse
cold before his young brother popped on to his throne and
into his sheets, thereby offending both legal and natural
practice. Now why exactly are you behaving in this
extraordinary manner?

GUIL: I can't imagine! — (Pause) But all this is well known,
common property. 95

And again:

GUIL: Madness. And yet.

ROS: Quite.

GUIL: For instance.

ROS: He talks to himself, which might be madness.

GUIL: If he didn't talk sense, which he does.

ROS: Which suggests the opposite.

PLAYER: Of what?

(small pause)

GUIL: I think I have it. A man talking sense to himself is no
madder than a man talking nonsense not to himself.

ROS: Or just as mad.

GUIL: Or just as mad.

ROS: And he does both.

GUIL: So there you are.

ROS: Stark raving sane.

(pause)

PLAYER: Why?

GUIL: Ah. (To ROS) Why?

ROS: Exactly.

GUIL: Exactly what?

ROS: Exactly why.
GUÍL: Exactly why what?

ROS: What?

GUÍL: Why?

ROS: Why what, exactly?

GUÍL: Why is he mad?!

ROS: I don’t know!

And finally:

ROS: A compulsion towards philosophical introspection is his chief characteristic, if I may put it like that. It does not mean he is mad. It does not mean he isn’t. Very often, it does not mean anything at all. Which may or may not be a kind of madness.

GUÍL: It really boils down to symptoms. Pregnant replies, mystic allusions, mistaken identities, arguing his father is his mother, that sort of thing; intimations of suicide, forgoing of exercise, loss of mirth, hints of claustrophobia not to say delusions of imprisonment; invocations of camels, chameleons, capons, whales, weasels, hawks, handsaws — riddles, quibbles and evasions; amnesia, paranoia, myopia; day-dreaming, hallucinations; stabbing his elders, abusing his parents, insulting his lover, and appearing hatless in public — knock-kneed, droop-stockinged and sighing like a love-sick schoolboy, which at his age is coming on a bit strong.

ROS: And talking to himself.

GUÍL: And talking to himself.

Well, where has that got us?

(pp. 84-85)

There is no answer. One critic, who sees the play as a critique of Elizabethan drama, stops short at Ros’ 'stark raving sane' and announces that 'a conclusion about Hamlet’s insanity-sanity has been reached through a maze of conundrums'. Another, who sees it as representing a victory of death forces over life, claims that Stoppard shows the Hamlet whom he’s borrowed from Shakespeare to be alienated and mad and, like Ros and Guil, unable to distinguish self from notself. In seeing the play as, respectively, a review of Elizabethan drama and an existentialist tract, both critics have missed the rather
obvious point that Hamlet's insanity/sanity, alienation/integration, is not at issue. What is at issue is that Ros and Guil can't imagine in Act I, don't know in Act II and are still trying to make sense of the data in Act II. All they, and consequently the audience, get in the way of characterisation of Hamlet is what could possibly have been observed and overheard by the pair of courtiers in Shakespeare's play. That is why there is neither sign nor mention of a ghost in Stoppard's play. And lest we overlook the point, Stoppard twice brings on Shakespeare's Hamlet to stand, upstage with his back to the audience, silently mouthing soliloquies which we cannot hear. Nor can Ros and Guil. Stoppard's courtiers have no privileged information — at least, not that they remember; and neither do we. — at least, not that we remember very well and exactly. The pair aren't even sure that there is any privileged information to be remembered; for they are not even confident of having indeed known Hamlet from their young days brought up together. Ros fails to recognise the Prince when he first comes on stage; and as Guil points out, they've only the unreliable word of Claudius and Gertrude as evidence of previous acquaintance.

In fact, virtually all that Stoppard's courtiers know is what Shakespeare's are told. The character of Hamlet is only one piece in a puzzle, and is of interest to them only because it has been brought to their befuddled attention. Their only memory anterior to, or otherwise independent of, Shakespeare's text is of the way in which they were summoned. This they reconstruct in steadily stageier detail, Stoppard embroidering the Shakespearean 'fact' that they had been sent for with the paraphrenalia and business of a B-films costume drama:
GUIL: There was a messenger... that's right. We were sent for.

(p.11)

GUIL: The sun came up about as often as it went down... and a coin showed heads about as often as it showed tails. Then a messenger arrived. We had been sent for. Nothing else happened. Ninety-two coins spun consecutively have come down heads ninety-two consecutive times... and for the last three minutes on the wind of a windless day I have heard the sound of drums and flute.

(p.12)

GUIL: Do you remember the first thing that happened today?

ROS: I woke up, I suppose. Oh — I've got it now — that man, a foreigner, he woke us up —

GUIL: A messenger.

ROS: That's it — pale sky before dawn, a man standing on his saddle to bang on the shutters — shouts — What's all the row about? Clear off! But then he called our names. You remember that — this man woke us up....We were sent for.....It was urgent — a matter of extreme urgency, a royal summons, his very words: official business and no questions asked — lights in the stable-yard, saddle up and off headlong and hotfoot across the land, our guides outstripped in breakneck pursuit of our duty! Fearful lest we come too late!!

(p.13)

GUIL: Practically starting from scratch... An awakening, a man standing on his saddle to bang on the shutters, our names shouted in a certain dawn, a message, a summons... A new record for heads and tails. We have not been... picked out... simply to be abandoned... set loose to find our own way... We are entitled to some direction... I would have thought.

(p.14)

The plea for 'some direction' heralds the entrance of the Players. Though Ros and Guil will later get some mysterious directives dictated by Shakespeare, the players alone provide them with direction, which its recipients fail to appreciate:
GUIL: It could have been — it didn't have to be obscene...It could have been — a bird out of season, dropping bright feathered on my shoulder. It could have been a tongueless dwarf standing by the road to point the way. I was prepared. But it's this, is it? No enigma, no dignity, nothing classical, portentous, only this — a comic pornographer and a rabble of prostitutes.

(p.19)

Stoppard expands three lines of Shakespearean text into four separate encounters between the courtiers who are caught in a tragedy and the tragedians who, times being what they are, are caught without an audience. The attention paid the Players invites comparison with the theatricalist transpositions described above. As was pointed out there, the pre-War adaptations of _Hamlet_ tend to use actor-heroes and/or plays-within-plays to give clues about the central dramatic situation and to confirm its significance, whereas the later theatricalist transpositions of the play use roleplaying to emphasise the distance between the onstage world and Shakespeare's. The point in Stoppard's play is that the onstage world is Shakespeare's. The only possible inhabitants of such a world are characters, who are onstage actors, and actors, who are offstage characters. (And as the Chief Player says, 'Actors are the opposite of people' [p.45].) Stoppard's protagonists manage well enough when they're 'on', when they are Shakespeare's characters; but when they're 'off' they do not register that they are actors. The Players are certainly generous with directives. (This is the area of the play which I personally think got farthest out of Tom Stoppard's hand.) However, only at the end of Act III does the penny seem to be dropping, when Guil and Ros realise what awaits them in England:
GUIL: But why? Was it all for this? Who are we that so much should converge on our little deaths? Who are we?

PLAYER: You are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. That's enough.

GUIL: No — it is not enough. To be told so little — to such an end — and still, finally, to be denied an explanation.

PLAYER: In our experience, most things end in death.

(p.89)

'Your experience! — Actors!' snarls Guil, and he proceeds to read the Player one of his lectures on the fraudulence of stage deaths before stabbing him in the throat. It is the only moment in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead when either Ros or Guil does anything other or more than passively receive a role. The dagger being a trick one, what Guil does and the 'death' which he thereby causes are fraudulent, and they are soon revealed as such; but in the intervening moments Ros and Guil have been completely taken in. When Guil realises the deception, he does not perceive the point of his participation in it. He insists until what are quite literally his dying moments that death for him and Ros is different from that enacted by the Player:

GUIL: No...no...not for us, not like that. Dying is not romantic, and death is not a game which will soon be over...Death is not anything...death is not...It's the absence of presence, nothing more.

(pp.90-91)

Guil is half correct: 'absence of presence' exactly describes how his and Ros' deaths are arranged on the next page of Stoppard's play; but their ends are such precisely and solely because such is their last exit from Shakespeare's play, remarked only in that perfunctory announcement from the Ambassador which Stoppard
borrowed for his title. As long as they do not understand — as they never do — that their situation is Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, they will not have sufficient explanation.

Ignorant and always undecided about character (including themselves) and situation (of being in a play), Ros and Guil are of course equally baffled by action. The logic of *Hamlet* is utterly incomprehensible from the limited point of view which Shakespeare assigned them in it. They are given an abundance of clues in the chief player's discourses on tragedy:

**PLAYER:** There's a design at work in all art. Surely you know that? Events must play themselves out to aesthetic, moral and logical conclusion.

**GUIL:** And what's that, in this case?

**PLAYER:** It never varies: we aim at the point where everyone who is marked for death dies.

**GUIL:** Marked?

**PLAYER:** Between 'just desserts' and 'tragic irony' we give a lot of scope for our particular talent. Generally speaking, things have gone about as far as they can possibly go when things have got about as bad as they can possibly get.

(He switches on a smile)

**GUIL:** Who decides?

**PLAYER:** (switching off his smile) Decides? It is written.

(p.57)

But Ros and Guil haven't read the script, and there is no writing on the cyclorama wall to help them. The action of *Hamlet* around them is seen by them (and by the audience) as entrances and exits over which they have no control and out of which they can make no sense. Guil's complaint in Act II is typical:
GUUL: As soon as we make a move they'll come pouring in from every side, shouting obscure instructions, confusing us with ridiculous remarks, messing us about from here to breakfast and getting our names wrong.

(Ros starts to protest but he has hardly opened his mouth before)

CLAUDIUS: Ho, Guildenstern!

ROS AND GUIL: You're wanted!

(p.62) And so on with Act IV, scene 1 of Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Stoppard obviously does interrupt the text of Hamlet from which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead directly borrows about 210 lines, while another 120 or so are remotely quoted in on-stage business countering the speeches of his Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. (For example, we see a dishevelled Hamlet such as Ophelia describes in Act II, Scene 1) But Stoppard's ambitions are of course, precisely the opposite of the disintegrators': unlike them, he isn't aiming to explode audience preconceptions, but is rather reminding them, through the filter of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, of what happens in Hamlet. Again unlike them, he is not trying simply to disrupt the narrative but rather to demonstrate, by such interruptions, that it is incomprehensible to the limited characters caught up in it. In showing it as such, Stoppard in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead retains Shakespeare's order quite as exactly as he does in the Hamlet adaptation. Moreover, and more remarkably, most of the passages of Stoppard dialogue take about as long to enact as do the portions of Shakespearean text which they replace and which are assumed to be being performed somewhere in the wings. This preservation of the sequence of the Shakespearean text, then, and this approximation of the duration of its playing time, contribute to the audience's sense that, as
the programme note for the New York production read: 'The action of the play takes place within and around the action of Shakespeare's Hamlet.'

The care with which the two actions are aligned, however, becomes apparent only when one draws up a list of the passages from the Shakespearean text which are directly quoted or mimed in Stoppard's play. At only one point does Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead violate the original sequence of the passages interpolated from Shakespeare's play. This point is the Players' dumbshow. Stoppard may be giving warning that something notable is here to occur when he makes the Player King miss his cue:

PLAYER-KING: Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart —
(PLAYER jumps up angrily.)

PLAYER: No, no, No! Dumbshow first, your confounded majesty!
(To ROS and GUIL.) They're a bit out of practice, but they always pick up wonderfully for the deaths...

(p.55)

The dumbshow itself is a mimed concatenation of: (i) any Shakespearean soliloquy; (ii) the Shakespearean bedchamber scene; (iii) the Shakespearean sequence in which Claudius consigns Hamlet to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern; and (iv) the double-crossing of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern which Hamlet reports to Horatio in Shakespeare's Act V. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are told its purpose:

GUIL: What is the dumbshow for?

PLAYER: Well, it's a device, really — it makes the action that follows more or less comprehensible...

(p.56)
This dumbshow, being a dress rehearsal, is accompanied by detailed commentary from one of its performers:

PLAYER: Lucianus, nephew to the king, usurped by his uncle and shattered by his mother’s incestuous marriage... loses his reason.... (He springs up, still talking.)

The King — (he pushes forward the POISONER/KING) tormented by guilt — haunted by fear — decides to despatch his nephew to England — and entrusts this undertaking to two smiling accomplices — friends — courtiers — to two spies —

(He has swung round to bring together the POISONER/KING and the two cloaked TRAGEDIANS; the latter kneel and accept a scroll from the KING.)

— giving them a letter to present to the English court — !

And so they depart — on board ship —

(The two SPIES position themselves on either side of the PLAYER, and the three of them sway gently in unison, the motion of a boat; and then the PLAYER detaches himself.)

— and they arrive —

(One SPY shades his eyes at the horizon.)

— and disembark — and present themselves before the...... English king

(An exchange of headgear creates the ENGLISH KING from the remaining player...)

But where is the Prince? Where indeed? The plot has thickened — a twist of fate and cunning has put into their hands a letter that seals their deaths!

(The two SPIES present their letter; the ENGLISH KING reads it and orders their deaths. They stand up as the PLAYER whips off their cloaks preparatory to execution.)

Mime and commentary alike present a Hamlet in which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are the protagonists. The dumbshow, moreover, exactly meets Ros’ and Gull’s respective requirements for drama:

ROS: I want a good story, with a beginning, middle and end.

GUIL: I’d prefer art to mirror life, if it’s all the same to you.
In realising these criteria, the dumbshow is the first and only time that Ros and Guil are permitted to perceive both a complete action and also the truth of their situation. However, both perceptions being at one remove — in drama, which Ros and Guil never recognise to be what defines them, the Shakespearean characters Rosencrantz and Guildenstern — they do not make the necessary connection: 'PLAYER: Are you familiar with this play? GUIL: No. (p.60)' 100

The subsequent action made more or less comprehensible by the dumbshow is, of course, not the murder of Gonzago trying the conscience of the Claudius who murdered old Hamlet, but rather the failure of the betrayal of Luciano to dent the consciences of the betrayers of Hamlet. It is only in the commentary on the dumbshow that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead assigns any blame to its protagonists — 'two smiling accomplices — fiends — courtiers — two spies'. It is only in the mime, the dumbshow proper, that Stoppard retains any traces of the scene in which the Shakespearean Rosencrantz and Guildenstern accept Claudius' assignment to England and do so with speeches so full of fawning praise of royal majesty as to raise suspicions of culpable knowledge on their part. There has been some critical complaint that Stoppard neglected to quote this scene: the playwright, it is said, has relieved Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of the moral blame which Shakespeare lays upon them through their own sickly rhetoric. Shakespeare, however, lays blame on them as characters in relation to other characters. The rendering of this scene in the mime of the dumbshow makes quite clear that Stoppard's Ros and Guil,
like the Players whom they observe in this play within their
play around Shakespeare's play, are culpable as long as they are 'in
character' — which in the case of Ros and Guil is when, in the
interpolated passages from Shakespeare's text, they become the
Shakespearean characters, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Left to
their own devices outside those passages, Ros and Guil are quite
without the preconditions of moral responsibility — judgment and
will. They lack the knowledge required for the former and are
incapable of exercising the latter. Critics determined to
make existential heroes out of Stoppard's Rosencrantz and
Guildenstern have seen them embracing their tragic fate when, in the
final scene, they find out what it is. They do nothing of the
sort: Stoppard's Ros and Guil are just as passive upon
learning that they are supposed to be killed as they had been,
ine nine pages earlier and in an identically structured scene, upon
learning that they are supposed to kill. The only difference at
the later point is Guil's futile spurt of theatricality when he
stabs the Player.

That difference, however, warrants examining. Rosencrantz'
and Guildenstern's last exchange, during the course of which
Rosencrantz disappears, goes:

ROSENCRANTZ: We've done nothing wrong! We didn't harm
anyone. Did we?

GUILDENSTERN: I can't remember....Our names shouted in a
certain dawn. . .a message. . .a summons. . .There must have
been a moment, at the beginning, where we could have said
— no. But somehow we missed it.

(p.91)

And well they might have done. In the non-Shakespearean
portions of Stoppard's play, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern take a
decision at only three points, one in each act, and each protected from audience censure: (i) in deciding to come when sent for, a decision which we are simply given without explanation, but with many stagey touches; (ii) in deciding to go to England, a decision which we are again given after the fact and after we have seen it enacted in the Players' dumbshow; and finally (iii) in stabbing the Player — a work of impulse rather than decision, a protest that has no relation to their situation because it's not in their play, and in any case is only another piece of playing within a play within a play.

Now, by thus denying Ros and Cull any occasion of moral responsibility, Stoppard does indeed relieve them of the blame assigned Shakespeare's; but he does not by the same token turn them into heroes, existential or otherwise. He rather traps them in a moral twilight zone, the murkiness of which extends to the minds of the audience. I would here return to the dumbshow and remark the two heavily loaded pronouncements from the Player which bracket it. Before the performance, he insists on his own moral irresponsibility: 'We're tragedians, you see. We follow directions — there is no choice involved. The bad end unhappily, the good unluckily. That is what tragedy means!' (p.58). And after the dumbshow has progressed as far as it will — namely, to the point where the two Spies await execution — the Player inquires, 'Traitors hoist by their own petard? — or victims of the gods? — we shall never know!' (p.60). And neither will we.

In writing of Stoppard's placement of his heroes in an area of moral ambiguity, I have taken merely one out of many possible
approaches to the ambivalence with which *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is riddled. Who are the protagonists of Stoppard's play — Rosencrantz and Guildenstern or Ros and Guil? characters/actors or images of the audience? Where are they — at some imaginary point, be it at Elsinore or on a boat, on the stage of the Globe Theatre, or in a vacuum? What is going on around them — The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark or incomprehensible chaos? Insofar as they connect *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* with a tragedy which was written by William Shakespeare and which they are not expected to have remembered very well, the audience know that the 'correct' answer to each of these questions is the first alternative. At the same time, insofar as the audience are made to see the situation and action of that tragedy quite strictly from the point of view of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern the knowledge of the audience does not, for the duration of performance, exceed that of the protagonists, and to them the 'correct' answers are quite literally inconceivable. Stoppard's play constantly draws the attention of its audience to the alternatives, and yet it never allows them to opt for one or the other. The consequence of this is that the alternatives cancel each other out, and so the audience are, for the duration of a performance of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, in a state of enforced agnosticism about what is going on before their eyes.

The imposition of this agnosticism is a measure of Stoppard's success in presenting the point of view of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. So far as I am aware, Stoppard is, among the many adaptors of *Hamlet* who have adopted the strategy of the novel vantage point, the only one who has managed to prevent the figure of Prince Hamlet from becoming the centre, absent or present, invisible or visible, of his adaptation. That he rendered that figure positively peripheral was, I believe,
because in writing *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* he addressed himself to his potential audiences' memories of *Hamlet* the play, not *Hamlet* the character. Be that character a construct of critical interpretation, or an image accumulated over centuries of theatrical interpretation, as long as it remained the principal point of reference in the work of adaptors, it retained its hegemony, altering only the dispensation of critical interpretation or theatrical image. It is on this account that I think *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, for all its ancestral (and some formal) similarities with earlier twentieth-century adaptations of *Hamlet*, to be a radical variation from the patterns with which Stoppard's predecessors (and contemporaries) have played about so often and, on the whole, so tediously.

It is here, I would suggest, that the audience may experience Stoppard's play as tragic — or, more strictly, anti-tragic. Like its protagonists, the audience are trapped in an experience which is incomprehensible: all the elements in it are so uncertain that their ensemble resists intelligible shape and order. (The audience do, of course, always have the option of abandoning their seats in the theatre: that is perhaps their ongoing equivalent of Gull's 'moment, at the beginning, where we could have said — no!'; but, given that Stoppard's dialogue is on the whole distractingly dazzling, they too are likely to miss their chances to escape.) At the same time, through Gull's recurrent assertions to the effect that 'there's a logic at work' (p.29), through the Player's expatiations on the theme of 'a design at work in all art' (p.57), and most of all through the interpolation of enacted sequences from Shakespeare's play, the audience are constantly teased to look for shape and order. Tragic effect is created, as it were, in absentia: in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* tragedy is at
most, like death, an absence of presence; but unlike the deaths of
its protagonists, it is an absence which is acutely felt.
CHAPTER IV

DRAMATIC LANGUAGE IN ADAPTATIONS OF KING LEAR

i. Introduction

In the final chapter of The Stage Is Set, Lee Simonson turns from an historical account of scene design and theatrical architecture to a consideration of 'The Playwright and the Spoken Word'. Attempting to demarcate the respective dramatic responsibilities of playwright and set designer, he proposes the following:

It is comparatively easy to take a sensitive, introspective young man, Henry Elsin, or let us say, Henry Elgin, suffering because his still boxom mother has married again, set him down in the back-yard where some children have left a snow man, and allow him, hunched in his overcoat, to ruminate as follows:

HENRY: Damn my stepfather; lecherous old bastard. If I could only kill him. But I'm a smouldering introvert. All I can do is complain. I can't do anything... Mother — mother's nothing but a whore. No! I shouldn't have said that. Forgive me, mother... But it drives me almost mad to think of it. God! if I could only kill myself — get away from it all. There's nothing to live for. (He hunches more deeply into his coat collar.) I'm afraid! Afraid to do anything. Afraid of death. (He shivers.) Spooks. What they told me when I was a kid. Just afraid of the dark — but it sticks. It gets me. (Looking at the snow man.) I'm just so much mush — mush like you. (He breaks into bitter laughter, takes off the battered derby from the snow man's head and salutes him elaborately.) If I could only thaw with you tomorrow — thaw, just dissolve, trickle into the earth — run off into the sewer, etc., etc.

It would be possible...to continue in this vein, to add to the pathos of the scene by having two care-free children come out and cover the young man with snow until he too seemed another snow man. One could bring on a cook, who in sweeping off the back-yard sang an Irish tune with a refrain to the effect that life could be taken easily, "as the leaves grown on the tree". Or one might achieve a symbolic climax by having the snow melt before the eyes of the audience. None of this, however, would alter the transparent fact that Henry's pathetic confession contains the sum and substance of two of Hamlet's soliloquies, and because it is not couched in the language of supreme poetry is, by just that enormous gap, inferior as drama to Shakespeare's tragedy.
Simonson proceeds to elaborate his proposal with enough of an Ernst Jones interpretation of Hamlet to make it read like an advance notice for Elmer Rice's Cue for Passion (1958), which it antedates by more than a quarter of a century. He concludes:

The disability that the modern playwright suffers under is this: Although he may trace unerringly the conflicts of the libido or the psyche (if we prefer these words to the older one, soul), although he may envisage just as clearly as any of his predecessors essentially tragic stories, he cannot make them incandescent and illuminating at their climactic moments because of his inability, or his unwillingness, to employ the intensifications of poetic speech. 2

The disability described by Simonson is one which he saw as particularly crippling to the American theatre of his time; and he locates both its origins and the possibility of its cure in the wider context of American culture and society. I am not entirely convinced by either the diagnosis or the prognosis as Simonson presents them. I also think it somewhat shallow and simplistic to assume, as Simonson seems to have done, that the sole or even primary function of 'the intensifications of poetic speech' in Shakespearean tragedy is to endow 'climactic moments' with 'incandescence and illumination'. But while I thus have large reservations about the argument for which Henry Elgin's soliloquy was invented as illustration, I certainly have found that most English-language adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy — be their authors British or American — in this century have seemed to suffer from a verbal disability such as Simonson satirises. In my account of transpositions of Romeo and Juliet, I pointed to the parallel tendencies of post-World-War-II adaptors either to remind audiences that that 'essentially tragic story' is a theatrical fiction and thereby convert it into a comedy or a Lehrstück, or to rely upon the non-verbal resources of the theatre for any approximation of tragic emotion. And in my account of.
adaptations of *Hamlet*, I described how 'the conflicts of the libido
or the psyche' have been recast in various modern moulds and materials,
and how these conflicts have been, successively, awarded pat
psychological solutions, turned into pretentious postures whose
fraudulence is indicated above all by verbal excess, or (most recently)
established and sustained by more or less non-verbal means. Approached
in terms of plot or in terms of character, twentieth-century
adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy show symptoms of a verbal dis-ease
which has so grown in the course of the century that it appears to
have been assumed incurable in the last two decades. This chapter
of my thesis will deal directly with questions which have often
appeared on the peripheries of previous ones: what problems of
language arise for twentieth-century playwrights who set out to
adapt Shakespearean tragedy for their contemporaries? what solutions
have been attempted, for what reasons, and with what success according
to which criteria? does any of the solutions amount, or at least point,
to an idiom appropriate for modern tragedy?

Lest Simonson's proposal be thought too brief, joking, dated or
parochial to introduce, let alone sustain, consideration of such
questions, an examination of John Osborne's *A Place Calling Itself Rome*
should make apparent both the most commonly recurrent problems and
the inadequacy of the obvious solutions. A full-length play of
twenty-five scenes divided into two acts, *A Place Calling Itself Rome*
is the deadly earnest and recent (begun ca. 1967, published 1973)\(^3\)
work of a dramatist who had won and retained international recognition
for a dozen years previous to his undertaking to adapt Shakespeare's
*Coriolanus*. The adaptation has been cited before (above p.74) for
its striking lack of theatrical imagination; and it is almost equally
remarkable for the absences from it both of any critique of Shakespeare's
play and of any analysis of that place — calling itself Rome, initially designated as Africa, but in the end sounding more like England than like either of these — proclaimed in the title. Whatever Osborne's ambitions for change may have been when he undertook the adaptation, he does not seem to have managed to take them very far below the verbal surface of his original. Yet it is precisely on this account that I think it useful to look at *A Place Calling Itself Rome* as a sort of verbal test case before turning to adaptations in which the obvious alterations are more radical. Osborne follows the Shakespearean text scene for scene, speech for speech, sentence for sentence, and sometimes even word for word. There are some changes: Osborne telescopes scenes v through ix of Shakespeare's Act I into one long battle scene (which is of course their collective effect in production as opposed to reading), and he presents Shakespeare's Act V, scenes ii and iii, the successive appeals of Menenius and of Coriolanus' family, in a single scene. He dispenses with both Shakespeare's Act IV, scene iii, the highway meeting between a Roman and a Volse, and also Shakespeare's Act V, scene v, the return of Coriolanus' family to Rome. As will be remarked again below, he divides the first scenes of Shakespeare's Act II and Act III into two separate scenes each; and he tacks one whole new scene onto the beginning of the play and tucks one long new speech into the end of the final scene. Excepting the last two, these adjustments are cut-and-paste work within a paraphrase. *A Place Calling Itself Rome* is not just a transposition of the plot and characters of *Coriolanus* to modern equivalents or analogues, but indeed a translation of Shakespearean English into a modern British idiom uttered under the conventions of post-naturalist drama.
In a plaintive aside which I think to be as accurate as it appears unsophisticated, the Venerable Bede once regretted that 'songs, be they never so well made, cannot be translated from one language into another, word for word, without some loss to their grace and worthiness.' While the diffused presence of grace and worthiness in a dramatic text may be matter of common agreement, the precise locus of a concentration of such things is to some extent a matter of personal taste. I therefore turn to a passage in Coriolanus of which I am particularly fond. It is Coriolanus' return to Rome in Act II, scene i, lines 160 to 201 in the New Cambridge edition:

A sennet. Trumpets sound. Enter COMINIUS the general and TITUS LARTIUS; between them, CORIOLANUS, crowned with an oaken garland; with Captains and Soldiers, and a Herald.

HERALD: Know, Rome, that all alone Marcius did fight Within Corioli gates, where he hath won, With fame, a name to Caius Marcius; these In honour follows Coriolanus. Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus! (flourish)

ALL: Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!

CORIOLANUS: No more of this, it does offend my heart; Pray now, no more.

COMINIUS: Look, sir, your mother!

CORIOLANUS: 0, (kneels) You have, I know, petitioned all the gods For my prosperity!

VOLUMNIA: Nay, my good soldier, up; My gentle Marcius, worthy Caius, and By deed-achieving honour newly named — What is it? — Coriolanus must I call thee? — But, 0, thy wife!

CORIOLANUS: My gracious silence, hail! Wouldst thou have laughed had I come coffined home, That weep'st to see me triumph? Ah, my dear, Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear, And mothers that lack sons.

MENENIUS: Now, the gods crown thee!
CORIOLANUS: And live you yet? O my sweet lady, pardon.

VOLUMNIA: I know not where to turn: O, welcome home! And welcome, General: and you're welcome all.

MENENIUS: A hundred thousand welcomes. I could weep And I could laugh, I am light and heavy. Welcome! A curse begnaw the very root on's heart That is not glad to see thee! You are three That Rome should dote on: yet, by the faith of men, We have some old crab-trees here at home that will not Be grafted to your relish. Yet welcome, warriors: We call a nettle but a nettle, and The faults of fools but folly.

COMINUS: Ever right.

CORIOLANUS: Menenius, ever, ever.

HERALD: Give way there, and go on.

CORIOLANUS: Your hand, and yours! Ere in our own house I do shade my head, The good patricians must be visited; From whom I have received not only greetings, But with them change of honours

VOLUMNIA: I have lived To see inherited my very wishes And the buildings of my fancy: only There's one thing wanting, which I doubt not but Our Rome will cast upon thee.

CORIOLANUS: Know, good mother, I had rather be their servant in my way Than sway with them in theirs.

COMINUS: On, to the Capitol!

Flourish; cornets. Exeunt in state, as before.

The Osborne translation of this is:

Shouts and some confusion. COMINUS and TITUS LARTIUS enter. Between them, discreetly but dashing uniformed, is CORIOLANUS, accompanied by MEDICAL ORDERLIES, OFFICIALS, etc. Shouts of 'Caio Marcius', 'Lord Marcius of Corioli', 'Corio-lan-us' 'Corio-lan-us'!

CORIOLANUS: Are they all gone mad or what? That will do, I think. I've seen enough sickening things today; even for my stomach.

COMINUS: Your mother's here.
CORIOLANUS: Oh, I know you're all overjoyed —

VOLUMNIA: Don't be modest, of all things; my by-rights-gentle Marcius; Caius who always truly 'deserved'. And now you receive it; however brief it may turn out to be, however much of a one night stand; it's yours, and yours by your own efforts. But, Caius, no, what is it we must call you now? Oh, here's your wife. Now the Lady —

CORIOLANUS: I've seen and done bad things.

MENENIUS: No, no. You are tired, you need rest; make some space there!

CORICLANUS: Valeria, my dear, forgive me.

VOLUMNIA: I don't know what to say. Cominius, welcome back, all of you.

MENENIUS: Yes, all of you. It's a sad day and a good, for all that. Anyone here will see that.

COMINUS: Quite so. Make way along there. Make a path.

CORIOLANUS (to VOLUMNIA and VIRGILIA): Here! Both of you. Before I ever get home there are people I've got to see. Of course. It just has to be done.

VOLUMNIA: Today, everything I have ever wanted is true; yours and mine; so what can anything else matter? There is only thing left for Rome to offer you and, after this, I can't see them refusing it you.

CORIOLANUS: Time for us to get off to the Capitol.

In some confusion and clamour, as before, they go...

(pp. 38-39)

The most obvious verbal change in the above is Osborne's drastic reduction and simplification of Menenius' second speech, the longest in the original. Its opening antitheses — 'weep/And...laugh', 'light and heavy' — have been pruned down to a single pair of terms — 'sad...and...good' — which are both less precise and concrete in denotation and also less exactly in opposition to each other. The subsequent lines full of horticultural images (notably that union of opposites which is the grafting of an old crab-tree) have been extirpated without trace. One might note with some nervousness the
obfuscation and excision of any antithetical schemes and paradoxical figures of speech from a play which uses these so often and so crucially as does Coriolanus, but then one would have to concede that Osborne has taken some pains throughout his adaptation to divest his Menenius of any rhetorical skill. As is most obviously illustrated by what Osborne does with the belly fable of Shakespeare's Act I, scene i, the Menenius of A Place Calling Itself Rome is not even that Sophist who is latent in Shakespeare's Coriolanus and actual in Brecht's adaptation. He is closer to a Peter Sellers' parody of a politician as a clumsy juggler of blithering abstractions. Once he has been established as such, the maintenance of character continuity and coherence forbids his being changed for a ceremonial occasion.

But Menenius is not the only speaker in this passage who has been stripped of rhetorical skill. With one exception, the principal speakers all have less to say than they do in the original, and they are speaking as inarticulately and inanely as you or I might be expected to do in a state of extreme excitement or exhaustion. The vocabulary is neither precise nor concrete, and the syntax, comprising short and even fragmentary units, is extremely simple. In the Shakespearean passage, every speaker except Cominius with his two half-lines is assigned figurative and/or patterned speech. In Osborne's translation of the passage, only Volumnia is allotted an attenuated image and a crude cursus built on repetition — 'however brief it may turn out to be, however much of a one night stand; it's yours, and yours by your own efforts' — and even in this exceptional instance the metaphor is obscured, and the construction undermined, by the fact that the pronominal reference of 'it' is entirely opaque. Elsewhere in the translated passage, tropes and schemes are conspicuous only by their absence.
This absence entails a loss of more than grace and worthiness, with the removal of figurative and patterned speech go all the paradoxes which in Coriolanus carry an intricate interplay of name and fame, voice and deed, utterance and identity. This interplay informs virtually every line of the Shakespearean passage; and I, being completely convinced by Donald Gordon's argument in 'Name and Fame in Coriolanus', take it to be the intellectual axis of the play as a whole. In other words, while Osborne may have achieved surface verisimilitude of language in this passage, the price has been its conceptual castration. It simply does not — any more than does Henry Elgin's soliloquy despite Simonson's claims for that — contain the sum and substance of its original.

What does the passage contain, either by retention or by replacement? The clue here is Volumnia, the one exception to the general rule of abbreviated utterance. She alone is as voluble as is her original in the Shakespearean passage. And within the limited field of her own emotions and opinions she is almost as eloquent as that equivalent. The speeches of Volumnia, the first and second especially, are the only ones in the Shakespearean passage in which emotion appears to be impairing articulateness. Osborne has retained and emphasised Shakespeare's psychological realism of syntax even while excising the paradoxes among which it is at play in the original. And in allowing Volumnia's speech alone to retain any elements of stylisation — the image and the sentence construction as noted above, plus the not commonly current phrase 'my by—rights—gentle' — Osborne is drawing attention to the importance of this speaker's feelings. In so doing, he is developing a psychological relationship which he has, from the beginning of the adaptation, exaggerated out of its original proportions — that between the over-
bearing mother and the son impotent in all save war. In other words, while the speeches of Osborne’s Volumnia show fewer signs of change for the sake of surface verisimilitude, they also give evidence of the adaptor’s attempt to develop the psychological dimensions of the character’s Shakespearean speeches. This attempt becomes, I think, more apparent if one looks to the other speakers and sees what Osborne has left them after paring away figurative language and with it, intellectual import. And with the exception of Cominius’ two lines of traffic control, every speech in the translated passage is a statement or expression — however inane or inarticulate or abbreviated — of its speaker’s inner condition.

Internal drama is all important in A Place Calling Itself Rome. Five years before the publication of the adaptation, Osborne had announced that he had set aside an Uhr—version, a Coriolanus set in an African republic, because ‘I didn’t know whether I wanted to write a play about public feeling when all my instincts were focussing down on interior things and people’s inner self.’ Osborne’s work in the intervening years (especially West of Suez and the adaptation of Ibsen’s Hedda Gabler, a script markedly more amenable to his instincts) suggests that the focus was unlikely to have changed by 1973. The adaptation as published in that year confirms that it had not. All that remains of Shakespeare’s perfectly balanced paradox of politics and ontology is an equation of ideology with individual outlook. All that remains of the linguistic elements within that paradox is a scattering of ponderous and prosy pronouncements, such as ‘Words is that they, that is people, expect them to mean either what they say, don’t say, or may say…’ A Place Calling Itself Rome, p.13/. That line, and the dominant outlook in the adaptation, are Coriolanus’, alias Osborne’s. The grammatical
slip at the end of the sentence quoted above from a 1968 interview — 'people's inner self' — is suggestive.

Yet as an adaptation of Coriolanus in terms of one man's 'interior things and people's inner self', A Place Calling Itself Rome fails of its purpose. Between the closeness with which the adaptation follows its original, and the conventions of dramatic language to which it adheres, Osborne left himself very little room for manoeuvring in the internal affairs which interested him. I have argued above that in adopting a demotic idiom and distributing it among 'credible' (because self-consistent) speakers, Osborne has restricted his own access to intellectual heights. The combination of surface verisimilitude of idiom and psychological realism of characterisation also limits the ways in which Osborne is able to represent psyches and their conflicts. It restricts those who may speak about 'interior things and people's inner self' to characters established as 'in the know'. Shakespeare's First Citizen, for example, can tell us that Coriolanus pays himself with being proud...what he hath done famously he did it to that end; though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it partly to please his mother and to be proud, which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue.

(Act I, scene i, lines 32-39)

We may not at this (or any subsequent) point assent to this opinion without reservation, but we listen to it without wondering how an anonymous speaker in a mob knows about Coriolanus' domination by his mother. But while that relationship is of even greater interest to Osborne, his citizens are so far from the privileged circle of principals to whom inner things are known and important that his First Citizen can only say: 'He served his time, such as it was.

And, mark you, his wife, his mother, his child, his fine houses, his
The combination restricts what may be spoken to 'factual' events, 'real' objects, more or less raw emotional responses, and such abstractions as are so banal as to be commonplaces rather than concepts. As Gareth Lloyd Evans has recently remarked, the 'language of everyday' is to be recognised by its terms of reference rather than by the absence of verse metres:

Prose is commonly believed to be the 'language of the everyday', although what we use everyday is more accurately to be thought of as speech, which, either tacitly or explicitly, is taken to be concerned with the expression of what is called the actual. 8

Even an unpromising example will illustrate how the expression of the actual occludes Osborne's drama of 'interior things and people's inner self' in A Place Calling Itself Rome. Shakespeare's Auffidius can be made to spin a formal character of Coriolanus through an intricate maze of moral and political considerations in which there is a recurrent vibration between specific instance and general rule:

...I think he'll be to Rome
As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it
By sovereignty of nature. First he was
A noble servant to them, but he could not
Carry his honours even. Whether 'twas pride,
Which out of daily fortune ever taints
The happy man; whether defect of judgement,
To fail in the disposing of those chances
Which he was lord of; or whether nature,
Not to be other than one thing, not moving
From th'casque to th'cushion, but commanding peace
Even with the same austerity and garb
As he controlled the war; but one of these —
As he hath spicies of them all — not all,
For I dare so far free him — made him feared,
So hated, and so banished: but he has a merit
To choke it in the utt'rance. So our virtues
Lie in th'interpretation of the time;
And power, unto itself most commendable,
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair —
T'extol what it hath done.
One fire drives out one fire; one nail, one nail;
Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do fail.....

(Act IV, scene vii, lines 33-56)
Prefixed to this are five and a half lines in which Aufidius has commented on Coriolanus' current popularity in Rome. Osborne assigns his translation of these lines to Aufidius' interlocutor, the Lieutenant. This transposition draws attention to the character analysis offered by Aufidius. Its importance is further emphasised by the fact that the speech begins with a simile (an ill-fitted one, but images are so unusual in this adaptation that they invariably attract attention); and Osborne ends speech and scene with very nearly verbatim quotation of his original (a fairly common occurrence at the end of scenes in the adaptation and one for which I am unable to account). In between the simile and the quotation, Osborne's Aufidius traffics mostly in the actual — what Coriolanus did or may have done and what the Romans made of it:

Oh, I think he'll be to Rome what a piranha is to an overfleshed human. It's the nature of them both, as he was their honoured servant but then couldn't keep his balance. Whether it was pride brought on by unbroken boyish fame, who knows, but he was lucky in it, whatever it was it may have been sic. Perhaps he had defective judgment in following up; certainly he had the chances. But whatever, this was a right royal rising up of one man we've not seen the like of — not in our time; at any rate. But even in all this he was feared and hated more than anybody. Can you think of anyone else it was like? Everything he had going for him — it was quite enough to gag on and eventually choke. So whatever value any one of us may have is: no more than what the time puts on to it, and power, however comfortable for its run to sit in, is a pretty hard coffin to lie in. One fire drives out one fire; one nail one nail; rights foundered by rights; strength by strength; they all fail....

(A Place Calling Itself Rome, pp. 68-69)

Finally, the combination of surface verisimilitude of idiom and psychological realism of characterisation leaves a limited number of occasions — primarily in the sense of why, secondarily in the sense of when and where — for speaking 'interior things and people's inner self'. The obvious casualty is of course the soliloquy. There
are only two in Coriolanus, one at the beginning and the other at the end of Act IV, scene iv. The first — shorter and more functional — serves primarily as an identification of place, and the second as a meditation on mutability; but between the two of them there is some direct articulation and analysis of inner self by the speaker:

Enter CORIOLANUS in mean apparel, disguised and muffled

CORIOLANUS: A goodly city is this Antium. City, 'Tis I that made thy widows: many an heir Of these fair edifices 'fore my wars Have I heard groan and drop. Then know me not, Lest that thy wives with spits and boys with stones In puny battle slay me.

Enter a Citizen

...Thank you, sir: farewell. Save you, sir....

O world, thy slippery turns! Friends now fast sworn, Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart, Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal and exercise Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love Unseparable, shall within this hour, On a dissension of a doit, break out To bitterest enmity: so fellest foes, Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep To take the one the other, by some chance, Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear friends And interjoin their issues. So with me: My birth-place hate I, and my love's upon This enemy town. I'll enter: if he slay me, He does fair justice; if he give me way, I'll do his country service.

(Act IV, scene iv, lines 1-6, 11-26)

Osborne cuts the first soliloquy entirely and retains the second in truncated form. But he leads into it in a rather peculiar way.

The Citizen of Antium who directs Coriolanus is made to scribble Aufidius' address on a piece of paper, and then:
He disappears into the shadows. CORIOLANUS reads the piece of paper.

CORIOLANUS: Here I am, hating my own birthplace and ending up in Antium with a slip of paper. Oh, world, what slippery terms [sic]! Oh, I can find this place. If he shoots me down, he'll have done well for himself. If not, I can do things for him even now.

(A Place Calling Itself Rome, p. 62)

As far as I can determine, the warrant for this otherwise gratuitous business of writing down an address is that within post-naturalist conventions of dramatic speech, one of the few occasions when characters are allowed to talk out loud to themselves is when they are or have just been writing or reading something. (That the something is likely to be a letter betrays the ancestry of this exemption from ordinary onstage behaviour, but it need not always be so.) Moreover, as will emerge below, Osborne's Coriolanus has in the very first scene of the adaptation been introduced as a character prompted to self-disclosure by a piece of paper.

The above is a good instance of how the dialogue in A Place Calling Itself Rome strains to find space and strategies for psychologizing within the limits — of source play, of idiom, and of naturalist convention — which Osborne has imposed upon himself. Small instances of the strain recur throughout, with psychological tidbits appended to more or less unlikely places, sometimes altogether altering the original sense. Thus where Shakespeare's Menenius, urging Coriolanus to choose his vote-soliciting words with care, says, 'O me, the gods! You must not speak of that: you must desire them/To think upon you' [Act II, scene iii, lines 53-55] Osborne's cajoles more personally, and to quite a different purpose:

Do not think of yourself; and don't abuse your tongue or you'll end up with even more than ulcers in your hands. Think of Rome — of Rome alone. You need its popular support — to begin with — not just the respect of a few of us.

(A Place Calling Itself Rome, pp. 43-44)
The most substantial additions, however, and those which give away the game which Osborne is losing in *A Place Calling Itself Rome*, occur at the very beginning and end of the adaptation. It opens, not with Shakespeare's first scene, but with an entirely new scene set in a bedroom where an insomniac Coriolanus is writing in his diary — or rather, dictating to it:

*Rome*. The bedroom of CAIUS MARCIUS. He lies beside his wife VIRGILIA, staring at the first light as it begins to cut more clearly across the bed... He sits at a table and switches on a tiny light which serves to isolate his wife in more darkness. Taking out a notebook, he writes in an unsure hand:

**CORIOLANUS:** Concentration difficult. More so today. Woke suddenly. Foot almost through the sheet. Today more difficult...sure to. Senate...people...crowds. Tribunes and all of that! No chance of waking her again...A few more hours...And years, not blind. Blind flying. No pilot beside. Just as well...Decisions impossible. But forced ones. Elephants of decisions. Over-weighted. Jostled...

...Crowds...Hold back...But how?

(To VIRGILIA) Am I disturbing you?

(No answer)


**VIRGILIA:** Come back to bed.

(*A Place Calling Itself Rome*, pp.12-13)

In effect a soliloquy, this prolonged self-revelation inevitably overshadows and colours the adaptation which it prefaces. But if
there were any doubt by the end about the focus of *A Place Calling Itself Rome* upon 'interior things and people's inner self', Osborne's addition to the final scene makes his aim inescapably obvious. Where Shakespeare's Aufidius makes a thirteen-line speech (Act V, scene vi, lines 88-100) accusing Coriolanus of treachery, Osborne's is answered by a counter-accusation, of patriotism. It is spoken by a Coriolanus who is yet again (this time, as in Shakespeare) holding a piece of paper in his hands:

You're a true patriot, Aufidius, for a true patriot is a good hater. You come from a good-natured people and you have many virtues but they are of the heart, a cold one too, not of the head. In your passions and affections you are sincere but in understanding; you are hypocrites, every one. When you begin to calculate the consequences, self-interest prevails over everything. You have wit, genius, eloquence, imagination, affection: but you have no understanding and consequently no standard of thought or action. Your strength of mind cannot keep up with the pace of your so-called warmth of feeling or your apparent quickness. Your animal spirits run away with you. Oh yes, there is something crude and undigested and discordant in almost everything you do or say. You have no system, no abstract ideas. You are everything by starts, and nothing long. You are a wild lot. You hate any law that imposes on your understanding or any kind of restraint at all. You are all fierceness and levity. If you have any feelings, when they aren't excited by novelty or opposition, they grow cold and stagnant. If your blood's not heated by passion, then it turns to poison.

*(A Place Calling Itself Rome, pp. 76-77)*

Ruby Cohn is bemused by this speech:

Coriolanus charges Aufidius with lacking theory and principle upon which to base his actions. But the speech is puzzling because Coriolanus himself is even more remiss in ideology. And there is no indication that Osborne means us to notice the self-blindness of Coriolanus, since he is killed almost immediately afterward. 9

Although the logic of Professor Cohn's last sentence eludes me, I agree that Coriolanus' speech is at least as apposite unto its speaker as to his interlocutor. Moreover, it might equally well have been addressed to the Roman Citizens as to the Volsci. It tallies with nothing which an audience would objectively see, but with
everything as seen through the subjective screen of Coriolanus' 'interior things and...inner self'. Along the latter line of sight, it is impossible to discriminate among objects — or even between subject and object. Like Osborne's public letter 'To My Countrymen' — '...you are MY object. I am not yours. You are my vessel, you are MY hatred. That is my final identity' — this last outburst from Coriolanus reads like a voice crying out in a vacuum. It is Osborne's last attempt at annihilating all that Shakespeare's made into an emotional charge in a solipsistic shade. I think it impossible that the attempt would succeed with any audience familiar enough with the original to recognise its outlines and echoes in the adaptation, but I cannot say that it has not so succeeded: as far as I have been able to discover, A Place Calling Itself Rome has never been staged.

If it were to be staged, however, the differences most instantly obvious to an audience might well be the visual rather than the verbal ones. These differences may be illustrated from Shakespeare's and Osborne's respective versions of Coriolanus' return to Rome, as quoted at length above (pp 329-330). Although it is not apparent in the passage quoted there, Osborne has tied that scene to 'An Airport Near Rome'. He does not prescribe details of the setting, but that he intends it to be a specifically localised one is apparent from the fact that he has found it necessary to split Shakespeare's Act II, scene i, into two scenes — his own Act I, scene viii, 'Rome. A conference room. Informal' and scene ix, 'An Airport Near Rome'. (The same thing happens to Shakespeare's Act III, scene i, which Osborne breaks up and pins down to his own Act I, scene xii, 'Rome. A conference room...with...long table and rows of chairs', and scene xiii, 'A public square. Crowds and noise.')
Yet these newly localised settings are barely pertinent to the words spoken in them. In the case of Osborne's Act I, scene ix, airport, there are a couple of stage directions requiring Menenius and subsequently Volumnia to look up at the sky while speaking lines assigned them before Coriolanus arrives, but this business is not necessitated by the words which they are saying. In addition to this (non-functional) localisation of scene, some changes in costuming would be noticed by an audience. Out of the mass of different details in the adoption of modern dress, one is particularly important: the oak garland assigned Coriolanus in the Folio stage directions has in Osborne's instructions been replaced by 'a discreet but dashing uniform'. An oak garland is (or was in Shakespeare's time) a distinct visual sign, an icon of honour for a victor. As such, it can be played off against the verbal signs which constitute the dialogue, and Shakespeare made such play — proximately, in the Herald's double-sensed announcement that 'these/In honour follows Coriolanus', and more allusively in those arboreal images of speech which Shakespeare assigned Menenius and which Osborne excised. The shape and significance of 'a discreet but dashing uniform', however, must be left to the taste of a costume designer; and however it may be realised, it, like the setting, is totally without pertinence to the words of the scene. The surrounding mob will look different, too, when 'Medical Orderlies, Officials, etc.' replace 'Captains, Soldiers, and a Herald'. And where in any production of the Shakespearean passage the last named supernumerary would be visually set apart from the crowd to serve a distinct verbal role — the formally patterned pronouncement of Rome's welcome to Coriolanus and of the occasion of it — in Osborne's the same function is assumed piecemeal by a mob who are little more
than mobile extensions of the set. Finally, where certain lines in the original — 'Nay, my good soldier, up,' 'Your hand and yours,' and even (albeit more obscurely) 'And live you yet?' — require that certain postures and gestures accompany their speaking, Osborne's dialogue offers nothing so compelling. What few clues he gives to business — 'Oh, here's your wife' and possibly 'Valeria, my dear, forgive me' — are only clues, not (as it were) commands to an actor, and they have anyhow been imported from the original. No new business has been built in, and most of the old has been lost. Lost too is any control on the blocking of the movements of Coriolanus in relation to the group which greets him. In any staging of the Shakespearean passage he is forced by the lines to progress, if not quite along a reception line, through encounters with a descending hierarchy of acquaintance — Volumnia, Virgilia, Menenius, Valeria. In a staging of the Osborne translation, he could be anywhere on the stage as long as he is within the sightlines of the other speakers; and the social — or perhaps personal — order implicit in the original sequence of greetings has vanished.

Overall, the visual differences between the Shakespearean passage and Osborne's are considerably greater than those which would obtain between rival productions of Coriolanus by, say, William Poel and Barry Jackson. The difference between Elizabethan and twentieth-century sets and costumes is itself an important one: the visual elements of Elizabethan production are (or rather, were) signs, where in twentieth-century ones they have generally tended to serve the purposes of suggestion, illustration, and/or decoration rather than signification. Beyond that difference, there is another, a difference of relations between visual and verbal elements, between on the one hand sets, costumes, business and blocking,
on the other the words spoken onstage. What I have tried to
make clear with the above comparison of visual elements in
apparently equivalent passages from Coriolanus and A Place Calling
Itself Rome is that in the Shakespearean passage, both the visual
and the verbal elements are (i) signs and beyond that, (ii) signs
which necessarily collaborate with each other; but in Osborne's
translation, (i) the visual elements specified in the text are, at
best, suggestive rather than significant (and at worst, utterly
irrelevant), and (ii) they have virtually no necessary connection
with the verbal elements. To put it another way, the passage from
A Place Calling Itself Rome could serve as a radio script without
any alteration being made to it. The same could not be done with
the passage from Coriolanus, which would at very least need sound
effects suggesting the business demanded by the lines. And as
anyone who has ever listened to a recording or radio broadcast of
a Shakespearean play (rather than a programme of immortal excerpts)
will appreciate, the passage would in any case suffer from the loss
of the in-performance interaction between what is seen and what is
heard.

In the above account of Osborne's A Place Calling Itself Rome
I have attempted to indicate three areas where problems of dramatic
language commonly arise for adaptors of Shakespearean tragedy. The
first centres upon the verbal elements of dramatic language. In
traditional critical terminology, it is a question of the possibility
and desirability of inventing modern equivalents of the figurative
and the patterned (whether by rhetorical schemes, by verse metres,
or by both) language which characterises Shakespearean (and all
Elizabethan and Jacobean) tragedy. In the terminology of linguistic
analysis in the Saussure tradition, it is a question of the relations
between verbal signifier and signified, and of the relations among verbal signs. The second area centres upon the conventions of dramatic representation under which the verbal language or sign system operates — who may speak about what topic under which circumstances and with what inducement. At issue here are, again in traditional terminology, questions of decorum and of probability and necessity which arise when diction is considered in relation to characterisation and plot. This area becomes amenable to post-Saussurian linguistic analysis only when (and insofar as) those conventions of dramatic representation can be related to other sign systems whereby a society represents itself to itself. The third area has to do with the visual elements of dramatic language — in themselves (i.e., what they figure and how they relate to each other) and, ultimately, in conjunction with the verbal elements. Anglophone literary criticism has not overextended itself in this area until fairly recently, when (following on from the pioneering work of such scholars as George Kernodle and Frances Yates) it has begun to pay more than isolated and unsystematic attention to stage 'pictures' and emblems and the iconographies which inform them. Again in the terms of recent linguistic criticism, these are questions of the vocabulary and grammar of a visual sign system and of the relationship between it and the verbal one.

Osborne has, I have suggested, merely skated over the third area, struggled with the second, and skirted the first. In so doing, he has had numerous company among adaptors of Shakespearean tragedy. These problems will recur in various guises, and will get varying amounts of attention, in this chapter's discussion of twentieth-century English-language adaptations of King Lear. (As — and for reasons which — will soon be made apparent, the first half of the
chapter attends to texts which are on the whole interesting only in relation to the second area, while the latter half discusses two adaptations which are interesting in relation to the first and third.) There are several reasons why I now turn to adaptations of that play rather than continue with adaptations of Coriolanus. Perhaps the most compelling is a negative one: A Place Calling Itself Home is unusual among twentieth-century adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy not only in its close and dogged pursuit of its original but in its choice of original. Aside from the odd paraphrase adaptation intended for school use, I know of only one other twentieth-century adaptation of Coriolanus written in English — a rock opera, Marcius, which the students of Middlesex Polytechnic brought to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 1976.

In the second place, I think King Lear to be a fair if very difficult choice of source play for an examination of language among the epigones of any single Shakespearean tragedy. The linguistic values and richness of Shakespeare's King Lear have occasioned awe and wonder from both the giants and the dwarves of Shakespearean criticism since at least the beginning of the last century. And in this century, critical attempts to describe and explain this marvel have presented the play as a norm, sometimes even an unattainable ideal, in all three of the areas of dramatic language which I outlined above. The bulk of Anglophone critical attention has been addressed to the first area, and specifically to the denotative and connotative richness of the lexicon of the play. This has most usually been approached through an examination of reiterations and combinations of certain words and word families or clusters. The shape and size of the verbal units isolated for critical attention have varied enormously, and the attention paid to the effect upon
these units of the tragedy's very various verse forms and patterns of sound has also been a variable critical commodity. A cursory summary of the more important studies to have pursued this line of inquiry reveals some trends which I think to be fairly typical of the direction of Shakespearean criticism as a whole across the same period. One is that the verbal units studied have changed from being concrete images of or allusions to specific 'real' entities to being more abstract images, verbs and concepts. Another is that historicism and Kulturgeschicht have qualified, and eventually pretty well displaced, earlier critical tendencies to see these verbal patterns first as the psychological fingerprints of William Shakespeare and subsequently as his unmediated voice preaching moral and political philosophy across the ages. Most important for my purposes, however, is that the investigation of the multiple senses of various words and formulations in the play has led critics to be steadily more sensitive to its semantic richness and structural complexity.

Something like the same shift seems to me to have occurred in criticism centred upon the relation of the verbal patterns of King Lear to the plot and characters of the tragedy, an area which has also received considerable amounts of critical attention from Anglophone critics in this century. In both areas, too, it has become more common to discuss questions directly pertinent to the production of the play. This is in part to be ascribed to the growing fashion for what J.L. Styan calls 'stage-centred criticism', but I think it may also be because as the verbal intricacies and subtleties of the play are more and more thoroughly apprehended and analysed by critics, consideration of audience apprehension and understanding become more and more pressing.
As for the visual language of King Lear, this area of inquiry is, as noted above, a comparative novelty in English-language criticism. But it is striking that King Lear is, as far as I know, the only Shakespearean play for which a full-length study along these lines has been published. (Or rather, on converging lines, since the book, Russell Fraser's Shakespeare's Poetics in Relation to King Lear, relates the verbal imagery of King Lear to visual material in contemporary sources and does not extensively or systematically attend to visual elements implicit in the play itself.)

It is also interesting that an unpublished thesis studying the iconography of Troilus and Cressida uses King Lear (along with Coriolanus and As You Like It) to illustrate its introductory arguments on how Elizabethan emblems and mythography affected presentational imagery in Elizabethan stage production.

Finally, twentieth-century English-language adaptations of King Lear are a varied lot by any scheme of classification. As will be evident from the appendix, the list of them (including several for which the Shakespearean connection is merely one of allusion rather than derivation) is considerably shorter than that for adaptations of either Romeo and Juliet or Hamlet. I have further shortened it by refusing critical discussion to nearly half of the fourteen plays on it. The eight plays which I do discuss, however, both span the chronological limits of this thesis and are, albeit less thoroughly than the original list, representative of the various formal types of adaptation outlined in my first chapter: novel vantage point (Bottomley's King Lear's Wife 1915), transposition (Gilbert's King Lear at Hordle 1927, Manley's Mr. Lear 1942, Causley's How Pleasant to Know Mrs. Lear 1948), Dennys' Lear of Albion Crescent.
Maugham's Mr. Lear (1957); and play-within-a-play (Williams' The Light of Heart (1940). Bond's Lear (1971) eludes my system of classification but is arguably akin to adaptations from another point of view. The group is evenly divided between plays anticipating amateur (Gilbert's, Manley's, Causley's and Dennys') and those receiving professional (Bottomley's, Williams', Maugham's and Bond's) production. Moreover, the group runs the gamut of traditional dramatic genres: comedy (Causley's one-act How Pleasant to Know Mrs. Lear, Dennys' one-act Lear of Albion Crescent, and Maugham's three-act Mr. Lear); tragicomedy (Gilbert's three-act King Lear at Hordle, and Manley's five-act Mr. Lear); melodrama/drame (Williams' Light of Heart); and tragedy (Bottomley's King Lear's Wife and Bond's Lear). Most importantly for my purposes, there is across this range considerable variation in the kind and degree of verbal stylisation employed. At one extreme there are exercises in fictively demotic dialogue devoid of discernible rhythm, imagery, and all rhetorical schemes save the very simple ones common to everyday spoken discourse; at the other there are highly stylised texts littered with such luxuries of verbal language; and in between come compromises which operate in the former idiom most of the time but which are so contrived in terms of plot and/or character as to admit excurses into the latter. There is some correlation between genre and points on the scale of verbal stylisation, and this is particularly pronounced at the extreme verge: only the two tragic adaptations, Bottomley's verse King Lear's Wife and Bond's prose Lear, use verbal patterns and images systematically and sustainedly.

It is in part on this account that I am reserving discussion of these two plays until the latter half of this chapter. A further reason, and a point to which I will return further on, is that
these two plays invite discussion of visual language to an extent and in ways which do not obtain for the other. These others are interesting mainly (perhaps only) in relation to the second area of problems, that of the relation between verbal language and plot and characterisation. All of these other plays adhere (as Bond's Lear does not and Bottomley's King Lear's Wife does only in some respects) to the conventions of post-naturalist drama — spatial and temporal continuities, fully rationalised and 'realised' characters, and utterance which in mode and matter is, if not exactly everyday, at least what might be expected of ordinary people placed in extraordinary circumstances.

ii. Manley's 'Mr. Lear'

The simplest example of the limits of post-naturalist theatre for adaptations of King Lear is an extremely obscure text, E.R. Manley's Mr. Lear. This transposition is obscure because it was performed only by the sixth-formers of Rothwell Grammar School in 1943 and now exists only in unpublished typescript in the Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library. It is critically simple because, in the first place, that typescript is 'a rough copy which includes an absolute minimum of stage direction and acting notes', and in the second place because of all the twentieth-century English-language adaptations of King Lear it is superficially closest to Shakespeare's play, from which it retains the Gloucester subplot and translates almost all the original roles, including relatively minor ones, into modern equivalents. (With a cast drawn from a mixed school, Manley found it necessary to change Oswald's sex and to add in some four bit parts — two cleaners, a secretary and a
Manley contrived to reduce King Lear to five scenes. Lear becomes a shipping magnate; Mr. Kent his confidential agent, with 42 years in Lear's employ; the Fool Lear's valet Williams; Gloucester, rechristened Crockatt, is the firm's solicitor; Edmund is Frank Catterick; and Edgar retains his Shakespearean name, loses his role as Poor Tom, and is compensated with a successful love interest in Cordelia, renamed Kitty. Scene 1 of Mr. Lear is set in 'A room in Mr. Lear's palatial offices' and corresponds fairly closely to Shakespeare's first scene: King Lear's division and distribution of his kingdom are translated to Mr. Lear's conversion of his shipping firm into a limited liability company, whereof he plans to sign every penny over to his three daughters. The youngest, Kitty, refuses to flatter her father and so loses both her portion and the hand of Lord Gerald Fitz-Urse. There is no equivalent of the King of France and at this point Kitty finds no consolation in the faithful attentions of Edgar Crockatt.

Scene 2, covering the business of Shakespeare's Acts I, scenes iii and iv, and Act II, scene iv, is set in the Lounge of the house of Sir George Pickering, alias Albany. Here the hypocritically docile elder daughters, Rene/Regan (wife to Sir Charles Fanshawe) and Gertie/Goneril, quickly modify Mr. Lear's intended living arrangements, which had been the freedom of a few rooms in their respective houses for himself and his valet/Fool Williams, plus a set allowance in cash. When Gertie/Goneril dismisses Williams for upsetting her housekeeper Mrs. Jennings/Oswald and threatens to bring the police in if he doesn't depart, Mr. Lear storms out of her house. The
daughters remain onstage to tussle over the attentions of Frank/Edmund, whom Gertie/Goneril has retained as a solicitor.

Scene 3, set 'On the Road to the Moors', covers all the Shakespearean storm scenes in three pages (out of a total of 25 in the typescript).

Mr. Lear's mind snaps when he encounters first a Nightwatchman, Tommy, who has recently been released from a lunatic asylum and who claims to be the Duke of Wellington, and then Police Constable Jolson, who is keeping a kind eye on Tommy but whom Lear thinks his own daughters have sent after him. At the beginning of the scene Mr. Lear is sufficiently unhinged to refuse to get out of the rain and into an hotel room which Williams has booked for him; and by its end he has run offstage toward the moors and the problem is how to get him into the nursing home room which Kent has booked for him.

Scene 3, set in the reception room of that nursing home (where Lear is now safely asleep), covers most of the Gloucester subplot from the original. Crockatt/Gloucester is thinking of challenging the legality of Lear's bequest to his daughters; Frank/Edmund tricks Edgar into seeming to respond to the possibility in such as fashion as to earn paternal ire; and then the bastard betrays Crockatt/Gloucester's plans to Rene/Regan, Fanshawe/Cornwall and Gertrude/Goneril. They plan to buy Frank/Edmund out of his father's law firm and put him in control of Mr. Lear's shipping firm. At the end of Scene 4 Kitty/Cordelia (a) comes to visit her pyjamed and still distracted father, and then (b) falls into the ever-open arms of Edgar, who is made to quote Shakespeare at her.

The final scene, set in the general manager's office at Lear's, is even more breathless. Frank/Edmund, now in control of Lear's, tries to fire Kent, who threatens resistance. Crockatt/Gloucester enters to be told that Lear's legal business, the staple of his practice,
is being transferred to a firm of solicitors with whom Frank/
Edmund had previously worked. Before collapsing in response to
this news, Crockatt/Gloucester tells Kent enough about the respective
crimes of Frank/Edmund and Fanshiphe/Cornwall to enable him to set
them at each other's throats. Rene/Regan runs in with a letter from
her brother-in-law: Sir George/Albany, having discovered that his
wife has been Frank/Edmund's mistress for the last six months, has
written to his sister-in-law Rene to announce his intention to kill
his spouse and then himself. Rene/Regan sobs out her own sexual
entanglement with Frank/Edmund. He and Fanshiphe/Cornwall shoot each
other, whereupon she runs out to throw herself down the stairwell.
Valet/Pool Williams brings in Mr. Lear: Kitty/Cordelia had thought
that a visit to the office might restore his sanity. However, the
sight of all the corpses (which Williams keeps counting) littered
around the place finally finishes him off. Kent announces that
Edgar, who—we are belatedly told—'used in fact to handle all
Lear's work under his father', will take over the company and the
sole surviving daughter. Kent himself will 'just fade out'. (p.25)

In a covering letter to the Birmingham City Librarian, Manley
described Mr. Lear as the result of classroom discussions of King
Lear 'in terms of modern life' and as an attempt to 'take
Shakespeare's themes and his characters and translate them in terms
of the present day'. He also protested that

anything of value in it in the way of psychological study or
dramatic incident is owing entirely to Shakespeare himself,
but I believe this play to have much better acting qualities
and to be superior in rudimental stage technique. In any
case it will act, and that is more than "King Lear" will. 29

The 'superiority of rudimental stage technique' I take to be the
compression of the business of many short and more or less unlocalised
scenes in King Lear into very long ones set in specific places where
people might be expected to converge in Mr. Lear. (It is interesting that the shortest and most thinly populated scene of Mr. Lear is the only one which is not set in some sort of reception room.) This is of course as rudimentary a technique of the naturalist stage as it would be an unnecessary one on an Elizabethan stage.

As for Manley’s other claims quoted above, it is obvious throughout covering letter and adaptation alike that the adaptor’s terms of reference were predominantly those of contemporary popularised psychology. It is these which constitute his ‘modern life’ and ‘terms of the present day’ and which back up his assertion of ‘much better acting qualities’. Thus Gertie/Goneril, whose age is precisely specified as 28, is recast as a frustrated woman who resents her subjugated status as female. She is matched with Sir George/Albany, a generous stupid soul evincing healthy masculine regard for his male chauvinist pig of a father-in-law. Manley found Cordelia...preternaturally patient for modern times...so I gave her more fire plus a [generous] touch of father fixation. Regan is essentially the same character in ultimate result but I gave her a mask of gush. 30

Also gave her an awareness that her silly manner hides boredom with marriage to the unscrupulous businessman who is Fanshawe/Cornwall. Predictably, such attempts to fill out the psychologies of the characters in the onstage present time entail heavy hints about their pasts. Kitty/Cordelia and Gertie/Goneril, for example, are each made to remark in Act I that she holds Lear responsible for the death of their mother; and Gertie/Goneril also notes that Lear’s love tests are an old family game at which Kitty/Cordelia always lost.

In short, one has in Mr. Lear an exemplary instance of the convergence of sub-Bradleyan assumptions about Shakespearean character in particular and naturalist ambitions for dramatic
character — Zola's 'man of flesh and bones on the stage' — in
general. That is, Manley and his sixth-formers have read King
Lear in search of coherent characters with personal pasts and consistent
patterns of motivation and behaviour susceptible of description
according to the working hypotheses of twentieth-century psychology.
Whatever in the Shakespearean text can be made to fit this mould
has been extrapolated, fleshed out with twentieth-century setting.
Whatever does not fit the mould has been discarded. The selection
procedure is particularly clear around Manley's rendition of Lear's
madness, which he identifies as the only serious obstacle he
encountered as an adaptor:

In "King Lear", the old King is represented as a vehement,
self-willed, petulant, old man. I believe that when his
children were younger he used to do what my own father did
and gather his children round his desk and give them
sweets in reward for pretty speeches of affection, until,
as they grew older, he met with resistance from his
favourites and hypocrisy from the rest. I think that Lear
in the flush of excitement occasioned by the presence of
his nobles at the distribution ceremony went further than
he originally intended and, reverting to his earlier
practice, unexpectedly called for pretty speeches once more.
He thus let himself in for a public act of rebellion on
the part of his favourite child who was really very much
like himself. It was the knowledge of his fault which he
forced out of his fully conscious mind which made him
more petulant and unbearable even than usual, and played
directly into the hands of Goneril and Regan. Lunacy is
most frequently the result of the refusal to face
irreconcilable wishes. When Lear went out into the storm,
his mind was seething and it was the meeting with a real
lunatic (for so he considered Edgar) which completed his
unbalancement. There would still have been hope that rest
would have restored his balance; but Gloucester, coming with
the news that Goneril was seeking to kill him, compelled his
removal and gave his lunacy a more permanent character. It
is only when he at last fully acknowledges his fault with
regard to Cordelia that his mind, though weakened, regains
sanity. I think he is dreadfully sane when his happiness
is dashed from him at the last moment by the murder of his
child, and that he dies broken-hearted but no longer mad.
The presentation of this progression of mental conditions
in a twentieth-century play was not easy. 32

Nor is it, he points out, easy to present 'this progression of mental
conditions' in a twentieth-century production of Shakespeare's play. And this difficulty he proceeds to ascribe, apparently without having paused to consider how far 'this progression of mental conditions' is in fact the sum or even crux of King Lear, to contemporary social conventions and theatrical limitations:

The first weakness is Edgar's pretended lunacy. Today, lunatics simply do not go round crouching in holes...and in any case, with our entirely different attitude towards lunacy, it would be no way of avoiding arrest. Another difficulty is that the scenes are so very long-drawn-out that they become boring; and the synthetic thunder which has to be so modulated as to avoid drowning the voice of the speaker, simply cannot be handled by modern stage craft. Then, too, that final act of the murder of Cordelia seems to me to be introduced not so much to clarify the psychological problems of the play as to produce a sense of overriding fate. I do not consider it necessary for purely dramatic reasons. The purging of Lear's mind of the conflict produced by his own error has already been completed. I have dealt with these difficulties by introducing...a harmless lunatic with an identity fixation [i.e., Nightwatchman Tommy]. It is being left along with this lunatic which leads to the first definitely insane condition of Lear's mind. I could not, without straining the story too much, show the modern Goneril dispatching her servants to kill Lear, so the next stage in his lunacy was covered by the introduction of yet another character, P.O. Jolson. There is no thunder in my version. It is merely raining and all speeches can be heard without the stage managing [sic] creaking. The appearance of Lear in my Act IV is brief, but in it there is the same inconsequence of thought that Shakespeare suggests though there is not the range of idea. 33

That last concession is a considerable understatement. It is unlikely that the Shakespearean range of idea could have been encompassed by any adaptor who, as is evident from Manley's comments on Cordelia's death as quoted above, equated dramatic reason with the clarification of psychological problems.

This being Manley's very limited ambition as an adaptor, however, let us see whether his dramatic language was equal to the ambition. Mr. Lear talks about himself at length in each act; and in both what he says and how he says it one can easily discern Manley's attempt to establish the psychological progression which was his reading
of King Lear. In Scene 1 we are given the 'vehement, self-willed, petulant, old man' whose semi-public address at the distribution ceremony makes it apparent that he is over-excited and that he is reverting to the past:

There is one thing and one thing only which prompts me to leave my work. I am tired. All these young men I see about me — there's no difference between them — I get no excitement from dealing with them. This is a namby-pamby world. Fifty years ago we weren't all alike. Ah well, that's one thing I know is unfashionable now — to talk of old days. But by God, I can see my captain's /sic/ beards now. Beards, yes sir, beards: nowadays men are afraid that little boys will tease them; little boys! A little boy would have run screaming, aye and wakened screaming in the night, if old Captain Higgins had looked at him once. Higgins had a beard. A beard! I tell you it was old Higgins' life and character thrown in your face to do what you liked about. It was an advertisement. "I'm Higgins and you can damned well put up with it." That beard had been places. Why, damn me, I've seen girls blush merely to look at it. (deprecatory coughs.) Pardon me, ladies and gentlemen, it's just that vital unashamed past that calls to me, and it's god's truth that I'd rather spend my time remembering Higgins and his kind than live out this pale and paper farce which passes for life today. (pp.2-3) 34

In Scene 2, we get the voice of injured innocence:

Gertrude, am I quite sane. Do I understand that you propose to disobey me absolutely, to defy me and break your word of honour in the house which I have placed over your head... You are my daughter... a child I worked with at one time: a girl I worked for, a woman I gave all this. My God, I wish you had died in your cradle. You may have children: may they tear your heart out, may your house fall on you and crush you, may your limbs be twisted and your eyes lose their sight. You'll say you don't believe in curses, but no woman born of an old seaman can fail to know in her heart how a curse will ride on and on. May my curse by /sic/ on you and on this house and on all that is yours, you fraudulent debtor, you defaulting sharper, you thief. I will not stay an instant longer under your roof. My love has been yours, now you have my hate and my contempt. I have another daughter. (pp.10-11)

In Scene 3, the unbalance of a seething mind:

.....Shut out. And by my own daughters. Rain. Why rain is good. It is cold and clean: rain washes, and I am all dirtied by their ingratitude. Rain. Let it pour man. Pour, rain, pour. I want to feel it. I want to hear it rushing down the
roads. I want all the hecks to thrash and bubble: I want the heather hung with rain to soak me to the knees. So cold...so clean. What's wrong with rain, boy...Here, here...houses, people...cats, dogs, monkeys, snakes. Boy, they choke my soul...choke my soul with daughters. Undo this button. Thank you.

In Scene 4, inconsequence of thought:

(to himself) What did I come for? I wanted something? It was something I wanted to...Beautiful, beautiful thing...Who wore a rose? Somebody wore a rose...Kind old father...Kind old father...I can't remember...I can't see. You're one of them but I can't see. (p.19)

And in the final scene, a weakened mind regaining sanity:

I'm lost, Kent, lost but for the goodness of you three. Everything else is a haze. I want to know nothing else. I feel that my mind has been tortured till it has in someway been freed. I feel now just a quiet love and deep gratitude. Kitty, take me away. (pp.24-25)

In the middle scenes of the adaptation, the verbal echoes of King Lear are very loud; and up until the last scene of Mr. Lear, a tangled thread of talk about the sea and ships is woven through and around the title character. And whatever one may make of such attempts at adornment, Mr. Lear's speeches do clearly indicate stages in the psychological progression of their speaker.

Mr. Lear, however, speaks from a peculiarly privileged position: insofar as a speaker is established as mad, he is not bound by the conventions of matter and mode which obtain for everyday utterance. In fact, the further he transgresses those conventions, the more clearly established his madness becomes. Lunatics are allowed to talk to themselves or to no one in particular, to say things which have no direct connection with anything that is or has been established on stage, and to use words and constructions which are wildly off-key and/or disproportionate. We will find other adaptations of King Lear which also, albeit in another fashion and to other ends, manage to cheat on naturalist conventions of dialogue by setting up a figure.
who — by virtue of personal condition, professional occupation, national origin, and/or a plot situation of extraordinary stress — is to a greater or lesser degree dispensed from the rules of day-to-day discourse. The strategy is of course not peculiar to transpositions of King Lear, nor even to Shakespearean adaptations in general. (Chekhov, for example, accomplishes something of the sort by administering generous doses of alcohol to his characters.) It does, however, recur fairly often in such transpositions: the plot données of the original provide twentieth-century adaptors of King Lear with one relatively easy escape route from the restrictions of naturalist speech. The tendency of these adaptors to emphasise the psychology of the title character, moreover, would seem to have made that escape route especially obvious to them. At any rate, because Mr. Lear is by madness permitted irregularities and extravagances of speech, he himself presents no problems for the direct articulation of psychological progressions and conflicts. Whether Manley managed to depict them with any skill or subtlety is another matter: the point to emphasise here is that insofar as he did not do so, the failure is not to be ascribed to obstacles inherent in the naturalistic form as he used it, but more likely to authorial incompetence.

Precisely because the title figure is so easily allowed immediate and explicit expression of his inner affairs and workings, it is to other characters in Mr. Lear that one must turn to see how, with his reading of King Lear as psychological conflict and his adoption of a form which requires most speakers to maintain the conventions of everyday speech, Manley saddled himself with two interrelated problems of verbal language. One of these problems was how a character might
be made to give information about his own and others' inner workings. (Manley exaggerated the difficulty of this by putting much emphasis upon plot intrigue, which requires more to go on than meets most characters' ears.) The other was how to shape this information into conflicts whereof the definition and weighting would correspond to his reading of *King Lear* and how to confer upon them the moral import which he saw in the Shakespearean script. And it is precisely because *Mr. Lear* is such a crude piece of work that these problems obtrude: lines which carry the exposition or development of character psychology, and/or which offer a moral interpretation thereof, leap from every page of dialogue.

Within naturalist conventions of dialogue, there are basically two verbal modes by which psychological data can be supplied and shaped. In the work of a more skilful dramatist than Manley—for obvious example, in Ibsen's 'middle-period' plays—the two ways coincide almost constantly, and even in *Mr. Lear* they occasionally do so. It is, however, a useful critical exercise to separate them out. One way, and the one on which Manley relied more heavily, is the direct description, in the course of an onstage conversation, of one character by another or even by himself. Such descriptions admit, though often at the risk of violating decorum of characterisation, some degree of generalised interpretation. Thus in order to explain the actions of his Oswald figure with the mixed motive of sadism and servility, Manley makes his Goneril figure remark, 'I believe the only person Mrs. Jennison would not enjoy hurting is...myself' (p.6).

Or again, Sir George/Albany, addressing his brother-in-law Fanshawe/Cornwall, is made to sum up their spouses with: 'Charles, old boy, it's hopeless. Elemental forces, those two, damned uncomfortable. Come and have a drink' (p.10).
The latter quotation also illustrates the second resource available to Manley — characterful speech. A speaker characterises himself by his choice (or evasion) of topic, vocabulary and constructions. This indirectly establishes something about the speaker's psychology even while remaining a plausible pronouncement within the situation on stage. Because Manley construed Shakespeare’s *dramatis personae* in terms of contemporary psychological types, the characterful speeches of his reconstructions likewise tend to the typical, and indeed to the clichéed and caricatured. The verbal language assigned Williams, for example, is that of the trusty, tight-lipped servant, plus a dash of slang to remind us that he is a Fool:

MR. LEAR: ...You see these women, Williams, they were my daughters. I brought them up and made them rich women. I trusted them, gave everything into their hands.

WILLIAMS: Bit rash, sir; very rash, I might say.

MR. LEAR: Don't be impertinent.

WILLIAMS: No, sir, certainly not, sir.

MR. LEAR: I am going. I shall not stay here, not even tonight. Go and pack me a few things.

GERTIE: This man leaves my house at once. Williams, if you are not off the premises in five minutes, I shall ring the police station...You can choose.

WILLIAMS: Crikey.

Or again, that 'mask of gush' which Manley devised for his Regan figure worked out to a full armour of inanity:

MR. LEAR: ...I have another daughter. Rene, I must home with you at once.

RENE: But Daddy, darling, really...before dinner. I'm really quite hungry and I must have dinner. You wouldn't have oos little Rene all faint and queer like.

(p.11)
It is, however, Manley's Edmund figure, Frank Catterick, who best illustrates how very limited these resources are. He is a salient test case because Manley tried to turn the figure into the reverse image of his title character:

The main character, apart from Lear himself, is, in my play, Frank Catterick, the Edmund of King Lear. I believe he is essentially unchanged but I feel that in Shakespeare's play, his character is not adequately developed ... and that to secure unity, it should be. I feel that the unity of the play requires a strong contrast drawn between Lear, who has always had his own way and is finally purged by the series of events, and Edmund who has never had his own way but determines to secure power by all available means. Where Lear is vehement Edmund is cool and calculating. He is the embodiment of the principle of unscrupulous ambition and for him there is no purgation but death. 35

But this attempt to present a neat psychological opposition does not, cannot, succeed. The conventions of speech which operate in Mr. Lear virtually preclude any strong contrast between the titular hero and the villain being made in the dialogue of the adaptation. Unlike his original in Shakespeare's King Lear, Frank/Edmund cannot enter solo to salute a raw and unredeemed Nature (or any twentieth-century moral equivalent), nor can he utter asides to notify an audience of his true allegiance. And unlike his intended opposite in Manley's Mr. Lear, he has not the privileged speech of the insane for immediate and direct expression of his inner workings. Indeed, in as much as Frank/Edmund is the centre of so much plot intrigue, such speech is even further out of bounds for him than it is for the less deceptive characters. The characterful speech of this 'embodiment of the principle of unscrupulous ambition' is from beginning to end the utterance of scrupulous correctness — civil and moral. Even when Frank/Edmund is among his evil ilk, it is generally not words which betray the blackness of his soul. In the middle of his mutual seduction of Gertrude/Goneril, for example, he says of his own
begotten that Crockatt/Gloucester' fathered me... in a moment of irresponsibility' (p.8). Against such clichés of correctly characterful speech, stage directions prescribe clichés of corruptly characterful business —

MR. LEAR: You would deny me my necessities Oh, heavens, what have I bred up: — a hypocritical cynical windbag... and a vicious snake. God curse you both. (Exit.)

WILLIAMS: You'll have broken his heart. (Exit.)

(Frank gets up and walks silently out of the room. He glances at the two sisters and as he closes the door he laughs.)

(p.11)

—and tone—

RENE: I tell you, I get what I want when there's the littles, littles /sic/ chance. And I want you.

FRANK: What an intriguing person you are. (meaning she excites interest.)

RENE: I am. (meaning she gets her way by scheming.)

FRANK: Clever, by Jove.... I admire you more than I can say.

RENE: I like you because you're young and clever and wicked. (p.19)

Thus directly described by one of the wicked sisters, Frank/Edmond is allowed to address one speech of direct self description to the other, Gertrude/Goneril:

(They sit at opposite ends of a chesterfield. Gertrude appraises Frank. Frank, at first uncertain, returns the scrutiny. It is obvious that each knows the other is forming an opinion on personality).....

FRANK: Lady Pickering, when you were... appraising me just now, I know that you read me aright.

GERTRUDE: Well, perhaps I did. In fact, I don't think I found you very flattering either. You were not thinking that I was young, or pretty, or well dressed, were you? .... I must know what you were thinking.

FRANK: I was inspecting the owner of half the shares in Lear's. I was thinking that all you could get out of the enormous power you have over the lives of thousands was a pretty frock and a superb complexion. Do you realise...
you have more power than a reigning king. To have
power like that. I worship power, Lady Pickering...
and perhaps one day, I'll have my share of it.

(p.7)

Although Manley has here engineered a way of enabling Frank/Edmund
to say that he is ambitious and worships power, the indications
of strain are obvious. (Indeed, the interstices of the above
quotation actually include an offer of a penny for Frank's thoughts!)
Manley having attempted to show father and son as two sides of the
same coin, most of the direct descriptions of Frank/Edmund come from
Crockatt/Gloucester. To him are assigned such impossible speeches
as this explanation to Kent of both himself and his illegitimate
offspring:

This boy is able to do all those wicked things which I could
only imagine because I had a home training which weakened my capacity for evil by a superimposed conscience the evil I
knew was in me. I can read his mind, because it is my mind.

(p. 22)

But even with this close (and clumsily explained) sight
into the evils lurking under two socially acceptable exteriors,
Crockatt cannot speak all of what he sees and still maintain the
decorum of everyday speech. Thus in the opening exchange of the play,
he says of Edgar:

CROCKATT:......Decent lad enough, no go about him though.
How could you expect it. My Molly was a pleasant lass,
and it was just a matter of settling down and a lad
in due course, but Frank...well, it was different.

KENT: (rather embarrassed) Mr. Crockatt, I think I see
Mr. Lear in the ante-room.

CROCKATT: (holding him by the arm and leering excitedly) It
was different, I tell you.

(p.1)

This is not speech requiring action, it is business replacing speech.
The denotative and connotative deficiencies of the verbal formulation
have had to be supplemented by visual aids. What was 'different' for
Crockatt with Frank, in what sense it was so, and what the audience is to make of the difference, would not be evident without the embarrassment and leers prescribed by the stage directions. Manley may be presumed to have resorted to them — as also to those calling for deprecatory coughs in the course of Lear's first speech quoted above (p.38) — in consequence of his explicit belief that those specifications of sin which stud the Shakespearean text are too strong stuff for sixth-formers. ("Some of the most important lines that Shakespeare gives King Lear are, and should be, expurgated for school purposes", he opined in the previously cited letter.) Manley's sixth-formers (or more likely their parents) could never say in so many words, as would an actor playing Shakespeare's Gloucester, 'There was good sport at his making.' Neither can Crockatt: the information and the moral judgment which the audience are expected to pass upon it, must be established outside the dialogue. This is a good instance of how in naturalist dialogue what is plausible within a play is dictated by what is acceptable in the social world of the audience for which it was intended. I will return to this point via another route. The other point to emphasise here is that, in order to articulate the unmentionable, Manley has had to resort to stage directions specifying leers and embarrassment, and that these stage directions operate independently of the dialogue.

To establish Frank/Edmund as an 'embodiment of the principle of unscrupulous ambition', then, Manley has had to rely upon stage business which bears little relation to the dialogue and upon some few speeches (most of them from Crockatt/Gloucester) which press hard upon the limits of situational probability and character plausibility. The contrast between Mr. Lear and Frank/Edmund is not (as Manley had intended it to be) so much a contrast between characters' psyches
as rather between one figure who can speak the minutiae of his soul and another who can only show the main lines of his. Beyond this difference of detail there is one of dynamism. Because Mr. Lear with his privileged speech can be made to express internal changes while they are going on, he can be made to undergo a psychological progression and to point its moral significance. Frank/Edmund, however, remains static. This is especially obvious in their respective last moments. Mr. Lear's final speech is the announcement quoted above (p.358) that his mind has been freed and filled with virtuous emotions. But a Frank/Edmund who cannot be permitted to articulate and evaluate his psychological dimensions in advance or in the course of his actions can hardly be allowed to announce and denounce them after he's done his dirty work. The final about-face of Shakespeare's Edmund, with his spoken recognition that 'the wheel has come full circle' and intention to 'do some good...despite of mine own nature' (Arden edition, Act V, scene iii, lines 174, 243-244), is impossible in Mr. Lear. Manley allotted his Frank/Edmund as 'no purgation but death', yet that death hardly amounts to a purgation. Fanshawe having drawn a gun on him,

(...Frank fires from behind desk. Fanshawe is hit and staggers, lowers revolver. Frank stands up, holding his.)

FRANK: I call you to witness, Mr. Kent, that I fired in self defence. You fool, Fanshawe.

(Fanshawe pulls himself together, fires from hip. Frank falls dead. Fanshawe lurches into centre stage...)

KENT: Let me help you, Fanshawe.

FANSHAWE: No good, Kent, I'm going. I'd take no blessing from any priest, blast 'em, but it would help if you'd even say goodbye.

KENT: Goodbye.

FANSHAWE: Thanks, old man.(falls)
Where the Satan who has disguised himself as an angel of light does not draw attention to his costume, let alone change it, in his final moments, Fanshawe/Cornwall is assigned some valiantly stiff-upper-lipped lines for his. We have just learned that Fanshawe/Cornwall has been responsible for the deaths of three men, and we have just seen him kill a fourth. That he, rather than the bastard and fornicator Frank/Edmund, should be allowed even such very sporting dignity in dying suggests that in the world of Mr. Lear, crimes against life matter less than crimes against property and sexual propriety. The limitations of the moral universe of Mr. Lear become most apparent on the rare occasions when an appeal is made to a higher authority. Kent's prayer over the fresh corpses of Frank/Edmund and Fanshawe/Cornwall (and, offstage, Rene/Regan) pretty well sums up the moral dimensions of the script:

Oh God, whose existence is certain and whose will is good, I thank you that you have seen fit to leave me untouched by the frenzy of passion. I know that you have freed me from fear. Your goodness to me fills me with calm and happiness and makes me humble: for I know that my strength would have been insufficient to withstand the fury of evil with which thou hast seen fit to beset other men. I thank you.

(p.24)

Critics who have found the final couplet of Shakespeare's text a trifle pat would probably choke on this prayer! It is perhaps only too easy to sneer at such an utterance as an interpretation of King Lear so reductive as to deform what it is derived from, and/or as an indoctrination of sixth-formers into an ethos so smug as to amount to moral anaesthesia. That conceded, the passage pretty well sums up the merely technical problems of verbal language which Manley encountered in transposing King Lear according to the conventions of naturalist dramaturgy. The passage is in fact a soliloquy: corpses incapable of reaction or response are Kent's
only company on stage when he speaks it. And while he may be taken to be heard by a 'God whose existence is certain', he is addressing an unseen Being, not a present character who can reply. He is, in short, exteriorizing his thoughts, and the way in which he is made to do so can be justified under naturalistic conventions only insofar as the out-loud utterance of a prayer can be regarded as a plausible response from this character to this situation. He is at points in the prayer speaking language which is not that of ordinary, everyday discourse — 'the fury of evil with which thou hast seen fit to beset other men' — and such an admixture of images, abstract nouns, and second-person singulars is justifiable under naturalistic conventions only insofar as it is plausible that this character, in this situation, might adopt the idiom of a prayerbook. And finally, that language asserts a moral interpretation, and the one which is offered can be justified under naturalistic conventions only insofar as it is coherent with the moral import (if any) of all the lines assigned the speaker elsewhere in the play.

To test out the extent in which these 'insofars' do in fact obtain for Kent's prayer would require a closer examination of the script than it will bear and than my purposes warrant. What I would rather emphasise is the implication of these 'insofars': the decorum of any given speech in a script such as Mr. Lear depends upon the establishment of a consistent, three-dimensional (space and time) character to speak it. It is against this construct that the mode, language and import of every utterance must, in the first instance, be tested. That construct in turn depends upon audience/dramatist assumptions about human psychology and behaviour. The dramatist gives out some information, some dramatic 'facts' about the 'personalities' and 'biographies' of his characters, and thereby
trains an audience to expect specific patterns of action and utterance as a consequence of these 'facts'. The dramatist's choice and the audience's acceptance of the combination of data and the patterns which may be predicted from it — of, in short, a given character — are in large measure historically determined. Manley discards Edgar—as—Poor—Tom because 'today, lunatics simply do not go round crouching in holes, clutching one blanket around them, and... avoiding arrest'; finds 'Cordelia...preternaturally patient for modern times'; and 'could not...show the modern Goneril dispatching her servants to kill Lear'. Yet he offers for audience acceptance a 'confidential agent' who has been employed by a shipping firm for 42 years and whose first response to a double murder plus a suicide is a prayer thanking God that he is not like other men. Whether you find the rejectamens or the replacements more implausible depends, in the first analysis, on who you are when and where. When the possible justifications for the language of a play can be reduced to nothing more/other than (a) its appositeness unto a character and, beyond and through that, (b) its accuracy in reflecting the self-images of the men by and for whom it was written, that language — and with it that play — are in the long run doomed by historical change and in their own time confined to those sharing the self-images. Mr. Lear was performed only in the school for which it was written and now has only the half-life of an archive file. It has deserved no more.

iii. Gilbert's 'King Lear at Hordle'

The other tragically comic adaptation of King Lear is Bernard Gilbert's King Lear at Hordle (1922). Where Manley's transposition
aimed to re-present Shakespeare's themes and characters in terms of the present day, Gilbert's aimed to represent the present day.

And where Manley's problem was the inadequacy of available conventions of dramatic language (not to mention his own competence) for the representation of a conflict which he had reconstructed from Shakespeare's text, King Lear at Hordle gives evidence of problems which these same conventions imply for representation in general.

King Lear at Hordle dispenses with the subplot of King Lear and reduces the primary plot to filial ingratitude from a single daughter. The dramatis personae are only four in number: Jacob Toulson, the title figure; his daughter Matilda; his son-in-law Albert Rowett; and his neighbour Mrs. Parrott. In Act I Jacob Toulson makes over his house and seventeen-acre field to Matilda, who with her husband has just returned from nine years in Toronto. That Matilda is less loving and lovable than her father believes, and that she and her spouse have returned to the paternal household only in desperation, are apparent from Mrs. Parrott's comments and from what we see of the couple alone on stage. In Act II, one week later, Jacob has been banished to the draughts and solitude of his kitchen while the Rowetts entertain Hordle's high (i.e., Church) society in the sitting room. They are indifferent to Jacob's health and happiness until Mrs. Parrott lets it be known that the old man owns another, larger and better field — 'down by Platt's Hole: twenty acres of the richest fen land' — which had been omitted from the deed of gift. The act ends with a suspiciously sudden show of filial devotion. In Act III Mrs. Parrott tells Toulson the full truth about his daughter and son-in-law: that they were married, against the wishes of Albert's father, because Matilda claimed to be pregnant; that they had stolen £80 from the elder Rowett before
stealing off to Canada; and that their Canadian sojourn had been quite the reverse of the success which they had claimed. Toulson tests these reports by questioning Albert; feigns co-operation with Matilda's solicitations that he make over the Platt's Hole property; tricks her into leaving the original deed of gift in his hands while sending her off to ask Mrs. Parrott to witness the new one; destroys the original in Matilda's absence; and proclaims restoration of the old order.

Clearly, then, the plot of King Lear at Hordle is remotely and reductively derived from Shakespeare's in its first donne and its development through the beginning of Gilbert's Act II, but thereafter further development and resolution have been derived from another source. This other source is the adaptor's idea of countryfolk's commonsense. Where Manley wrote his transposition to be produced by the sixth-formers whom he taught, Gilbert wrote for production by the adult villagers among whom he lived. And as he explained in his preface to the play:

King Lear at Hordle arose from my desire to present the ancient unfilial motif. It was no use giving Shakespeare's, because our hard-headed villagers, who judge everything in the light of experience, would look on it as plain nonsense and its protagonists as idiots. I once heard one of them give his views after he had read Shakespeare's Lear....He said, "It's all moonshine."

(p.3)

The conjunction of 'the ancient unfilial motif' with hard-headed judgment in the light of experience recurs throughout the dialogue of King Lear at Hordle in such exchanges as the following:

MRS. PARROTT: You'll hardly know her again.

JACOB: When children's gone, you miss 'em. When you're old, there's none like your own flesh and blood.

MRS. PARROTT: There's none ever plagues you half as much.

JACOB: They may plague you, and yet...they're your own. Ain't you weaned 'em and worried over 'em; ain't you...
toiled in the daytime and sorrowed in the night-time for 'em? When you don't want nobody else, you still wants them.

MRS. PARROTT: That must be the reason why brothers always fall out. They say as the worst quarrels is in families.

JACOB: And yet...at the last...you want your own. They may have worried you and nagged you, but...you want 'em. You want 'em to close your eyes for you just the same as you want to lie among your own kin in the cemetery.

MRS. PARROTT: That's all very well for you, what doesn't see your relations every day. If your darter hadn't been thousands of miles away all these years, you might have sung a different tune. If it comes to that, you didn't set such a great store by her when she was cook at Flepton Manor. As for closing eyes — my old man used to close mine every Saturday night with his fist. Families is right enough for men, but women doesn't have such a fine time.

JACOB: (shaking his head) You want your own, Missis Parrott. You want your own.

Homely platitudes in rhythmic prose are serviceable for statements of ancient motifs, while terse truisms and sharp reversions to 'fact' are an entirely adequate verbal language for hard-headed judgment in the light of experience. But when it comes to showing particular figures reacting to specific situations of stress, Gilbert is hedged in by his overriding determination to maintain truth to a psychological life which he construes as follows:

The English peasant has a strain of doggedness and a strain of almost pathetic affection for his own, but, never far below the surface, is the thread of shrewdness combined with humour. This prevents the overgrowth of sentimentality.

It also prevents the characters of King Lear at Hordle from speaking what they feel. Their articulateness operates in inverse proportion to the immediacy and intensity of what they are supposed to be feeling. And that 'what' is indicated through the tones and gestures prescribed in the stage directions. At the high emotional moments, taciturnity
takes over and business abounds. Thus, when in Act II Mrs. Parrott tries to give Toulson warning of the avarice of his daughter, his tirade of a reply quickly dwindles into short, unspecific sentences before being cut short by coughing. The speaker is then sent off in an elaborately prescribed exit which draws attention to his exclusion from his own, by his own:

JACOB: (starting furiously forward) Why can't you leave me alone, and mind your own business? Do you think I can't manage my own affairs at my time of life, and stick up for myself? Leave me alone; I'm all right (He coughs.) Interfering between a man and his darter! (He coughs again.) Have I found fault? There's nothing the matter. (He is doubled up by a violent fit of coughing which so exhausts him that, when it passes, he can only say in a feeble voice:) I want my medicine. (As he hobbles towards the staircase, Mrs. Parrott follows and watches him climbing. The bedroom over the sitting-room is reached by passing through the bedroom over the kitchen, which is reached from the stairs by a door on the right at the top. A door on the left opens into the small attic over the scullery. Jacob opens the right-hand door and starts to go in, then recollects himself and withdraws, opening, this time, the left-hand door.)

(p.37)

An even more striking instance of the replacement of verbal language with visual is the moment in Act III when Mrs. Parrott tells Jacob of Matilda's past actions and present intentions. On being laden with the last straw, the information that his daughter had claimed pregnancy in order to force Albert to marry her, 'Jacob starts convulsively from his chair, and tries to speak; then sinks back again. Mrs. Parrott steps towards him anxiously, but he waves her away.' He is then assigned a very few words and a lot of business:

JACOB: I waited so long for her — (he speaks to himself in a low voice, and the only words that can be heard are) — nobody to care —

MRS. PARROTT: (in great distress) Mister Toulson! It's better to be sorrowful in comfort, than sorrowful in rags. You can't have things just as you want 'em. Nobody can't in this world.

JACOB: I wanted her back.
MRS. PARROTT: Don't 'ee take on so... Children's like that.

JACOB: It's sharp... it's sharp! (He stands up, in such trouble that Mrs. Parrott, unable to say more, can only raise her hands and drop them helplessly. Jacob sinks feebly into his chair again and Mrs. Parrott goes quietly out through the sitting room door. There is silence for a moment, then, as Mrs. Parrott is heard closing the front door, he stands up again. His face is set now, and his mouth tightly closed, so that he looks grim and shrewd. He takes a fresh clay pipe from the mantel-shelf, reseats himself, fills and lights the pipe, and sits staring into the fire.)

(pp.61-62)

A psychological transition — from a convulsively troubled state of mind to a grimly and shrewdly determined one — has been represented; but only its terminus a quo has been represented (and then only in part) by words. The progression itself is represented by business and facial expression. Indeed, the latter part of this passage is, in effect a mimed soliloquy.

King Lear at Hordle is a sentimental drama wherein the characters are, partly by authorial fiat and partly by the conventions in which he is working, not allowed to speak of or with sentiment. It is primarily the visual language which represents the drama: conditions and changes, conflicts and consequences, are shown, not spoken. Most of what is spoken is either (a) information about external facts and objects, or (b) opinion about eternal human emotions and inter-relations. In the first passage of dialogue quoted above (pp. 371-372), data and some of the dicta are presented as discrepant, and Gilbert works such discrepancies hard and frequently for ironic effect. The verbal and visual languages are in this sense worked to such different ends that one could easily imagine King Lear at Hordle turned into pure comedy as a radio play, and into melodrama as a silent film. The convergence between the languages is minimal. Relatively little of the dialogue is directly connected with the plot, the demands
of which are hardly exorbitant. Still less is serviceable for either direct or indirect characterisation, which is all-important but is left to the scene-directions.

Where the verbal and visual languages of *King Lear at Hordle* do converge is not so much in the play as in the authorial intention which may be inferred from it and which is made explicit in the assorted apologia published with it. Writing plays about villagers for villagers to perform, Gilbert sets out to reflect back to them their images of themselves and their environment. Writing plays about villagers for non-initiates to read, Gilbert goes to great lengths to emphasise that his image is not marred by the faintest glimmer of moonshine. His detailed prescriptions for the visual language of *King Lear at Hordle* not infrequently draw attention to the verisimilitude of that language. The opening scene directions, for example, run to more than three pages of precise specifications for the set —

...The house borders on the village street, which runs parallel with the back of the stage, and passing vehicles can be seen through a long, low window on the right of the back wall...Across the right-hand corner is one of the stuffed horsehair sofas with very shiny seats, beloved of villagers...A circular walnut table is covered by a white cloth on which is laid a meal...The piece de resistance is an enormous pork pie, flanked by a solid slab of cold fat bacon, and a colossal home-made cake. The remainder of the table is occupied by a silver teapot, a cruet, cups, saucers and plates, bread, two sorts of jam, cheese, celery, a large jar of pickles, sugar, and milk.... (pp.7-8)

— and for costumes —

Jacob Toulson...is dressed in a snuff-coloured suit of good stout cloth, about twenty-five years old. This is his best suit, as is emphasised by the combined collar-and-front and the black, ready-made bow, in which, for many years, he has graced the pulpit of the Primitive Methodist Chapel. He hasn't changed from his heavy hob-nailed boots into slippers because he doesn't wear slippers...Slippers, night-shirts, and tooth-brushes are luxuries in Hordle. (p.9)
As is of course most immediately obvious from Gilbert's adoption of
dialect, the verbal language of King Lear at Hordle is also in
self-conscious pursuit of versimilitude. It is to serve this that he
pulls out such verbal stops as his dramatic language commands. At the
very beginning of the play, for example, Mrs. Parrott comes in and
adds a stuffed chine of pork (identified in the stage directions as
'the great rural delicacy' to the meal laid on the table,
and this contribution occasions a verbal celebration of the exceedingly
concrete — a paean to pigs:

JACOB: Thank 'ee kindly, Missis Parrott; thank 'ee kindly.
     It's a welcome fit for any king.

MRS. PARROTT: What could be more seasonable at the Feast than
     a pig?

JACOB: Specially when you've fed him his vittles all the year
     round, and watched him grow from a little grunting sucker
to a fair and proper size. Of all the parts of a pig, the
     fry's as good as any.

MRS. PARROTT: (smacking her lips) Give me the pies all brown
     and tasty from the oven.

JACOB: I've a weakness for stuffed chine myself.

MRS. PARROTT: (rapturously) Then there's the sausage meat, and
     the spare ribs, and the collard rhind, and the feet, and the
     head, and all the tasty little bits from odd corners.

JACOB: And the hams and flitches what hangs from the kitchen
     baulk all the summer until they're mellow.

MRS. PARROTT: And the bladders of lard swinging side by side with
     the plum pudding, like apples on a tree.

JACOB: (responding with the sonorous fervour of an archdeacon)
     There's nothing bad about a pig; leastways, I've never found
     it; and I've seen the death and latter end of many a
     hundred. Of course, things isn't what they was. In my
     young days not one cottage but had its pig ready by the Feast,
     so that the killers were working night and day, and the loud
     cries of dying pigs went on all the week, without ever
     stopping.

MRS. PARROTT: (with a holy look) A pleasant sound, surelie! I
     loves to hear it.

JACOB: I can remember, when I was only that high, seeing them lay
     on the cratches after they'd been scalded and scraped, all
     clean and white and beautiful. Beau-ti-ful! ......

(pp. 11-12)
The chin is retired from attention until later in the act, when it is made the centrepiece for Jacob Toulson's reunion with the prodigals. The reunion bears extended quotation solely for the sake of an assortment of critical points which it well illustrates:

(....if ever there were a dominant wife and a passive husband, here they are. Matilda is a tall, big-boned woman of forty, with neutral colouring, long pointed nose, and thin lips. She is wearing a felt hat and a ready-made serge costume, and is carrying a heavy blanket coat that was evidently bought for the voyage. Her strong and rather unpleasant face is not redeemed by the forced air of amiability with which she now advances. Albert Rowett, who carries two new canvas suit-cases, is a loosely built fellow of five-and-thirty, with a big flat face, and rather shifty brown eyes. His character is obvious at a glance: slow, stupid, sheepish, good-natured, and weak. He is wearing a soft felt hat, a heavy tweed suit of American cut, and cheap, block-toed shoes American of yellowish leather....)

JACOB: How you have altered! Let's have a good look at you.

MATILDA: (giving him a loud kiss) You don't look a day older, Dad. (She stands back and glances round the room.) And the place hasn't altered a bit.

ALBERT: (who has been standing sheepishly by, puts out his hand) Very pleased to see you, Mister Toulson.

JACOB: (gripping his hand) And welcome you are, my boy, now you've brought my darter home again.

ALBERT: (very politely) I hope your health's good, sir.

JACOB: Well enough, and my spirits too, this happy day. I only wish my poor missis was alive to enjoy it with me. (He turns to Matilda, who is examining the table with the eye of an experienced cook.) Tea's all ready, my darlies, and I expect you'll be wanting it.

MATILDA: Why, Dad, what a feast you've got for us. (She lifts up the dish with the pork pie on it, turns it round and puts it down again, while Albert fidgets hungrily around the table.) And I don't think I've ever seen a better crust than this.

JACOB: That's Missis Parrott. You remember her — (he points with his thumb) — just across the road. She's locked well after me ever since your poor mother died.

ALBERT: Didn't her husband used to mend the roads?

JACOB: That's right; and now her boy Dick has the job and lives with her.

MATILDA: (peering into the teapot) I'd better make the tea, hadn't I, Dad?
JACOB: Do, my dear. The kettle's on the boil.

ALBERT: (unable to contain himself any longer, and giving voice with rapturous fervour) Stuffed chine!!!

MATILDA: (making tea) Fancy! Charles Pinion's dead!

JACOB: Mr. Pinion? Oh, yes. And his grandson has the Priory.

MATILDA: And Bannister Hides has that lovely Manor. I couldn't believe my ears when Mr. Gilbert told me.

JACOB: Mister Gilbert?

MATILDA: Gilbert Pinion — we saw him on Bly platform.

ALBERT: (removing his eyes from the table with an effort) Henry Dodsworth's done well. He has a groom now. And fancy Eli Gunn retiring here, and —

MATILDA: Wait till we've had tea, Albert, and then Dad'll tell you all the news.

ALBERT: (fervently) Yes, yes! Let's have tea.

(pp. 19-21)

Note in the first place that, as before with his reaction to news of daughterly deceit, the lines assigned Jacob for an intensely emotional moment of reunion are few and soon turned to external affairs. Secondly, not one word of the passage is directly relevant to the plot, and those words which are indirectly relevant are so through characterisation. Thirdly, however, most of the indications of character (and all of the strong ones) are in the stage directions rather than the dialogue. Finally, however, the latter contains references to (a) the late Mrs. Toulson, (b) the late Mr. Parrott, (c) Dick Parrott, (d) the late Charles Pinion, (e) Charles Pinion's grandson, (f) Bannister Hides, (g) Gilbert Pinion, (h) Henry Dodsworth, and (i) Eli Gunn. Mention has been made of some eight or nine inhabitants of Hordle, of whom none is ever seen, three are dead, and three are never named again. Yet the references are not gratuitous. They are not being used to characterise any one speaker, nor need one account for their presence by appealing
to common topics of conversation in familial reunions. *King Lear at Hordle* in fact contains verbal references to some 40 figures whose only relevance to the Toulson family drama is that they live or have lived in or near the village in which it is set. (One or two have a slightly closer connection in that we are told that they have done or may do something pertinent to the plot situation, but even these have no more substantial existence than that of being names attached to 'factual' data.41) The dialogue is also dense with geographical references, and sprinkled with allusions to Church-Chapel and Conservative—Labour tensions. None is any more relevant to the enacted drama than are the references to distant Toronto. But all are the equivalents in the dialogue of those 'passing vehicles...seen through a...window' in the set. Here in the verbal language of his play, as in the visual, Gilbert has gone to great pains to suggest surrounding life, to situate the Toulson household in a 'real' geographical place and the events therein in 'real' historical time.

The full measure of Gilbert's attempt to create the illusion of an environment and events around his play becomes apparent when one examines the context in which *King Lear at Hordle* was published. It is the title piece in a volume of 'rural plays' of which the common setting was described as follows by the author in a 'Preface on Rural Art':

The scene of these plays is a section of three to four hundred square miles, offered as an example of rural England, uncontaminated by city civilisation. This district is purely imaginary, but will, I think, be found true to most parts and typical of the whole.

(p.xvii)

To assist the reader's exact cognition of the unfamiliar imaginary, Gilbert also prefaced *King Lear at Hordle and Other Rural Plays* with tables of information about the villages (including Hordle), population distribution, principal seats, etc., in the three to four hundred square
miles of the Ely district. (He even takes this so far as to
distinguish in the tables between 'Places Mentioned but not on Map'
and 'Places on Map but not in Ely District' !!) Hordle itself is
described in still further 'official detail' in an 'Extract from
County Directory' which is prefixed to the already extensive scene
directions at the beginning of Act I:

HORDLE, a village of 437 inhabitants. Apart from the Waste,
there is no large landowner, the parish being divided into
small properties. Church — All Saints. Vicar — Rev. J. King.
Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Chapels. "Flower Pot" Inn
(H. Dodsworth). "Green Man" Inn (E. Pinder). "Welcome Stranger"
Inn (N. Lack). Two beerhouses. The parish is almost entirely
contained by the River Brent, River Roan, and Hordle Brook.
HORDLE WASTE, the property of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners,
is a large expanse of sandy soil, abounding with gorse, and
unfit for cultivation. HORDLE RISE is the only one of the
Brent, between Ely and the Gulland. ROUNDHEAD RISE is the slope
leading up from Fletton Bridge. Local legend says the
Iron sides charged the Cavaliers here, driving them through
Fletton into the marshes.

(p. 7)

For the inhabitants as well as for the places, Gilbert provides
tables of 'official' information. The reader who wants to sort out all
the identities behind a line of dialogue like 'Old Mester Rowett.....
wanted Albert to marry his cousin Thompson's eldest darter, in Fletton'
(p. 61) can turn to the back of the volume and find:

ROWEITT, THOMPSON, Farmer, Fletton.
ROWEITT, ANNIE, Daughter, Fletton.
ROWEITT, WILMOT, Dead, Hordle.
ROWEITT, MRS. W., Dead, Née Quillam, Hordle.
ROWEITT, ALBERT, Son, Hordle.
ROWEITT, MRS. MATILDA, Née Toulson, Albert's Wife, Hordle

(p. 260)

But this is not all. King Lear at Hordle and Other Rural Plays
was published as the second part of Gilbert's projected 'Old England
Series'. The series was to have run to fully fifteen parts, and seven
were actually published between 1921 and 1925.42 Adopting a different
literary genre or subgenre in each part, Gilbert attempted to invent and
elaborate a complete and detailed world so 'true to life' that his readers would enter into it even so far as to share the mental outlook of its imaginary inhabitants:

The English market town with its area of parishes is a self-contained unit. For thirty years the author lived in such a district... A countryman knowing everyone in his own village, and a great many in adjacent ones, takes for granted, in conversation, an intimate knowledge of the locality. It is this local apprehension that the author wishes to give his readers... The object is to place the reader in the position of an inhabitant of the district of Bly; and though his cognition must be extended to embrace the several thousand characters, together with 150 square miles of wold, heath, fen and marsh, roads, rivers, fields and woods, churches, chapels, inns and dwellings, he will ultimately have been provided with the material for such an extension.

The immediately preceding quotation is from a publisher's advertisement printed in the seventh (and last published) volume of the series, and it would seem that by then Gilbert's territorial ambitions for his fiction had been halved — from 300 or 400 square miles to 150! But while the geographical boundaries of his fictional space may have shrunk, his attempt to position his readers in such a space (and time) and to give them 'a knowledge of each character and each relationship and a simultaneous view of every one of a vast complexity of interweaving strands' is the same. What the series amounts to, in short, is the construction of a world which is as complete and closed as it is imaginary — a fiction wherein an elaborate system of self-referential cross-referencing creates for the reader the illusions of reality in the fiction and of divine omniscience in himself.

To consider King Lear at Hordle in this context is in part a critical cheat, for such a procedure ignores the obvious point that it is not a novel but a play-text, a script for performance on its own — apprehended independently not just of the whole 'Old England Series' but indeed of the other plays in the volume to which it gives its title. (The sole record of a performance of King Lear at Hordle by a
village drama group in 1923, makes no mention of performance on the same evening of any other play in that volume. The audience are given only some of the references, not all; and, performances being without textual appendices, they cannot turn to official tables and situate those references within an imaginary system. This system could conceivably be included in a programme. Even then, however, the limitations of verbal language in King Lear at Hordle would leave the audience without access to the 'inside information' available to divinities and novel-readers. When this play is in performance, then, even its abundance of 'factual' references cannot give a member of an audience the illusion of omniscience over the whole of the world represented on and around the state.

These references can, however, give him the illusion that that world exists — or, more likely, that it is very like a world which exists or has existed somewhere, sometime. This is of course why so much of the verbal language of King Lear at Hordle is simply the announcement of bits of information — loose-ended and disorganised for the audience, carefully co-ordinated for any reader interested and industrious enough to consult appendices and other parts of the series — about its imaginary world. Moreover, the more such bits of information are thrown about, the more complete is that world made to seem. But insofar as the illusion is complete, by so far is it closed. The data with which the dialogue of King Lear at Hordle is so dense serve a construct which is, every sense of the word, finished.

As for the data, so also, though in a perhaps less obvious way, for those dicta which are the other distinction of the verbal language of King Lear at Hordle. Whether these are true to any village life outside Gilbert's imagination is probably unverifiable; but the fact that and the reason why they should give the impression of such truth
bear further examination. The point, that is, is not whether Lancashire villagers in the second decade of the twentieth century were wont to sum up the dialectic of domestic relations with such sentiments as 'You want your own' and 'They say as the worst quarrels is in families'. It is rather than these sentiments are sententiae; they seem like the language that men do (or might well) use because they are as if were offered in quotation marks. Some ('They say as...') are cast as quotations. 'You want your own', on the other hand, is repeated so often that it becomes self-quotation. And both, like other homey platitudes in the play, have the further edge of conviction in that they are clichés. Such phrases ring 'true' because they are common coinage, well-worn through circulation in other literary, representations of rural life. A reader whose acquaintance with English rural life went no further than Golders Green would not stop to consider whether such phrases were (or had become) counterfeit but would accept them as valid because he would find them familiar from other texts.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the only conspicuous convergences of visual and verbal languages in King Lear at Hordle centres upon a familiar quotation. It is, moreover, both a quotation of impeccable literary antecedents and one which is presented precisely as a text. One of the first bits of business assigned Jacob at the opening of Act I is the squaring of a text which hangs on the sitting-room wall and which reads HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER 'in red letters on a white ground' (p. 10). Later in the act the dialogue pointedly alludes to the written quotation. Matilda is made to draw attention to it, along with photographs of herself and her spouse: 'MATILDA:......Look at them! (pointing to the text and the enlarged photographs). Those are his treasures ' (p. 22). Attention is also
directed to the text by her father:

JACOB: (rhapsodically, pointing to the text on the wall) Aye, my gall! Them as tides by that never has cause to repent it.

(p.25)

The text follows Jacob into banishment in the kitchen, where —'poked under the dresser...it leans against the wall partly hidden by a stone jar' (p.31) — its situation is even more humiliated than his. A subsequent (p.35) scene direction requires Mrs. Parrott to register and react to its degradation at some length and Jacob in silent turn to respond to her pantomime. At the beginning of Act III (p.55), Matilda's attempts to placate her father are indicated by the restoration of the text to a place on the wall, albeit only the kitchen wall; and at the very end of the play:

JACOB:.....I've had enough of this kitchen. (Jacob takes his text down from the wall, and delivers the final blow.) I shall do as I like with my own property...Please yourselves: but mester in my own house I'm going to be as long as I live.

(The tide sets towards the room door. Albert goes first...Jacob follows with his text under his arm...)

Even this rare convergence of verbal and visual languages in King Lear at Hordle is achieved through the written, not the spoken, word. In the dialogue proper, sententiae are not deployed with such dexterity nor to such significance. An Elizabethan dramatist — Webster with his commonplace book at elbow would be the obvious example — can take an equally clichéd quotation from a text, embed it in a passage of dialogue, and make it variously serve characterisation, plot, decoration, and/or commentary. It can do so in direct proportion to (inter alia, notably the dramatist's skill) the variety, flexibility and complexity of the various visual as well as verbal languages of which it is there made a part. The visual and verbal languages of Gilbert's play, however, serve only, and on the whole very simply, to represent an imaginary
world as real. An examination of the liberal use of homey platitudes and clichéd turns of phrase across *King Lear* at Hordle reveals very little more than the way in which verbal verisimilitude can be achieved by such means — *i.e.*, that this representation of an imaginary world can be assembled in large part out of borrowings from other such representations.

A secondary purpose to which Gilbert puts his borrowings is more playful. Here and there he opposes homey platitude to antithetical homey platitude or sets homey platitude against more flatly phrased statements of onstage 'fact'. (The passage of dialogue quoted on pp. 317-318 above includes instances of both fliting and deflating; the latter especially.) These contrasts, though not infrequent, are interesting mainly for limited and local comic effects. I draw attention to them merely because the latter sort seems to me analogous with the basic game of verbal language which is played in all three comic adaptations of *King Lear*. The difference is that where in *King Lear* at Hordle the comic contrast is between two different sorts of purportedly 'life-like' speech, in these comedies it is between such speech on the one hand and overtly literary utterance on the other.

iv. Comic and Sentimental Violations of Norms

These comic adaptations are much of a time (1945-1956) and can, I think, be discussed very briefly. All are transpositions; all are set, without scene change, in sitting-rooms; and all adhere to naturalist conventions of dramatic speech. Indeed, their comic effect depends on their doing so. The one-acts intended for amateur performance — Charles Causley's *How Pleasant to Know Mrs. Lear* (1948) and Joyce Dennys' *The Lear of Albion Crescent* (1956) — are most
remotely related to Shakespeare's *King Lear*. In the former, set in a Cornwall vicarage late in the reign of Queen Victoria, three girls are under the tyranny of their (never-seen) mother. At the end of the play, she conveniently elopes with the choir-master, and the girls' aunt carries off them and their stage-struck, Shakespeare-quoting serving-maid (a Fool subjected to sex change for the sake of all-female casting) to unleash their long-curbed talents upon London. In the latter, set in a middle-class house in a present-day provincial town, a man with three daughters is put through a succession of comic postures while his wife is away giving birth to a fourth child that he desperately hopes will be a boy. Misinformation dashes his hopes; but it is corrected, and he rejoices, in the end. Though his overbearing egocentricity doesn't allow him to notice, the ups and downs of his expectations are matched by those of his youngest daughter, Robyn — a child of apt age (13 years) and sufficient precocity to permit her playing the family Fool — concerning a scholarship examination. Obviously, in neither case does the Shakespearean connection amount to much more than an initial plot situation of three daughters and a domineering parent, and I don't think either play invites extended discussion. What is to be noted, however, is that both plays use verbal allusions to and quotations from Shakespeare amid almost unbearably banal lines; that this literary interlarding is assigned to figures who by virtue of dottiness or artiness (*How Pleasant to Know Mrs. Lear*), of situational stress or adolescent precocity (*The Lear of Albion Crescent*) are privileged to break the banality; and that all of the allusions and quotations are rendered ridiculous by the same posturing which makes them permissible, and most are deflated and/or identified by other characters as soon as they are spoken. As most of the many quotations in *How Pleasant to Know Mrs. Lear* are garbled gobbets from
Hamlet and The Bells (and none is from King Lear), I trust that an example of the more sparing use of quotation in The Lear of Albion Crescent will suffice to illustrate the standard shape of the verbal joke. The paterfamilias, chasing his youngest, has dropped some properties, stooped to pick them up, strained his back, and started shrieking:

FATHER: I can't move. I've broken my back! Ow! Ow! I'm in agony!

PAT: It's your lumbago again.

FATHER: Don't be silly — this is serious. I tell you I've broken my back! Ow!

PAT: (taking his arm) Can't you straighten up a bit?

FATHER: No, I can't. This is all Robyn's fault. Oh sharper than a serpent's tooth is an ungrateful child. Ow! I suppose she'll be delighted to see me wheeled about in a spinal carriage for the rest of my life.

LESLIE: Robyn didn't touch you — it's lumbago. (She takes his other arm.) Come on Pat, we'll get him to the sofa.

FATHER: Go away! Don't touch me! I tell you it's agony! OW! OW! It's like a knife going through me! OW! ........

(With many groans and shrieks FATHER is helped to the sofa and gradually gets down on to his back. PAT picks up the flowers and lays them on his chest.)

FATHER: (with his eyes closed) Send for Doctor Gordon and tell him to bring plenty of morphia. Thank heaven your dear mother is provided for and there'll be enough money to educate the boy.

LESLIE: It's only lumbago, Father.

FATHER: My poor child, little do you know! All I hope is that I don't linger and become a burden to others........

(ROBYN comes in.)

ROBYN: Well, that was a rough-and-tumble, wasn't it? (She sees FATHER lying with his eyes shut and the flowers on his chest.) Oh, hullo, what's the matter with Father? Is he dead?

FATHER: Oh sharper than a serpent's tooth —

ROBYN: No, he isn't dead.
Robin Maugham's comic transposition, Mr. Lear (1956), plays the same verbal game (without the visual comedy) across three acts. These follow the domestic and professional fortunes of a hack historical novelist, Walter Craine. Feeling slighted in the latest Birthday Honours, Craine decides to make over his house and part of his estate to his three daughters so that upon his demise they won't be subsidising the government with death duties. The decision has been prompted by the scheming elder daughters Rose and Enid. The youngest, Jane, forfeits her portion by refusing to break her engagement to a young man who has slated Craine's latest novel. Maugham rather clumsily engineers absences from London for both father and youngest daughter. By Act II, set eight months later, the elder daughters have divided the house between themselves, redecorated the drawing room to suit their appalling and incompatible tastes (one running to imitation Fragonards and the other to Art Ultra-Moderne), and converted the basement of the house into a flat for their father and his private secretary, Peter Stacey, whom they both faintly fancy. Craine's butler Harold Kent, however, has been dismissed as superannuated but in fact on account of his irrepressible impudence. The rest of Act II, scene i, takes Craine further into trouble by establishing that neither of the elder daughters will give him the financial assistance he desperately needs after the failure of a Broadway musical which he'd backed. Act II, scene ii, later in the same day, moves towards a resolution of the crisis. With Stacey and Kent in his inebriated wake, Craine returns from a pub and meets his elder daughter's and son-in-law's dinner guest, Violet Danefield, a Cabinet Minister who adores Craine's novels, is on the look-out for a marriage of politically respectable convenience, and has the money to buy a husband. The latter two points, however, are made clear only at the end of Act III. In the meantime a few
other schemes to save Craine have fizzled; but the devoted daughter, no longer engaged, both has turned up to help her father and also has been won by Stacey.

The play being intended for professional performance (which it received at the Connaught Theatre in Worthing, Sussex, in September of 1956)\(^5\) and being set in a Belgravia drawing-room, the dialogue of Maugham's *Mr. Lear* is markedly more pretentious and polished than is that of either of the one-act comedies described above. Its norm of everyday utterance is that of the (would-be) West End stage and London literary party rather than that of hired-hall platform and suburban/provincial household. The difference is merely one of verbal gilt applied in deference to the more exalted and exotic status of the social/psychological stereotypes who are the *dramatis personae*. The gilt does not disguise either the banality of the norm, or the various verbal truisms by which the norm is disrupted and the disruptions themselves promptly deflated back to banality. None of the disruptions is a direct quotation from Shakespeare, but all are effectively bracketed by quotation marks. They are rendered ridiculous by their speaker and by the reactions (generally drawing attention to literary pretentiousness) they get. Thus, early in the first act, after the audience have been introduced to the three daughters, to Peter Stacey and to Harold Kent:

(ALAN /ROSE's husband\(^7\) comes in, L. He is a plump man of forty. His dignity of speech and manner is impaired by indigestion. He conceals the occasional spasm by covering his mouth decorously with his right hand.)

ALAN: What an entrancing picture you make! The three Graces — as large as life.

ROSE: Now don't you start using florid terms of speech. You know they make you suspect in the House.
Exchanges such as this are most frequently constructed around the central character, Walter Craine. Where his son-in-law is rendered ridiculous by constitutional flatulence, the hack novelist is absurd on account of personal and professional bombast. He first enters 'in a temper' (p.14), reads at length from the review which has occasioned his ill-spirits, fulminates floridly over it, and then is promptly lured into a stretch of self-quotatation which confirms the review. The trap is sprung by Harold Kent, who has been justifying the absence of ice on the drinks table with complaints about the condition of the refrigerator:

WALTER: That will do, Harold. You can go.

HAROLD: Speaking of which, the immersion heater's gone wonky again.

WALTER: You can go, I said.

(HAROLD moves towards the door, then stops and turns.)

HAROLD: (Melodramatically) Hard words, Ludovic.

WALTER: (After a pause, playing up rather sulkily.) Not hard words. True.

HAROLD: My daughter loves you.

WALTER: Nay.

HAROLD: Yea.

WALTER: How can you be assured?

HAROLD: Do you disbelieve me?

WALTER: Yea — I mean, nay. I trust your probity. But can you be certain?

HAROLD: Does not a father know the little child he reared?

WALTER: Yea.

HAROLD: Would that child hide her heart from the father she loved?

WALTER: Nay.

HAROLD: The how say you, Ludovic?
WALTER: How say I?

HAROLD: How say you? Yea or nay?

WALTER: Nay.

HAROLD: Nay?

WALTER: Yea. For alas, there are reasons why I cannot return that love, reasons I can never divulge to any man.

HAROLD: (In his usual voice.) Not for at least three chapters. Dinner at eight.

(HAROLD goes out. WALTER turns to ALAN who has been staring at him in amazement.)

WALTER: The Swordsman's Daughter. My first historical novel. Sixteen editions and well over two hundred thousand copies. Perhaps a little dated now, but it's Harold's favourite.

(pp. 16-17)

The exchange of course vindicates the bad review and utterly discredits Craine's recurrent claims to universality and profundity as a writer. It casts an anticipatory shadow of ridicule over the father-daughter relationships which will be played through. In particular it ensures that in the act-ending exchange between father and daughter anything said on his side will sound as strained and silly as if he were still quoting himself. And there is plain-speaking Jane to remind him (and the audience) that his utterances are overblown:

WALTER: Jane, once and for all, I must insist that you never see that...man again.

JANE: I love him.

WALTER: How can you be so disloyal to your father?

JANE: I happen to love my father. But does that mean I've got to love all his books?

ENID: An artist and his work are indivisible.

WALTER: Neatly put. Love me, love my books.

JANE: That's nonsense and you know it.....

WALTER: You must choose between your loyalty to your father and your paramour.
JANE: I don't want to choose. I love both.

WALTER: If you can love that spotty cat after seeing him in this room let alone in the bath-tub, you need to consult an oculist.

JANE: That was a cheap crack if ever there was one.

(pp. 30-31)

The method of the dialogue of Maugham's Mr. Lear guarantees that only cheap cracks and similar verbal postures can be used in situations of stress. Every potentially emotional exchange is ironised in advance. Another passage of posturing quotations from *A/Sic* Swordsman's Daughter is introduced at the end of the second act (pp. 60-61) and ensures that the love scene in which Violet and Walter are to be assigned in Act III will sound like a quotation. It is no surprise to find that the play ends with the newly betrothed Minister of Food and the novelist concocting a menu in purple prose:

WALTER: .....I can make you a frothy feather-weight zabaglione.

VIOLET: Followed by some of those succulent little wood strawberries to get our Vitamin C content.

WALTER: (Approaching her as she stands beside the armchair.) Violet... 

VIOLET: (Continuing) And if we're still hungry there's a delectably nutritious Stilton. Or perhaps a soft ripe Camembert?

WALTER: (Passionately) Violet!

(...WALTER pulls VIOLET over the side of the armchair and kisses her full on the lips.)

CURTAIN

(p. 84)

The contrasts of verbal language on which these three comic transpositions depend are analogous with those used in play-within-a-play adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy. In these such contrasts are usually put to comic purposes. This will have been evident in some of my previous quotations (pp. 285-293 above) from post World-War-II
adaptations in which the central character adopts the role of Hamlet and is rendered ridiculous by the bad fit of this borrowed garment. This is often and easily indicated by verbal contrasts: the role-player's pretensions are pointed up by the way in which the lines assigned him are out-of-key with lines spoken by those around him and out-of-line with the 'facts' of the dramatic situation in which he is placed. In the one play-with-a-play adaptation of *King Lear*, however, verbal contrasts are used to a quite different end (and one more like that of play-within-a-play adaptations early in the century): we are invited to see the character in a role he never managed to play.

This adaptation is Emlyn Williams' *The Light of Heart* (1940). The central character of this three-act melodrama is Maddoc Thomas, an aging actor attempting a comeback. Set in the present time and in a Covent Garden bed-sitting room, the play covers the last eleven months of Maddoc's life, wherein events and central figures bear small relation to *King Lear*. Maddoc's originally brilliant promise has long been pickled in alcohol and he is looked after by his 28-year-old daughter Catrin. In Act II, scene i, through chains of events which need not be summarised here, father and daughter are each given a chance at his/her heart's desire: he gets offered the title role in a Gielgud production of *King Lear* at Covent Garden and she, unbeknownst to her father, gets engaged. In Act II, scene ii, on the day *King Lear* is to open, Maddoc accidentally discovers that Catrin is about to go off to America. Shocked, Maddoc finds he cannot remember his lines and goes out to get too drunk for the show to go on. The evidence of her parent's utter dependence on her provokes a crise de conscience in Catrin in Act III, and she breaks her engagement. Maddoc, having overheard this self-sacrifice, matches it by committing suicide.
The selection of *King Lear* as the play within this play is mainly because the length and difficulty of its title role make it a major challenge for a mature actor. Most of the direct references to the Shakespearean tragedy emphasise the problems of memorisation which it poses Maddoc. This is stated visually as well as verbally. Between the scenes of Act II there is a time lapse of six months, and Maddoc’s hard work across that time is indicated by the fact that his copy of *King Lear* has become ‘dog-eared and battered’ by the opening of Act II, scene ii. At this point we see him, cued by a friendly police constable and fellow-Welshman, practising his part, with Maddoc 'reeling off under his breath, at an unintelligible speed' Lear's lines at IV.vi. 86-100 (Arden edition). As remarked above, it is on discovering, at the end of this scene, that he cannot remember his lines that Maddoc goes out and gets drunk; and at the end of the next scene, his incapacity is made clear to Catrin:

**CATTRIN:** Just to please me, love, will you say your first lines in the play? Just once . . .

A pause.

**MADDOC:** (slowly, indistinctly, like an infant over and over again.) Baa baa, black sheep . . . have you . . . any wool . . . The clock begins to strike six.

(A foolish smile spreading over his face.) Any wool . . . Baa baa . . . baa baa . . .

The lights fade slowly into darkness. The curtain falls...

(pp. 95-96)

Elsewhere and again the dialogue of *The Light of Heart* advert to the strain upon the memory of its central character in learning the title role of *King Lear*. There are other title roles which could have served the purpose, and beyond this the connections between the two plays are only very vague and generalised resemblances. There is some parallel in the inversions of both plays of the parent-child relationship, but this is of enough insignificance to *The Light of Heart* that
Williams, reducing Maddoc's age to his own (35 years) so that he could play the part himself, rewrote the relationship into a brother-sister one when the play first went on tour. An even more distant and abstract analogy — the suspension of both Lear and Maddoc between extremes of human dignity and degradation — is more important, at least as regards verbal contrasts in Williams' play. Maddoc is introduced as a figure of personal dissolution and professional failure. In the course of the play he moves towards self-command and triumph, but failure to play the role of King Lear pins him forever to the condition in which he has been introduced. At this point there comes a father-daughter exchange in which he speaks eloquently and lengthily of himself and his feelings, and she sticks to short statements of facts and commonsense. The exchange covers a lot of territory, but it is on the topic of Maddoc's failure to play his role that the verbal contrast between the speakers is most pronounced:

MADDOC: .....I mean. . . (looking at her). . .don't think too badly of me because I haven't come to anything in the end. You see, I love, I was never meant to. I've got good things in me, I know that, but the trouble is I'm one of those freak machines with every good part running against a wonky one, and in the end nothing moves at all. In the middle of that dress rehearsal — when I suddenly knew I'd got to those heights Irving told me about — I had an odd feeling, of standing at the back of the circle — as I am now, rather dirty, down-at-heel — watching myself on the stage and saying, 'By Jove, he's a great personality, that old boy! He's a success!' There I was, on the stage, showing this shadowy old tramp what was what. And of course it was the other way about — the old tramp at the back of the circle was the real me — because here I am, flesh and blood — whereas King Lear, nobody'll ever see him. . .See? Funny.

CATTRIH: (writing, determined not to yield) As the reason nobody'll ever see him is that you had too much to drink yesterday, there's no point in carrying on like Pagliacci, is there?

(pp. 107-108)

A few pages later, however, Maddoc has thrown himself out of the window. The final verdict on him is pronounced by the figures who have through
the play been the speakers of good sense — Catrin and her fiancé Robert. And they require that Maddoc be remembered and judged in the role which he never played:

**Catrin:** (suddenly sobbing) There's a crowd running up — thousands of them — and he was worth all of them put together... (In a panic.) In one second they'll be pouring up those stairs — through that door —

**Robert:** And while we've got this second, we've got to say one thing, and make ourselves believe it. He played that first night after all —

**Catrin:** (in a sob) But he didn't — he didn't —

**Robert:** We've got to make ourselves believe he did, and made the success of his life.

**Catrin:** They all thought he was finished, but now —

**Robert:** He's all right.

**Catrin:** He's all right.

*The Curtain Falls.*

(p.115)

In his 1919 essay on 'Rhetoric and Poetic Drama' T.S. Eliot proposed that:

The really fine rhetoric of Shakespeare occurs in situations where a character in the play sees himself in a dramatic light..... This dramatic sense on the part of the characters themselves is rare in modern drama. In sentimental drama it appears in a degraded form, when we are evidently intended to accept the character's sentimental interpretation of himself.

I think this last sentence exactly describes the end of Williams' *The Light of Heart*. Modern drama has, however, devised another form of degradation for 'this dramatic sense on the part of the characters themselves' — namely, that which is found when we are evidently intended to reject and ridicule the character's sentimental interpretation of himself, as we are in those comic transpositions of *King Lear* which I discussed above. Either way, the audience are fed their cues by a normative figure — Jane (and to a lesser extent, Peter Stacey) in
Maugham's *Mr. Lear*, Catrin (and to a lesser extent, Robert) in Williams' *The Light of Heart*. It is with them that the audience respond and judge; and as Eliot argued in the interstices of the above quotation:

A speech in a play should never appear to be intended to move us as it might conceivably move other characters in the play, for it is essential that we should preserve our position as spectators, and observe always from the outside though with complete understanding.  

I think it unlikely that such a position is possible for the spectator of a drama which invites identification with its characters and in which verbal and visual languages represent an onstage fiction as a fixed reality. At any rate, when this illusion has been imposed on a spectator, there are only two ways in which he can respond to deviations from whatever has been established as 'normal' on stage — rejection or acceptance. He can take a character's sentimental self-reading and leave the surrounding 'reality', or vice versa; but he cannot do both. And when both playwright and performing company are in full control of the idiom and conventions to which the play adheres, the spectator cannot even choose which.

Another way of putting this would be to say that in plays which adhere to naturalist conventions of dramatic speech, both verbal and visual languages either are homogenous in degree and in kind of stylisation, or, if a certain stylistic heterogeneity is admitted, build in controls which indicate which elements are normative and which deviant. Of the two tragic adaptations which will be discussed in the rest of this chapter, one, Bottomley's *King Lear's Wife*, has a fully developed, causally connected plot and fully rationalised and individualised characters. Its patterned and figurative speech is
highly stylised, but uniformly and homogeneously so: all nine characters always speak in verse and in images. Its setting is remote but is recognisable as 'real' in terms of place (a domestic room with two doors, one bracketed by windows and opening onto a garden, and the other leading to a corridor) and of time (duration of performance, which is not broken, is approximately the same as the time it would take to perform the actions represented). The other, Bond's Lear, has a clear chain of action overall but does not, I think, even admit discussion in terms of plot, and its more than 80 speaking parts are not rationalised and developed as individual personalities with coherent motivations and more or less complete biographies behind them. The dialogue is here patterned and figurative, there bare, unrhythmical and literal. The specificity and literalness of the places in which it is set vary enormously across the play and sometimes even within scenes. In one such fluid scene, II. 2 (Lear's meeting with the ghosts of Bodice and Fontanelle as girls), we see characters as they were — or may have been, or are remembered by Lear, no matter — anterior to the beginning of the play. And while elsewhere the sequence of time is not reversed, its duration is left utterly obscure: there is no indication anywhere in either stage directions or dialogue as to whether the events represented cover weeks, months, years or decades. No one of these variations in verbal and visual language is represented as more 'real' than any other.

Both King Lear's Wife and Lear, then, use stylised speech and do so without indicating that an audience ought to take exception to it or make an exception for it. Both are therefore of interest in relation to my first area of linguistic problems for adapters of Shakespearean tragedy, that of the invention of figurative and patterned verbal language. With regard to my second area, that of diction in
relation to plot and characterisation, this is pertinent to
*King Lear's Wife* but requires some readjustment for Bond's play.

In *Lear*, I will be arguing, both the verbal and the visual languages are shaped by an argument, and it is in relation to this that I propose to consider them. As for my third area of problems, that of the invention of a visual language and of the relation between it and verbal language, it is possible to give much fuller treatment to the visual language of these plays than I have given to any other so far. Productions of the plays discussed in the first half of this chapter are extremely unevenly documented: indeed, for two of the four adaptations for amateurs, I've no record at all of production. And even when, as with the professionally produced adaptations, reviews of productions are available, these are not very instructive about business and setting. I have therefore had to rely on such information as to visual language as could be extracted from the texts, but this too has been uneven, on account of the variations in format of publication (if any) and in theatrical circumstances presupposed. For both *King Lear's Wife* and *Lear*, however, and especially for the latter, a considerable amount of information about productions is available. My reason for thinking it desirable to give much fuller treatment to the visual languages of these plays constitutes a large part of the critical brunt of this latter part of the chapter: I will be arguing that the commendable but colossal failure of *King Lear's Wife* and the Pyrrhic victory of *Lear* lie mainly in the relations between verbal and visual languages which respectively exist in these plays. Finally, note should be taken of the irresistible coincidence of the facts that *King Lear's Wife* and *Lear* are the only two twentieth-century English-language adaptations of *King Lear* with tragic pretensions that can be taken seriously, that
they are the only two to use stylised verbal language without embarrassment, and that they come at the very beginning and the very end of the chronological period covered by this thesis. Both plays are sufficiently idiosyncratic that one cannot even imagine either as the work of anyone other than its author; but the differences in dramatic language between King Lear's Wife and Lear do in very large measure reflect the extraordinary opening up of conventions of playwriting and staging in this country since the 1960's. That is, while the parole of King Lear's Wife or Lear is indisputably recognisable as that of Gordon Bottomley or Edward Bond, the language of each play is respectively that available to a serious Anglophone adaptor of Shakespearean tragedy from ca. 1914 to ca. 1960 and that available to his late-twentieth-century equivalent.

v. Bottomley's 'King Lear's Wife'

Ruby Cohn has written of Bottomley's play:

Implicitly, King Lear's Wife seeks to answer the question of Shakespeare's Lear: "Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" The title suggests Bottomley's answer: King Lear's Wife. 60

A more accurate statement of the question implicitly addressed by the play would require a recasting of the question: 'What cause in nature makes hearts hard?' King Lear's Wife, as a type of one half of Bottomley's mankind, is only half the answer. King Lear supplies the other halves. The play's idea of the human condition is easily summarised with two lines describing its presiding divinities: 'All gods are cruel, bitter and to be bribed, but women-gods are mean and cunning as well.' 61 The description and distinction obtain for all characters in King Lear's Wife, as indeed for other of Bottomley's
plays, the central female characters of which tend to recapitulate each other. I will return further on to Bottomley's image of the human condition as a conflict among psychological types. Suffice at this point to insist that his hypotheses as to domestic developments anterior to Shakespeare's *King Lear* are cast in that image. That is, in no direct or important sense is Bottomley's *King Lear's Wife* an attempt to criticise Shakespeare's *King Lear*. By Bottomley's account, Shakespeare simply gave him a formal model, which he construed as a combination of naturalistic plot and patterned verse. By my account, Shakespeare simply provided Bottomley with fictional data and a point of emotional departure, as did other authors (notably Malory and the Norse saga-writers) and also visual artists. In one of the most self-revealing bits of bad verse I have ever encountered, Bottomley in 1916 dedicated *King Lear's Wife* to Thomas Sturge Moore:

> The years come on, the years go by,
> And in my Northern valley I,
> Withdrawn from life, watch life go by....
> For twenty years and more than twenty
> I have found my riches and my plenty
> In poets dead and poets living,
> Painters and musicians, all giving,
> By life shut in creative deeds,
> Live force and insight to my needs.

In those twenty years and more than twenty, Shakespearean tragedy had prompted Bottomley to write: 'A Prologue to *Antony and Cleopatra* (1899); three sonnets — 'The Last Night' (1897), 'Romeo to Rosaline' (1898), and 'Juliet to Rosaline' (1898); and one song, "'She Shall Be Buried by her Antony"' (1912). With the possible exception of the prologue, all are 'dramatic' in the sense that they imply a speaking character: the lines of 'The Last Night' are assigned in alternation to Iras and Charmian on the night before their mistress' death; the two sonnets inspired by *Romeo and Juliet* are, as their titles suggest, monologues; and even the song, though it is not
assigned to any fictional speaker(s) in particular, is cast as a series of questions, with the second verse a rejoinder to the first. Again with the possible exception of the prologue, they are also 'dramatic' in the sense that they imply conflict in or between characters. As will become apparent further on, neither sense of the word seems to me sufficient to make the dialogue of a play 'dramatic', but in both these limited senses much of Bottomley's early verse, in addition to these Shakespearean poems, might be (and was) termed 'dramatic': and both senses obtain for the dialogue of the three plays — King Lear's Wife (written 1913-14, published and performed 1915), Gruach (written 1918, published 1921, first performed 1923), and Crookback's Crown (completed and published 1946).

A cursory examination of Bottomley's Shakespearean exercises from The Last Night in 1897 to Crookback's Crown in 1946 reveals a growing mastery of traditional dramatic form. There is an obvious difference in length: the longest of the early poems are the song and the prologue, both of sixteen lines; and while the later works for the stage are all one-acts, each is longer than its predecessor. There is an increase in the number of speakers: the poems are spoken by one or two voices, but the number of speaking parts in the plays rises from nine in King Lear's Wife through thirteen in Gruach to nineteen in Crookback's Crown.

Then, too, there is across the plays an appreciable access of deftness and complexity in Bottomley's distribution of dialogue. King Lear's Wife is effectively a series of duologues punctuated by monologues. At no point in this play does Bottomley even attempt an interplay of more than three voices; and most of the passages in which he attempts to play off more than two are in fact duologue with occasional utterance interjected by a third figure who is present
more as observer than as speaker.\textsuperscript{70} This makes for some entrances and exits which are, in terms of plot probability, obtrusively clumsy in their contrivance.\textsuperscript{71} The orchestration à deux also increases the odds against Bottomley even remotely approximating the sense one gets in \textit{King Lear} of a disruption in the social fabric and that play's interaction between private and public worlds. It is not just that the world of \textit{King Lear's Wife} is merely domestic — as Coleridge described \textit{Timon of Athens}, 'a local eddy of passion on the high road of society, while all around are the week-day goings on of wind and weather'.\textsuperscript{72} It is that this domestic world is composed of a very few individuals who occasionally talk to each other. The household is not shown as a social unit, as a piece (however small) of social fabric, but rather as a chain in which all the links are broken or breaking. Such an image resulting from such verbal orchestration could perhaps be defended as aposite to Bottomley's emphasis in the play upon the aching isolation and mutual self-destruction of all the characters.\textsuperscript{73}

However, a glance at Gruach suggests that the orchestration of \textit{King Lear's Wife} was more a matter of technical inexpertise rather than of thematic intent. The later play, of which Bottomley in 1921 wrote that 'I believe it is my best thing',\textsuperscript{74} also emphasises individuals' isolation within a household. In it, however, Bottomley manages to keep up to six figures on stage and in the dialogue at once, and he makes more sparing and judicious use of discourse à deux. (In the first half of the play such discourse is reserved for a pair of encounters between two interlocking pairs of rivals in love. In the second half of the play, Gruach and the royal Envoy, the successful halves of each rivalry, are brought together for a long duologue which is ended only when they exit in the elopement which will make her Lady MacBeth.) As a result of this better management, Gruach does establish an image
of the household as a social unit: in consequence, the isolation therein of the title figure is much more marked, and the three points at which the play presents figures alone in conversation together are highly charged.

Finally, there is a growth in the complexity of the internal divisions of these one-act plays: *King Lear's Wife* is unbroken; *Gruach* is divided into two scenes interrupted by a few hours; and *Crookback's Crown*, while also divided into two scenes, posits a longer lapse of time between them and is, more remarkably, punctuated by a prologue, interlude and epilogue, these constituting a frame play set many years later in time.

Perhaps most striking, however, are the shift and the growing specificity of setting and subject matter. Between the Shakespearean verses and the plays, Bottomley moves North from the Mediterranean, and thereafter each play is more precisely pinned in place and time than its predecessor. *King Lear's Wife* is set somewhere in a Britain at some point in transition from paganism to Christianity. The scene of *Gruach* 'is laid in Scotland in the early Middle Ages' and specifically in the Thane of Forthingall's castle, which lies somewhere off the route of the Royal Envoy Macbeth from King Duncan's court at Inverness to Thorfinn, the Jarl of Caithness. *Crookback's Crown* is set in August 1485, 'at the place afterward called Diccon's Nook, near Sutton Cheney in Leicestershire, where Richard III77 encamped with his host the night before the Battle of Bosworth.' Its frame play is set in Pitscottie in Fife, 'in the year 1560 or thereabout', at which time Robert Lindsay is seen at work upon the chronicle history of Scotland which provided Bottomley with the non-Shakespearean incident which is the plot substance of this self-designated 'tragicomedy'.

Bottomley's remarks about his selection of subject matter and
style sometimes read like those of a man suffering from a bad case of tunnel vision. Warning Paul Nash off 'even the most surface service to the artistic internationalism that was springing up before the war', he proclaimed in a letter of 12 December 1919:

The Italian Futurists bore me: the French Post-Impressionists sometimes attract and sometimes aggravate me and always seem to me to have no concern with us (or message for us beyond one of general sincerity): I am a free-trader in politics and quite willing to let Germany sell me chemicals and France wines, but in art my Motto is "England for the English".78

Bottomley made a more reasoned and elaborate statement of that motto the following year in a letter to Sir William Rothenstein. In the course of his thanks for Bottomley's gift of the freshly published King Lear's Wife and Other Plays, Rothenstein had wondered whether the poet 'would someday write a play on some more contemporary event'. The inquiry provoked a long reply from Bottomley on 15 October 1920. As the letter amounts to a statement of personal poetic, I quote it at length:

...How shall I write of contemporary life? I was chopped out of it at eighteen, and it is the thing of which I know least. What I see of life in this remote place [rural Lancashire] can be very little different from what men and women saw in Armaide Tower, over the hill, in 1320 — except that they saw a more complete organism of life. If I am to write of present-day life as it exists around me, I have practically imposed upon me a peasant drama of the Synge-Abbey Theatre type; and this my mind rejects violently — I do not wish to yield to the limits of peasant experience.....

Is it not legitimate to go back to those times in the past when the country about me was containing a complete organisation of life unmaimed by the elephantiasis of the modern town-growth?.. I cannot find any hope in rehandling southern mythologies...I want the life of my own country, but in my singular circumstances I find most joy in handling subjects that will allow me to reconstitute a complete, full life, with its centre here and not elsewhere, in the region of which I know most.

Then I come back to your fundamental, ineluctable requirement of finding inspiration in the life about us: but must it be of as well as in the life about us? Poetry is such an unreal form of speech by its metrical nature: can it be used with a sense of reality in situations resembling those of daily life?.....

Does, then, poetic drama need to create a symbol of life rather than a representation of life?
I feel sometimes that perhaps the solution for a poet is to be found in the different aspects the great themes present to the different ages: different heroes may embody the same principle, but, beyond that a supreme story of a time long ago presents quite another aspect to our consciousness and culture from what it did to those who first knew it, and can yield new delight and illumination from its rehandling in an unexpected light... I feel too that there is something real to be done yet in telling the story of the past of Britain; and especially for us of the North, where the past has too often been simply assumed to be identical with the better-known, more documented past of the South. And if the English, the local, theatre is to come to life again, there should be a vital need, as well as a fine chance, of filling the gaps of history and legend left by the Elizabethans.

As far as plot is concerned, it is easy to summarise how in King Lear's Wife Bottomley set about both the 'filling in the gaps...left by the Elizabethans' and also the 'rehandling in an unexpected light' of 'a supreme story of a time long gone'. Although his long-suffering wife, Hygd, is declared to be within two dawns of her death, King Lear refuses to let his heirloom emerald be ground up into a pain-killing potion for her. He then freely bestows the jewel on her maid and his mistress, Gormflaith, who further decks herself in Hygd's crown while the Queen watches from her deathbed. Dragging herself across the room to a window, whence to observe further loveplay between her spouse and her servant offstage, Queen Hygd collapses into her final throes. She dies in the arms of her eldest daughter, Goneril, whom she enjoins to 'pay Gormflaith' (p.152). Goneril obliges and avenges her mother by knifing Gormflaith. In so doing she discovers a letter which proves the maid's infidelity to King Lear and thereby deflects his intended vengeance away from herself.

Although some early critics of King Lear's Wife thought otherwise, it seems to me that this intrigue illuminates only the peripheries of Shakespeare's dramatic version of 'a supreme story of a time long gone', and that even that illumination is dependent upon no-longer-tenable
assumptions about dramatic character. The origins of the Shakespearean Goneril's cruelty, and of the Shakespearean Lear's preoccupation with adultery, are posited in events anterior to those represented by Shakespeare. The Shakespearean Regan's less aggressive antipathy and the Shakespearean Cordelia's filial devotion are also accounted for, but only by-the-by. Neither Cordelia (who is cited as 'Cordeil') nor Regan is seen in Bottomley's play: their offstage activities and personalities are merely described in a conversation between their sister and mother and have no pertinence to the plot.

Nor, more remarkably, does that conversation have much pertinence to the plot: part of it explains the antecedents of the onstage situation, but as none of it directly furthers that situation, I have not even mentioned it in the preceding paragraph. The tidy, causally connected plot of Bottomley's *King Lear's Wife* can in fact be extracted from a small proportion of the play's lines, several long sequences of which need not even be taken into account. The plot with its spatial and temporal continuities is merely an occasion, almost an excuse, for the process of psychological discovery which is the real action of the play. Goneril is disabused of her fear and respect for her father, and she discovers in Hygd's death her own general situation as suffering woman doomed to decrepitude and therefore rejection (i.e., her likeness to her mother) and in Gormflaith's murder her own active capacities as killer (i.e., her likeness to her father). Lear, less importantly, is disabused of his illusions about Gormflaith and discovers the iron intractability of his eldest. A string of extracts will serve in part as a précis of the action of *King Lear's Wife* and in part as evidence of its unreliedly inward focus:

PHYSICIAN: But these strong inward pains that keep ebbing
Have not their source in perishing flesh.
I have seen women creep into their beds
And sink with this blind pain because they nursed.
Some bitterness or burden in the mind
That drew the life, sucklings too long at breast......
The harried mind is from the body estranged......
......The mind can be so hurt
That nought can make it be unhurt again.
(pp.135-136)

LEAR: ...Shatter my emerald!
Only the fungused brain and carious mouth
Of senile things could shape such a thought....
(p.136)

HYGD: You pulse and glow; you are too vital; your presence hurts......
I should have known that Goneril stands here.....

GONERIL: ......I am wicked reft in joys of breath and life,
And I must force myself to think of you......
(p.138)

HYGD: Be wild and calm and lonely while you may.
These are your nature's joys, and it is human
Only to recognize our natures' joys
When we are losing them for ever.

GONERIL: But why
Do you say this to me with a sore heart?
You are a queen, and speak from the top of life,
And when you choose to wish for others' joys
Those others must have woe.
(p. 140)

GONERIL: Hard and unjust my father has been to me;
Yet that has knitted up within my mind
A love of coldness and a love of him
Who makes me firm, wary, swift and secret,
Until I feel if I become a mother
I shall at need be cruel to my children,
And ever cold, to string their natures harder
And make them able to endure men's deeds;
But now I wonder if injustice
Keeps house with baseness, taught my kinship —
I never thought a king could be untrue,
I never thought my father was unclean.....
(pp. 142-143)

GORMFLAITH: ...Goneril is wild in her cold brain
And soon I must be made to pay a cruel price
For this one gloomy joy in my uncherished life.
Envy and greed are watching me aloof......
Longing to see me ruined, but she'll do it....
......
Now let me wear the Queen's true crown on me
And snatch a breathless knowledge of the feeling
Of what if would have been to sit by you...
LEAR: Girl, by the black stone god, I did not think
You had the nature of a chambermaid....
If you would be a queen, cleanse yourself quickly
Of menial fingerling and servile thought....
You cannot have the nature of a queen
If you believe that there are things above you:
Crowns make no queens, queens are the cause of crowns
(pp. 147-148)

GONERIL (to LEAR): ... (p.147) had long been dying in her heart.
She lived to see you give her crown away;
She died to see you fondle a menial:
These blows you dealt now, but what elder wounds
Received them to such purpose suddenly?
What had you caused her to remember most?
What things would she be like to babble over
In the wild helpless hour when fitful life
No more can choose what thoughts it shall encourage
In the lost mind? She has suffered you twice over,
Your animal thoughts and hungry powers, this day,
Until I knew you unkingly and untrue....
You cannot touch me now I know your nature:
Your force upon my mind was only terrible
When I believed you a cruel flawless man...
Now you have done a murder with your mind...
(pp. 155-156)

GONERIL (to GONERIL): You were not nurtured to sustain a crown,
Your unanointed parents could not breed
The spirit that ten hundred years must ripen.
(p. 157)

GONERIL...to herself (while washing bloody knife and hands):
How could this need have been conceived slowly?
In a keen mind it should have leapt and burnt:....
What I have done would have been better done
When my sad mother lived and could feel joy.
This striking without thought is better than hunting;
She showed more terror than an animal....
A little blood is lightly washed away,
A common stain that need not be remembered;
And a hot spasm of rightness quickly torn
Can guide me to kill justly and shall guide.
(p.161)

The last speech is almost a paradigm of the verbal language of
King Lear's Wife — echoes of Shakespeare bound and blurred by ponderous
talk of emotional and intellectual processes. In the world of this
play, even an emerald must be said to have 'a spiritual influence' (p.136),
and the offstage infant Cordelia can be rejected by her mother
'Like an afterthought that deceives nobody' (p.142). Gormlaith's response to being told that the Queen has been left without food is, 'Madam, that is too monstrous to conceive' (p.144), and her song of seduction begins, 'If you have a mind to kiss me' (p.150). In her final moments — when, in her eldest daughter's words, 'she breathes, but something flitters under her flesh' (p.151) — Hygd hallucinates. One of those for whom she mistakes Goneril is her own mother-in-law, who 'had a savage mind' (p.152). Even the underlings of the establishment speak the language of internal affairs amid colloquialisms and crudities. The old waiting-woman Merryn, unable to find Gormlaith anywhere, complains that she is 'old with running about/After a bodiless name' (p.151). Merryn has perhaps been trained to local turns of phrase: Lear accuses her with, 'You work upon her yeasting brain...' (p.134). But the idiom of visitors shows the same inward inclinations. At the end of the play, when two old women come on to prepare the Queen's corpse for burial, the senior of them scolds the junior with 'Is your mind wandering?' (p.159) and thanks the gods 'that I lack your unforgiving mind' (p.163). Most striking of all, however, is the Queen's name: Hygd is an Anglo-Saxon word, and a fairly common one, meaning 'Mind' or 'Thought'. Bottomley was urged by his first publisher to change the name and refused. The reason he gave for retaining 'Hygd' was that he liked its sound; but as it is never actually spoken in the course of King Lear's Wife, I am not convinced by this claim and so cannot think he was ignorant of its significance.

Years later — and in an essay which begins, 'Drama is one of the fundamental activities of the mind' — Bottomley was to claim that actualization (in a naturalistic plotting) of a play's theme is not very logical in combination with an artificial patterned speech controlled by verse-form and metrical detail.
At first glance it would seem that in 1913/5 the adoption of 'an artificial, patterned speech' (though not, at that stage of Bottomley's career, one completely 'controlled by verse-form and metrical detail') had in fact assisted 'actualization...of...theme' in King Lear's Wife, however illogical its combination there or anywhere with naturalistic plotting. Or, to put it differently, the conventions of speech which obtain in naturalist drama do not seem to have impeded the articulation of a drama of mind in King Lear's Wife. The play operates both within and outside these conventions: the points at which it crosses or merely strains them could be argued as imperceptible in performance if one accepts (as Bottomley seems to do and as some critics assert) that verse arouses less realistic expectations in an audience than does prose. And to some extent, the adoption of 'an artificial, patterned speech' does seem to me to have ironed out some of the illogicalities, even incompatibilities, which lie between the intrigue plot and psychological action in King Lear's Wife.

The question of who may speak the psychology of the principals was in large measure skirted by the restriction of the dramatis personæ to a few figures, most of whom exist in intimate relations. Hygd, Lear, Goneril and Gormflaith all have, by instinct or information, a fairly thorough acquaintance with their own and each other's inner workings; and, as outlined above (p. 407), the action of the play is fundamentally the completion of that understanding for daughter and father, particularly in relation to each other. Suspension of the likely limits of everyday discourse is thus at issue only for the other four figures who appear on stage. For the internal action of King Lear's Wife, the most important of these figures is the Physician, who appears only at the beginning of the play and, although self-
professedly ignorant of skeletons in the Lear family cupboards, proposes a general case which is an exactly accurate diagnosis of the particular situation he addresses. Such prescience is not (and, I think, need not have been) explained by any introduction of the Physician's personal qualities and/or professional qualifications: because his pronouncements are in patterned, figurative speech, they are ensured the audience's serious attention. The figure who establishes such speech as the idiom of the play is the old waiting-woman, Merryn, who speaks its first lines. She there and the two Corpse-washers at the end of the play function as choric brackets. She speaks as an insider and a Christian, they as hostile outsiders and pagans; and beyond the minimal characterisation necessary to define these two points of view, their speeches operate almost as discrete statements, independent of speakers.

The question of what may be spoken seems to be even less troublesome in *King Lear's Wife*. It should be apparent from the above concatenation of quotations that the *dramatis personae* discuss very little other than their innermost thoughts and feelings, analysed with a precision far in excess of ordinary introspection. Direct descriptions of self and of others so abound that little room remains for other topics. Nor do the speakers require much provocation: Bottomley's ingenuity does not seem to have been overtaxed in inventing occasions for them to reveal themselves and each other, and in large measure they do so quite conventionally, the when and why of such revelation being accounted for naturalistically. Bottomley introduces three songs: the first, Goneril's lullaby, is set up and cut short within her dialogue with her mother; the second, Gormflaith's seduction song, floats in from the garden after she and Lear have left the stage; and the third, the Louse Song, is the Corpsewashers' work chant, sung while they prepare Hygd's
body for burial. (That it was cut after the first performance of
the première production was because the Lord Chamberlain found it
improper, not implausible.) A number of speeches are more or less
soliloquies. One, Merry's and the play's first speech, is cast as
a prayer. Hygd speaks two monologues: one is addressed to attendants
whose absence she is too sleepy to register, and the other is addressed
to herself while she inches around the room to observe Lear and
Gormflaith through the window. Both are effectively soliloquies
though only the second is strictly so. Goneril also gets two
monologues — one addressed to her newly-dead mother and the other to
her own newly-murderous self. (The latter monologue, quoted above
is spoken while the Corpsewashers are on stage; but
as the stage directions require them to retire to the back of it,
and as she speaks not to them but to herself, the speech seems to me
to qualify as a soliloquy.) With these exceptions the why of speaking
inner affairs follows the conventions of naturalist dramaturgy. It
even uses one of its most well-worn tricks — the exposure of
Gormflaith's duplicity to the audience by her reading aloud to
herself from the letter which will prove her infidelity to Lear.
Elsewhere revelation proceeds mainly by conversational rules — answer
for question, contradiction/qualification/addition for statement, etc.
For example, Hygd's simple if not unadorned question, 'Where have you
been, my falcon?' (p.138) suffices to set Goneril off into a 45-line
narration of a dawn hunt in which she has learned to revel in killing
without thought and with a knife, a skill of which she will (in the
soliloquy quoted above p. 407) speak further after she has exercised
it again, upon Gormflaith:
GONERIL: I dreamt that I was swimming, shoulder up, And draw the bed-clothes spreading to the floor: Coldness awoke me; through the waning darkness I heard far hounds give shivering aery tongue, Remote, withdrawing, suddenly faint and near; I leapt and saw a pack of stretching weasels Hunt a pale coney in a soundless rush, Their elfin and thin yelping pierced my heart As with an unseen beauty long awaited; Wolf-skin and cloak I buckled over this night-gear, And took my honoured spear from my bed-side Where none but I may touch its purity, And sped as lightly down the dewy bank As any mothy owl that hunts quick mice. They went crying, crying, but I lost them Before I stoep, with the first tips of light, On Raven Crag near by the Druid Stones; So I paused them and, stooping, pressed my hand Against the stony bed of the clear stream; Then entered I the circle and raised up My shining hand in cold stern adoration Even as the first great gleam went up the sky..... I lost my thoughts before the giant Stones... And when anew the earth assembled round me I swung out on the heath and woke a hare And speared it at a cast and shouldered it, Startled another drinking at a tarn And speared it ere it leapt; so steady and clear Had the god in his fastness made my mind. Then, as I took those dead things in my hands, I felt shame light my face from deep within, And loathing and contempt shake in my bowels, That such unclean coarse blows from me had issued To crush delicate things to bloody mash And blemish their fur when I would only kill. My gladness left me; I carseened no more Upon the morning; I went down from there With empty hands; But under the first trees and without thought I stole on conies at play and stooched at one; I hunted it, I caught it up to me As I outsprang it, and with this thin knife Pierced it from eye to eye; and it was dead, Untorn, unsullied, and with flawless fur. Then my untroubled mind came back to me. (pp. 138-140)

Goneril's narration was isolated for special attention by the reviewers of the premiere production of King Lear's Wife at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in September, 1913, of the first publication of the text in Georgian Poetry II, and of the volume King Lear's Wife and Other Plays. The passage was almost unanimously praised: indeed it was the only thing in the play to be praised by some. The generally
damning review — its headline reads 'Repertory Theatre: A Tragedy which Prostitutes Art' — in the Birmingham Weekly Mercury allowed that 'Goneril...tells in quite exceptionally good phraseology, the story of the chase.' When pronounced by a critic favourable to King Lear's Wife as a whole, the praise of this passage approaches a paean. S.B.P. Mais, for example, singled out it and Goneril's lament over her mother's body as

beautiful, beautiful not with an exotic richness that hides its meaning under a magic rhythm, but beautiful with the inevitable simplicity of the Anglo-Saxon, monosyllabic yet haunting....Mr. Bottomley does not strive to heighten his effect by the introduction of the quaint or the remote: he is almost Blake-like in his choice of phrases.

Or, even more extravagantly, John Freeman in The Bookman: 'Few passages of modern verse reach the beauty of Goneril's hunting-narration.' With such a backlog of praise, it is not surprising that Humbert Wolfe included Goneril's narration in his 1928 selection of Bottomley's poems, the only non-lyric from the plays to be included there.

Considered simply as patterned, figurative speech, the narration seems to me feeble. That the words are few-syllabled and the metre simple is undeniable. The metre is also fairly regular: by my scansion, only lines 3, 6, 9, 10, 21, 22, 24, 33, 35, 38 and 40 vary the ten-syllable pattern. The lines, moreover, are shaped by phrases. The problem is that the phrases are padded: at a quick count, I find that out of 64 substantives, almost half are modified by at least one adjective; and a propensity for unnecessary doublets is discernible among both substantives and adjectives. The excess verbiage makes for problems at a literal level: one doesn't swim shoulder up, one treads water; is it the weasels or the coney or both 'in a soundless rush' in line 7 and if either of the latter, how do the weasels come
to be yelping in line 8; to or from what does the narrator leap in line 6; what acoustics can make sense of a sound being 'Remote, withdrawing, suddenly faint and near' in line 5; and why is Goneril's hand shining in line 21? Such questions may well be dismissed as nit-picking, but even then, I retain a fundamental objection to the passage as figurative language: the figure (carelessly) described is insufficient unto the emotion attached to it. If one extrapolates the abstract nouns (and a few loaded adjectives) from that list of 64 substantives, one gets the psychological process: coldness — waning darkness — soundless rush — heart — unseen beauty — purity — cold stern adoration — first great gleam — thoughts — god in his fastness — steady and clear my mind — shame — loathing and contempt in my bowels — gladness (left) — without thought — untroubled mind. A thick interlarding of vaguely phrased perceptions and feelings is supposed to give beauty and meaning to the discovery that there is more than one way to kill a rabbit. In this respect, the passage seems to me to parallel, almost to recapitulate in miniature, that gap between plot and action which I have suggested exists for King Lear's Wife as a whole.

The preceding paragraph inevitably reflects this century's shifts in criteria for the appraisal of lyric poetry. A few of Bottomley's sharper-eyed contemporaries, however, were a bit nervous about the hunting narration as dramatic poetry, and they dropped hints that they were paying attention to the passage mainly because it was obviously screaming for such. The Spectator's critic, reviewing Georgian Poetry II, intimated that 'the wild beauty of some of Goneril's speeches' — that of the hunt is quoted at length — could 'spoil the effect'. Desmond McCarthy, reviewing the London premiere (19 May 1916 at Her Majesty's Theatre) for the New Statesman, put a similar point more
precisely, and with more attention to the fact that the speech was supposed to be functioning in a play:

I noticed that the lines which told most on the stage were not those which I admired reading the play. It was not the passage like this speech of Goneril's which impressed me in the theatre... Lines 3-22 of the hunting narration are quoted.... Well as Miss Tree delivered it, the literary beauty of this speech did not tell. It is not through descriptive lines like 'Any mothy owl that hunts quick mice', whatever delight at their literary quality they may wake in the reader, that poetic drama can affect us.... Verbal beauty only tells in drama in so far as it either contributes to atmosphere, or is at the same time the condensed expression of the situation.91

Much later, Priscilla Thouless pointed out:

Goneril's story of her holy joy in hunting... is intended dramatically to be the key to her character. Yet the passage is complete in itself in its effect and can be detached from the play, and still be understood and felt. It is not, that is to say, a purely dramatic image, whose very essence is changed by being torn away from its surroundings.92

I think these criticisms to be on the right track but not taken far enough along it. The problem with the speech is not just that it stands out, either because it is over-written or because it is self-contained. That a passage of dialogue is more decorative than, or that it is (with whatever detriment to its potential effect) detachable from, its context seems to me insufficient reason for damning it as non-dramatic. There are, after all, highly wrought passages in King Lear which are susceptible of anthologisation. Their full effect may depend upon their original surroundings amid simpler statements, as Winifred Nowotny has argued in proposing that King Lear operates by a sort of linguistic montage,93 but their 'very essence' is not changed by such excision. Edgar's speech at Act IV, scene vi, lines 11-24 (Arden edition) is an obvious example; in or out of context, it is an exquisitely artificed description of an imaginary cliff. But in context, that description is doing more than contributing to
atmosphere, or expressing a situation, or revealing a character.
It is also accomplishing something from which other things will
follow in the subplot of King Lear. It is tempting Gloucester to the
'suicide' which will save his soul: it is addressed to an interlocutor
who can subsequently take action in the light of it. Goneril's
speech, on the other hand, does nothing whatsoever in its original
context except to construct a personality for its speaker: no
action can be taken upon it, and nothing can follow from it. It is
'dramatic' in the senses that it presupposes utterance by a fictitious
personage and that it describes a change within that psychological
construct; and these senses, as remarked above, are equally applicable
to Bottomley's earlier lyrics on Shakespearean subjects and in
Shakespearean personae. It has no plot function, and yet, through
what it announces and anticipates in Goneril's psyche, it is enormously
important for the overall action. In this respect it is an extreme
edition of the majority of lines in King Lear's Wife. Here, as so
often elsewhere in the play, verbal language has been used for direct
self-characterisation and thence for revelation of those vast and
eternal psychic conflicts in which Bottomley traffics. It may
communicate or even express such conflicts; but, plot being here put
aside and elsewhere surfacing but briefly and as a sordidly silly
intrigue, it does not represent them. The illogicality, I would suggest
once again, lies not so much in Bottomley's combination of naturalistic
plotting and patterned, artificial speech, but in the hiatus between
his plot on the one hand and on the other the theme he attempts to
actualise in such language.

In addition to its deficiencies as figurative, patterned speech
and to its irrelevance to plot, Goneril's speech betrays yet another
deficiency as drama. It contains not a single internal clue as to
the tone of its delivery and any accompanying business. Lancelles
Abercrombie, who along with several others of the Georgian Poetry group attended the first performance of *King Lear's Wife* and wrote about it to their editor, reported of Margaret Chatwin, the first actress to play Bottomley's Goneril:

Goneril, for some strange reason, assumed the costume and the manners of an Irish washerwoman with a broken heart. I kept expecting her to break off her long speech about her hunting with — 'Of course it's the drink, sir. I'm not always like this, but it's the drink comes over me. I can't put it by somehow' — or something like that.  

In public and later, Abercrombie was to remark that *King Lear's Wife* had had the extraordinary fortune of being acted; and what was more remarkable of a poetic play nowadays, it showed itself capable of being acted precisely and entirely as it had been written.

Capable, but not compelling. There is nothing in the dialogue to prevent an actress playing Bottomley's Goneril from assuming the costume and manners of an Irish washerwoman and to ensure her looking, sounding and behaving like the figure prescribed by the stage direction at her first entry:

GONERIL appears in hunting dress, — her kirtle caught up in her girdle, a light spear over her shoulder...She is a girl just turning to womanhood, proud in her poise, swift and cold, an almost gleaming presence, a virgin huntress.  

(p.137)

The one hint which the 45 lines of the hunting narration give for costuming — 'Wolf-skin and cloak I buckled over this night-gear' (line 10, as quoted p.414 above) — could even be said to be contradictory to this stage direction. At any rate, the passage contains nothing which requires or even invites a gesture on the part of the actress speaking it. Given that it is a narration, this omission is perhaps not surprising; but the same is true of the fifteen lines from Nygd which interrupt it (between lines 22 and 23 as quoted above), and indeed of the rest of the mother—daughter exchange up until Corteil's voice
breaks in from offstage. By then Hygd and Goneril have got through 114 lines of narration, thematic statement, and character revelation—all without a single control upon their performance built into them.

In the review quoted above (p. 417), McCarthy continued his critique of Goneril's hunting narration by arguing that the Elizabethan tradition has misled our dramatic poets. Those fine descriptive speeches and gorgeous packed harangues were just possible on an apron stage, when the actor stepped forward and delivered them for their own sakes—almost like the songs which so frequently broke the action......Only when, as in the case of Shakespeare, we are very familiar with the words of such soliloquies and passages of description does their beauty move us. If we heard Shakespeare for the first time, would we be more than aware, at these moments, that something extremely fine was going on?......The human mind is so constituted that it must stop to think and dream before it can apprehend literary beauty......Beautiful passages or beautiful words......live only faintly on in the mind when the attention is fixed on live human beings. 96

The problem seems to me more that Bottomley has misread the Elizabethan tradition. McCarthy's account of audience epistemology rings false off my own first experiences, in the theatre, of plays previously unfamiliar to me. And his account of how Elizabethan actors delivered 'fine descriptive speeches and gorgeous packed harangues' would seem to have been disproved by Bertram Joseph's research and experiments, as reported in Elizabethan Acting. 97 At any rate, I cannot imagine the Elizabethan actor who played Edgar speaking that 'fine descriptive speech' about Dover Cliffs as if he were singing an operatic aria. As he is addressing a blind man, Edgar need not be staring off into the distance, shading his eyes, turning his head, etc., while he speaks the speech; but preliminary lines such as 'Come on, sir; here's the place: stand still' (IV.vi.11) and 'Give me your hand; you are now within a foot of the extreme verge' (IV.vi.25-26) do require some business just before he goes into it. When he did so, he was not, I
think, likely to abandon Gloucester, hop forward onto the apron, and speak the speech as if he were suspended in thin air; not the least of the glories of the lines in the theatre is the contrast between the dizzy heights they describe and the flat surface (of the thrust stage, of the Kentish countryside, or of both, depending on how far disbelief has been suspended) before an audience's eyes. The Elizabethan stage may have been unlocalised: it was still a space, still contained surfaces, and even the least characterful speeches spoken on it were not written for disembodied and ubiquitous voices.

It was eventually for such voices that Bottomley would write, and a tendency in that direction may be discerned in *King Lear's Wife*. Across the play as a whole there tends to be an inverse proportion between, on the one hand, the pretensions of any given passage to musicality and to philosophy and/or psychology, and on the other hand, its implicit demands for tone and gesture. Since so much of the play is rife with such pretensions, the lines which demand action in the sense of stage business are few. In my opinion, these exceptions tend to be better as patterned, figurative language — the vocabulary is more concrete, the images are more exactly thought out, and the rhythm is not so obviously achieved by the piling on of words which are only metrically necessary. At any rate, such exceptional passages render any accompanying stage directions tautologous. The soliloquy which Hygd speaks while straining to spy on her spouse and her servant is a good example:

**HYGD:** I'll watch him at his wooing once again,
Though I peer up at him across my grave-sill.
(She gets out of bed and takes several steps toward the garden doorway; she totters and sways, then, turning, stumbles back to the bed for support.)
Limb, will you die? It is not yet the time.
I know more discipline: I'll make you go.
(She fumbles along the bed to the head, then, clinging against the wall, drags herself toward the back of the room.)
It is too far. I cannot see the wall.
I will go ten more steps: only ten more.
Sundown is soon to-day: it is cold and dark.
Now ten steps more, and much will have been done.
At last the turn. Thirty-six. Thirty-nine. Forty.
Now only once again. Two. Three.
What do the voices say? I hear too many.
The door: but here there is no garden. . . Ah!
(She holds herself up an instant by the door—curtains; then she reels and falls...)

(p.150)

Or, slightly before this, Gormlaith's trying on of Hygd's crown — a
passage from which McCarthy quoted the first three lines as an
example of lines which did 'tell' on the stage when Goneril's narration
didn't:

LEAR: You cannot have the nature of a queen
If you believe that there are things above you:
Crowns make no queens, queens are the cause of crowns.

GORMFLAITH: (slipping from his knee) Then I will take one. Look.
(She tip-toes lightly round the front of the bed to where the
crown hangs on the wall.)

LEAR: Come here, mad thing — come back!
Your shadow will wake the Queen.

GORMFLAITH: Hush, hush! That angry voice
Will surely wake the Queen.
(She lifts the crown from the peg, and returns with it.)

LEAR: Go back; bear back the crown:
Hang up the crown again.
We are not helpless serfs
To think things are forbidden
And steal them for our joy.

GORMFLAITH: Hush! Hush! It is too late;
I dare not go again.

LEAR: Put down the crown: your hands are base hands yet.
Give it to me: it issues from my hands.

GORMFLAITH: (seating herself on his knee again, and crowning
herself)
Let anger keep your eyes steady and bright
To be my guiding mirror: do not move.
You have received two queens within your eyes.

(pp. 148-149)
Again the stage directions are redundant of the requirements of the lines.

Elsewhere, on the contrary, it is the stage directions which make sense of (and therefore determine) the lines. For example, to continue the above:

\[
\text{\textit{(GORMFLAITH laughs clearly...HYG awakes and...watches LEAR and GORMFLAITH...})}
\]

LEAR (continuing meanwhile): Doff it. (GORMFLAITH kisses him.) Enough. (Kiss) Unless you do (Kiss) my will (Kiss) I shall (Kiss) I shall (Kiss) I'll have you (Kiss) sent (Kiss) to (Kiss) —

GORMFLAITH: Hush. (p.149)

On the whole, Bottomley left it to the stage directions to establish his intentions both for performance and import. But such things cannot be enforced by the stage directions alone, and too infrequently do they make any incursions upon the dialogue. In this drama of individual psyches, every character except the Physician is at first entrance assigned a stage direction, like that quoted above (p. 419) for Goneril, which specifies physical (and, for the principals, moral) characteristics. These directions are cast in prose which is as figurative and rhythmical as the dialogue. (The latter part of Goneril's, for example, could easily be set out in a ten-syllable verse line.) The reader thus has an easy time apprehending such information. There is, however, no guarantee that the information will ever get through to an audience because, once it has been given in the stage directions, it is altogether disregarded in the dialogue. The one exception to this rule is simply embarrassing: a stage direction describes Gormflaith as having, among other attributes of mind and body, 'red hair which coils and crisps close to her little head, showing its shape' (p.144), and Lear subsequently (p.147) addresses her as 'Goldilocks' and 'a tawny fox'.
There are in *King Lear's Wife* similar though less serious problems in another part of the visual language of drama: decor.

This is the scene of the play as prescribed in its opening stage direction:

The scene is a bedchamber in a one-storied house. The walls consist of a few courses of huge boulders roughly squared and fitted together; a thatched roof rises steeply from the back wall. In the centre of the back wall is a doorway opening on a garden and covered by two leather curtains; the chamber is partially hung with similar hangings stitched with bright wools. There is a small window on each side of this door.

Toward the front a bed stands with its head against the right wall; it has thin leather curtains hung by thongs and drawn back. Farther forward a rich robe and a crown hang on a peg in the same wall. There is a second door beyond the bed, and between this and the bed's head stands a small table with a bronze lamp and a bronze cup on it. Queen HYGD, an emaciated woman, is asleep in the bed; her plenteous black hair, veined with silver, spreads over the pillow. Her waiting-woman, MERRYN, middle-aged and hard-featured, sits watching in a chair on the farther side of the bed. The light of early morning fills the room.

Out of all these carefully prescribed objects and effects, the dialogue of the play will directly mention or implicitly require only the following: a wall, with a door, a peg and a window, behind/around a bed; a robe and a crown; a lamp and a cup; a pillow; a chair and the light of early morning. Some of the other prescriptions — the second doorway in the wall, the curtains across the first doorway and around the bed — will reappear in subsequent stage directions. The rest will be forgotten. There are some utilitarian elements in the scene, and Bottomley has thought through their positions and functions with care. At the same time, however, and more serviceable to an illustrator than to a producer, there is an amassing of pictorial details which have no concrete, specific function and which serve solely to create an overall impression. These latter details of visual language seem to me analogous with Bottomley's excess verbiage in his verse dialogue. And if one turns to his extensive correspondence with
Paul Nash about that artist's set and costume designs and models for *King Lear's Wife* and later for *Cruach*, one finds that while the playwright is there astonishingly sensitive to minutiae of visual effect, he is so more impressionistic than to functional ends. Less remarkably, he attends only infrequently — and then again with an eye on visual impression — to the practicalities of the stagecraft through which, and the stage(s) on which, these designs and models might be given greater substance and dimension. But then, they never came to that. Exhibited in 1922 but never realised for production, the models were in 1930 reported destroyed by Nash. And by then Bottomley was moving into an idea of theatre so abstract and impressionistic, so indifferent to representation and function, that he could write an account of 'The Relative Importance of Costume, Lighting, Scenery, Line and Contour to the Poet' and omit from it any mention of properties: such concrete and utilitarian objects were not necessary in the 'Theatre Unborn' to which he devoted most of his dramaturgical effort in later life.

In fairness, it should be emphasised that at the time Bottomley was writing *King Lear's Wife* and *Cruach*, he showed a considerably stronger sense of theatrical realities — of what could and could not be done on the sorts of stages and with the sorts of stagecraft available for production of his plays — than did many of his contemporaries. His verse is rarely so unspeakable, and his scenic requirements never so extravagant, as were those of Stephen Phillips and his followers. But he simply failed to ensure in his dialogue that what could be done, would be done. And he was in no geographical position to do so in person. Yorkshire born, he spent most of his adult life near Carnforth in Lancashire, where he was virtually immobilised by impecuniosity and illness from 1892, the year in which he first assayed playwriting,
until 1920. (His movements were especially restricted by ill-health during the years in which he wrote *King Lear's Wife*.)

Thus although by his own account he was interested in drama from an early age and 'had no idea of writing for the reader in his study... was showman first', by 1913/5 he had had little chance to observe, and no practical experience of, the West End stage. His early acquaintance with London theatrical circumstances seems to have been made mainly through reading *Stage*. He first saw these circumstances in May of 1903, when he was dazzled by Gordon Craig's production of Ibsen's *The Vikings at Helgeland* at the Imperial Theatre. But by then he was 30 and had already published one play, *The Crier by Night* (1902). And of his early model, Maeterlinck, he could not (so far as I am aware) have seen a professional production before he started imitating him.

*King Lear's Wife* was, moreover, the first of Bottomley's plays to be produced in this country. He was fortunate in his first British producer, John Drinkwater. (Both Harley Granville-Barker and Basil Dean had previously been approached as producers.) For Drinkwater's direction Bottomley had nothing but praise: 'I couldn't have minded the press notices,' he wrote to the editor of *Georgian Poetry*, 'while I was seeing how my play had built itself up into such a rich romantic thing under John's producing hands.' He was also fortunate in his house: since 1913 the Birmingham Repertory Theatre had occupied the first purpose-built repertory theatre building in the country, and Bottomley was to describe it in 1917 as 'the most beautiful theatre in England and the only one worth paying to get into.' There the play got a staging — 'simply decorative, with no suggestion of time or place' — which satisfied the dramatist both at the time and in hindsight. Even there, however, it had to contend with: (1) a
rehearsal time which did not suffice either to create among the cast a uniform standard of verse-speaking,\textsuperscript{112} or (as is evident from Abercrombie's account) to persuade the unsympathetic/intransigent to abandon realist manners; (2) bad ticket sales across a one-week run;\textsuperscript{113} and (3) worse press. Bottomley and the Georgian Poetry group generally approved the performance of Kathleen Orford (Mrs. John Drinkwater) in the title role of \textit{King Lear's Wife} and condemned that of Margaret Chatwin as her daughter. The reviewers went in exactly opposite directions.\textsuperscript{114} This chiasmus of opinion is indicative of how far out of sympathy Bottomley was with accepted (naturalistic) standards of acting.

The London premiere of \textit{King Lear's Wife} at His Majesty's Theatre in May of 1916 did nothing to bring Bottomley into sympathy with prevailing theatrical norms and introduced him to West End conditions of production. Along with Gibson's \textit{Hoops} and Brooke's \textit{Lithuania}, \textit{King Lear's Wife} was given a single performance at a Saturday matinee which Viola Tree had organised for the benefit of a war charity. I have been able to discover nothing about the mounting of this one-off production except that the sets, as might be expected under such circumstances, seem to have been hand-me-downs.\textsuperscript{115} Drinkwater was brought in to produce but had only three weeks' rehearsal time. Moreover, he was operating under the aegis of Viola Tree, who also played Goneril. Exacerbating the damage already done by the censor, she cut the conclusion of the play so as to emphasise her own final exit.\textsuperscript{116} The 'irrelevant realism' of her mother, Lady Tree, in the title role was all wrong in the author's opinion.\textsuperscript{117}

From, at the latest, the London premiere of \textit{King Lear's Wife}, Bottomley was to learn a distrust both of critics and of professional performers, especially actresses.\textsuperscript{118} (He made exceptions for:
Sybil Thorndike, who played the title role of Gruach at its London premiere in 1924; the Scottish National Players, who gave that play its world premiere in 1923; and Terence Gray's Cambridge Festival Theatre company, who staged King Lear's Wife in 1926 and premiered Bottomley's The Riding to Lithend in 1928.  He distrusted their professionally ingrained penchant for naturalistic acting/impersonation, especially as it impinged upon the speaking of his verse. By his own retrospective account:

Unlike most poets, I...never found it impossible to have my plays brought to some kind of performance: every one of them has found friendship in the theatre, and some player attracted by a sympathetic part. I ought to add that such players were oftest of the older generation, who had had their youthful training in Shakespeare; and that I never found a whole cast sympathetic to verse and skilled in its delivery. That may have been one reason why journalist-critics to a man found my verse unsuited to the theatre, and advised me to stick to poetry: but I believe now that the picture-frame theatre had so steadily diseducated them (as well as the younger players) in the application of verse to stage, that they had never understood or conceived that poetry could have a relationship to drama at all — or that there is a heightening power in it which the poet and the actor can share between them in delighted partnership.  

Bottomley's solution to this impasse was to detour around it and to stop throwing his dramatic pearls into the pigsty of professional theatre. He interested himself in the work of various amateur groups which were experimenting with choral delivery and choreographic movement.  

For such groups he wrote relentlessly non-naturalistic plays in which aural effects are supposed to take precedence over visual and in which both are so highly stylised that what is being represented is an abstract pattern of sound and movement. In other words, he put into extreme practice his and many of his contemporaries' programmatic proclamations that poetic drama is an imitation of spiritual realities and actions — ultimately of Mind, not of men — and like many of them, he took to writing religious plays. The eventual answer, then, to his 1915 question to Rothenstein — 'Does
poetic drama...need to create a symbol of life rather than a representation of life?' — was an emphatic 'Yes!'.

Having effectively abandoned any idea of drama as an imitation of the actions of men, Bottomley set Shakespeare aside. (Crookback's Crown is, as noted above, non-Shakespearean in source and so only coincidentally Shakespearean in subject matter. However, the play, which was posthumously published, does seem to me to be a reversion to what its author, describing the format of King Lear's Wife, Cruach, etc., termed 'Plays for a Theatre Outworn', and I am unable to explain why he undertook it.) The Elizabethan and Jacobean tradition as he (mis-) understood it — i.e., 'a drama of patterned, unrealistic speech on the basis of a realistic plot which might serve a prose drama equally well' — was set aside as 'outworn in the light of contemporary needs'. It was no longer Bottomley's model. Still less, Bottomley having turned from the professional theatre of his time, was this tradition to be hailed (as it had been by him in 1919) as the nation's greatest pride precisely because it had been written to fill professional theatres in Shakespeare's time. It now served him only as a sort of whipping boy, a watershed in his versions of the great tradition of poetic drama. Even under the new dispensation, exceptions were made for some few Shakespearean scripts — A Midsummer-Night's Dream, The Tempest, Richard III, and part of Hamlet — but the rest of the tradition was dismissed as 'mental astigmatism...not noticed while the fires of great genius flamed high'. I have been arguing at length above that the astigmatism lay in Bottomley's eye. He was, I think, fatally wrong in his understanding of the relationship between Shakespearean language and Shakespearean plot, a relationship which he took to be about as intimate and supportive as that between a decorative divorcée and a distant ex-husband who from time to time
sends her a small alimony cheque, a modicum of support for her expenditures on apparel. For in turning this understanding into a working model for his own dramatic method, Bottomley ensured that *King Lear's Wife* would be dramatically dead, down to the last detail of verbal and visual language, and that these languages would rarely interact. But, as with his abandonment of drama as representation, his rejection of the Elizabethan and Jacobean tradition, as he (mis-) construed it, was a logical development from the attempt he made in that play to express internal conflicts.

**vi. Bond's 'Lear'**

Like Bottomley in *King Lear's Wife*, Edward Bond in *Lear* is investigating the causes of hard hearts. But the question which he addresses is 'Is there any cause in nature which makes hearts hard?' and the answer is 'No'. Bond is arguing in the play that human violence has no cause in biological nature, only in human society. As was not the case with Bottomley's drama of psychological conflict, an examination of the dramatic language of Bond's thesis play does require some minimal analysis of its author's argument: where the language of *King Lear's Wife* is, at best, simply expressive or evocative of psychological conditions and types, in *Lear* the action is an argument, and that argument is directly represented by visual and verbal images. The argument can be summarised with a syllogism:

1. Men are animals.
2. Animals only endanger their own species when they are kept in adverse conditions and forced to behave unnaturally — e.g., when caged in zoos.
3. Therefore the reason why the human species is destroying itself is that men are keeping themselves in adverse conditions and forcing themselves to behave unnaturally.
It remains to specify these adverse conditions and unnatural compulsions which the human species imposes upon itself. Bond identifies them as the urban environment in which, and the moral and political sanctions under which, men live. He also claims that the former begets the latter — that technology for its continuation requires the institution of social structures which for their continuation in turn require social morality.

This argument is set out in Bond's preface to Lear, and also (and to me less opaquely and confusingly) in various interviews which Bond gave while writing the play in 1969-71 and working on its first production in 1971. I would draw attention to two points in it. One is that a problem is left unattended between the middle term and conclusion: in 2, animals are kept in adverse conditions by animals of other species; but in 3, animals are kept in adverse conditions by animals of the same species. This argument is supposed to be solving the problem of evil (i.e. human violence) without recourse to religious doctrines of original sin or biological ones of innate aggression, both of which Bond rejects. But in failing to account for why the human species turns on itself in the very first instance, the argument simply shoves these doctrines one remove further off. This is fairly evident in the preface, where Bond is at some pains to cover his tracks with more/less unverifiable speculations as to events in the first aeons of the human species' existence. In the play, however, it causes no problems — although it might perhaps provoke a Bradleyan critic to wonder how Lear had made the enemies whom he would keep out with his wall.

What is enormously important for the play Lear, and particularly for its language, is that the first premise of its argument asserts identity, not analogy. The intellectual world of Lear is not the
hierarchical micro-macrocosm of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, in which one thing can be visually or verbally likened to another without either losing its divinely appointed place. (Still less is it the Idealist stratosphere of Bottomley's *King Lear's Wife*, in which it doesn't much matter what is likened to what else because everything comes down to the Mind's construction.) For Bond, men aren't like animals, more or less, depending on whether they are being construed according to their bodily needs or according to their spiritual capacities. For Bond, they are animals and no higher construction can or ought to be put upon them:

> Our human emotions and intellects are not things that stand apart from the long development of evolution; it is as animals we make our highest demands, and in responding to them as men we create our deepest human experience.

*(Author's Preface' to Lear, lxiii)*

I emphasise this identification because I will be arguing that it is the central point of reference for the language of *Lear* and that the images of that language are to be taken literally — not as similes or metaphors but as illustrations and concretisations of an argument. 130

I propose, then, to take as a working hypothesis that this identification supplies the central image of *Lear* and that every element of visual and verbal language in the play is selected and shaped in relation to the argument which I have syllogistically summarised above. My ultimate reason for doing so is that I believe, and hope to show, that this hypothesis enables one to explain how that language works and to account for the presence in it of what are otherwise inexplicable or at least puzzlingly disparate elements. My initial reason, however, is that I think the argument and the language of Bond's play must be taken in tandem. Criticism of Bond has tended to run to opposite extremes along parallel
lines: on the one hand his message gets written off or at least played down while his imagination and technique are applauded; and on the other (and rather rarer) hand, his message gets rehearsed at length and the means by which it has been communicated are dismissed with a few perfunctory nods of approbation, or at most analysed but briefly and almost embarrassedly. These opposing tendencies, it should be added, may be discerned among Bond's admirers, and I presume that they are traceable to fundamental differences of critical orientation and method: are Bond's plays to be analysed and evaluated as works of art sub specie aeternitatis or as artefacts addressed to a particular society in time? I am in the second camp of Bond's admirers. However, I believe that by looking at the argument and the language of his Lear together one can see how the artefact works and, rather more tentatively, suggest why in fact it doesn't do what it is supposed to.

In the senses which have obtained for them in my discussion of other plays in this chapter, 'plot' and 'characterisation' will not be taken into account for Lear because they are completely subsidiary to the argument outlined above. It would perhaps be possible to treat of plot and characterisation in relation to argument and then language in relation to plot and characterisation (or vice versa), but such a procedure would be more than a trifle tortuous: Lear has seventeen scenes and about 80 separate speaking parts. It would also be unnecessarily circuitous for my purposes, which are to show how an argument and its corollaries are directly represented through verbal and visual languages. Consequently, I see no point in detouring through considerations of plot and characterisation.

Moreover, while such considerations might well be in order for a thesis play written within the idiom and conventions of naturalist
dramaturgy, they would be wildly inappropriate for Bond's. To discuss the language of Lear with an eye on decorum of character and probability of plot would be to operate under a critical dispensation which does not accommodate this play. Bond simply is not interested in representing a single, clear, causally-connected, self-contained and self-coherent sequence of events acted out by and having an impact upon fully realised individual characters. He does not deal in such events or such characters. He is not interested in the deeds of individuals, nor even in the deeds of individuals as social products, but rather in society and its processes. Such a definition of protagonist and action requires the maintenance of multiple points of view and the drawing of a whole complex of causes and consequences. It is these ends which are served by most of the trademarks of Bond's playwriting — the choice of subject distant in time, the use of anachronisms, the medley of idioms and styles of speech, the abrupt introduction (and often as not, the prompt abandonment) of one figure after another, the drawing (and dropping) of parallels among these figures and between scenes, the construction of scenes with two or three distinct areas of simultaneous activity. All of these abound in Lear. And where there (as later in Bingo, The Fool and We Come to the River), Bond centres his drama of society and its processes around one figure whose coming to consciousness cues the audience, the audience is never allowed to identify with that figure to such an extent that they cannot judge him as the figures around him variously do. Nor, strictly speaking, are they ever allowed to enter this imaginary construct of consciousness as some sort of sanctuary. For Bond, internalised drama is an impossibility. For beyond his definition of his protagonist as society and his action as social process, Bond
does not admit a body–mind dichotomy. (This is obviously implicit in the first premise of the argument outlined above and Bond has explicitly stated the point elsewhere.\textsuperscript{135}) Rejecting this fundamental assumption of all those previously–discussed plays which struggle to articulate inner conflicts, Bond obviously isn't encumbered by the conventions of speech which obstruct them. The who, what, why and when of onstage utterance are not confined within the 'probable limits of everyday conversation' but are rather aligned with the overall argument.

In a recent study which includes some few passages of useful analysis amid long stretches of explanation of Bond's political thought and purpose, Tony Coult has suggested that Bond's language (by which he means verbal language only):

can be divided into three broad categories, but what really distinguishes Bond is his ability to mix and juxtapose these styles while still maintaining an inner logic. One such style is the 'pared-down naturalism' (Gaskill's phrase) which is, strictly speaking, not naturalistic at all. This is the language of Saved, where sentences are short and un rhetorical, in speeches which are also short, and in a specific dialect. When he turns to a more open and expressionist style of play with Early Morning, a new kind of dialogue appears, a very funny, formal parody of the speech of the middle and upper classes. It is a style that satirises the moral evasions made possible by cultivated speech, and the inability to deal with real experience.

The third broad category is the language that some characters use at moments of discovery and learning, a language which is often full of beautiful, formal writing. It is a language of soliloquy, and so it is often honest and direct, but it is also reflective, summing up experience rather than expressing it as it happens.\textsuperscript{136}

All three categories can be found juxtaposed in Lear; but it is the third — the language used 'at moments of discovery and learning' — which seems to me most instructive for a thesis play. And when one seeks such language in Lear, one is struck by two things. One is that while the preponderance of such language is assigned the title character, it is by no means his exclusive prerogative, nor is it even
peculiar to the larger speaking parts. (Both Bodice in Act II, scene 4 [pp. 48-49] and the dying soldier Terry in Act II, scene 3 [pp. 44-45], for example, speak this language.) Simply in his distribution of such language, then, Bond is diffusing 'discovery and learning' among his *dramatis personae*. Secondly, such language tends to be uttered under circumstances which are as far removed as can be imagined from the conventions of naturalistic speech.

Taking Lear's speeches of this order as the central line of 'discovery and learning', one finds that they are variously soliloquies (with or without other figures on stage), asides, harangues which would be cut short in 'real life', and conversations with ghosts.

Let us follow the line of Lear's discovery and learning through a few crucial break-throughs:

(Act I, scene 5)

OLD COUNCILLOR goes out. LEAR finds the bread on the ground.

LEAR: Bread! Someone was eating this and they dropped it and ran away. (He eats it.) That's all there is.

(LEAR sits down. He is very tired. MARRINGTON comes on upstage. He is crippled...He carries a knife awkwardly. He's already seen LEAR and comes on creeping towards him from behind.)

My daughters have taken the bread from my stomach. They grind it with my tears and the cries of famished children — and eat. The night is a black cloth on their table and the stars are crumbs, and I am a famished dog that sits on the earth and howls. I open my mouth and they place an old coin on my tongue. They lock the door of my coffin and tell me to die. My blood seeps out and they write in it with a finger. I'm old and too weak to climb out of this grave again.

(WARRINGTON sees someone coming and goes out.)

(Looking off.) Is this one of my daughters' men?

(pp. 16-17)

(Act I, scene 6)

LEAR: (eating. To himself. The BOY'S WIFE stares at him.)

The mouse comes out of his hole and stares. The giant wants to eat the dragon, but the dragon has grabbed the carving knife....My daughters turned a dog out of its kennel because it got fond of its sack....
(BOY goes...to his WIFE and lies beside her. LEAR sits on his blanket.)
(to himself) It is night. My daughters empty their prisons and feed the men to the dead in their graveyards. The wolf crawls away in terror and hides with the rats. Hup, prince! Hup, rebel! Do tricks for human flesh! When the dead have eaten they go home to their pits and sleep. (He lies down in an awkward pose and sleeps.) (Act II, scene 1)

LEAR: ...... (He stares down at the mirror.) No, that's not the king. ..This is a little cage of bars with an animal in it. (Peers closer.) No, no, that's not the king! (Suddenly gestures violently. The Usher takes the mirror.) Who shut that animal in that cage? Let it out. Have you seen its face behind the bars? There's a poor animal with blood on its head and tears running down its face. Who did that to it? Is it a bird or a horse? It's lying in the dust and its wings are broken. Who broke its wings? Who cut off its hands so that it can't shake the bars? It's pressing its snout on the glass. Who shut that animal in a glass cage? O God, there's no pity in this world. You let it lick the blood from its hair in the corner of a cage with nowhere to hide from its tormentors. No shadow, no hole! Let that animal out of its cage! (He takes the mirror and shows it round.) Look! Look! Have pity. Look at its claws trying to open the cage. It's dragging its broken body over the floor. You are cruel! Look at it lying in its corner! It's shocked and cut and shaking and licking the blood on its sides. (Usher again takes the mirror from Lear.) No, no! Where are they taking it now! Not out of my sight! What will they do to it? O God, give it to me! Let me hold it and stroke it and wipe its blood. (Bodice takes the mirror from the Usher.) No!...Kill it. Kill it. Don't let her torment it. I can't live with that suffering in the world.....My daughters have been murdered and these monsters have taken their place! I hear all their victims cry, where is justice?....Cruelty! Cruelty! See where they hauled it up by its hair!.....(Lear is taken quickly away...) Its blood's on the steps where the prisoners come! (pp. 34-5)

(Act II, scene 2)

LEAR To GHOST OF GRAVE-DIGGER'S BOY: There's an animal in a cage. I must let it out or the earth will be destroyed. There'll be great fires and the water will dry up. All the people will be burned and the wind will blow their ashes into huge columns of dust and they'll go round and round the earth for ever! We must let it out! (Calls, bangs
on the wall.) Here! Pull your chain! Here! Break it! (There is a banging from the other side of the wall.) What? It's here! A horse!.....

/To GHOSTS OF BODICE and FONTANELLE/ The animal will slip out of its cage, and lie in the fields and run by the river, and groom itself in the sun, and sleep in its hole from night to morning.....

/To GHOST OF GRAVE-DIGGER'S BOY/ Listen! The animal's scratching! There's blood in its mouth. The muzzle's bleeding. It's trying to dig. It's found someone! (He falls unconscious on his sack.).....

/To GHOST OF GRAVE-DIGGER'S BOY/ I shouldn't have looked. I killed so many people and never looked at one of their faces. But I looked at that animal. Wrong. Wrong. It's made me a stupid old man. What colour's my hair?.....I'm frightened to look. There's blood on it where I pulled it with these hands.

(Act II, scene 6 /Prison Autopsy on Fontanelle's Body/) LEAR: Who was she?.....Did I have a daughter?.....Is that my daughter. . ? She was cruel and angry and hard.....So much blood and bits and pieces packed in with all that care. Where is the. . .where. . .? Where is the beast? The blood is as still as a lake. Where. . .? Where. . .?.....She sleeps inside like a lion and a lamb and a child. The things are so beautiful. I am astonished. I have never seen anything so beautiful. If I had known she was so beautiful. . .Her body was made by the hand of a child, so sure and nothing unclean. . .If I had known this beauty and patience and care, how I would have loved her. (The GHOST starts to cry but remains perfectly still) Did I make this — and destroy it?.....I destroyed her! I knew nothing, saw nothing, learned nothing! Fool! Fool! Worse than I knew! (He puts his hands into FONTANELLE and brings them out with organs and viscera.....) Look! I killed her! Her blood is on my hands! Destroyer! Murderer! And now I must begin again. I must walk through my life, step after step, I must walk in weariness and bitterness, I must become a child, hungry and stripped and shivering in blood, I must open my eyes and see!

(pp. 37, 40-42)

Excerpts from these speeches are commonly quoted by Bond's critics. One reason why I have given them at such length and with the inclusion of stage directions (though with the excision, especially in the last passage, of lines assigned other speakers) is that I would emphasise how thoroughly Bond's verbal language is implicated with his visual language. For the audience, as for Lear, the crucial
moments of learning are moments of seeing. I will be suggesting further on that this characteristic of Bond's playwriting is linked to what I take to be his limitations as a political playwright.

Suffice here to draw attention to how thoroughly the verbal language prescribes the tone of its delivery and any accompanying gestures. Every bit of the business assigned Lear by stage directions in the passages quoted above is already implicit in the lines. (One might argue an exception for the last direction in the last speech quoted, but I think a sharp-eyed director would work that one out.) The same is true of the movements of the mirror in the courtroom sequence: Lear's lines make it compellingly clear who is to be holding it at any given point in his speech. The mirror sequence has been likened to the deposition scene in Shakespeare's Richard II, but it is rather more to linguistic purpose to note that what is 'Shakespearean' about the sequence is less a matter of similarities of verbal surface than the way in which the spoken lines demand one bit of business and no other.137 (Jaques' 'duc-dame' joke in Act II, scene 5, of As You Like It would be an equally or even more appropriate Shakespearean passage for comparison with the mirror speech of Bond's Lear.)

Moreover, and perhaps less obviously, every one of these speeches is spoken around a concrete, visible object: bread in the I.5 sequence; bread and then bedding in the I.6 one; the mirror in the II.1 one; the prison wall and then bedding again in the II.2 one (where also, as selective quotation could not make apparent, Lear is ignoring food which has been brought to his cell); and finally Fontanelle's body in II.6. The speeches all refer to these objects. For the most part, they do so directly; and elsewhere they do so through the use of these objects in the performance of the business
which is built into the lines. What is going on in each of these passages is, among many other things, a Brechtian gestus: speaker and situation are being defined around a visible object. In Bond's writing (as in Brecht's) this serves more than economy of characterisation: it also ensures that the language of learning and discovery remains firmly attached to the concrete and specific. There are no disembodied or displaced voices in Bond's Lear.

This material attachment obtains across the whole stage. In this regard note should be taken of those stage directions which prescribe business which is not implicit in Lear's lines. These are all directions for other figures — for example, that requiring the Ghost of the Gravedigger's Boy to weep but remain motionless, or that requiring the Gravedigger's Boy's Wife to stare at Lear while he eats and soliloquises. One has in these directions faint traces of what has mostly been lost in reducing these passages to even remotely quotable proportions — Bond's widely (and justly) celebrated skill in setting up stage pictures. Every verbal utterance is qualified and coloured by the whole of the visual context in which it is spoken on stage. This context extends far beyond the details of costume, property and business assigned any given speaker and takes in all such elements visible on stage as he speaks. Behind Lear and his bread (crumbs) in I.5 there is Warrington with his knife; alongside Lear with his bread and blanket in I.6 there are the Gravedigger's Boy and his wife with ditto; around Lear and the mirror in II.1 there are the witness stand, the Councillor with his notebook, and the rest of the court; in the interstices of the passage quoted from II.2 there have come Soldiers with lists, a young orderly who brings in Lear's food, an old orderly who takes the food away, and the Ghosts of Bodice and Fontanelle with their
mother's dress; and alongside Lear and Fontanelle's corpse in II.6 there is the Fourth Prisoner in his dark-blue striped suit and with his official forms (and presumably some dissecting equipment), while around both him and Lear at the autopsy table are both the Soldiers with their rifles bringing in a dirty and dishevelled Bodice, and the white and thin Ghost of the Gravedigger's Boy standing in silent tears.

The preceding paragraphs might well suggest that it is probably impossible and certainly pointless to discuss Bond's verbal language without making reference to his visual language, and I do not propose to attempt to do so at any length. However, I think it in order to make a few remarks about the verbal patterning of the speeches quoted above. As prose, they are even simpler than Bottomley's verse: short and common words in basic grammatical constructions. (There is only one passive verb, and most of the longer sentences are simple compounds.) Because the constructions are extremely repetitive, the prose is equally as rhythmical as that verse. If, however, one goes through the passages and tallies up which sentences are declarative, which imperative, and which interrogative, one is struck by the shifts in their proportional distribution. At this point it becomes necessary to unpack the general category of 'language of learning and discovery' and to remark that where the first two passages, in which declarative sentences dominate, are indeed reflective, the rest, riddled with imperative and interrogative sentences, are (pace Coult) also expressive of a learning process as it is happening, not as it is being summed up at a distance. Perhaps more important, however, is the way in which imperatives in the courtroom speech give way to interrogatives at the autopsy: it is at the latter point, when Lear discovers
his responsibility, that he ceases to be the king giving commands and becomes the child asking questions.

I would suggest, then, that the grammatical patterning of these speeches serves to point up the process of learning and discovery which is being shown through Lear and which the audience is supposed to be sharing. In order to consider what is being discovered and learned it is necessary to consider these speeches as figurative verbal language. The most obvious and recurrent images are of course of animals. And indeed that there is a lot of animal imagery throughout Lear has not escaped the attention of many critics, but most seem to have overlooked the implications of that imagery. Ruby Cohn, for example, hears a number of verbal echoes between Lear and King Lear, among them:

Most strikingly drawn from Shakespeare's tragedy is Bond's animal imagery... Bond is not Shakespeare, of course, but Lear's sustained animal imagery concretizes the great Shakespearean line: "Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor bare forked animal as thou art." 139

I think it would make better sense to seek the sense of Bond's animal imagery in the preface to Lear, not in Act III, scene 4 of King Lear. That imagery does not concretize Shakespeare's line: it concretizes Bond's argument as outlined above. When that argument is kept in mind, virtually every verbal and visual image in Lear falls into place around the image of the human animal made beast by encagement. As far as I have been able to discover, the centrality of that image has been fully appreciated only by the graphic designer for the Royal Court premiere, who put this image on poster and playbill for the production. (He did so, moreover, despite different suggestions from the director; and Bond approved the designer's choice.) With that as the central concretisation of Bond's argument, the language of Lear makes both sense and system:
with a few exceptions, every visual and verbal element in the play can be 'read' or decoded by reference to it, and through it can be related to other elements. The critical procedures which this assertion entails may well be thought excessively schematic, and recent reading of 1940's image criticism of *King Lear* (and rejoinders thereto) has left me very wary of such procedures. But *King Lear* is not a thesis play, and its images operate by analogy, which in logic cannot constitute proof. *Lear* is a thesis play, and its images operate (or are intended to) by assertion of identity.

Taking the argument of the preface seriously, then, and abandoning any forced (and false-to-the-play) separation of verbal and visual elements, let us try looking at the language of Lear synchronically. Crisscrossing the play through the axial image of the human animal made beast are images of the technology and social moralisation which have made him so. To pick an unpromising looking pair, maps and lists. Maps are visible in fully four scenes (I.1, I.3, II.4, and II.5), and they are always in the hands or on the walls/tables of the figures who at that point are giving orders — in Bond's book, doing violence — to others. The dialogue draws attention to the dependence of the ruling classes on abstract knowledge:

ENGINEER: The chalk ends here. We'll move faster now.

COUNCILLOR (looking at his map): Isn't it a swamp on this map?

FONTANELLE (to BODICE): My feet are wet.

NORTH (studying the map): They can't get round these mountains.

CORNWALL: No

It also indicates, with varying degrees of explicitness, that this knowledge is useless —
COUNCILLOR ([now without a map]): At least there are people about! I thought this was the end of the world. (p.16)

SOLDIER J (looking at a map): Useless bloody map!....They must a issued this for the Crimea! (pp.49-50)

— and ultimately enslaving —

BODICE: .....(taps the map with the finger tips of one hand.) And now I must move them here and there — (She moves her index finger on the map.)— because the map's my strait-jacket and that's all I can do. I'm trapped. (p.48)

— to those who both control and are controlled by it. By contrast, the figures in Lear who can cope with their environment are unequipped with abstract information; and if they have come from the city (for Bond, the Götterdammerung of technology), they have to learn fast. For example, in the (mapless) Rebel Field Post:

CORDELIA (to SOLDIER I): How far did you come?

SOLDIER I: 'Ard t'say. We never come straight an' the maps is US. I was born in the city. These fields are China t' me.

CORDELIA: How long did you march?

SOLDIER I: 0 I can tell yer that. We moved off at first light.

CARPENTER (sips his tea): They've reached the river. (pp.43-44)

In Lear virtually every visible object which is a product of technology — from the eye-removing equipment (which 'isn't an instrument of torture, but a scientific device' §.537!) through the rifles and bayonets down to Bodice's knitting needles — is, or is turned into, a weapon. But thus to align so apparently innocuous an object as a map with an argument against technology and abstract knowledge is extraordinarily close and careful thinking through of every image.

Or again, lists and official papers. These also turn up in four scenes (II.2, II.4, II.6, II.2) and again are always in the
hands of the (more or less pro tem) oppressors. They are first seen (II.2) as properties in the hands of soldiers who are being trained as jail-keepers:

SOLDIERS G and H bring LEAR in (to his cell).....

SOLDIER G: Not a bad way t' earn yer livin' if it weren't for the smell.

SOLDIER H: It won't last.

SOLDIER G: Nay, they'll send us up the front with the rest.

SOLDIER H: Cross laddie 'ere off.

SOLDIER G marks a list and the TWO SOLDIERS go out.

(p.37)

THREE SOLDIERS (G, H and I) come in. They are methodical and quiet.

SOLDIER H: Watch careful an' take it all in.

SOLDIER I: Corp.

SOLDIER H: Under the sack an' in the corners. (SOLDIER G shows him how to search.) Can yer remember it? Five times a day. Yer skip the personal.

SOLDIER I: Corp.

SOLDIER H: Less see yer try.

SOLDIER I: (searching in the corners) When yer off?

SOLDIER G: Tmorra. Least it's out a this 'ole.

SOLDIER I: I'll stay out a the fightin' any day!

SOLDIER H: Yer don't know nothin' about it. When there's a war on yer all end up fightin'.

SOLDIER I: (finishes her search) Corp.

SOLDIER H: So yer're ready t'mark yer list.

SOLDIER I: Corp. (Goes to mark his list.)

SOLDIER H: An' did yer look under the bedding'?

SOLDIER I: Corp.

SOLDIER H: Then look under the beddin'.

SOLDIER I: (looks under the bedding) Corp.
SOLDIER H: An' now yer can mark yer list.

SOLDIER I: Corp. (Marks his list.)

SOLDIER H: Nignogs! . . . (When SOLDIER I has finished.) An' on t' the next one.

The THREE SOLDIERS go out.

(pp. 40-41)

Lists and documents soon become more obviously lethal pieces of paper.

In II.4:

BODICE: ....Sign these before you go.

FONTANELLE: What are they?

BODICE: Various warrants. We'll have to run the country between us — but you're no good at office work, it's a waste of time you trying.

FONTANELLE: I'll only sign what doesn't conflict with my conscience. (Picks up a document.) What's this?

BODICE: Father's death warrant.

FONTANELLE: Where's the pen?

BODICE: (as FONTANELLE signs) There are a number of old matters it's politically dangerous to leave open. They should have been closed long ago, but it's been left to us, of course!

FONTANELLE: Where is he?

BODICE: They're bringing a batch of prisoners to HQ. They had to evacuate the prisons. The warrants will be carried out when they arrive. Sign the others.

(p.47)

We see the warrants being carried out in II.6, when (p.56) the list of prisoners to be shot is read off and they are taken away; and later, in II.2 (p.77) we see Lear's former (II.2) keepers, now deserters who have sought sanctuary, being taken back to the wall (and at least one of them to the gallows), on the proclamation of yet another official form. In between, and mainly in connection with the Fourth Prisoner who becomes Hospital Doctor, official papers have been appealed to as sources of identity:
FOURTH PRISONER: (efficiently) I'm the prison medical doctor. We met in less happy times. I said I was in good standing with the government. My papers confirmed that. I'm just waiting for more papers and then I'll be given a post of more obvious trust and importance.... My new papers will open up many new opportunities for me.

( pp. 58-59 )

Two pages later his reaction to the disruption of the autopsy and the arrival of his Commandant is 'I tried to stop them — saboteurs! — don't let this stop my petition' (p. 60); and to further that petition he removes Lear's eyes. Overall, we see human figures imprisoning, disfiguring and murdering each other on the strength of pieces of paper which come to them from other men but which are held as unimpeachable because official. We see too both that they have to be trained how to use these pieces of paper, and that they can become a figure's sole source of self-justification. Bond has again turned very ordinary objects and references into an image — in this case, of the social moralisation by which he believes the human species of animal to be destroying itself.

The most important of the subsidiary images of Lear are the wall and the cage. From the opening-night reviewers on, critics have taken a flying leap for the wall, and some of them have tripped over the cage as well; but I do not think either has been fully seen in terms of the argument and system of imagery in which they are presented. Like the maps and the lists, the wall and the cage are figures for, respectively, technology and moralisation: each thus derives its significance from the central image of the human animal who they imprison and bestialise; and each is connected to the other through that image. At one unforgettable moment in the play — the chain gang in Act II, scene 5 — the images fuse. And indeed, the wall and the cage, like the technology and the moralisation which they figure, come down in the long run to much the same thing — means by
which the human species has enslaved and is extinguishing itself. But again like those abstractions, one is the cause of another: technology begets social morality in Bond's argument, and in his play it is the building of walls which brings about the construction of cages/prisons. (The former term is twice used for the latter \(^{\text{pp.} 12 \text{ and } 73}\).) Lear takes its title figure from the building of his wall, through various encagements (the cell, the chain gang, and the instrument of torture which is the only throne on which we see this king sit), and back to his wall. He is in every sense uncaged after the blinding in the peraltimate scene of Act II, and in the first scenes of Act III he can read the Old Councillor lectures on social morality:

> ...You commit crimes and call them the law! The giant must stand on his toes to prove he's tall!.....Think of the crimes you commit every day in your office, day after day till it's just routine, think of the waste and misery of that!.....Whatever's trite and vulgar and hard and shallow and cruel, with no mercy or sympathy — that's what you think, and you're proud of it! You good, decent, honest, upright, lawful men who believe in order — when the last man dies, you will have killed him! I have lived with murderers and thugs, there are limits to their greed and violence, but you decent honest men devour the earth! (pp. 78–79)

Later in the same scene he realises that he is still bound by the wall:

> What can I do? I left my prison, pulled it down, broke the key, and still I'm a prisoner. I hit my head against a wall all the time. There's a wall everywhere. I'm buried alive in a wall. Does this suffering and misery last for ever? Do we work to build ruins, waste all these lives to make a desert no one could live in?

(p. 80)

Lear proceeds to reject the Gravedigger's Boy's Ghost's urgings that he poison the well. (The well is itself another death-linked piece of technology in Lear — a self-enclosing wall which in I.7 is used not only as a source of water but also as Warrington's grave and which here in III.2 becomes a potential poisoner of the
population.) And when Cordelia in turn — and despite another lecture on social morality (p.85) — rejects Lear's urgings that she tear down the wall, he sets about doing so himself.

There are two points which I would emphasise here. One of them, which has not escaped attention, is that Lear's undoing of his own wall is one of the two major respects in which Lear can be construed as a critique of King Lear. In Shakespeare's play, suffering leads to understanding leads to acceptance. In Bond's, suffering leads to understanding leads to action. Bond himself has made much of the difference; and insofar as Shakespeare's play is still at the back of an audience's minds by the end of Bond's, it is an important one. But I think it even more important that in Lear the audience do not see the wall until the end of the play. This was decided in the first production and is preserved in the published text, which sets Act I, scene 1, and Act II, scene 7 (respectively pp. 1 and 65), 'Near the wall', not on it. Only Katherine Worth has, I think, taken note of this point:

We remain constantly aware of the wall until the last scene when a tremendous physical shock is got by having it suddenly appear, filling the whole stage...a great earthy monster threatening us as well as the characters. The effect brings home the terrible, sad irony of people in the play continuing to see this dreadful wall as their defence and protection.

I think there is more at stake here than tremendous shock and terrible irony — or rather, that (as usual with Bond) these emotional effects have been carefully created to serve an intellectual argument. The wall, the ultimate enclosure and oppression of human animals, has acquired such metaphorical proportions across the play that the audience are likely to have forgotten that it is an art fact. It has become a myth — in Bond's terms, a dominant image to which men become enslaved because they forget its realities — within the play.
In the final moments of the play the myth is destroyed: the audience see, at last and simultaneously, both the concrete object and its attempted undoing by its maker. Bond has made good the claim with which he concludes the preface to Lear:

Act One shows a world dominated by myth. Act Two shows the clash between myth and reality, between superstitious men and the autonomous world. Act Three shows a resolution of this, in the world we prove real by dying in it.

(p. xiv)

Because Bond's argument posits technology as prior to moralisation, the above description of the imagery of the wall and the cage has for the most part looked at Lear as it is experienced in time by an audience. Thus to see the language of the play diachronically is probably also the easiest way of taking account of the imagery of the child in Lear. This element of the play's language, and the argument about the socialisation of children which is carried by it, have been gone over fairly thoroughly by Richard Scharine, who subtitles his chapter on Lear with "Suffer the Little Children", so I do not think it necessary to attend to either at length. I would, however, note that just as images of maltreated children and an abused animal are associated in the first of the speeches quoted above (p.435), so too the child and the animal are linked throughout the play. Like the wall and the cage, they come down in the end to the same thing — in this case, the suffering human species. But where the significance of the imagery of the encaged animal is, I think, apparent almost from its first introduction, that of the imagery of the child only emerges as the play turns more and more directly to parent-child relations, with Lear's (and through him, the audience's) recognition of responsibility coming ever closer to home. In the first scene of Act II (p.33) Lear denies his adult daughters and in the next (pp.38-40) embraces the Ghosts of them as
children. At the beginning of the autopsy in Act II, scene 6, he does not recognise the adult corpse as his daughters, but by the conclusion he can say to Bodice: 'That's your sister....I destroyed her' (p.60). This recognition of responsibility for the adult is the other authorially-emphasised rejoinder which Lear makes to Shakespeare's King Lear. And at the same time as Bond's Lear comes to acknowledge his daughter as his own and himself as her destroyer, he also realises, from the body of his own offspring, that there is no beast innate in the human animal. What is learned and discovered in this penultimate scene of Act II is that Lear is both the murderer of what he has made and the maker of murderers. That is the essence in epigram of the argument summarised in syllogism above (p. 430). And if Bond had been content to represent a thesis and had not further undertaken to show a 'method of change' in Lear's last-act progress, he could well have ended his play with the final scene of Act II, the meeting between the blinded Lear and the blinder parents who are carrying out the destruction of the species through their own child and who deem the blind man mad for telling them so.

I have been arguing that the verbal and visual languages of Lear are a pellucid albeit complex crystallisation of an argument and that they are schematically organised around a central image. If it is so systematic, then one ought to be able to enter that system and decode the languages from any of its major images as they relate and so lead to others. And yet Bond in relation to his critics is more often like Lear in relation to his prisoners at the autopsy:

LEAR: So much blood and bits and pieces packed in with all that care. Where is the...where...?

FOURTH PRISONER: What is the question?
LEAR: Where is the beast? The blood is as still as a lake. Where...? Where...?

FOURTH PRISONER (to SOLDIER O): What's the man asking? (No response.)

Critics persist in referring the verbal and visual imagery of Bond's Lear to Shakespeare's King Lear, to Christian mythology and Freudian psychology, to Bond's biography — to everything, it sometimes seems, but the question which Bond is asking and attempting to answer through Lear. Why is the question seemingly so inaudible or incomprehensible?

The question is not, I think, incomprehensible, nor is it entirely inaudible, but it is obscured by Bond's deployment of a private mythology. This is most obvious in Lear's fairy-tale speeches. For example, the exquisite and yet obscure lines assigned him at the end of the penultimate scene, just after the death of the Gravedigger's Boy's Ghost and just before Lear goes off to undo his wall —

I see my life, a black tree by a pool. The branches are covered with tears. The tears are shining with light. The wind blows the tears in the sky. And my tears fall down on me.

— connect not so much with other images in Lear as with the final paragraph of a short story which Bond has said was one of his working notes for Lear. Indeed, to make any sense of the speech one has to go outside the play and read the short story. A fairer example, because it does utilise the play's key image of the caged creature, is perhaps Lear's Act III, scene 2 parable:

LEAR (to the audience): A man woke up one morning and found he'd lost his voice. So he went to look for it, and when he came to the wood there was the bird who'd stolen it. It was singing beautifully and the man said 'Now I sing so beautifully I shall be rich and famous'. He put the
bird in a cage and said 'When I open my mouth wide you must sing'. Then he went to the king and said 'I will sing your majesty's praises'. But when he opened his mouth the bird could only groan and cry because it was in a cage, and the king had the man whipped. But the man believed the king had treated him unjustly and he kept saying to himself 'The king's a fool' and as the bird still had the man's voice it kept singing this all over the wood and soon the other birds learned it.

The next time the king went hunting he was surprised to hear all the birds singing 'The king's a fool'. He caught the bird who'd started it and pulled out its feathers, broke its wings and nailed it to a branch as a warning to all the other birds. The forest was silent. And just as the bird had the man's voice the man now had the bird's pain. He ran round silently waving his head and stamping his feet, and he was locked up for the rest of his life in a cage.

(The STRANGERS murmur.)

So, in puzzlement, - the acting company of the Royal Court premiere production, but Bond refused to explain 'anything so obvious'.

When himself directing a production of the play at the Vienna Burgtheater sixteen months later, he was rather more helpful:

3.2... Story is Lear's prepared story of the day. Edward explains it. Lear is the bird who speaks the truth, because birds speak the truth, but they can only speak truthfully when they are free, not in a cage. And if they are free, there is a danger because the soldiers (King) will then come and punish them. But if you don't tell the truth, your life becomes mad.... Munch [who played Lear in the Vienna production] is worried that 'If I saw Christ on his cross, I would spit on him' [Lear's next line but one after the parable of the bird] is too obscure to be understood by the audience. Edward explains to him...that even if the audience doesn't totally understand, it will have enough respect for the character to know that what he says is[sic] important.

The awareness that a speech is important does not seem to me adequate compensation for full understanding of it. For such understanding an audience would have to have access either to the author or to his earlier play Passion, in which Christ does not mount His cross — it is already occupied by a crucified pig, at which He looks while asking 'How can I suffer for men, what are my sufferings compared to theirs?' — and in which
Bond established the importance of the bird and the pig in his mythology... The bird represents ultimate harmony with its environment and a caged bird implies the opposite... The pig in Passion has a double significance, representing the reality of suffering on all levels of life and the dehumanization of a man resulting from their society-induced actions.\textsuperscript{153}

Similarly, to understand why in his last encounter with the Grave-Digger's Boy's Ghost Lear is made to say that he can 'hear an owl on the hill...but not the fox' (p.82) and why in the same scene his last words to Thomas are 'Now I have only one more wish — to live till I'm much older and become as cunning as the fox, who knows how to live. Then I could teach you' (p.85), one needs the help of an authorial opinion offered outside the play: 'The animal I most admire is the fox, not the lamb. No one protects the fox. They protect the lamb — but only because he's good business'.\textsuperscript{154}

Those moments in Lear where private mythology seems to me to obtrude are all instances of verbal images being left without visual support or statement. One does not, I think, need to enter into correspondence with the playwright in order to discover the significance which Bond assigns pigs: within the play, their connection with human suffering and dehumanisation is made abundantly evident by non-verbal means — the incursion of porcine squealing when Cordelia is raped and the Gravedigger's Boy's Ghost by his own maddened pigs in III.3. On the other hand, Lear's image of his life as 'a black tree by a pool' is without any visual statement in the play: the audience are told, not shown, a figure from Bond's private mythology. Nor are they given any visual indication of the special wisdom he sees in foxes. Again, while the parable of the caged bird and the king does connect in some way with
the play's central image of man as caged beast, the precise equation of birds with truth-tellers is not an obvious corollary of that image. And only in the sight of Lear speaking the parable, directly to themselves, do an audience get anything like a visual statement of that equation: for them to perceive it as such, they must accept his parable as truth. They are thus arguably in the situation of the man confronted with Cretan liars, and at very least they are not being confronted with an immediately evident concretion of the equation of birds with truth-tellers. I have earlier (p.441) said that I think it pointless for a critic to attempt to separate the verbal and visual languages of Bond's Lear: I would now suggest that the points at which the communication of an argument breaks down in this play are those at which the languages separate, at which some detail of private mythology is given verbal but not visual statement.

Across the play as a whole, moreover, the instruction — the argument — of Lear seems to me very much more forceful in its visual than in its verbal formulations. This may in part be attributable to authorial idiosyncrasy. Bond's distaste for words — or at least for words denoting things which are not immediately, palpably perceptible — is on public record as the reason why he writes plays rather than prose fiction. In the play Lear, I have been trying to show, an argument is carried by images which are assertions of identity (always so in function and, in the case of the image which I take to be key, also so in essence). I find the visual assertions of identity more compelling because they are clearer and more concrete — but also because they are cruder and, in a sense, unchallengeable. That is, Bond in Lear is able to make visual images 'real', to make immediately, palpably present
to the eye, things and relations which are present only in 
onstage fiction, more unfailingly than verbal images allow him. 
The other side of this coin, however, is that the logical connections 
which can be given visual statement are (outside the special 
idioms of symbolic logic) few and limited in finessse: one can 
follow a demonstration or one can refuse/fail to do so, but 
one cannot argue with it except by a counter-demonstration. Such 
restriction of audience responses seems to me more obvious in the 
visual than in the verbal languages of Lear, but I would suggest 
it obtains for the latter as well, not least because it is, with 
the occasional exceptions noted above, so inextricably implicated 
with the former. Bond's argument in Lear is virtually an exclusion 
of alternatives. If one accepts the equations which it makes, one 
can enter and pursue it at any point, but at no point can 
one qualify or challenge it. 

The preceding three paragraphs are obviously looking for 
trouble. If the general sense of all those caged creatures in 
Lear is clear enough, what matter the order of preference in which 
Bond arranges the animal kingdom and what matter the exact significance 
he assigns each species? Again, if the argument of Lear is cogent, 
what matter whether or not the play allows (let alone invites) 
an audience to think against as well as with it? None whatsoever 
if Lear is to be performed and responded to solely for the sake of 
aesthetic merits and dramatic effect. But if one honours Bond's 
claim that he writes plays to change society, then these questions 
cease to be rhetorical. Inasmuch as the argument of Lear is 
carried entirely by visual and verbal images, it would seem to me 
essential that the audience be in control of the significance of 
every one of those images if they are fully to apprehend the
argument. And inasmuch as that argument aims to induce an audience to discover a method of change in their society, it would seem to me essential that it, as an artifact of that society, should admit criticism of itself. I am acutely aware that both the points which I here propose as essential fall within tangled and treacherous theoretical territory. As that territory lies outside the provenance of this thesis, I would simply draw attention to both points as consequences of Bond's undertaking to change society by means of his plays. That neither requirement is met in Lear may, I would further suggest, have something to do with Bond's working procedures at the time of writing that play. He then made it abundantly evident that he approached playwriting as a private activity and that he was calling his own tune. In 1969, the year in which he began writing Lear, for example, he said of the furor over Saved:

I'd spent a long time learning to write, and do it well. I knew I'd finally done it — written just what I'd intended; got it right. And suddenly all these people who set themselves up as custodians of art, of artistic opinion, were sounding off in every direction except that. They weren't involved with art at all. They were writing about themselves — critics often do. But it didn't affect me as a writer. Art is the most private of all activities, and the theatre is the most private of all arts. Of course you learn to practise various techniques of communication in it, but really you're communicating with yourself. You are the audience.

At the time of his Lear, at least, Bond was making no more concessions to performing companies than to critics: he was in attendance at Royal Court rehearsals from about six weeks before opening night, but he was there to explain, not alter, his text and to give his opinion (usually the deciding one) about details of production.

I do not draw attention to this for the sake of some exercise in spotting the contradiction between anarchic intent and divine
right of authorship. Somewhat more to my purposes are some
points raised by Albert Hunt:

Bond's ideas ought...to be perfectly acceptable to an
audience of liberal-minded theatregoers. Why, then has he
failed to attract such an audience?
His failure springs...from his increasing self-indulgence
as a writer in what he himself calls "a writer's theatre".
Bond sees the "writer" as something special....The
implication is that the "writer" has some kind of particular
insight, a personal vision of the truth....
Bond seems to me a playwright who has been trapped by
his own literary aspirations, and who has lost touch with
the society he is trying to explain....

I think it would be more accurate, and much less ad hominem, to
say that Bond's working procedures at the time of Lear imply problems
for his dramatic language as a means of communication, which is
what it must be above all else if plays are to have any political
impact. Within months of the premiere of Lear, Bond said that in
writing

what I begin from is really a series of small visual images,
or sometimes just phrases or sentences which seem to me to
have some sort of curious atmosphere about them that one
wants to explore and open up..... The important thing is not
to be intrigued or puzzled by images, but always to understand
them.

Fully to understand all of Bond's images in Lear one has, I suspect,
to be Bond. But in unpacking each of them and assembling them into
a play, he took for granted that his terms of reference and of
value were the same as his audience's:

Other people have to get what they can out of the play —
if it has the relation to me that I want, then I assume,
since one lives in a culture that is shared by other people,
that it is possible for them to experience the same thing.
That happens for me, anyway, in relation to other writers.....
One must be aware of how certain things work with an audience,
but not let this awareness get too much in the way. My
justification for saying that my plays ought to have an interest
for society is that I am a typical member of my society, and
so my problems are the problems that everybody else has to
solve if they're not going to die, or be killed, or be very
unhappy.
The problems may well be the same throughout the society; but I think it is self-delusion (and risks political self-defeat) to assume that that society has a shared culture guaranteeing a shared experience of, and response to, an artifact which instructs us in those problems.

Shortly after the opening of Lear, Bond said in an interview that 'If a house is on fire and I shout "Fire! Fire!" I don't want people to commend my shouting ability, I want them to join in the fire-fighting'; and the sub-editors of the New York Times, in which the interview was published, very sensibly pounced on this sentence for a headline.¹⁶¹ Earlier, while Bond was writing Lear, the Observer had published an interview with him and illustrated it with a photograph of the playwright sitting alone in the dust-sheeted stalls of the Royal Court.¹⁶² What I have tried to show in my account of Lear is that in a sense Bond is shouting 'Fire!' in an empty theatre — or perhaps '@*!' in a full one. Insofar as its first terms of reference are admitted, the language of Lear is coherent and its verbal and visual elements are in exact alignment, internally and with each other. At the lexical level, there is a careful correlation between referent and referee, and at the syntactical level, there is an exactly and self-consistently co-ordinated use of terms. The result is an elaborate and precise statement. But insofar as the first terms are not admitted, the shout of 'Fire!' fizzles out into the bangs of fire-crackers: they compel attention and the tough-eared may find them exquisite as abstract arrangements of sound and/or exciting as isolated dramatic effects, but signals they are not.

In performance that 'insofar' is the measure the audience have variously brought to the theatre. In Lear Bond forces them to see his way, for split seconds at least, but not so to think unless they already do, because he is employing his own amazing language.
vii. Conclusion

The first thing that can be concluded from my examination of language in most of the plays considered in this chapter is that any attempt to approximate the language of Shakespearean tragedy within the idiom and conventions of post-naturalist drama is a bit like trying to get mercury back into a thermometer after the bulb has been shattered. This is hardly a surprising conclusion. A critic equipped with any of the (few) available programmes for consideration of dramatic language could find any number of grounds for forecasting a very bad fit. It will have been obvious that my account above (pp.341-344) of visual elements in parallel passages from Coriolanus and A Place Calling Itself Rome is greatly indebted to the scheme which Raymond Williams sketched out in Drama from Ibsen to Eliot and elaborated in Drama in Performance. Indeed, my argument there is virtually a corollary of the comparison which Williams makes between 'acted speech' and 'visual enactment' on the one hand, and 'behaviour' on the other; and this distinction has been the indispensable operating assumption of most of my remarks about my third area of problems of dramatic language for adaptors of Shakespearean tragedy.

Another critical scheme for the discussion of dramatic language, and one which is also in Williams' debt though it abandons his historical argument, is that proposed by Thomas van Laan in The Idiom of Drama. Part III of this book covers approximately the same territory as my first and second areas of adaptors' problems with dramatic language. Van Laan here outlines 'Expository', 'Stylistic' and 'Structural' devices for the revelation of what he terms 'the action of depth' and what I take to mean 'absolute meaning'. His three expository devices are: (i) direct statement by a chorus or an individual character; (ii) exposition of unstaged events; and
(iii) the grouping, in reciprocal reflection, of several characters around a central referent which may be a character, a concrete object, an event, or a concept. The first of these is only exceptionally available to dramatists in the tradition of what van Laan calls 'formal realism'. His six stylistic devices are: (i) sound patterns, including variations in stress and pitch, differences in placement and duration of pauses, relationships between individual words or lines, presence or absence of rhyme, and contrast between speaking voices; (ii) words used ambiguously and/or repetitively; (iii) allusions to pre-existing contexts of a word or an image; (iv) image patterns; (v) repetition of ideas; and (vi) symbols. By van Laan's account the first is only partially, and the second, third and fourth only rarely or with difficulty available to dramatists in this tradition. And while the sixth is here assigned considerable importance within the tradition of formal realism, part of van Laan's argument for its importance is slightly suspect because self-inconsistent. The argument is simply an illustrative one — a discussion of the white horses and the setting of Rosmersholm. The former, being a matter of verbal reference, is of the same aural kind with the other 'stylistic devices' discussed, but the latter is not. Moreover, in his first chapter, van Laan (following Williams) has said that in the tradition of formal realism, the setting of a play, and much else besides, lie 'outside the direct control exerted by the dramatist's language'. Van Laan's structural devices, which turn out to be simply characters and episodes or scenes, are all, however, within range of dramatists in the tradition of formal realism.

With its focus upon 'action of depth' and through that upon 'meaning', van Laan's study seems to me much less indebted to Raymond Williams than to Francis Fergusson. Thus derived from a
concept of drama which leaves little room or value for the tradition of formal realism, The Idiom of Drama also seems to me at points too quick to declare its various linguistic 'devices' inaccessible to dramatists of that tradition. That the only 'realist' play discussed in detail is Rosmersholm, and that even fleeting references to others are made only rarely is suspicious. And that the whole scheme is not made to accommodate any play more recent than Death of a Salesman (1949) is somewhat discrediting of a study of dramatic idiom published in 1970. Yet one must concede, on the one hand, that all van Laan's devices abound throughout Elizabethan drama and were exploited even by hacks, and on the other hand, both that thematic imagery is pretty thin (and then generally painfully conspicuous) on the ground in realist drama, and also that the full resources of sound patterning have been deployed by only a few dramatists in this tradition.

A final and quite different example of a critical scheme from which the linguistic problems of modern adaptors of Shakespearean tragedy might have been forecast is Pierre Larthomas' Le langage dramatique. Where Williams' work centres upon historically changing relations between dramatic text and theatrical performance, and van Laan's upon dramatic text as meaningful expression, Larthomas' study, very much in the tradition of linguistic analysis since Saussure, takes as its working hypothesis the following paradox.

It would not, I think, be much to my purpose to summarise and criticise the whole of the elaborate and at points tautologous framework with which Larthomas proceeds to solve the problem he has posed. (A
simpler version of his scheme is available in an article published seven years before the book.) Suffice that for Larthomas dramatic language is a compromise between the written and the spoken language, but that it is neither the one thing nor the other:

Un bon langage dramatique peut être très proche ou du langage parlé ou du langage écrit, il ne se confond jamais avec eux. Si cette confusion se produit, l'œuvre perd toute efficacité ...

...Une conversation apprise et jouée n'a ni valeur dramatique, ni style. Entrent en ligne de compte ici et l'insignificance des propos (cela va sans dire) et leur forme. Dans un souci de réalisme un auteur dramatique peut vouloir reproduire le plus exactement possible les propos de tous les jours; s'il veut que son œuvre soit efficace, le langage qu'il emploie doit avoir d'autres caractères que le nôtre. Lesquels? C'est toute la question.

Another five chapters are devoted to answering it (whereas a warning off 'Les Tentations de l'Écriture' is accomplished in a single chapter). The characteristics of dramatic language by which Larthomas in these five chapters differentiates it from everyday spoken language are:

(i) rectification, (ii) enchaînement of dialogue, (iii) concentration of verbal effects, (iv) unity of tone, and (v) rhythm, metre and tempo.

None of these is by definition entirely inaccessible to dramatists with 'un souci de réalisme', formal or otherwise. Yet with the arguable exception of the fourth, all are more obviously and consistently to be found in the language of Shakespeare and his contemporaries than in that of most modern dramatists who have adhered to the conventions of the post-naturalist stage.

It is primarily these conventions that I would ascribe the fact that the verbal and visual languages of most English-language adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy up to circa 1960 (and some more, like Osborne's, thereafter) are so impoverished, un inventive, and sometimes simply embarrassing. In many instances, of course, the incompetence of an individual adaptor and/or his address to more/less
restricted theatrical circumstances should also be taken into account. And in the case of Bottomley's *King Lear's Wife*, any freedom from naturalist conventions which has been obtained through the use of verse has been more than cancelled out by the author's misunderstanding both of the language of his Shakespearean model(s), and, in my opinion, of the nature of drama.

Bond's *Lear*, however, points to problems of dramatic language more fundamental than those caused by any of the factors outlined above. There is today some question, to put it as optimistically as possible, as to whether the verbal language available to modern dramatists admits even the possibility of any contemporary approximation of the images, patterns and rhythms which distinguish Shakespearean tragedy. Critics have claimed over and over again that the spoken vernacular of the mid-twentieth century is a less precise and less flexible mode of communication than it is taken, primarily on the evidence of the writings of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, to have been in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean England. Lexicon and syntax alike are said to have been debased by careless usage which is a post-printing consequence of the devaluation of oral utterance in favour of printed, and after that of the devaluation of verbal language itself in favour of the visual images of screen, television and advertising. By comparison with the same evidence, critics have further noted the dwindling of the stock of verbal associations which a dramatist may exploit in his dialogue, and the virtual disappearance of those visual associations which depended on now-defunct iconographies. These connotative declines are usually ascribed, by one route or another, to the discrediting and dissolution of that common sensibility or thought structure or world picture which was the matrix of the visual as well as the verbal language of Elizabethan drama.
I do not entirely share the despair. For one thing, I am faintly suspicious of any comparative diagnosis of oral vernaculars which must of force derive the normative half of its evidence from written — often printed — texts. For another, whatever I may make of English as spoken today by newscasters, undergraduates or myself, I do not see that that 'whatever' is of necessity fully coextensive with and thus exhaustive of the contemporary possibilities of that language in drama as opposed to its practice in everyday discourse. Nor do I see that verbal and visual associations are either unavailable or insusceptible of invention, particularly not when mass communications and reproduction techniques have rendered the potential sources of allusion more immediately and widely available.

The first of the objections in the preceding paragraph is simply a quibble with critical method. And I think that Bond's Lear gives me warrant for the optimism of the second and third points: that play does (as do most of Bond's) seem to me to demonstrate that a mid-twentieth-century dramatist can construct a tightly-knit visual-verbal language in which pattern and figure are as conspicuous and as controlled as in Shakespearean tragedy. Moreover, the elements of that language — particularly its visual side — can be picked up from many widely available sources. (It is impossible, for example, to imagine Shakespeare borrowing from mid-fifteenth-century illuminated manuscripts in the way that Bond is widely recognised to be borrowing from Blake's drawings and verse.) I remain, however, nervous about the intellectual grounds and ramifications of the figures. Bond is forced to utilise his own private mythology because there is no longer a pool of visual and verbal figures whereof the moral and political import is clear, coherent and commonly held, and because he rejects as stagnant whatever puddles remain of that pool. The only option left him carries some risk of linguistic solipsism. And Shakespeare was not talking to himself.
CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the preceding chapter could well stand as a conclusion to this thesis as a whole: the problems of language which are faced by contemporary adaptors of Shakespearean tragedy subsume all others, for it is out of stage languages that action and character are constructed. I would, however, briefly return to my starting point for a conclusion. In that article which was summarised in my Introduction, Irving Wardle bolstered his hopes for great Shakespearean happenings among contemporary British playwrights by pointing to two developments in contemporary British theatre and drama which he regarded as restorations of the Shakespearean tradition: 'direct address to the audience and civic subject matter.' I would point 'direct address to the audience in two different ways. On the one hand, I would extend it to cover all parts of non-illusionistic performance — to techniques and styles of staging, acting and writing that accept that onstage 'fact' is fiction. And on the other hand, inasmuch as an address implies a communication, that phrase implies that something is being said in that fiction. In both the extended and the implicit senses which I would thus apply to it, 'direct address to the audience' distinguishes every one of the recent adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy which are discussed in the concluding parts of my Chapters II, III and IV. As Wardle hoped, British adaptors since 1966 have indeed helped themselves to and by conventions of playwriting and performing which were not available to their predecessors. Under 'civic subject matter,' however, the present state of British adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy seems somewhat less sanguine. Early twentieth-century adaptors used Shakespeare for, at best, what they saw in him: tragedies of the inner selves of individuals. Scholars and producers having re-established the political and intellectual dimensions of Shakespearean drama, recent adaptors have seen the civic subject matter in Shakespearean texts and responded in kind: of the recent adaptations which I have discussed in detail, all those which are subsequent to Wardle's article do deal in 'civic subject matter'. But of these four — Davies' Rohan and Julie, Edgar's Death Story, Gooch's Back Street Romeo and Bond's Lear—only the last named succeeds in turning that subject matter to tragic effect.
NOTES: INTRODUCTION

1. 29 September, 1966, p.495.

2. Ibid., p.496. All subsequent quotations from Wardle's article are taken from this — its second and last — page, and they will not be given further citation.


5. These figures are based on Appendix B, 'Offshoots Discussed in This Book,' to Modern Shakespeare Offshoots (op.cit., pp.413-416). My computation, however, has involved one correction of Professor Cohn's listings. She enters Rayner Heffenstall's and Michael Innes' Three Tales of Hamlet (London: Gollancz, 1950) as fiction rather than as drama in this appendix; and on pp.180-181, in her chapter on Hamlet adaptations, she has treated them as narratives. She makes no mention of the fact that Three Tales of Hamlet had been broadcast on the BBC's Third Programme before they were published in book form, and that two of them are dramatic scripts appears to have escaped her. As these two are printed as radio play texts (complete with listings of original casts and instructions for sound effects), as the date of broadcasting is noted before each of the three published texts, and as Heffenstall's preface to the book recounts the genesis of all Three Tales, it is difficult to reconstruct how this oversight occurred.

My computation has also accounted the American expatriate Charles Marowitz — whose college Hamlet (first performed and published 1964, revised version first performed 1965 and published 1966) and Macbeth (first performed 1969, published 1971) are discussed in Modern Shakespeare Offshoots, although his later adaptations of Othello (performed 1972, published 1974), Taming of the Shrew (performed 1974, published 1978), and Measure for Measure (performed and published 1975) are overlooked — as a U.K. rather than a U.S. writer. I do so on the grounds that these collages were made for and with British companies.

6. Francis Jackson, Skylock Returns, published in Shakespeare Quarterly (Sydney, Australia), II (April 1923), pp.25-32. I have not examined a copy of this text and know of it only through Dr. Gros Louis' thesis. According to Note No.36 to her Chapter V, 'The only recorded performance of this play was on April 23, 1923, in Sydney, in honor of Shakespeare's birthday, at a meeting of the Shakespeare Society of New South Wales.'

7. Ibid., p.6 and Note No. 4 to Chapter I.
NOTES: INTRODUCTION

8. The extensively treated (ibid., pp.16-31) text which is prior to Dr. Gros Louis' terminus a quo is Gordon Bottomley's King Lear's Wife. As she records, this appeared in Edward Marsh's anthology Georgian Poetry 1913-1915, alias Georgian Poetry II, which was published in 1915, and by 1916 had achieved two productions. See pp. 400-420 below. The pre-1916 adaptation to which Dr. Gros Louis gives only brief mention (on her p.15) is Maurice Baring's Calpurnia's Dinner Party. This was published in The Morning Post before it appeared in Baring's Diminutive Dramas (London: Heinemann, first edition 1911, pp.129-137). It is followed there (pp.138-159) by a companion travesty of Julius Caesar, Lucullus' Dinner Party, of which Dr. Gros Louis makes no mention.

9. Gros Louis, pp.41-48. Her account of the play seems to me a much more perceptive condemnation than the somewhat impatient pair of paragraphs accorded it by Professor Cohn in Modern Shakespeare Offshoots (op. cit., p.252). See pp. 388-393 below.


11. Ibid., pp.136-137

12. This formulation of the argument of Dr. Gros Louis' thesis is from the abstract published in Dissertation Abstracts. (See Note 3 above.) Less succinct statements of the argument may be found in the introductory and concluding sections of the thesis (op. cit., pp.1-6 and 280-290).

13. Ibid., p.4.


15. Ibid., pp.225-226

16. Ibid., p.286.

17. Cohn, pp.vii-viii.

18. Ibid., p.232

19. Ibid., pp.389-390

20. Ibid., pp.3-4. The inconsistency of 'Shakespearean' adjectives is Professor Cohn's, or her proofreader's.

21. Ibid., p.56.

22. Cohn, p.4. My underscoring.


24. Professor Cohn specifies in her foreword: 'My study focuses on Shakespeare offshoots intended for — and usually performed in — a serious theater. Not only Broadway, the West End, the Boulevards,
subsidized theaters, but theaters that are staffed by trained and/or committed workers.' This gloss does not necessarily exclude amateur theatre, but effectively rules out much of it. And as remarked above (Note No.5), though she does briefly discuss two radio plays, she terms and treats them as fiction.

25. Professor Cohn's chapter on Rumbelow's Triple Action Theatre concludes: 'Their work on Shakespeare...shows that the Bard provides viable material for the Alternative Theatre' (ibid., p.320). The term 'New or Alternative Theater' has in an earlier chapter been glossed as theatre 'in which texts are less important than thematic physicalization, audience entertainment than actor exploration. The patron saint of this New or Alternative Theater is Antonin Artaud' (ibid., p.92).

26. The nearest thing to such a guide is scattered, under various headings and without much discrimination among kinds of adaptation, through the seven volumes of The Catalogue of the Birmingham Shakespeare Library, Birmingham Public Libraries (London: Mansell, 1971). Professor Cohn's foreword to her Modern Shakespeare Offshoots includes the curious remark that her research had involved 'even traveling to the Birmingham Shakespeare Library when I was (mistakenly) informed that that fine collection had a winnowed list of "Shakespeare alterations"' (op.cit., p.vii). As the published catalogue of that fine collection lists alterations for every play in the Shakespearean canon, I find it difficult to discern the mistake — unless perhaps Professor Cohn went to the library of the Birmingham Shakespeare Institute rather than to the Shakespeare Collection in the Central Reference Library of the Birmingham Public Libraries. The hypothesis occurs to me only because I initially made exactly this error. Once it had been rectified, I found the collection as incomparably helpful to my research as the catalogue had already been: it contains many American and Continental adaptations which are not available elsewhere in the United Kingdom, and it also houses a considerable amount of unpublished British material, notably scripts of Shakespeareana broadcast by the BBC.

My numerous other debts for bibliographical assistance are acknowledged at the beginning of the bibliographical appendix to this thesis.

27. These intriguing but embryonic observations are: 'This metamorphosis, from the irreparable moral injustice of Shakespeare's King Lear to the swiftly solved financial dilemma of Maugham's Mr. Lear may be symptomatic of the modern decline of tragedy' (Gros Louis, p.48); and a reference, many pages later, to Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead as 'modern both in its thought and in its method...an anti-heroic comedy, indeed an anti-tragedy' (ibid., pp.288-289).
NOTES: CHAPTER ONE

1. Stanley Wells has recently edited a useful collection of Nineteenth-Century Shakespeare Burlesques (London: Diploma Press, 1977) in five volumes. To the bibliography which he lists in Note No. 1 to his introduction to the collection's first volume (John Poole and his Imitators /ibid./, pp. xxvi-xxvii), I can add only: Arthur Edwin Dubois, 'Shakespeare and Nineteenth-Century Drama', ELH, vol. 1, no. 2 (September 1934), pp. 163-196.


3. 'Some Notes on Parody', appended to D.W. MacDonald, ed., Parodies: An Anthology from Chaucer to Beerbohm and After (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), pp. 557-559. The passages excised from my quotation of MacDonald's definitions include (among other things) assertions of the superiority of parody over burlesque and of burlesque over travesty. As a rule, writers of burlesques and travesties have tended to give their works titles or subtitles pegging them a notch or even two above their proper places in this scale of literary snobbery.

4. Alternatively, parody can become travesty when the object of its satire ceases to be the style of a specific artifact, literary or otherwise (see Note No. 19 below) and becomes instead the idiom of a type known in 'real' life. The difference is well illustrated within A.E. Wilson's 'Brighter Shakespeare', published in his Theatre Gypsies: The Baedaker of Thespians (London: Methuen, 1935), pp. 74-81. This includes rewrites of passages from Romeo and Juliet in the manner of Noel Coward, Hamlet in the manner of J.W. Synge, and again Hamlet and also Julius Caesar in 'Americanese'. Only the first two of these four are, to my understanding of MacDonald's definitions, parodies.

5. Dumont's Shakespearean travesties are titled: Roamy-E-Owe and Julie Ate; O-thello and Dare-de-Money; Ham(on)let, Prince of Dunkirk; Sky-lark, or the Merchant of Ven-im-it; Richard the Three Times; and Julius Sneezer, the Snoozer. Together with other playlets by Dumont and others they were published in New York as in the Witmark Stage Publications. They contain detailed instructions for scenery, costumes, props and make-up (most of which work by a conjunction of ethnic caricature with theatrical extravagance) and occasional reminders that the more recherché
items required for production can be acquired from the Crest Trading Company. Dumont, who was one of the last great minstrel showmen in the States, owned and managed Philadelphia's Eleventh Street Opera House, a professional theatre specialising in minstrel shows. At the same time he 'wrote probably more songs, jokes and afterpieces for minstrel shows than any other performer or producer' (Carl P. Wittke, Tambo and Bones: A History of the American Minstrel Stage / Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1930; reprint New York: Greenwood Press, 1967, p.243). Although Dumont's publications obviously anticipate production by amateurs, they continue the traditions of the professional stage: see ibid., p.157, for comparable titles of minstrel travesties of Shakespearean plays.

Stevens' High Speed Shakespeare...Three Tragedies in a Tearing Hurry was published in London by H.F.W. Deane & Sons in 1934. The Hamlet travesty in this collection had already been staged by Reginald Bach at the Arts Theatre on 28 June 1931 and published that year in a collection of three playlets by Stevens. (This travesty is briefly discussed by Cros Louis Shakespeare by Many Other Names, op.cit. [Note No. 3 to Introduction above], pp. 177-180). The travesty of Julius Caesar was first performed on radio, 'in a programme of the author's short plays transmitted to the British Empire — Autumn, 1934' (High-Speed Shakespeare, p.20). I have found no record of a production of the third travesty, which is of Romeo and Juliet, printed in the collection. It too is briefly discussed by Cros Louis in Shakespeare by Many Other Names, pp.108-110.

F.A. Carter's Haywire Shakespeare (travesties of Romeo and Juliet, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Taming of the Shrew, Julius Caesar, Hamlet and The Merchant of Venice) and More Haywire Shakespeare (travesties of A Midsummer Night's Dream, Antony and Cleopatra, King Richard III, Macbeth, Othello and The Tempest) were both published in London by Samuel French. I am not aware of any specific occasion upon which any one of these dramatic monologues was performed, and it is difficult to imagine any of them on any British professional stage of the mid 1940's and 1950's. The later collection, which is No. 57 in French's Monologue Series, includes a note that amateurs need not solicit permission for performance, and this indicates that the monologues were meant mainly for an amateur market.

6. H.W. Barber, A. Neville Cox, and E.G. Schlesinger, Macbeth: a pseudohypertrophic muscular dystrophy in four acts (London: Ash, 1912). In this Duncan, the Resident Surgical Officer, is murdered by Stumpy Macbeth, a house surgeon. Occasion is provided when Duncan is hospitalised, in Macbeth's ward, with a streptococcal infection in his finger; and the means of murder is an overdose of strychnine. This sets up some pretty obvious bits of burlesque dialogue — 'Is this a syringe I see before me?' (p. 31) — and casting — three 'be-witching' nurses (p. 8). Other jokes are now obscured by their dependence upon local colour; such is Professional Murderer McSted's bombarding of Banquo, another house surgeon, with bread over a meal in the dining hall. (The preface suggests that this was common practice among the housemen of Guy's at the time.) Most striking and to my point, however, is
the ease with which the show slipped in and out of its Shakespearean model and, presumably, took its audience with it. For example, from p.43:

BANQUO: ....And how strange it was that the very day the witches prophesied, poor Duncan should go septic, be warded, and then peg out so mysteriously. It was an unpleasant business.

MACRETH: Quite, quite. Shakespeare uses another word, but I can quite see that it wouldn't do here.


8. With its authorship assigned to 'William Shakespeare and Others', King George V was published in the forty-first Christmas number of Truth (25 December 1917), pp. 27 - 32. This quotation, p.6.

9. King Edward VIII or The Merry Wife of Windsor: A Drama in Three Acts exists in unpublished typescript in the Folger Shakespeare Library (MS Y.d. 437). A note in the Folger's catalogue records: 'This play was given before the Shakespeare Society of Plainfield, New Jersey, by some of its members in the Fall of 1937.' The authorship is ascribed to 'Margaret V. McCutchen with the collaboration of William Shakespeare.' A typical passage, from p. 2:

KING EDWARD: ...To quit, or not to quit? That is the question. Whether 'were better, in his realm to suffer The tiresome twaddle of that bossy Baldwin; Or to make war on all his 'musts' and 'must nots'; And, abdicating, end them? (He picks up the Articles of Abdication, studies them a moment, then looking off, but still holding the paper) This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle, This dear, dear land, dear for her reputation through the world, England, bound in with the triumphant sea, — (Taking a pen) I now blot out with inky parchment, from me henceforth, Ah, will the scandal vanish with my life?

10. Unpublished typescript courtesy of Sarah Hunter Parsons, who played Lady Sane.

11. Macbird had a prolonged and complicated evolution from a slip-of-tongue at a rally in Berkeley, California, in August of 1965, through the circulation of various Uhr-versions and fragments of in typescripts, limited editions, and several journals (Ramparts, Despite Everything, and City Lights Journal) throughout 1966, to the premiere production of a full-length stage version at the Village Gate Theater in New York in January of 1967. See the Foreword to the Grove Press edition (New York, 1967), pp. ix-xi. Further changes were made for the British premiere at Joan
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12. There is a typescript, dated 30 November 1973, of Edgar's burlesque in the library of the British Drama League (MS 1241). Titled Would You Buy A Used Horse From This Man? or, Dick Deterred, this typescript includes only minor variants from the published text, Dick Deterred: A Play in Two Acts (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1974). According to the latter (p. 9), a slightly shortened version was staged in the premiere production. This opened at the Bush Theatre, London, in February of 1974 and subsequently transferred to the Terrace Theatre in the Institute of Contemporary Arts.

13. The Watergate Classics was staged by Yale Drama School in the winter of 1973/4 and promptly published as a special issue of the School's journal, Yale/Theatre. I have failed to procure a copy of this full text and so have seen only the text of the one skit — Robert Brustein's Oedipus Mix — which was published in Yale/Theatre, Vol. V, No. 1 (Fall, 1973), pp. 130-138. An advertisement published in the next number of the journal (Spring, 1974) itemises the contents of the full text. Brustein gave an account of the Hamlet burlesque in a speech to the Shakespeare '74 Convention at Brooklyn College; and this speech has been published, under the title 'No More Masterpieces Revisited', in his The Culture Watch: Essays on Theatre and Society 1969-74, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1975), pp. 131-137. (See especially p. 136). Friends who have reported to me about the revue were particularly struck by the adaptation of the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy for recitation by the hesitant hero Senator Sam Ervin.

14. Sovereignty Under Elizabeth was first (and, given its topicality, probably last) staged at the Almost Free Theatre, London, in mid-November of 1977. The cast list on the unpublished typescript, which was lent to me by Rudkin's agent, specifies:

   DOCTOR: thoroughly modern totalitarian man, of seductive mental exactitude and clarity.

   GENTLEWOMAN: a lady-in-waiting, close to the Queen, yet something about her appearance of midwife blue. A touch of the Scots in her voice.

   QUEEN: young, fleet, virginal — a talismanic presence, her gown, crown, waistlength tresses, perhaps even her skin, all of dazzling gold. At no point and in no respect resembling any mere living monarch: she is the essence, Queen itself.

The Queen comes sleepwalking into a display of Jubilee souvenirs which the Gentlewoman has arranged and which disturb the royal conscience. Rudkin does paraphrase some of the less familiar lines of dialogue in the original: for example, where Shakespeare's scene opens with the Doctor of Physic saying, 'I have two nights watched with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last walked?' (New Cambridge edition, V.l. 1-3),
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Rudkin's begins with his Doctor saying, 'Well lady. This is the third night now I've waited with you here, and still no sign of such a royal performance as you describe' (typescript, p.1). Rudkin taps surprisingly few of Lady Macbeth's better remembered lines for the soliloquies of his own somnambulist monarch, but there is the odd echo: 'Yet somewhere here's a lie. Sniff, sniff' (typescript, p.2). The burlesque of Macbeth is soon dropped: on p. 4 (out of 25 pages) the Queen starts talking to the Doctor, whom she mistakes for one of her Councillors; and they are subsequently joined by the Prince, who is described in the cast list as 'a collage of Establishment fragments — one eye blue, the other brown...one leg kilted, the other in RAF blue...an MA hood, the plumed hat of a Governor-General; and so on, and so on.'

15. At the time (November 1978) I read it in typescript, Eagleton's play had yet to be staged, but negotiations were then under way for a production on the London Fringe.


17. Published text in Alan Bennett, etc., Beyond the Fringe (London: Souvenir Press, 1963), pp. 89-93. The revue was first presented by the Edinburgh Festival Society at the Lyceum, Edinburgh, on 22 August 1960, produced by John Bassett and directed by John Hammond. The following spring it was presented by William Donaldson for W. & D. Plays Ltd. and Donald Albery for Calabash Productions Ltd., and directed by Eleanor Pasan: this production opened at the Arts, Cambridge, on 24 April 1961 and transferred to the Fortune, London, on 10 May 1961. (Production information from The Stage Yearbooks for 1961 and 1962, pp. 47 and 48-49 respectively.)

18. Dehn's parodistic pastiche purported to demonstrate the possibility of a 'permanent play' to match the 'permanent set' which Michael Benthall had designed for the Old Vic's 'Five Year Plan' of staging all the plays in the First Folio in 1953-1958. The text is included in the piece entitled 'Potted Swan' in Dehn's For Love and Money (London: Max Reinhardt, 1956). pp. 44-49.

19. Published in Taggart's Short and Sweet: Monologues, Sketches, Blackouts and Burlesques for Stage and Television (New York, London and Toronto: S. French, 1956), pp. 5-21. An earlier adaptation bearing the same title as Taggart's, Walter Ben Hare's Macbeth a la mode: a school burletta in three acts (Chicago: T. Denison, 1914), is not a parody at all but rather a full-length travesty transposition of Macbeth to an American secondary school scene.

One might note here that the style parodied in a number of Shakespearean parodies in recent years is not even literary, let alone specifically Shakespearean, but rather that of the communications media and/or advertising. Hazel Addis' Sellevision: Comedy for Four Scouts, for example, claims to be 'one of Shakespeare's unfinished plays,' as produced and
adapted by the Universal Household Aid Company' (pp. 10-17 in her
On With the Show /London: Boy Scouts Association, 1955/, this
quotation p.11). More recently, Jamie Rix and Nick Wilton,
co-authors of the University of Kent at Canterbury Dramatic
Society's 1977 Christmas revue, Turn-off, included a Hamlet
in the manner of Jesus Christ Superstar within a parody of
BBC 2-TV's weekly arts programme, 'Arena'.

20. Creswell's Rosalynde in Arden exists in unpublished typescripts
in the Folger Library (MS Y.d. 439) and the Shakespeare Library
of the Birmingham Public Library (Ac. No. 526637).
On Barton's textual labours for his production of King John, see
the extensive quotation from his programme note in Judith Cook,

21. The textual work of Barton et al. for The Wars of the Roses
is published under that title (London: BBC, 1970), and the
Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library contains
the three-volume typescript (Ac. Nos. 74615/6/7) for the BBC
transmission of the production, televised from the Royal
The prefatory material to the published text includes (pp. xv-xxv)
Barton's account of 'The Making of an Adaptation', a process
which he terms 'directorial interference' (p.xxv).
Welles' Five Kings is not published. A typescript of its Part
I, wanting Scene 4, is available in the Lincoln Center Theater
Collection of the New York Public Library (NCCF). In 29
scenes, plus choruses and epilogues, it covers King Richard II,
both parts of King Henry IV, and King Henry V. Virtually all
that remains of the first play, however, is Richard's corpse,
brought on in a first scene which begins with the opening lines
of King Henry IV, Part I. With Welles playing Falstaff and Robert
Speaight the Chorus, Part I of Five Kings was first produced by
the Mercury Theater under Theater Guild sponsorship at the
Colonial Theater in Boston on 27 February 1939. The production
closed during a pre-Broadway tour, and Part II never materialised.
Barton's amalgamation is discussed in Cohn's Modern Shakespeare
Offshoots (op.cit., Note 4 to Introduction above), pp. 4-7.
where there are also brief references to Welles' on pp. 4 and 72.
For further discussion of Barton's work, see Robert Speaight,
Shakespeare on the Stage: An Illustrated History of Performance
(London: Collins, 1973), pp. 286-288; Richard Proudfoot in
Shakespeare Survey xxiv (1971), p. 177; and G. Lloyd Evans,
'How Far Can We Improve Shakespeare?' in an interview with Barton
about Welles' production, see Roy S. Waldau, Vintage Years of the
Theatre Guild, 1928-1939 (Cleveland and London: Case Western

22. See the announcement of the plans for the production in Plays
and Players, Vol. XI, No. 3 (December 1963), p.5; and Richard
F. Shepard's review of it in the New York Times, 17 March 1964,
p. 31, col. 1. From the latter it appears that this 'arrangement
of scenes' relied heavily on the services of a narrator, who also
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'step in and out of small parts.' I have been unable to discover what the narrator's text(s) may have been, but I am interested to note (again from this review) that the only prop used in the production was a crown.


An example of the rarer form of Identikit adaptation is George Jean Nathan's The Avon Flows, an 'orchestration' of Romeo and Juliet, Othello and Taming of the Shrew into a single three-act play. The text has been published (New York: Random House, 1937) and also exists in typescript in the Lincoln Center Theater Collection of the New York Public Library. It is discussed below in Note No. 10 to Chapter II. See also Cohn, op. cit. (Note 4 to Introduction above), p. 46; Gros Louis, op. cit. (Note 3 to Introduction above), pp. 99-102; P.M. Jack, New York Times Book Review, 14 February 1937, p.104 and Christopher Morley, 'Reunion in Verona', Saturday Review, 14 February 1937, p.12.

And for a warning of such efforts see Act II, scene iii of Charles Williams' A Myth of Shakespeare (Oxford: University Press, 1936, first printed 1929), p.21:

HENEOEAGE: It's well your fellows keep their plays. Suppose Iago labouring to twist Hamlet's mind And the Ghost preaching to Othello!

SHAKESPEARE: Faith, There'd be an opposition worth the talk On one side; on the other a two-act play With one corpse honourably poignarded — no death Drunk to the lees.

24. MacKaye's Caliban was published in 1916 by both Curtis Brown (London and Garden City, N.Y.) and Doubleday, Page & Co. (Garden City, N.Y.). The masque was presented in May 1916 by 1,500 amateurs in Lewisohn Stadium in New York, as part of the city's Tercentenary Shakespeare celebration, and again in July of 1917 at the Harvard Stadium. There is a programme from the latter staging in the Shakespeare Library of the Birmingham Public Library (Ac. No. 599874). The original production is discussed at length, and the masque summarised scene by scene, in Mel Gordon's 'Percy MacKaye's Masque of Caliban' (1916), The Drama Review, Vol. XX, No. 2 (June 1976), pp. 93-107. See also: Gros Louis, op. cit. (Note No. 3 to Introduction above), pp. 9-15; Louis Marder, His Entrances and his Exits: The History of Shakespeare's Reputation (London: John Murray, 1964), p.326; and Cohn, op. cit. (Note No. 4 to Introduction above), pp. 276-280, and references cited there.

I have been unable to trace a Shakespearean masque which would seem
to have been very close in place and time to MacKaye's extravaganza. This was Hermann Hagedorn's *The House of Magic*. According to Stephen Phillips in *The Poetry Review*, vol. III, No. 3 (May–June, 1916), p.209, this had been presented in March 1916 at the Century Theatre in New York and subsequently printed, but I cannot discover it in the Library of Congress catalogue.

Endore's *Call Me Shakespeare: A Play in Two Acts* is published (New York: Dramatists Play Service, copyright 1966), but I know nothing of any productions of it.

25. Notable among these have been John Gielgud's *Ages of Man*, which was based on George Rylands' identically titled anthology (published 1939) and which premiered in New York at the 46th Street Theater on 28 December 1958 and came to London's Queens Theatre on 8 July of the following year; and Jerome Alden's arrangement of *A Program for Two Players* (alias *Shakespeare Revisited*), which Maurice Evans and Helen Hayes premiered at the American Shakespeare Festival on 17 July 1962 and in which they toured the U.S. from 15 October 1962 to 9 March 1963.


The only one of the pastiches upon war-time themes which I know to have been given theatrical presentation was, in a sense, an academic star vehicle. This is G. Wilson Knight's *This Sceptred Isle: Shakespeare's Message for England at War* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1940). This curiously hybrid text organises extended quotations from King John, Henry VI, Part I, Richard II, Henry IV, Part II, Henry V, Richard III, Macbeth, Othello, Coriolanus, Merchant of Venice and Henry VIII under the headings 'What England Is,' 'How England Should Act,' 'What England Must Oppose', and 'What England Stands For,' and interlards them with patriotic commentary. The resultant lecture-recital was presented at the Tavistock Theatre in the summer of 1940 and, after production at various provincial centres including Cheltenham, returned to London the following summer for a week at the Westminster Theatre.


30. Houuhannes I. Pilikian, *The Copy for 'Mahumodo'* (Beirut: Lotus Publications, 1964), p.25. A note on p.77 helpfully explains: 'I have tried to minimize the usage of my terminology because it covers a whole viewpoint, and, though it is the background philosophy of my works, is the matter of unpublished two volumes, partly called 'The Philosophy of Multiple-Meaningness.'

31. Ibid., p.270. Punctuation and syntax sic.
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35. Ibid., pp.1, 2, 4, 6 and 9.


37. Published in Northampton, Mass., by the Hampton Bookshop in 1939, the text of Schrager's How Like a God is available in the Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No. 519134). It is mentioned by Gros Louis, op.cit. (Note No. 3 to Introduction above), p.15.


40. Moran, op.cit. (Note 33 above). According to a prefatory note, this adaptation was 'first given under the auspices of the National Plant, Flower and Fruit Guild in the Grand Ball-room of the Hotel Plaza in New York City by a cast...of "Junior-Leaguers" who appeared in spectacular splendor against costly scenery...and since produced...quite simply in almost every state across the country and...enthusiastically received in small suburban parishes, modest club-rooms, and often out-of-doors' (p.3).


42. Denton Jaques Snider, The Redemption of the Hamlets (Son and Father) (St. Louis: Mound City Press, 1923), p.4. The specification of the scene is quoted from p.3.

43. Ibid., p.192.

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46. The unpublished and British exemplar is Emma Farrow's Perdita at Home (1955), of which there is a typescript, presented by the author, in the Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library. In this 'comedy in one act', Rosalind, Celia, and Viola come calling on Perdita, Florizel and the new baby ('Polixenes Florizel Leontes Simon') some time after the events enacted in their respective original plays.

The two out-of-place assemblies which were published after World War II are both American, and I have not been able to examine the text of either. One is Charles George, When Shakespeare's Ladies Sing (New York: S. French, 1951). As described by D.H. West and D.M. Peake in their Play Index 1949-1952 (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1953), this is a 'musical comedy based on some of Shakespeare's women characters,' requires a cast of at least 12 women, and 'includes passages from his plays.' The other is Anne Coulter Martens, Rosemary for Remembrance, in her Popular Plays for Teenagers (Boston: Plays Inc., 1968). As described by E.A. Fidell in her Play Index 1968-1972 (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1973), this script made Shakespearean heroines appear before Anne Hathaway to prove that his love was still with her even though he wasn't.


48. Dr. Gros Louis designates these 'interpolations' (which correspond to my 'plays presented from the point of view of a new or previously minor character') and 'prologues' and 'sequels' (which correspond to my 'plays in which the action occurs outside the time of the original'). As they seem to me to be fundamentally the same — and certainly they are informed by one and the same set of critical assumptions — I prefer a single epithet for them all, though I appreciate that it is without linguistic grace.

49. Written 1918 and published (in Bottomley's Gruach and Britain's Daughter /London: Constable, 1921) three years later, Gruach was first performed by the Scottish National Theatre Society at the Glasgow Athenaeum in March of 1923. See Chapter IV, pp. 402-404 below.


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52. For a Romeo and Rosaline, see T.B. Morris, A Garden in Verona: A Play in One Act For Seven Women, French's Acting Edition No. 927 (London: S. French, 1954). Discussed and drawn to my attention by Gros Louis (op. cit. Note No. 3 to Introduction above, pp.106-108), this play is one of the very rare instances of an adaptation of Romeo and Juliet from a novel vantage point. (See Chapter II, pp.102-103 below.) It should, strictly, be titled Rosaline and Mercutio, for it explains that lady's indifference to Romeo by suggesting that her interests lay elsewhere.

For A Dane at Wittenberg, one must depart from English-language adaptations and see Gerhart Hauptmann, Hamlet in Wittenberg: Schauspiel (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1935). This is reviewed in the Times Literary Supplement for 15 August 1936, p.660, and is summarised by Cohn, op.cit. (Note No.4 to Introduction above), pp.188-190.


54. 'EWOE' i.e., E.G.V. Knox, 'Malmsey Wine,' Punch, 22 October 1947, p.386.


57. For a sampling of Hamlet adaptations offered to the script-reading services of the New York Theatre Communications Group and the O'Neill New Playwrights' Conference in the early 1970's, see Nos. 46-48 and 50-54 of my Appendix III.

As for undergraduate exercises, I should perhaps confess to a spasmodic suspicion that my interest in this thesis topic may be traceable to my own involvement, as a University of Toronto student in 1968, in a pair of undergraduate adaptations of Shakespeare from a novel vantage point. In one, Hamlet's corpse was carted back to Wittenberg to sit (literally) finals and earn the Prince an aegrotat; and the other offered an Edmund's-eye-view of the events of King Lear.

58. Richard Drain's Caliban Lives! was given its first performance by Temba, under the direction of Alton Kumala, at the Terrace Theatre in London's Institute of Contemporary Arts on 20 July, 1976. The text is not published, and I have not seen it in typescript, but I did see the première production on 21 July 1976.

Wesker's The Merchant began in a drama course which Wesker taught at the summer school of the University of Colorado at Boulder and went through many drafts. I know nothing of these early stages of the play, and no more of the première production in Sweden than the fact and year of its occurrence. The disasters attendant upon the short-lived American première, which was backed by the
Shubert Organisation and the J.F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (among others) and which opened at the Plymouth Theater, New York, after a pre-Broadway try-out in Washington, D.C., are fairly well documented. See Judith Weintraub, 'What Made Wesker Rewrite Shakespeare', New York Times, 13 November 1977, Arts and Leisure Section, pp. 1 and 8. See also Richard Eder's negative review in the New York Times for 18 November 1977 (Section 6, p.18) and Clive Barnes' favourable review in the London Times for 3 December 1977 (p.13). Wesker further revised The Merchant before its British premiere, directed by Peter Farago, at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre on 12 October 1978. This revised text was published, before the Birmingham production had gone into rehearsals, in Adam, Nos. 401-403, pp. 4-68. Miron Grindea's 'Shylockian iconography' in the same issue of this journal (pp. 2-3) gives some information about the history of the adaptation. See also D.J. Hart's interview with Wesker, 'The Quality of Jewry,' in the Times Higher Education Supplement for 13 October 1978, p.10.

Directed by Jonathan Kent, the Oxford Playhouse Company toured the premiere production of Ophelia from 19 October to 19 November 1977. I did not see the production but have examined the unpublished text in typescript, courtesy of Taylor's agent.


60. Really a brilliant burlesque rather than a travesty, Herbert's Two Gentlemen of Soho was published with the following prefatory note from its author: 'It is now accepted that Shakespeare loses nothing by a performance in modern dress; and this is a shameless attempt to uplift a modern theme by clothing it in Shakespearean language. Some may think the play wordy, but then there are brutes who think Shakespeare wordy' (London: Samuel French, 1927), p.57.

Fortinbras in Plain Clothes is subtitled 'A Sequel to "Hamlet in Modern Dress"', and its opening stage direction reads: 'SCENE: One sees the room in the palace of Elsinore, just as it appeared when the curtain fell on "Hamlet in Modern Dress".' The American counterpart of Barry Jackson's so-called 'Hamlet in Plus-Fours' at the Kingsway Theatre in London in 1925, 'Hamlet in Modern Dress' was George Liveright's production at the Booth Theater in New York in the same year. (For Jackson's production, see, in addition to the surveys cited in the preceding note, T.C. Kemp,
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The Birmingham Repertory Theatre: The Playhouse and the Man
(Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, second edition 1948, pp. 15-16.)
Brooks' play and its connection with Liveright's production are
discussed by Gros Louis (op.cit. Note No. 3 to Introduction
above, pp. 180-181). The text of Fortinbras in Plain Clothes
is published in One-Act Plays for Stage and Study, 4th Series
(New York and London Samuel French, 1928), pp. 37-46; and
the above quotation is on p. 39.

61. 'Falstaff in Spats', reprinted in Farjeon's The Shakespearean
Farjeon had had similar things to say the year before in connection
with Barry Jackson's modern dress production of Macbeth at the
Royal Court, which he reviewed under the title 'Macbeth with Tabs
on' (ibid., pp. 136-138).

It is interesting to set Farjeon's prediction alongside the almost
exactly contemporaneous pronouncements of Hubert Griffith in
Iconoclastes: or The Future of Shakespeare (London: Kegan Paul,
Trench, Trubner & Co., 1927). The thesis of this monograph is
'that the future of Shakespeare lies in doing Shakespeare as a
modern playwright, either now or a thousand years hence in the
times to come; that the finest effort ever made on behalf of
Shakespeare in the modern theatre was made when Sir Barry Jackson
and Mr. H.K. Ayliff produced a "modern dress" Hamlet in London
in October, 1925' (p. 48). The argument is not so much an apology
for modern-dress productions of Shakespeare as an attack on any
specifically 'Shakespearean' style of staging: 'The only way
that is definitely wrong is to treat Shakespeare's plays as they
are mostly treated at the moment — to invent a special set of
symbols, mannerisms, movements, pronunciations, gestures, that
are alone imagined to be "Shakespearean" and that are alone thought
capable of interpreting him to our eyes' (p. 86).

62. In an interview published in 1975, Brenton said of Revenge, which
had first been produced in 1969 and published in 1970: 'It took
three years to write, and was in a huge form at first, about
five hours long .... It had very literary beginnings in that it
was going to be a rewrite of King Lear, no less, and there still
are the Lear elements there, in that the criminal hero, Hepple,
has two daughters and he gives up his kingdom and tries to get
it back and fails. And they never mention the mother, which is one
of the oddly crucial things about Lear: Mrs. Lear is never present.
And Mrs. Hepple is never present in Revenge: that's the only
trace of its literary beginnings. It first had a formal scene
with Hepple giving up his gangster kingdom and then going to
goal — that's how the play began.' (Catherine Itzin and Simon
Trusler, 'Howard Brenton: Petrol Bombs Through the Proscenium

63. The echo of King Lear in Ardrey's Thunder Rock (1939) is feeble
and isolated. The hero of Ardrey's play is a modern-day keeper
of a lighthouse. There he keeps imaginary company with a party
of immigrants who had been drowned nearby in 1849. In the final
act, as two of the immigrants are leaving the stage — and the
hero's imagination — for good, one says to the other, 'Stefan,
you have lost a button,' and he replies, 'So I have. Well...I
shall not need it' (R. Ardrey, Thunder Rock, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1940, p.120). Audrey Williamson has noted of this exchange: 'the author, as his Stefan goes out into the void, is not above cribbing a mundane button from King Lear' (Theatre of Two Decades, London: Rockcliff, 1957, p.174).

64. On King Lear and Endgame, see: Jan Knott, 'King Lear, or Endgame', in his Shakespeare Our Contemporary, translated Boleslaw Taborski (London: Methuen, 1965; paperback edition 1967), pp. 100-133, and especially 124-128; and Ruby Cohn, 'Shakespearean Embers in Beckett', Chapter IX of her Modern Shakespeare Offshoots, op.cit. (Note No. 4 to Introduction above), pp.375-388, and especially 375-380.

On the 'Beckettian' frame of reference with which Peter Brook undertook his 1962 Royal Shakespeare Company production of King Lear, see Charles Marowitz’s account of rehearsals in 'Lear Log,' first published in Encore, reprinted in Tulane Drama Review, Vol. VIII, No. 2 (Winter 1963), pp. 103-121, and in C. Marowitz and S. Trussler, eds., Theatre at Work (London: Methuen, 1967), pp. 133-147. Marowitz says (Theatre at Work, p.134), 'It is not so much Shakespeare in the style of Beckett as it is Beckett in the style of Shakespeare, for Brook believes that the cue for Beckett’s bleakness was given by the merciless King Lear.'

The Shakespearean frame of reference for the world premiere of Fin de partie at London’s Royal Court Theatre in 1957 was recorded, some fifteen years after the fact, by Roger Blin, who both directed the production and played Hamm: 'Quand j’ai eu entre les mains Fin de partie, j’y ai vu le theme de la mort des rois. J’ai tiré, peut-être indûment, mais volontairement, le personnage de Hamm vers le roi Lear....Ce qu’il y avait de royal dans le texte, d’impérieux dans le personnage, a été reçu comme "shakespearien." Beckett n’était pas contre' (quoted from Blin’s programme for his 1972 production of Macbeth for the Théatre National de Strasbourg, in Cohn, Modern Shakespeare Offshoots, p.379).

65. Brenton’s Measure for Measure was first performed at the Northcott Theatre, Exeter, under William Gaskill’s direction, on 25 September 1972. The text is not published, but I have examined it in typescript.

David Edgar’s Death Story was first performed at the Birmingham Repertory Studio Theatre, under Christopher Honer’s direction, in November of 1972, and was staged again at the Theatre at New End in London, under Robert Walker’s direction, in November of 1975. It is discussed in my Chapter II.

John Bowen’s Heil Caesar was written for BBC Schools television and first broadcast, in a production by Ronald Smedley, in three parts on 12, 19 and 26 November 1973. Its first staged production, directed by John Blackmore, opened at the Midlands Arts Centre on 25 April 1974. The text of the original television version was published by the BBC in 1974.

John Osborne’s A Place Calling Itself Rome has not been staged but was published in London by Faber and Faber in 1973. It is discussed in my Chapter IV.
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Andrew Davies' *Rohan and Julie* was first staged at the El5 Acting School, London, in 1975. The text is not published, but I have examined it in typescript. It is discussed in my Chapter II.

Tom Gallacker's *The Sea Change* was first staged at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh on 3 February 1976, in a production directed by Chris Farr. The text is not published, but I have examined it in typescript.

Steve Gooch's *Back Street Romeo* was first performed at the Half Moon Theatre, London, under Robert Walker's direction, on 7 March 1977. The text is not published, but I have examined it in typescript. It is discussed in my Chapter II.


67. The first London performance of Lang's *Macbeth in Camera* was at Gresham College Hall, 8 July 1964, as part of the City of London Festival. I did not see this and have not seen the text, which is not published, but have relied on Simon Truusler's account in *Plays and Players*, Vol. XI, No. 12 (September 1964), p.34.


71. Ibid., p.64. The 'Sixth Act of Merchant of Venice' to which Rolfe refers fills pp.49-62 of Adams' *Motley Jest*. The earlier part of the book is 'The Shakespearean Fantasy,' an eight-scene play which combines the novel vantage point strategy with the out-of-place assembly; Miranda and Ferdinand are by Prospero's art returned to the island of *The Tempest* and there encounter figures from some eleven Shakespearean plays.


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74. Produced by Val Gielgud, One Traveller Returns was broadcast over the Scottish Home Service of the BBC on 20 January 1947. Directed by James Gibson, it was subsequently (15 March 1954) staged at the Gateway Theatre, Edinburgh. I have seen only the radio version, of which there is a typescript in the Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library (Ac. No. 582731). Quotations in my text are from this typescript, pp. 8 and 31.

The sneer at the lifelessness of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is yet another detail in the elaborate game: they figure in the dream-play-within-a-mental-home as a Viennese psychoanalyst and his assistant and are assigned dialogue with Hamlet, who had denied them independent existence. Moreover, determined to milk a joke for rather more laughs than it's worth, McLaren variously identifies their home institution as the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft and later as the Institut für gespalten dramatischen Personen.

75. Subtitled 'A Whimsy in One Act,' Morocco Calf exists in typescript in the British Library (Shelf No. 11780.dd.29), to which it was sent from the Birmingham Public Library. (Their copy is Ac.No. 446476.) There is also a copy in the Folger Shakespeare Library, MS. W.b. 578. This quotation is from p.7 of the British Library's typescript, which is a carbon.

76. Ibid., p.11.

77. Ibid., pp. 11-12.


The Trial of Ancient Iago was the fourth and last programme in a series entitled 'Discoveries in Shakespeare' which Innes wrote for the BBC. Earlier programmes had dealt with the Shakespearean criticism of Dryden, Johnson and Coleridge.


82. In his Drama in the Sixties, Laurence Kitchin interestingly remarks of a passage in a review by James Agate: 'One can think of few critics more remote than Agate from the close-analysis school, yet here he was in touch with it, equally aware of the changes of tone.
and emotion in the passage quoted from Othello" (London: Faber & Faber, 1966, p. 114). Such textual quotation and analysis, Kitchin points out, was no longer possible under the conventions of post-World-War-II journalistic criticism.

83. This charge, which has been re-iterated in so recent a book as J.L. Styan's The Shakespeare Revolution, op. cit. (Note No. 59 above), p. 38, is one which Katharine Cooke was especially concerned to refute in her previously-cited (Note No. 69 above) study of Bradley, particularly in its sixth chapter (pp. 119-152). Dr. Cooke's assertion that 'the so-called Bradlyean over-emphasis on character is in fact an over-emphasis to which every critic and indeed every audience of Shakespeare is prone' (ibid., p. 119) is paralleled by the preface to Althea Hayter's Horatio's Story (London: Faber & Faber, 1972), published in the same year as Cooke's book. Hayter insists that 'it is no use telling us that Shakespeare's characters have no existence outside the action of the plays in which they appear. They exist in our imaginations; and what goes on there, as long as it does not pass itself off as scholarship or literary criticism, is free' (p. 8). This insistence on freedom of adaptors' imaginations harks back to the theme of previously-cited prefaces to the works of Hayter's predecessors; and Hayter's prose fiction adaptation might be taken as a small piece of evidence in favour of Dr. Cooke's argument for the partial restoration of Bradleyism to critical respectability in recent decades.

84. See J.L. Styan, The Shakespeare Revolution, op. cit. (Note No. 59 above), pp. 66-68.

85. See, for examples: Rhoda Power's The Play's the Thing, a Macbeth-centered play which (as far as one can tell from the single typescript page in the Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library [Ac. No. 550857]) brought a seventeenth-century player to the microphone to tell of the actors and theatre of his time, and which was broadcast 16 November 1943 as the ninth programme in the second 'Senior English' series of the BBC; Sam Langdon's You Secret, Black and Midnight Hagg, a programme which quoted Macbeth and expounded attitudes towards witchcraft of the time as a background to the play, and which was a schools broadcast of the BBC's Home Service on 20 June 1950 (typescript in the Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library, Ac.No. 614641); and Terence Tiller's The Conscience of the King: a play-within-a-play which — among other things summarised in Note No. 24 to my Chapter IV below — demonstrated the difference between Shakespearean Fools written for Robert Armin and Clowns written for Will Kemp, and which was broadcast by the BBC on 7 May 1952 (typescript in Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library, Ac.No. 624733).

86. Respectively volumes H15 and H20 of the BBC Shakespeareana now in the Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library. I have not made a systematic study of all the typescripts for BBC programmes related to Shakespeare; to have done so would have taken me past the limits of this thesis and my own abilities. However, I believe that this would be an interesting area for investigation by someone with the necessary expertise in the medium and history of radio and television broadcasting.
87. 'Stage-centred criticism is that which characteristically checks text against performance, and does not admit critical opinion as fully valid without reference to the physical circumstances of the medium' (The Shakespeare Revolution, op. cit. Note No. 59 above, p. 72).

88. My terminus a quo here is the terminus ad quem of James W. Nichols' article on 'Shakespeare as a Character in Drama 1679-1899,' Educational Theatre Journal, Vol. XV, No. 1 (March 1963), pp. 24-32. Derived from its author's 1952 Birmingham M.A. thesis, A Study of William Shakespeare as a Character in English Drama, this article finds 'a gradually awakening interest in the personality of the man Shakespeare himself...evident in...plays' from after the middle of the eighteenth century (p. 31).


91. Rather than become a bibliographical monstrosity, this note will simply record the Shakespearean/Elizabethan plays on/from which these dramatists are known to have worked:

- Adamov: Marlowe's Edward II
- Anouilh: As You Like It, King Richard III, Romeo and Juliet, Twelfth Night, The Winter's Tale
- Audiberti: The Taming of the Shrew
- Brecht: Marlowe's Edward II, Webster's Duchess of Malfi, Coriolanus, Hamlet, Julius Caesar, King Richard III, Macbeth, Measure for Measure, Romeo and Juliet
- Cocteau: Romeo and Juliet
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Dürrenmatt: King Richard III, King John, Titus Andronicus
Frisch: Romeo and Juliet
Gide: Hamlet
Hacks: Macbeth
Hauptmann: Hamlet
Ionesco: Macbeth
Muller: Macbeth
Obey: 'The Rape of Lucrece,' 'Venus and Adonis'
Sarment: Hamlet, Much Ado About Nothing, Othello, Romeo and Juliet
Zweig: Jonson's Volpone

92. The case is that of Brecht's progress from a translation of Measure for Measure through Die Spitzköpfe und die Rundköpfe to Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe. His path can be pursued through the very many plans, fragments and drafts which survive in the Bertolt Brecht Archiv in Berlin. See Gisela Bahr, 'Roundheads and Peakheads: The Truth About Evil Times', in Siegfried Mause and Herbert Knust, Essays on Brecht, Theater and Politics (Chapel Hill: University of N. Carolina Press, 1972), pp. 141-155.

93. Articles contributed by Peter Brook and Michael Benthall in, respectively, 1948 and 1949 to John Lehmann's two volumes of Orpheus usefully illustrate the difference in directorial emphasis which I am concerned to point out. In 'Shakespeare in the Theatre' Benthall writes that it is 'artistic wholeness' that makes an entertainment completely satisfying in the theatre, that the 'basic requirement... to preserve the play's essential unity, to create for the audience a complete and exciting evening's entertainment,' and that produces 'and his actors must attack the unplumbed imaginations of the modern audience by trying to meet the dramatist with the best they can give in acting, design and music' (Orpheus Vol. II [1949], pp. 139, 142 and 143). And while Benthall does say of Hamlet that 'it is the prime function of the producer to discover the truth which is implicit in the text,' it is evident elsewhere in the paragraph containing this claim that the 'truth' which he has in mind is a realism of psychological atmosphere (ibid., p. 141). Brook, though titling his article 'Style in Shakespeare Production,' clearly posits style as ancillary to significance. Insisting that 'no play can speak for itself,' he lays down that 'to communicate any one of Shakespeare's plays to a present day audience, the producer must be prepared to set every resource of modern theatre at the disposal of his text,' and that it is his primary duty to discover every intention of the author and to transmit these with every possible means at his disposal' (Orpheus, Vol. I [1948], pp. 141, 144, 145).

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96. Ibid., p.8.


98. Muriel St. Clare Byrne, 'Fifty Years of Shakespearian Production,' *Shakespeare Survey II* (1949), pp.1-20. This quotation, p.17.

99. John Barton's 1973 production of *King Richard II* for the Royal Shakespeare Company would well instance the shaping of a whole production with reference to historical scholarship — in this case Ernst Kantorowicz's 1957 study of *The King's Two Bodies*. (Some debt to Noel Coward's *Private Lives* is also recorded by Judith Cook in 'King John Barton,' *Plays and Players*, Vol.XXI, No.9 (June 1974), p.251) Trevor Nunn's 1977 production of *As You Like It*, also for the Royal Shakespeare Company, contained a good instance of a staging detail derived from such scholarship: Act I, scene ii, with its lines about Fortune, was centred around a statue of Fortuna complete with the iconographical attributes which are now the commonplaces of footnotes but which were first seriously studied in English by H.R. Patch in *The Goddess Fortuna* (1927).

100. This paragraph is heavily indebted to Mulhern's *The Moment of Scrutiny*, op.cit. (Note No.81 above). Without his explanation of how, for the Scrutiny school, 'the act of criticism was in essence maieutic' (p.171), my own rather different argument here would never have occurred to me.

101. A completely convincing documentation of this generalisation would entail an exhaustive analysis of most Shakespearean productions, plus programme notes, in the subsidised theatres of England since World War II — or at least since the administrative re-organisation of the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1960 ff. Such a project lies outside the parameters of this thesis. Moreover, it would further entail some personal estimate of how successfully these productions had communicated the thematic statements picked out and pointed up by their respective directors; and on this account, it is not a project which I, who saw no British Shakespearean productions (films excepted) before 1970, would want to undertake.

Lacking such an analysis, I am impressed by the regularity with which the major directors of Shakespeare in the 1960's and '70's have written or spoken of their work as the clarified, compelling communication of whatever they have taken to be the central intention(s) or meaning(s) in Shakespearean scripts. Especially useful here is the series of interviews, most of them given to Peter Asworge, published in *Plays and Players* in 1968-70, notably: Terry Hands in Vol. XVI, No.12 (September 1968), pp.59-61, 64; Geoffrey Reeves in Vol. XVI, No.2 (November 1968), pp.69-71; Jonathan Miller in Vol. XVII, No. 6 (March 1970), pp.52-53, 59; Peter Hall in Vol. XIII, No.10 (July 1970), pp. 20-21; Trevor Nunn in Vol. XVII, No. 12 (September 1970), pp.16-17, 21; Peter Brook in Vol. XVIII, No. 1 (October 1970), pp.18-19. Later *Plays and Players* articles which I have found helpful here include Margaret Tierney's interview with Trevor Nunn and Christopher Morley in
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103. Kenneth McLellan, Whatever Happened to Shakespeare?, op.cit. (Note No. 59 above), pp.197-213. The final sentence of the chapter's first paragraph is more than adequate index to the high-hysterical tone of the book as a whole: 'But in recent years the control of the big Establishment companies seems to have passed into the hands of men who hate Shakespeare and enjoy smashing up his work.'

104. Stanley Wells, 'Directors' Shakespeare,' lecture delivered 22 November 1976 to the Literary Society of the University of Kent at Canterbury.


106. On what provoked the original inspiration of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead in the course of a conversation between Stoppard and his agent, Kenneth Ewing, see the interviews with Stoppard by: Sean Day-Lewis in the Daily Telegraph for 8 April 1967; Dan Sullivan in the New York Times for 29 August 1967 (fuller account in Sullivan's notes, which are to be found in The Lincoln Center Theater Collection of the New York Public Library / NOOF & Stoppard/); and Jon Bradshaw in The Telegraph Sunday Magazine for 26 June 1977. In the first of these Stoppard says only that he had been 'seeing various productions of Hamlet'; but from the second and third it is clear that Olivier's National Theatre production, starring Peter O'Toole, was particularly fresh in his mind. According to Kenneth Tynan in 1977, however, Stoppard's agent says that the topic of Hamlet came up: for no reason that he can now recall! (Kenneth Tynan, 'Withdrawing in style from the chaos, The New Yorker, 19 December 1977, p.60).
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107. 'Adapted' and directed by Peter Layton, Touchstone and Jaques Are Missing was staged at London's Mercury Theatre on 5-15 December 1973. I have not seen a typescript of the adaptation, which reduced Shakespeare's dramatis personae to nine (Charles, La Belle/sic/, Phebe, Silvius, Duke, Rosalind, Celia, Oliver and Orlando), but I did see the production.

'Devised' and directed by Angela Hopkins, You Will—WHAT? was staged at London's Little Theatre Club, Upper St. Martin's Lane, on 18-29 September 1974. (Gill's production of Twelfth Night had opened at Stratford on 22 August of that year.) I have not seen a typescript of the adaptation, which reduced Shakespeare's dramatis personae to three (Olivia, Orsino, and 'Caesario'), but I did see the production.

108. Snoo Wilson's Pericles: The Mean Knight was his first script for Portable Theatre, who toured it in 1969/70. I did not see the production but have seen a typescript of the adaptation (courtesy of Wilson's agent). Shakespeare's dramatis personae were reduced to four parts (Gower, Simonides, Pericles and Marina), and the show had a playing time of one hour.

109. These scene directions are: at the opening of Osborne's Act I, Scene 5, 'Oblique, battle-torn area on the outskirts of Coriolis ....From the flies a parachute descends bearing a heavily armed PARATROOPER'; and near the end of Act II, Scene 10, the adaptation's last scene, 'Sound of a helicopter. Four ropes attached to a stretcher descend from above the proscenium arch' (John Osborne, A Place Calling Itself Rome, op. cit. [Note No. 65 above], pp.26-27, 78).

110. The opening scene direction for Osborne's Act I, Scene 2, reads in part: 'Rome. A street.....The Roman mob enters.....Note: Mob scenes are obviously up to the director's resources, lack of them, taste, inclination, disinclination or lack of it. However ....I would suggest something of the following as a pattern for the similar scenes in the play: a cross-section MOB of STUDENTS, FIXERS, PUSHERS, POLICEMEN, UNIDENTIFIABLE PUBLIC, obviously TRADE UNIONISTS, JOURNALISTS and the odd NEWS CAMERA TEAM, SOUND MEN, etc...' (ibid., p.13).


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114. This is of course the title of Marshall's extremely useful book about the non-commercial British theatre between the First and Second World Wars, The Other Theatre (London: John Lehmann, 1947). The label is also adopted by Richard Findlater in that chapter of his The Unholy Trade (op.cit. / Note No.68 above/), pp.48-66) which, with different emphases, continues Marshall's account to 1952.

115. The 'curtain-raiser' of nineteenth-century (and earlier) professional stages, the one-act play had vanished from them to such an extent by 1935 that the regular staging of them at the Liverpool Playhouse under William Armstrong's regime (1922-1941) could be praised as an extraordinary policy of encouragement to novice dramatists. See Grace Wyndham Goldie, The Liverpool Repertory Theatre, 1911-1934 (Liverpool: The University Press, 1935), pp.191-192. See also George Taylor, History of the Amateur Theatre (Melksham, Wilts: Colin Venyon, 1975), p.145.

116. On the Maddermarket Theatre and the Bradford Civic Playhouse, see Norman Marshall, The Other Theatre (London: John Lehmann, 1947), pp.92-98. For a more generalised account, and one which emphasises the roots of the provincial theatres in the amateur movement, see Richard Findlater, The Unholy Trade, op.cit. (Note No.68 above), pp.50-56.


118. For example; British Theatre Association (British Drama League), Twenty-Five Years of the British Drama League 1919-1944 (London: British Drama League, 1944), and The British Drama League 1919-1959 (London: British Drama League, 1960). The first fifteen pages of the latter duplicate the former.

George Taylor's study is his History of the Amateur Theatre, cited above (Note No.115). A précis of the book was published in The Amateur Stage, Vol. XXI (1976), No. 1 (January), pp.28-29; No.2 (February), p.10; and No.3 (March), pp.22-24.

119. Principal among these are Taylor's Amateur Theatre and Playwright's Journal and John Bourne's Amateur Stage. Taylor's previously cited book (Note 115 above) includes a useful account (pp.133-138) of both of these two and other independent periodical publications aimed at an amateur theatre market.

120. Notably Roy Mitchell, Shakespeare for Community Players (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent, 1919); Frank Humpherson, Shakespeare for Amateurs (London: S. French, 1935); and R.C. Peat, Presenting Shakespeare (London: George Harrap, 1947). The proliferation of full texts and of mini-plays of related scenes, both specially edited for amateur and schools performance, is so intimidatingly great that I have not attempted an exhaustive investigation of it. A good example is Evelyn Smith's two sets of Little Plays.
121. One might add to this list: E.U. Ouless, Our Pageant, in Three Plays (London: Wells Gardner, Darton and Co., 1926), pp. 42-62; John Patrick, Macbeth Did It (New York: Dramatists' Play Service, 1972); and Michael Green, All's Well That Ends As You Like It, in Green's Four Plays for Coarse Actors (London: French, 1978), pp. 43-56. However, the first spoofs, not amateur productions of Shakespeare in particular, but the village pageant or 'show'. The second, as an American play, might be ruled out of court as evidence in support of an argument about productions of Shakespeare in the British amateur theatre. And the last is rendered somewhat eccentric by its associations with the 'Coarse Acting Festivals' of which Green gives an amusing account in his introduction.

122. See Marshall, The Other Theatre, op. cit. (Note No. 114 above), pp. 85-89.

123. The changing of these tides is probably most apparent in the recent flood of literature on theatre in education. An exciting, at times impressive, book addressed specifically to amateur groups, however, is Peter Barton's and John Lane's New Directions: Ways of Advance for the Amateur Theatre (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1973).

124. Ashley Dukes, 'The Actor in the Small Theatre,' Amateur Theatre and Playwrights Journal, Vol. III, No. 49 (9 April 1936), p. 7. Underscoring sic. The year before Duke's article was published, Robert G. Newton had made a similar, though less subtle and suggestive, point in connection with 'Shakespearean Settings for Small Stages': 'The Shakespearean formula differs fundamentally from that used at large in the commercial theatre of today. It is non-realistic, which means that it is not bound by verisimilitude and can therefore slip easily from one extreme to another... The Elizabethan stage was more histrionic than realistic' (Drama, Vol. XIV, No. 2 /November 1936, pp. 29-30).


128. League membership, which totalled 3,320 in 1931, was increased the following year by amalgamation with the Village Drama Society (Taylor, History of the Amateur Theatre, p. 118); and as the figure does not distinguish between group and individual membership, it
gives a misleadingly low impression of the number of people involved. As for the library, the previously cited (Note 118 above) Twenty-Five Years of the British Drama League records that the holdings of the library exceeded 32,000 volumes by 1937.

The play-lists for unisex casts are A List of Plays for Boys and Men and A List of Plays for Girls and Women (both London: Thomas Nelson, 1934). The 'Note on Shakespeare' is pp.254-256 in the former and in the latter.


133. Plays and How to Act Them (London: British Drama League, 1925), pp.9-10. Punctuation of titles sic. L. du Garde Peach's account of the Great Hucklow Village Players, cited in Note No.117 above, reveals considerable conformity between the production choices of that amateur company and the recommendations of the British Drama League. In their first twenty-two years of existence, the Great Hucklow Village Players attempted at least nine productions of Shakespeare: Merchant of Venice (1927); Twelfth Night (1927); As You Like It (1928); Julius Caesar (1932); Macbeth (1934 and 1949); Othello (1947); and Merry Wives of Windsor (1948).


135. See Styan, op.cit. (Note No.59 above), especially pp.66-68.

136. Drama in Adult Education, op.cit. (Note No. 134 above), paragraph 370 (pp.157-158). This paragraph reads to me like a late reply to a cry from Israel Zangwill a decade earlier: '...If our working classes rose so slowly to the conception of national sacrifice, may it not be because no effort had been made to use the theatre to cultivate those ideals and impulses, the traditional channel for which their estrangement from the church had choked up? I do not mean that the theatre should have appealed for recruits or for more devotion in the munitions workers, but that it should have fostered that habit of mind and fineness of temper
which would have made such appeals superfluous. What we need from our stage is a drama that helps us to move habitually on the high plane to which we are roused by the death and heroism of our soldiers and our sons, by the agony and aspiration of our country' (Poetic Drama and the War, The Poetry Review, Vol. VII, No. 1 [January-February 1916], p.31).

137. Drama in Adult Education, op. cit. (Note No. 134 above), paragraph 358 (pp. 153-154).

138. See respectively p.7 and p.5 of R.O. Peat's Presenting Shakespeare and Evelyn Smith's Little Plays From Shakespeare (either series), cited in Note No. 120 above.

An especially appalling justification for teaching Shakespeare in this fashion is given in the introduction to Albert Johnson's Shakespeare Vignettes, which proposes 'to fill a cultural need that is not ordinarily met in the quickening pace of our society .....It is hoped...that familiarity with these vignette versions of the Bard's plays will stimulate interest in depth study of the plays and even where further study is not forthcoming, that the vignette versions will give background for thought and conversation in an area of learning which educated people presumably have in common. Because each play in vignette form can be read or reenacted within a 30-minute period, a whole series of plays can be studied in a semester course and students should gain a much wider understanding of the scope of Shakespeare than is possible through the study of one or two plays during the course of a semester' (London: Thomas Yoseloff, 1970, p.9. My underscoring). The dust jacket on the U.S. edition (New York and S. Brunswick, N.J.: A.S. Barnes, 1970) proclaims: 'How to stage Shakespeare in a single class session: that could be the title of this book.' I'd suggest 'Teach your class literary names to drop.'


140. See Joy Anderson, Poor Mr. Shakespeare: A Comedy for Nine Women (London: Evans Brothers, 1964, copyright 1962). This play is mentioned in Dr. Gros Louis' thesis, op. cit. (Note No.3 to Introduction above), p.15, which was my source for the reference.

141. Entertainment Machine's play-within-a-play is unpublished. It was performed at the Edinburgh Fringe and immediately thereafter at London's Abbey Community Centre in Westminster, where I saw it on 15 September 1976.


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146. See ibid., pp.119-122.

147. In the volume for 1935/6, the monthly issues of Drama are of sixteen pages (excepting February, which doubles that figure for a special issue on village drama). Book reviews occupy from 1 to 2½ of these 16 pages, in addition to which there are two leaves and the inside covers for advertisements. In the volume for 1966, Drama runs to quarterly issues of 60 pages, between 4½ and 8 pages of book reviewing and between 21 and 26 pages of advertising.

148. For the death of those theatres by 1952, see Richard Findlater, The Unholy Trade, op. cit. (Note No. 68 above), p.51: 'Sunday night societies have almost disappeared, and the only little theatres of importance are the Arts and the New Boltons. The Mercury...has played a great part....but it is not open all the year round and its seasons are fitful and erratic.' Or, for a retrospective account, see Ronald Hayman, The Set-Up: An Anatomy of the English Theatre Today (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973), p.209: 'there were...small theatres, like the Boltons, the Embassy, the Torch, the New Lindsay and the Watergate, which survived into the early fifties. But from about 1952 until 1957, when the Royal Court's Sunday night productions started, there was hardly any opportunity for non-commercial plays to be tried out cheaply.'


My remarks about the contemporary alternative theatre are further informed, as those about the amateur theatre were not, by a considerable amount of direct observation of its work.

150. Ansorge's book, cited in the immediately preceding note, is probably the single most instructive account of the Fringe. The series of articles on which it is based was entitled...
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'Underground Explorations' and was published in Plays and Players, Vol. XX, Nos. 5-9 (February-June 1972).


153. Elsom, Post-War British Theatre, op. cit. (Note No. 149 above), p. 147. Elsom further observes that this output of new plays approximates that of the early years of this century, when 450 to 500 scripts were submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office every year.

154. Both playwrights did, however, make clear that this ease obtained only, or at least mainly, for new work on a small scale. In an interview which he and Trevor Griffiths gave to Peter Ansorge, David Hare noted: 'It's not difficult to get your plays on any longer. Anything, particularly if it has only two characters, can get on with the proliferation of lunchtime theatres' (quoted in 'Current Concerns', Plays and Players, Vol. XXI, No. 10 (July 1974), p. 19). Writing in an article published some fourteen months earlier in the same periodical, David Edgar had been less sanguine in emphasis: 'It's now quite easy to get short, small-cast shows on in the theatres...What is becoming well-nigh impossible is getting big shows on in big theatres. The existence of the Fringe, in and out of London, has actively discouraged managements from putting big new shows on' (Against the General Will, Plays and Players, Vol. XX, No. 8 (May 1974), p. 15).


156. On Brenton's transposition of Measure for Measure, see Note No. 65 above. On the ancestry of his Revenge in King Lear, see Note No. 62 above. On his use of the play-within-a-play of A Midsummer Night's Dream for his Churchill Play, see p. 16 of the 1975 Theatre Quarterly interview, 'Petrol Bombs Through the Proscenium Arch,' cited in Note No. 62 above. And on the reaction of Dutch critics and audiences to the Portable Theatre production of Brenton's Fruit, see p. 27 of Jonathan Hammond's interview, 'Messages First,' cited in the immediately preceding note.


158. In 1934, fully fifteen years after the foundation of the British Drama League and with it the organisation of the amateur movement, the editor of the periodical in which Dukes would later...
publish his acute observations about the implications of the audience-performer relations imposed by a small theatre, found it necessary to draw attention to other constraints upon amateur production: ' (a) a scarcity of male members; (b) financial embarrassment that makes them look twice at an acting fee of five guineas; (c) some fear of plays that have more than one change of scene,' and (d) control by a number of people who 'become extraordinarily squeamish about...choice of play.....They do not wish to risk too much; they have limited resources and no pretensions to be "arty".....But neither have the playwrights done enough to seek them.....I am merely urging the playwright with his eye on amateurs to see clearly in his own interest...if he wants to sell his play. On the lowest estimate there are 8,000 Dramatic Societies in Great Britain. Therefore, if a play were successful enough to be performed once only by 1½ of the societies at a small fee, say of three guineas, the playwright would stand to gain £250, less agent's commission' (John Bourne, 'Writing for the Average Society,' Amateur Theatre and Playwrights Journal, Vol. I, No. 1 (31 January 1934), p.30). The fourth of the constraints enumerated by Bourne was discussed in greater detail by Raymond Birt in an article published in a later issue of the periodical: 'Plays That Won't Offend,' Amateur Theatre and Playwrights Journal, Vol. III, No.66 (29 January 1937), p.27.
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1. Professor Cohn writes in Modern Shakespeare Offshoots: "The paucity of Romeo and Juliet offshoots was one of the surprises of my research" (op.cit. [Note No.4 to Introduction above], p.46.) That she found few 'Romeo and Juliet offshoots' comes as something of a surprise to me as well. I presume that the discrepancy between our findings for this play is primarily attributable to her inattention to adaptations for amateur performance, and perhaps also to her unexplained exclusion from discussion of whatever it was that she intended by the term 'analogues'. The passage quoted above continues: 'There are many analogues, but the characters themselves make no brief an appearance in Max Frisch's Chinese Wall that it does not deserve discussion.' (The setting of Frisch's play, which was first published in German in Basel in 1947 and in English translation in 1969, is the consciousness of Modern Man, who is also its principal protagonist. Through it wander various figures of Western culture, including Romeo and Juliet, whose Shakespeare sonnet is used to open and close Frisch's so-called farce.) The rest of Professor Cohn's paragraph is a summary of Ustinov's Romanoff and Juliet, and her immediately preceding paragraph has been an equally brief account of Nathan's The Avon Flows.

2. The most delectable example in support of this generalisation has been consigned to a footnote because it is a French text which has not been performed in England so far as I know. Its author, Edgar Gamard, was so literal-minded about psychological plausibility that he found it necessary to rationalise the Petrarchan sonnet of the lovers' first encounter by making Romeo encounter an impoverished pilgrim whose clothing he purchases and wears to the Capulet ball. Gamard lavished similar effort upon the thought processes of minor characters: for example, he assigned Friar Laurence fully four pages of moral qualms over Brother John's suggestion that his matchmaking had been the devil's work. However, such psychological threads are not woven back into the plot of the adaptation, nor are they spun far enough to shift attention away from the titular lovers. Gamard's final scene direction leaves the friar, however holy a man he may still or may not after all be, quite forgotten in the light of the lovers' death. This has just taken place, the stage has been darkened since Juliet extinguished a torch in her dying fall, and then: 'un homme paraît, s'arrête sur la dernière marche de l'escalier, brandit sa torche dont la lumière lui découvre Romeo et Juliette réunis dans la mort et tels qu'ils le seront à jamais dans la légende' (Edgar Gamard, Romeo et Juliette: Adaptation nouvelle d'après Shakespeare [Paris: Editions de l'Odeon, 1952], p.218). There they remain, most significant in death and interesting only in relation to each other. Brecht's examination, in one of his rehearsal scenes, of the high cost of that relationship for other human lives, is an experiment which other adaptors of Romeo and Juliet appear to have ignored. See Bertolt Brecht, Vermuche, Bd. XI (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1952), pp.121-124. English translation in The Drama Review, Vol. XII, No.1 (Fall,1967), pp.108-110.
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3. Andrew Davies, Rohan and Julie: Romeo and Juliet Today in Ireland, first performed at London's El5 Acting School in 1975. Unpublished and undated typescript lent me by the dramatist's agent. This quotation, p.45. Subsequent quotations from Rohan and Julie will all be from this typescript and will be identified within the body of the chapter.


5. Ibid., p.24. My attention was drawn to A Garden in Verona by Dr.Gros Louis' Shakespeare by Many Other Names, op.cit. (Note No.3 to Introduction above), pp.106-108.

6. The Burns Mantle Best Plays of 1894-99 (New York: Dodd Mead & Co., 1953) p.430 mentions a play entitled Romeo's First Love, but I have been unable to trace this. And as far as I know Morris' Garden in Verona is unique among twentieth-century English-language adaptations of Romeo and Juliet in presenting events anterior to those represented by Shakespeare.

7. Arthur Symons, Cleopatra in Judaea, op.cit. (Note No.51 to Chapter I above).

8. Edgar Lee Masters, Antony and Cleopatra: A Drama, signed and dated (New York, 1935) typescript in the Lincoln Center Theater Collection of the New York Public Library (9-NC0F+). It should be conceded that these unconstant activities, which occupy only the first of the play's three acts, are presented as directly pertinent to the greater love. To Cleopatra's court come young men braving her challenge to drive Antony from her heart in the course of one night in bed with her. Failure's penalty, paid by all and accounted a fair price by the last at least, is death. After these fairy-tale escapades for grown-ups, the play follows Shakespeare and history through to the death of Cleopatra.


And although it antedates this century and its heroine is entirely too adolescent to be capable of amorous infidelity, G.B.Shaw's Caesar and Cleopatra (1898) might also be mentioned here. See Cohn's chapter on 'Shaw vs. Shakespeare' in her Modern Shakespeare Offshoots, op.cit. (Note No.4 to Introduction above), pp.321-339, for a useful account of this play in relation to Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra.

10. George Jean Nathan's The Avon Flows: Being an Editorial Variation Constituting a Comedy of Modern Marriage (New York: Random House, 1937) uses Othello for its second act and The Taming of the Shrew for its third. The fusion does at least bear out the boast made in a prefatory NOTE: The Shakespearean line in this orchestration of three plays remains in every particular unchanged and intact. There is, further,
no general change, save only in the cutting, the transposition of two short scenes, and the re-identification of characters and places.' The Lincoln Center Theater Collection of the New York Public Library houses an undated typescript (NCOP+) which is quite understandably graced by a pseudonym ('Derek Wallas').

Christopher Morley's review of the published text pronounced it 'worth reading, if only as an ordeal...and certainly worth playing as an experiment' ('Reunion in Verona,' The Saturday Review, Vol. XV, No.15 February 1937, p.12). I cannot see what the experiment might prove — other than Nathan's cunning and his interpretation of Romeo and Juliet, as proposed in an article entitled 'Emotion Rules the Stage': *Romeo and Juliet: Intellectual content: Love, however star-crossed, conquers all, even in death. Emotional content: 100%. Maybe even 102%.* (Quoted, from p.617 of the American Mercury for May 1941, in Constance Frick, The Dramatic Criticism of George Jean Nathan /Fort Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1972, p.57). As noted above (Note 1), The Avon Flows is allotted a paragraph of discussion by Professor Cohn, who compares it with recent college work. It is also discussed by Gros Louis, op.cit. (Note No.3 to Introduction above), pp.98-102.

11. Robert Nathan's *Juliet in Mantua: being the account of the* in Mantua of Romeo and Juliet and their Return to Verona (New York: Knopf, 1968, copyright as an unpublished work 1955) is a full-length travesty transposition as well as a postscript. It is briefly discussed further on in this chapter.

12. Charles O'Brien Kennedy's *Romeo Passes By: A Suppositious Comedy in One Act* (New York: S.French, 1936) lays down 'the supposition that Romeo was exiled from Verona after his street fight with Tybalt, and that Juliet obeyed her father and married Paris. Ten years have elapsed and we find Paris a prosperous architect and Juliet the mother of his children.' From this point we proceed into another comedy of modern marriage, complete with the now-impoverished Capulet in-laws and with bittersweet memories, revived when Romeo passes by, of former flames. The supposition is not very systematically sustained: the dialogue is riddled with allusions to and quotes from the Shakespearean text, including some from parts of the play (e.g., Juliet's soliloquy before drinking Friar Laurence's drug) which the audience have been asked to suppose did not occur.

13. Charles Samuel Levy's *Romeo Comes to Town* is published in his *Ten Short Plays* (Denver, Colo.: Mitchell Press, 1942), pp.87-104. It brings Romeo, inexplicably released from the Capulet tomb and half a millennium of Juliet's shrewish company, to a street in New York City in the fifth decade of the twentieth century. He has traveled through England in search of his author, but war in Europe has driven him across the Atlantic. Juliet turns up and a warm reunion, including quotation from the much-abused balcony scene, ensues. When she announces that the Capulet
tomb has been a casualty of war in Verona, the pair propose to settle down. A policeman, however, comes on, demands to see the registration cards of Romeo and his servant Balthasar, and hustles them away. The adaptation is in part a travesty: before Romeo is joined by his bride, he flirts with passing girls and the humour here traffics heavily in types.

14. The level of banality to which sentimentality can reduce this simplicity is suggested by a caption used in the publicity for the 1936 Metro Goldwyn Mayer film of Romeo and Juliet: 'Boy Meets Girl 1436. Romeo and Juliet 1936' (Quoted in Ivor Brown and George Pearon, Amazing Moment: A Short History of the Shakespeare Industry /London: Heinemann, 1932, p.319).

15. The American text is a piece of late-nineteenth-century prose fiction by Edward Everett Hale, 'Both Their Houses: A Story of True Love,' Harpers Monthly, Vol.LXXXII, No.499 (February 1891), pp.413-424. In the course (p.420) of his story, Hale remarks: 'It may be observed that one difficulty which the American novelist has in creating a plot for his country which would pass muster in Europe is, that the greater part of his countrymen and women do not act like sheer fools in delicate or difficult circumstances. Now half the received plots require action of this sort, or there is no story.' Similarly, C.J.Dennis' 'The Play,' an Australian dramatic monologue about seeing a performance of Romeo and Juliet, includes the following stanzas:

Wot's in a name? Wot's in a strong o' words?
They scraps in ole Verona wiv the'r swords,
An' never give a bloke a stray dog's chance,
An' that's Romance.

But when they deals it out wiv bricks an' boots
In Little Lons', they're low, degraded boots.

Wot's jist plain stoush wiv us, right 'ere to-day,
Is "valler" if yer fur enough away.
Some time, some writer bloke will do the trick
Wiv Ginger Mick,
Uv Spadger's lane. 'E'll be a Romeo,
When 'e's bin dead five hundred years or so.


16. Schematic transpositions which I have decided not to discuss at all in this chapter include: (i) Harmah Weiner's 'Code Poem: Romeo and Juliet', published in The Drama Review, Vol.XIV, No.4 [September 1970], pp.105-109), which 'uses the language of the International Code of Signals for the use of All Nations...a visual signal system for ships at sea' to represent a lovers' first encounter, naval terminology getting heavily double-entendred in the course of seduction; (ii) Joan Aiken's children's play Street, which the author adapted for the stage from her novel of
the same title and in which the basic situation and action in the manner of Romeo and Juliet are thickly overlaid with fairy-tale material, such as magic rings and white bulls who are really Druids. Street has been published in the U.S. (New York: Viking Press, 1978); and the British Drama League Library has a typescript (RMS 2574) of the adaptation, which was staged by Unicorn Theatre at London's Arts Theatre Club in 1973; and (iii) Treteaux Libres de Genève's Regium for Romeo and Juliet, which used mime, improvisation and music to represent an allegory of the human race's fall from innocence and which the Swiss company brought to London's Oval House in 1970 and to the Mercury and Young Vic Theatres in 1971. I did not see the production, for which I assume no script could exist. It is discussed in some detail in John Elsom, Erotic Theatre (London: Secker and Warburg, 1973), pp.205-206, quoting himself from 'Undercutting Strip,' London Magazine, n.s. Vol.XI, No.3. (August-September 1971), pp.128-129. For a contrary judgment, see Eric Shorter, 'Sex and Spit for Young Vic Audiences,' Telegraph, 3 March 1971.

17. The only evidence I have that A Juliet of the People was produced in 1901 - at Madison Square Theatre, New York - is the word of its title-page, there confirmed by a 1901 copyright date. The title also says that the play has been 'extracted from the author's book Parerga,' of which I have found no trace. The separate text was published in New York by William McEvoy and is to be found in the New York Public Library (MNB pv.15 no.8). All quotations from A Juliet of the People are from this text and will be identified within the body of my chapter.


19. The production, at New York's Marvin Beck Theatre, opened 25 September 1935, and the Critics' Circle award was made the following April. The première, produced and staged by Guthrie McClintic, ran 179 performances on its first engagement and sixteen on a return. See Burns Mantle, Best Plays of the Year 1935-6 (New York: Dodd Mead & Co., 1936) pp.410-411.

20. In New York, as an Equity-Library Theatre production in 1944-5 and again in 1952-3; and in a 1966 production by the American Revival Company, directed Amnon Kabatchnik, at the Jan Hus Playhouse. The educational context of the first two, and the failure of the third to outlast 30 performances, are, however, suggestive. (Information from Burns Mantle Best Plays 1944-5 p.436, 1952-3 p.309, and 1965-6 p.429.) On the British productions at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in 1940 and at the New Lindsey Theatre in 1948, see Note No.52 below. There was also an ATV broadcast, produced by Lionel Harris, on 2 April 1958.
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21. The lengthy but less than penetrating review of the play in the Burns Mantle Best Plays of the Year 1935-6 (Note No. 19 above, p. 32) described Winterset as 'a somber tragedy of a hate as strong as any that moved young Hamlet to thought of revenge, frustrated by such a love as welded the lives of the Capulet daughter and the Montague son.'


Dr. Gros Louis notes that 'a slight critical skirmish exists in differing views as to which... Winterset most closely resembles' — Hamlet, King Lear, or Romeo and Juliet — but resolves that 'the most obvious and also the most important comparisons are with Romeo and Juliet.' See Shakespeare by Many Other Names, op. cit. (Note No. 3 to Introduction above), p. 112, and references there cited.

23. Mio underwent a change of surname — from Mazzini to Romagna — between Anderson's manuscript and final typed script. (See Laurence G. Avery, Catalogue of the Maxwell Anderson Collection at the University of Texas /Austin: University of Texas Humanities Research Centre, 1969, p.24.) I suggest further on (p.131) that the script's emphasis on his Christian name as a diminutive of 'Bartolomeo' may be a remote allusion to Vanzetti; but in the context of transpositions of Romeo and Juliet, any extended attention to the lovers' nomenclature can also be an echo of Shakespeare.


26. According to Anderson in 'The Essence of Tragedy' ibid., p.5), 'In discussing construction [Aristotle] made a point of the recognition scene as essential to tragedy.' According to Aristotle, however, recognition is desirable but not indispensable. In Chapter XI of The Poetics, it is listed and defined as one of the three parts of plot, the others being peripety and tragic incident. In Chapter X, however, he has distinguished between simple plots, in which the change
of fortune takes place without recognition or peripety, and involved plots, in which these two parts are present. Recognition is thus an indispensable part of the involved plot, the superiority of which is spelled out in Chapter XIII: 'It is necessary for the structure of a tragedy of the most excellent sort to be not simple but involved.' I use the translation by A.H. Gilbert in his Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962), pp.63-124.


28. Ibid., p.9.

29. Avery, (op.cit./Note No. 23 above, p.24) reports: 'Originally, the episode of Shadow's misplaced body was not in the text and the policeman left the Esdras house after his remark to Trock: "if we find any stiffs on the river bank/ We'll know who to look for" (first 1935 edition, p.102). The episode which transpires between this remark and Trock's statement "Better ship that carrion back in the river" (first edition, p. 107) is added...'


31. The incident has the further disadvantage of blurring the trim lines of Mio's anagnorisis. In order to account for Mio's retraction (p.82) of his claim that there's a corpse in the next room, and yet not show him as prematurely softened by Miriamne, Anderson has to suggest that Mio has not yet realised the extent of her brother's involvement in the old crime. Earlier indications in the dialogue, notably Mio's two long speeches (pp.75 and 77) shortly before the entry of the policeman, suggest that the penny is beginning to drop. They can only be outweighed in production by playing up the following lines

MIO: Why did you lie about Shadow?
(There is a pause GARTH shrugs, walks across the room, and sits.)
You were one of the gang!

and again

MIO: (To Garth) My father died
in your place. And you could have saved him!
You were one of the gang!

To do so, however, is to end the act with a sort of miniature anagnorisis which anticipates, and therefore lessens the importance of, the principal one in the final act.
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32. The opening scene direction reads, in part: 'The Two Young Men in Serge are leaning against the masonry in a ray of light, concentrating on a game of chance. Each holds in his hand a packet of ten or fifteen crisp bills. They compare the numbers on the top notes and immediately a bill changes hands. This goes on with varying fortune until the tide begins to run towards the 1st Gunman who has accumulated nearly the whole supply. They play on..... Luck begins to favor the 2nd Gunman, and the notes come his way..... They.....play on.... and the bills again shift back and forth, then concentrate in the hands of the 1st Gunman. The 2nd shrugs his shoulders, searches his pockets, finds one bill, and playing with it begins to win heavily.....' (p.87)

33. The attempt to explain the range of literary allusion commanded by Mio — whom the stage directions (p.16) describe as a 'road boy of 17 or so' and whose social ostracism has entailed educational deprivation (p.19) — is clumsy. Mio, telling Carr how he'd spent the past winter in the public library, describes the atmosphere exuded there by other unemployed:

MIO: .....Man, what a stench! Maybe I stank, too, but a hobo has the stench of ten because his shoes are poor.
CARR: Tennyson.
MIO: Right. Jeez, I'm glad we met up again! Never knew anybody else that could track me through the driven snow of Victorian literature.
CARR: Now you're cribbing from some half-forgotten criticism of Ben Jonson's Roman plagiarisms.
MIO: Where did you get your education, sap?
CARR: Not in the public library, sap. My father kept a newsstand. (p.21)

34. 'Poetry in the Theatre,' reprinted in The Essence of Tragedy op.cit. (Note No.25 above), pp.29-38 (where it is more tentatively titled as 'A Prelude to Poetry in the Theatre') and in Off Broadway op.cit. (Note No.25 above), pp.47-54.

35. Ibid., pp.37-38

36. For a statement of the Morelli hypothesis by a Sacco-Vanzetti supporter, see H. Ehrmann, The Untried Case (New York: Vanguard Press, 1933). Ehrmann had figured conspicuously in the tangle of appeals and other legal actions which had filled the years between Sacco and Vanzetti's convictions on 14 July 1921 and their execution on 23 August 1927. For information about the case, however, I have depended mainly on later accounts, particularly Francis Russell, Tragedy in Dedham: The Story of the Sacco-Vanzetti Case (New York: McGraw Hill, 1962).

37. Mio's references to '...some college professor investigating the trial and turning up new evidence' and 'Professor Hobhouse's discussion of the Romagna case' (both p.21) presumably allude
to the work Frankfurter, then teaching at Harvard Law School, published in defence of Sacco and Vanzetti.

38. Such as: 'MO: I'm the son of a man who died many years ago/ for a payroll robbery in New England.' (p.52); 'GAUNT:...In all my years/ on the bench of a long-established commonwealth' (p.57)—Massachusetts, where Sacco and Vanzetti were tried, being the only state in the Union to term itself a 'commonwealth'; or GAUNT .....I think I've lost my way.

SERGEANT: I'll say you have.

About three hundred miles (p.78)

It should, however, be noted that the New York setting of Winterset, an important verbal and visual element in the play from the moment the curtain goes up on the base of Brooklyn Bridge and Trock starts cursing Manhattan (pp.1-2), is unrelated to the Sacco-Vanzetti case.

39. Mio says that his father lies 'under thirteen years of clay' (p.39) and that 'it was Trock Estrella/ that robbed the pay roll thirteen years ago' (p.79). The robbery for which Sacco and Vanzetti were executed had occurred on 18 April 1921, and they were tried in the summer of the same year. Anderson's manuscript of Winterset specifies that it was 'begun March 21st 1935, finished June 1st 1935'; and it had been preceded by a manuscript outline of the acts of the play. See Avery, op.cit. (Note No.23 above), p.24.

40. In the mock trial scene of Act II:

(A flash of lightning)

GAUNT: Who set that flash! Bailiff, clear the court! This is not Flemington, gentlemen! We are not conducting this case to make a journalistic holiday!

41. Most often by his son (pp.39, 52, 53) but also by Esdras (pp.53, 54-5) and Miriamne (pp.97-98).

42. For example, Garth to Trock, early in the play:

GARTH: ...who wants to go to trial again except the radicals?.....Let the radicals go on howling about getting a dirty deal. They always howl and nobody gives a damn. This professor's red — everybody knows it. (p.11)

43. See Gaunt's speeches on pp. 48, 57, 59 and 76.

44. See their simultaneous entrances (from separate places on stage) in Act I, scene 3 (p.25), their exit together later in the same scene (p.33), their exit together in Act II (p.62), and their return together later in the same scene (p.66).
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45. On youth and old age, compare Esdras' epitaph (quoted in the body of this chapter p. 117) and Gaunt's Lear-like speech (p.72):

GAUNT: .....Only the young love truth and justice. The old are savage, wary, violent, swayed by maniac desires, cynical of friendship or love, open to bribery and the temptations of lust, corrupt and dastardly to the heart. I know these old men. What have they left to believe, what have they left to lose? Whorers of daughters, lickers of girls' shoes, contrivers of nastiness in the night, purveyors of perversion, worshippers of possession! Death is the only radical. He comes late, but he comes at last to put away the old men and give the young their places.

And on crime and punishment, compare how each argues for a conspiracy of silence:

ESDRAS: .....There's no guilt under heaven, just as there's no heaven, till men believe it — no earth, till men have seen it, and have a word to say this is earth......(p.14)

GAUNT: .....It's better, as any judge can tell you, in such cases, holding the common good to be worth more than small injustice, to let the record stand, let one man die. For justice, in the main, is governed by opinion. Communities will have what they will have... (p.76)

46. On the cutting of Esdras' speech in the Broadway premiere, see Avery's account of the stage-manager's script in the Maxwell Anderson Collection of the University of Texas at Austin (op.cit. Note No. 23 above, p.24). Bailey (op.cit. Note No.30 above, p.139) defends the speech as characteristic of its speaker, but she is elsewhere (ibid., pp.142-143) of the opinion that in Winterset 'the poetic flights are flights. They break away from their context.'


48. Ibid., pp.142-143.

49. A Prelude to Poetry in the Theatre, op.cit. (Note No.34 above), pp.36-37.

50. 30 October 1935.

51. So one might argue from Mio's last act (p.92) hypothesis MIO: .....suppose one knew that while he stood in a little shelter of time under a bridgehead, say, he could live, and then, from then on, nothing.

But in fact this is too imprecise to give any clue as to
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Anderson's exact understanding of the implications of the set; and it is striking that the dialogue does not refer to either the bridge or Shadow in any ways which would restrict the significance we may see in them. These merciful instances of Anderson not spelling things out are suggestive, I believe, precisely because he is silent.

52. By his own account, Norman Marshall had wanted to produce Winterset at London's Gate Theatre late in the 1930's; but, intimidated by the excellence of the premiere production in New York, he decided to stage Anderson's Masque of Kings instead. See Marshall's The Other Theatre, op.cit. (Note No.114 to Chapter I above), p.118. Winterset was first professionally produced in Britain at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in the 1939/40 season. The production was hedged in by restrictions laid down by the dramatist's agents: the play was licensed only for that production, which was to have no revival and was to be performed only at the Rep. See T.O.Kemp, The Playhouse and the Man, op.cit. (Note No.60 to Chapter I above), p.103, and J.C. Trewin, The Birmingham Repertory Theatre 1913-1963 (London: Barrie and Rockcliff, 1963), p.125. The latter erroneously observes that Winterset 'would never be acted professionally in London': either Trewin does not deem theatre club production to be professional, or he simply overlooked the eight performances which Winterset was given at London's New Lindsey Theatre in 1948.

53. The composition of the play is generally assigned to 1945, but its completion would seem to have continued into the new year. In an interview published 10 January 1946, André Frank describes meeting with Anouilh 'l'autre jour,' when the playwright was about to leave Paris 'pour la Haute-Savoie achever trois pièces,' one of which was Romeo & Jeannette. (See 'Le Theatre d'Aujourd'hui: Jean Anouilh,' Les Nouvelles Litteraires, 10 January 1946, p.1.)


55. Unpublished. The British Drama League Library has an annotated and emended typescript (MS 1471), which also gives the source of the revised title — Shakespeare's Sonnet 146 — in toto.

Critical comment on the appositeness of MacDonagh's relocation of the play reveals an amusing range of prejudices. 'It was patently a mistake,' wrote P.S., reviewing for Theatre World (Vol.XLV, no.297, 2-Oct 1949, pp.6-7), 'to translate the modern brittle French philosophy into an Irish setting, and ironic that Shakespeare's fine sonnet should be its dedication, for what the play lacks above all is "soul".' Of ssia's Tréilling, writing in Theatre Newsletter (Vol IV, No.79 10 September 1949, p.2) was protective of the Irish rather than antipathetic to the French: 'The extravagances of the present version are accepted only through the habitual presentation of the Irish as superstitious and given to blarney
and blathering.' Also it would appear, to drinking and posturing: Edward Owen Marsh (Jean Anouilh: Poet of Pierrot and Pantalon /London: W.H.A llen & Co., Ltd. 1953 /p.123) thought that 'the father fitted admirably into this new setting.' The Times reviewer (1 September 1949) took a middle-of-the-road stance, both anti-Gallic and anti-Hibernian: 'The Irish setting constantly sheds an air of implausibility over the lovers' willingness to let their behaviour be governed by French logic.' Walter Allen (New Statesman & Nation, 10 September 1949 /pp.271-272) reversed the causal logic and noted that in the land of the new setting 'anything is possible'.

Subsequent English-language productions of the play have included: BBC 3rd Programme, adapted for radio by Raymond Raikes, broadcast 24 June 1958; Maidman Playhouse, New York, 24 March 1960; Meadow Players at the Oxford Playhouse, 23 February 1965; and Yvonne Artaud Theatre, Guildford, 25 February 1975. I do not know what translation was used for the New York production, which ran only four performances. The others have all used the translation, more literal than McDonald's, by Miriam John. Restoring the play to France, this was originally entitled Jeannette. Anouilh's full title is restored to the text of John's translation as published in Anouilh's Collected Plays, II (London: Methuen, 1967), pp.235/-324. Except where otherwise noted, all my quotations from Romeo and Jeanette (and my two quotations from Eurydice) will be from this easily available text and will be cited within the body of the chapter.

56. Whence it transferred to the Criterion in the West End. See the text published in E. Martin Browne, ed., Four Modern Verse Plays (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1957), pp.201-266, and Browne's 1956 introduction to the collection, pp.11-12.

57. Edward Owen Marsh (op.cit. /Note No. 55 above /, pp.127-8 and 122) thinks that 'the first two acts are brilliantly written and provide some of the most extravagantly comic dialogue in the modern theatre,' and that 'in this play Anouilh has unhesitatingly mixed strident comedy and romantic drama in the Shakespearian manner and it is remarkable how reminiscent some of the moments in the play appear to be simply because of this jumbling of tones.' I wish that he had instanced some such moments of Shakespearean reminiscence, for they have escaped me.

58. On the one hand, the play is read as 'une tragedie de village... /An which?/ Jeannette refuse la mediocrite de la petite vie bourgeoise' (Pierre Brodin, Presences Contemporaines, I /Paris: N.E.D., 4th ed 1957 /, p.432); and on the other hand, such a reading is 'une erreur. Il n'est pas question de lutte entre les classes dans ce theatre. On incidemment....On dirait plutot d'une haine de races: la race des maudits, des reprouves, des echus volontaires, et la race des equilibres, des sociaux, des adaptes' (Robert Kemp, La Vie Du Theatre /Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1956 /p.92). Or again, Derick Grigs, reviewing the 1965 Oxford production, writes that 'As with Shakespeare, the families separate the lovers, but for feud and fate Anouilh substitutes background and temperament.' (Plays & Players, Vol.X, No.7 /April 1965 /p.42); while Michael Cooney, reviewing
the 1975 Guildford production, insists that 'no social or political pressures are brought to bear on the characters. Instead we have a sense of transience and mortality brooding over the scene where the eponymous lovers snatch at the idea of a meaningful relationship' (Financial Times, 27 February 1975).

59. British Drama League Library MS 1471, p. [27]. I have not seen a programme from this production, but the inclusion of this note as to setting is remarked by ossia "filling" in the Theatre Newsletter review cited above, Note No.55.


61. Antigone, Médée and Romeo & Jeannette were all published in Nouvelles Pièces Noires (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1946). Euridice, had been published in Pièces Noires (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1945). English translations of all four are in the Methuen Collected Plays, cited above (Note No.55); but Euridice, translated by Kitty Black, is there retitled Point of Departure.


63. Gabriel Marcel, ('In Love with Death,' Theatre Arts, Vol.XXXI, No.5 [May 1947], pp.44-5) was among the first to point this out. The most thorough working through of a psychological reading of Anouilh's plays is Vandromme's study, cited in the immediately preceding note, pp.107-43. From the same note, see also Radine, p.17.
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64. As Harvey (op.cit. [Note No.62 above, p.37]) points out: 'Even Anouilh's admirers have confessed that he wrote no real drama — i.e., drama of conflict — until Antigone, when at last he threw off his blinders and created on stage two equally viable individuals with clashing points of view. True, the conflict in these first works was smouldering within each protagonist, but even interior conflict must be objectified in hurtling characters if it is to be played out on a stage, and not on a couch.' This pinpoints the problem with the Eurydice: Anouilh is still playing off attitudes as represented by types and hasn't yet sorted out how to confront characters. However, Eurydice does have the advantage of conviction and consequently of clarity in its interplay of attitudes.


66. Harvey's often excellent book (op.cit., [Note No.62 above]) includes a chapter entitled 'Scenic Vision' (pp.100-115).

67. For a rather simple-minded summary of Anouilh's opinions on the subject, see Pronko, op.cit., (Note No. 62 above), pp.76-109.

68. Throughout Act I of Eurydice, Anouilh appears to be validating the love at first sight of Eurydice and Orpheus by counterpointing its enkindling with the squalidly sensual and romantic posturings of the minor characters. Only in Act II do they begin to register the impossibility of their love — not so much because they are opposed (though this problem is operative too) but because they are ineluctably separate and incapable of knowing each other. In Act III, the Underworld sequence, this situation is confirmed, and again counterpointed with the lesser ambitions of the lower orders of characters. In Act IV, it is transcended by Orpheus' departure to join Eurydice in death.

69. 'Just about everyone has decried the implausibility of the humdrum and truehearted Frederic falling in love with a crass wench like Jeannette, and on the eve of his wedding besides,' notes Harvey (op.cit., [Note No. 62 above], p.58)

70. This quotation is from MacDonagh's adaptation, British Drama League Library MS 1491. (See Note No. 55 above.) In this typescript, Anouilh's four acts become two acts, each of two scenes, and pagination is by scene. This quotation, Act I, Scene ii, p. L97.

71. Harvey, op.cit. (Note No.62 above), p.132.

72. The French of the original here reads:

FREDERIC: Ah! que vous êtes loin de l'autre côté de cette table! Comme vous avez été loin tout aujourd'hui...
JEANNETTE: Il le fallait. Qu'est-ce qui serait arrivé si vous m'aviez seulement frottée?

FREDERIC: Nous nous sommes battus tout aujourd'hui sans nous toucher, sans même oser nous regarder. Et nous roulions par terre, nous étouffions sans un geste, sans un cri, pendant que les autres nous parlaient... Oh! que vous étiez loin encore. Et, pourtant, vous ne serez jamais plus aussi près.

JEANNETTE: Jamais plus.

FREDERIC: Jamais plus, même en pensée... Il ne faudra pas, n'est-ce pas, si nous voulons être les plus forts. Il ne faudra pas une seule fois nous imaginer dans les bras l'un de l'autre.

JEANNETTE: (les yeux fermés, sans bouger) Il ne faudra pas demain. Mais de soir, moi, je suis —— dans vos bras.

(Il y a un silence, puis Frederic soupire aussi les yeux fermés)

FREDERIC: Je ne pouvais plus... Oh! ne bougez pas. C'est si bon tout d'un coup que cela ne peut pas être mal.

(Jeannette a les yeux fermés aussi. Ils vont parler ainsi de loin, sans faire un geste tous les deux.)

JEANNETTE: Oui, c'est bon.

(Un silence encore.)

FREDERIC: (dans un souffle,) C'était donc possible. Il me semble que je bois de l'eau. Comme j'avais soif.

JEANNETTE: Moi aussi, j'avais soif.

(My underscoring here indicates an omission by MacDonagh rather than by his producers.)

73. Both readings are anticipated in the first speech long assigned Jeannette, a sort of prayer to her sleeping father, at the beginning of the act.


75. Charles Lewsen's review, published in the Times for 26 February 1975, added: 'He can say that again.'
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76. British Drama League Library MS 1471, Act I, Scene i, p.25.


78. Marsh, op.cit., (Note No. 55 above), p.121. Marsh goes on to say (p.149) that Romeo and Jeannette has 'ended on a note of attack on sexuality.'


80. In at least two published articles, Anouilh has dated the termination of his adolescence at February of 1945, when he was shocked by the execution of the poet Robert Brasillach in the reprisals against collaborators with the Nazis. Both articles, 'Brasillach' and 'Février 1945,' are reprinted in Vandromme, op.cit. (Note No. 62 above), pp.172-178 and 179-181 respectively. Vandromme himself (ibid., pp.92-133) analyses the nature of Anouilh's change of heart and its consequences in his work.

81. Overboard for Juliet: A Play in Three Acts by William Shakespeare and John Leister, unpublished typescript in the Lincoln Center Theater Collection of the New York Public Library (NCOP). The acquisitions stamp appears to indicate 1948, and there are internal references to jitterbugging and to the Lend Lease programme. I have not been able to trace a production of the script.

82. See Note No. 11 above.


85. The première production of Romanoff and Juliet opened at London's Piccadilly Theatre on 17 May 1956 and played through 379 performances until 13 April 1957. The Broadway production, at the Plymouth, opened October 1957 and ran for 389 performances before touring the United States.

Ustinov also directed the film, which was produced by Pavla for Universal International. In his Ustinov in Focus (London: A. Zwemmer, 1971), Tony Thomas describes the film in some detail and terms it 'only moderately successful' (p.137).

86. Ibid., p.136.
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87. Interviewed by Frank Granville-Barker, Ustinov said:
'You ask me...why I am so often attracted to satire. I think it is because I am naturally drawn towards comedy in the first place, and because I also need a theme. Comic situations and characters aren't enough in themselves; they must express ideas, too. The obvious outcome of these two considerations is satire' ('Sugar Coated Satirist,' Plays & Players Vol.III, No.10 (July 1957), p.5)

88. Marc-Gilbert Sanvajon, who adapted Romanoff and Juliet for its Paris production (Theatre Marigny, 24 October 1957), found that 'pour le public français le texte doit traduire en images ce que la vie a de charmé.' This necessity arose because: 'Le text de Ustinov — et cela vaut sans doute pour ses compatriotes — a quelque chose d’abstrait. Par example, chez Ustinov...une scène d’amour nous apparait un peu comme une dissertation...sur l’amour' (L’Avant-Scène du Theatre, No.169 (28 February 1957), p.3. Sanvajon’s text is printed in this issue of the periodical.) At least one of Ustinov’s compatriots also found the abstraction excessive. Caryl Brahms, reviewing the London première wrote: 'As a playwright he is a keen observer, too lazy to make the necessary effort to observe, concerned only with end results, leaping from one conclusion to the next with all the carefree merriment of a baby elephant at play....Romanoff & Juliet...is less a play than an animated political cartoon — "Shall we stay and see the Mickie Ustinov?" ('Peter Panaroski, Plays and Players, Vol.III, No.10 (July, 1956), p.15).

89. Brahms, ibid.

90. The Broadway production, at the Winter Garden, opened 26 September 1957, and ran 732 performances. A revival, also at the Winter Garden, ran 249 performances from 27 April 1960; and there was another New York production in 1964. The London production opened at Her Majesty’s Theatre on 12 December 1958 and ran 1,039 performances.

91. The libretto of West Side Story was published by Harper and Row (New York, 1958, original copyright 1956) and reprinted by Dell Publications (New York, 1965). All my quotations will be from the text in the Dell reprint and will be identified within the body of my text.
West Side Story is discussed by Gros Louis, op.cit. (Note No. 3 to Introduction above), pp. 85-94.

92 ACTION: ....They PRs're the reason my old man's gone bust.

RIFF: Who says?

ACTION: My old man says.
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BABY JOHN: [to A-rab] My old man says his old man woulda gone bust anyway.

ACTION: Your old man says what?

BABY JOHN: My old man says them Peurto Ricans is ruinin' free enterprise.

ACTION: And what're we doin' about it? (pp.140-141)

93. MARIA: ...That rumble, why do they have it?

ANITA: You say how they dance; like they have to get rid of something, quick. That's how they fight.

MARIA: Too much feeling. And they get rid of it. (p.181)

94. The policemen, Krupke and Schrank, are respectively moronic and sadistic; and the Friar Laurence figure, the druggist Doc, is powerless to cope with either the constabulary or the gangs.

95. ACTION: Who asked you to move here?

PEPE: Who asked you?

SNOWBOY: Move back where you're wanted!

A-RAB: Back where ya came from!

ACTION: Spics!

PEPE: Micks!

INDIO: Wop!

BERNARDO: We accept the challenge to a fight! (pp.175-176)


97. Richard Watts (New York Post): '...it dramatizes its narrative to a large extent in terms of dance'; John Chapman (New York Daily News): 'Robbins and his superb young dancers carry the plot as much as the spoken words and lyrics do'; Walter Kerr (Herald Tribune) '...the most savage, restless, electrifying dance patterns we've been exposed to in a dozen seasons.... Mr. Robbins never runs out of his original explosive life-force....He has been almost sacrificially assisted in this macabre and murderous onslaught of movement by composer Leonard Bernstein....The evening hurtles headlong past whatever endearing simplicities may be hidden in Arthur Laurents' text for Stephen Sondheim's lyrics'; Robert Coleman
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(Daily Mirror): 'The real hero of the evening is director-choreographer Robbins. His dances talk. They advance the action with the momentum of an intercontinental missile'; 
John McLain (Journal American) 'Taking it from the top I would say that Mr. Bernstein is responsible for the true importance of the piece, for the music is always magnificent'; 
Frank Aston (New York World-Telegram and Sun): 'The Bernstein music possesses power to push the story forward and the Robbins dances aren't interpolated ballets but outbursts of integrated narrative action. In fact, one spectator left the house wondering if there hadn't been more dancing than anything else in this show.' (All New York press quotations are from issues for 27 September 1957.)

A more sophisticated statement to the same effect as the reviewers' was made the following spring by Michel St.Denis in a series of lectures to the American Shakespeare Festival and Academy at the Plymouth Theater, New York. Arguing that even Broadway theatre-goers were increasingly in search of a meaning amidst their entertainments, he remarked: 'West Side Story is not simply entertainment. The dance part, which is the most interesting, has a meaning' (Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style /London: Heinemann, 1960/7, p.74).

98. Ewan MacColl's Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad was produced by Charles Parker for the BBC Schools Broadcasting Series 'Books, Plays and Poems' and broadcast on 18 and 25 May 1966. There is an unpublished typescript, some of which is only rough edited, in the Shakespeare Collection of the Central Reference Library of the Birmingham Public Library (Ac. No. 756954). Except where otherwise noted, my quotations from Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad will be from this text and citation will be made within the body of my chapter.


100. Burton and Lane, New Directions, op.cit. (Note No. 123 to Chapter I above), p.93. Punctuation sic. I have drawn heavily upon this book for information both about the radio ballads in general and about Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad in particular.


102. This passage is from p.14 of the unpublished typescript cited in Note No.98 above. It is also included in a long quotation from Romeo and Juliet: A Radio Ballad in Burton and Lane, New Directions, op.cit. (Note No. 123 to Chapter I above), pp.94-100.
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103. Ibid., p.94.

104. As was recorded in Note No.65 to Chapter I, none of these transpositions has been published, and I am working from typescripts loaned me by either agents (Edgar's and Davies') or production company (Gooch's). Quotations will be from these typescripts, and pagination will be given in the body of my text.

105. Peter Ansorge writes in Breaking The Spectacle (op.cit., Note No.149 to Chapter I above/p.58): 'Although Edgar is often described as a political playwright of importance I find that he has had great difficulty in discovering his own voice as a writer. His work with The General Will showed him to be an effective lampoonist, a talent most perfectly attuned to his 1969 mock-pantomime Tedderella in which Mr.Heath takes the country to the Common Market Ball.' Later scripts in which Edgar's playwriting appears as parodistic as it is prolific include: Dick Deterred, op.cit. (Note No.12 to Chapter I above); Blood Sports, originally Summer Sports, a series of political sketches organised around British sports and sportsmanship, staged at the Birmingham Arts Lab in 1975 and at London's Bush Theatre in 1976; and The National Theatre, a one-act one-act transposition of Chekov's Three Sisters to a dressing room in a West End strip club, staged at London's Open Space Theatre in 1975.


107. I am not convinced by H.A. Mason's attempt, in Shakespeare's Tragedies of Love (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), pp.47-55, to upset the critical consensus which sees fate at work behind misfortune in Romeo and Juliet and to supplant this interpretation with 'the proposition that Romeo and Juliet had in effect (but not, of course, in intention) been contracting out of society from the first' (p.53). Mason insists, quite correctly, upon the distinction drawn between Fate and Fortune in Elizabethan (and earlier) doctrine. I agree that critics ought to keep the distinction in mind, but I think that the concepts are (con) fused in Romeo and Juliet, as elsewhere in Elizabethan texts, both dramatic and narrative, which style themselves 'tragedy'. At any rate, in trying both to banish Fate from the play and to make the thematic weight of Fortune negligible alongside to what he sees as a critique of love and death in relation to the whole of human social life, Mason makes some rather dodgy critical moves. For example, he argues that
if Shakespeare had wanted us to 'feel the events as fatal' (p.20) in Romeo and Juliet, he would at very least have made his dramatis personae call them so. He remarks junctures at which such designations might have been made, but are not. He then proceeds to dismiss lines which do indisputably point to the operation of cosmic forces with 'all these scattered references to fate do not amount to very much; they do not set a stamp on the play' (pp.22-23).


How Romeo came to know of the Capulet feast is likewise not considered in the version of the story in Bandello's Novella (1554), the remote source of both Brooke's poem and Painter's novella. Bandello simply recounts: 'Antonio Capelletto, capo de la sua famiglia, fece una bellissima festa a la quale invito gran nobilità d'uomini e di donne. Quivi si videro per la maggior parte tutti i giovini de la città, tra i quali v'ando Romeo Montecchio...Egli era mascherato e con gli altri entro ne la casa del Capelletto essendo gia notte'; and then further on, 'Avvenne...che Romeo mascherato ando su la festa del Capelletto, e ben che fossero poco amici, pur non s'offendevano' (Matteo Bandello, Novelle, ed.Giuseppe Guido Ferrero /Turin: Unione Tipografica, 1974/, pp.440 and 443). I have not checked this point in Boistear's 1559 French translation, which lies between the Italian of Bandello and the English of Brooke and Painter: a narrative (as opposed to dramatic) version of the story really need not account for Romeo's source of information, and I would not expect an intermediary text to introduce an unnecessary explanation when those before and after it do not do so.


110. This point was drawn to my attention by ibid., p.283.

111. In 'Double Time in Romeo and Juliet' (Modern Language Review, Vol.XLIV, No.3, July 1949/, pp.372-374), Raymond Chapman suggests that the time problems which emerge in the last act of Romeo and Juliet indicate that Shakespeare was not in control of its time scheme — specifically, that he had not been able to eradicate all traces of the more leisurely pace of events in his source(s) and that he was in this play making a first, imperfect experiment with the double time scheme he adopted in later work.
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112. The possibility is that Davies was replying to Edgar. As was recorded in Note No. 65 to Chapter I above, Death Story was first performed, in November of 1972, at the Birmingham Repertory Studio Theatre. Davies, who teaches at University of Warwick, lives in Kenilworth. I do not, however, know whether Davies was living there in 1972, and in any case the only connection between the two adaptations may be this geographical coincidence in the Midlands.

113. See, for examples, Edgar's use of a political meeting in Act II of Destiny (performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford's Other Place in 1976 and at London's Aldwych Theatre in 1977, and published in London by Methuen in 1976) and of a public enquiry in Our Own People (performed on tour by Pirate Jenny in 1977 and 1978, text unpublished) as ways of indulging this penchant.


2. Ibid., p.154.

3. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy, first published 1904, paperback edition (Greenwich, Connecticut: 1965), p.79. Bradley goes on to "examine the tragedy...two things which illustrate the same point. First, we find by the side of the hero no other figure of tragic proportions...so that, in Hamlet's absence, the remaining characters could not yield a Shakespearean tragedy at all. And, secondly, we find among them two, Laertes and Fortinbras, who are evidently designed to throw the character of the hero into relief....Naturally, then, the tragedy of Hamlet with Hamlet left out has become the symbol of extreme absurdity" (ibid., pp.79-80).

Subsequent quotations from Bradley's Shakespearean Tragedy will be from this edition and pagination will be cited within the text of my chapters.

I should here acknowledge my general debts to the brilliant and useful analysis of Bradley's account of Hamlet in Morris Weitz' 'Hamlet' and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism (London: Faber and Faber, 1965, paperback edition 1972) pp.3-18 and 228 ff.


5. Jules Laforgue, Moralités Légendaires (Paris: Mercure de France, eleventh edition 1921), pp.23-4. All subsequent quotations from 'Hamlet ou les suites de la pieté filiale' will be from this edition and their pagination will be cited within the text of my chapter.

6. Bailey (op.cit.; Note 1 above; p.148) tallies the points of similarity: 'The effect is a caricature at once of Laforgue himself and of the Romantic figures whose stories filled his poet's mind. It is as if Laforgue had made an image of himself with features of his literary forebears and plunged a needle through its heart. Physically, the identification with himself is unmistakable. Though he made Hamlet out to be thirty (that autumnal age in the Romantic's life), hence five years older than himself, he gave him his own chestnut-colored hair, growing to a peak over a lofty brow; his pale, smooth-shaven face and expression of gentle, meditative melancholy; his gray-blue eyes with their deep, abstracted gaze...; his customary black costume; his slow, calm gait. In character, ideas and interests, the details of resemblance are no less remarkable: the etcher's laboratory, the foreign cigarettes, the prophet's enthusiasm dwindled into dilettantism, the adherence to the philosophy of the unconscious, the mixed feelings about women, the "universal nausea," the rage at humanity's indifference to his "divine" heart.'

Bailey also (pp.142-151) traces Laforgue's use of Hamlet from his early poems 'Guitare' (1879) and 'Excuse macabre' (1880) through epigraphs in his Fleurs de Bonne Volonte and Derniers Vers to his 'Apropos de Hamlet,' a fictional interview which was first published in
Le Symboliste for 22 October 1886, a few weeks before the first publication of 'Hamlet ou les suites de la piété filiale' in serial form in three issues of Vogue in November 1886. Laforgue's development of a 'mask for himself, a mask of the self-doubting hero' from Shakespeare's Hamlet is also discussed by Mr. Martin P. Scofield in his forthcoming study of The Ghosts of 'Hamlet': The Play and Modern Writers. I am grateful to Mr. Scofield for permitting me to study the typescript of his book before its publication by Cambridge University Press.

7. Paul Valéry 'The Spiritual Crisis,' The Athenaeum, 11 April 1919, pp.182-184. This quotation, p.184. My attention was drawn to this article and to its pertinence to Laforgue's Hamlet by Bailey, op.cit. (Note 1 above) p.154, where it is briefly quoted and details of its subsequent publications in French are given.

Valéry's article is also used as an epigraph to Warren Ramsey's chapter (IX) on 'Ironic Equilibrium' in his study of Jules Laforgue and the Ironic Inheritance (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953).


9. Ibid., p.38.

10. Ibid., p.41.

11. The paragraph containing the phrase which I have just quoted from Bradley's Shakespearean Tragedy postulates possible causes for Hamlet's intense sickness of life: (i) his father's death; (ii) 'the vague suspicion that we know Hamlet felt'; and (iii) loss of the crown. All three are rejected in short order and Bradley then develops Gertrude's marriage as the real cause. The scene in which Mackaye's Hamlet is advised of his mother's impending remarriage begins with him (i) mourning his father, then gives him (ii) exchanging suspicious remarks with Horatio but (iii) rejoicing to learn that Claudius is become King. This leaves him free to concentrate on love and Ophelia, a prospect dashed (along with all else) when Gertrude gives notice of wedding plans.


13. Ibid., p.x. All quotations in this paragraph of the text of my chapter are from this page's 'Key to Marginal Symbols' in MacKaye's published text.


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16. Ibid., pp.197-198. The Mousetrap was drawn to my attention by Dr. Gros Louis' thesis, op. cit. (Note No. 3 to Introduction above), in which it is discussed on pp.210-215.


In his autobiography, Dukes records how impressed he and other London theatre-goers had been by John Gielgud's performance as Hamlet in the West End during the 1934-35 season. He makes no mention there of his own 1936 Hamlet adaptation, but the possibility of a connection is obvious. See The Scene Is Changed (London: MacMillan and Co., 1942), pp.201-202.


20. Ibid., pp.22-23.


23. Ibid., pp.72-72. Firkins' play is mentioned by Gros Louis (op.cit. [Note No.3 to Introduction above], p.176), who finds that the actors' conversations suggest some of the motivations which lie behind the seemingly presumptuous modern rewritings of Shakespeare's play.

24. Snider, The Redemption of The Hamlets, op.cit. (Note No. 42 to Chapter I above), p.56. The pagination of subsequent quotations will be given within the text of my chapter.

Snider's play is discussed by Gros Louis, op.cit. (Note No.3 to Introduction above), pp.133-192. She rather interestingly judges — and damns — it as a medieval morality play.

The back cover of this text records that this 40-minute playlet suitable for Schools and Clubs was performed at The New York National Arts Club, February 1927. It also advertises some seven other edifying playlets and pageants by Guthrie, including 'Tempest Unmasked, or Caliban Redeemed, a charming educational 45-minute playlet on the Soul's Emancipation by Conquest of the Spirit' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream Unmasked, a playlet on Finding Oneself by clarifying drama.'

26. 'Shakespeare II,' The Overman: being the serial-comic history of a twentieth-century Hamlet (London: Walter Scott Publishing Co., 1905), p.iv. This text has baffled me. In the first place, I have failed to discover the identity of its pseudonymous author, who on the verso of the title sheet also claims credit for We Two and the Devil and The Pilgrim Sons (apparently in one volume) and who gives his age as 27. In the second place, the hero seems to me as much Faust as Hamlet. It does meet its prefatory boast to the extents that the first acts show the hero trying to solve a problem set him by a brain specialist in Act I, Scene 1, and that the action is very schematic despite rapid shifts of scene and a lot of topical jokes (e.g., Darwin, women's rights).

27. My ignorance of Continental work for amateurs is not confined to adaptations of Hamlet but obtains across the field of Shakespearean adaptations in general. For references to English texts I have, as is outlined in the introduction to the Appendices below (pp. 560-70), had access to a wide range of bibliographies, many of which take cognisance of adaptations for amateurs. For references to French texts, I have had to rely on secondary sources which seem to have attended only to professional theatre. Most important among these sources have been: Paul Blanchart, 'Le théâtre contemporain et les Elizabéthains,' Études anglaises, Vo.XIII, No.2. (avril-juin 1960), pp.144-158; Jean Jacquot, Mises en Scène de Shakespeare et des Elizabéthains en France d'Antoine à nos Jours (Paris: Institute Pedagogique National, 1964); Jean-Jacquot, Shakespeare en France: mises en scène d'hier et d'aujourd'hui (Paris: Le temps, 1964); and for Hamlet adaptations, Bailey, op.cit. (Note 1 above), pp.153-169.
28. The interwar French adaptation of Hamlet which I have excluded from discussion in this Chapter is a detailed transposition, Henry Bernstein's *Le Jour*, published in *Les Oeuvres Libres*, No.CXL (February, 1933) pp.105-112. This text gives a cast list from production at an unspecified theatre.

29. Jean Sarment's *Le Mariage de Hamlet* was first performed, at Mayence, on 3 May 1922, and the production transferred to the Théâtre National de l'Odéon in November of that year. The production had closed by the time the text was published in *La Petite Illustration: Théatre*, n.s. No.84 (30 December 1922), and Gaston Sorbet's notes (inside front cover) express some surprise that it had done so. In a translation by Dorothy Morland and a production directed by Peter Godfrey, *The Marriage of Hamlet* was staged in England at the Gate Theatre, London. The production opened 17 February 1934, was reviewed (with less than full favour) in *The Times* for 19th February, and played for 8 performances. (On the last point, see Marshall, *The Other Theatre*, op.cit. [Note No.114 to Chapter I above], p.50.) A typescript of Morland's translation exists in the Shakespeare Collection of the Central Reference Library of the Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No. 452528). I will, however, be quoting from the published French text, and citations will be given within the text of my chapter.


John L. Palmer's *M.Jean Sarment and the New Romance,* Chapter V of his *Studies in the Contemporary Theatre* (London: Martin Secker, 1927), pp.116-136, is helpful for the relevant years of Sarment's career.

30. Sorbet's note to the published text (inside back cover) quotes, from the review *Belles Lettres*, the opinion of Andre Dumas: 'Un conte en prose de Jules Laforgue, une des sept Moralités légendaires, semble en avoir donné l'idée à M.Jean Sarment.' I think it gave him more than an idea: notable points of coincidence are the bifurcation of the Ophelia figure and the revelation of bastardy.

31. It is interesting to note that the most adaptation of Laforgue's 'Hamlet ou les suites de la piété filiale,' taking the form of a dramatic monologue and emphasising the relationship of actor to role, retained the voice of the narrator. This is the adaptation by Francis Huster, first performed (with Huster as Hamlet) on 7 December 1974 at the Théatre Daniel Sorano, and published in *L'Avant-Scène (Théâtre)*, No.578 (1 January 1976), pp.26-37.

Earlier stagings of the novella include one at the Atelier in 1939 with Jean-Louis Barrault as Hamlet and at the Théatre des Arts in 1961 (a revival of a 1957 production by the same company, Serge Ligiér's) with Jean-Marie Perrey as Hamlet. I have failed to trace the texts for either.
32. In his Jules Laforgue (London: Athlone Press, 1977), pp.53-54, Michael Colie deftly points out: that Laforgue creates a character who does not wish to be involved in the situation of Shakespeare's Hamlet...that being the case, any reference to or use of the wording of the original will be ironic. Laforgue makes Hamlet into the person who does not wish to accept the terms by which others would describe his situation. If the first of Colie's relative clauses were amended to read 'who does not wish to be involved in anything other than the situation of Shakespeare's Hamlet,' the same statement would apply to Sarment's character.

33. St. Georges de Bouthelier's La Célébre Histoire: pièce en trois actes... was first performed by Georges and Ludmilla Pittoff and The Pittoff Company, at the Théâtre des Mathurins, on 24 April 1928. Quotations will be from the text published by the Librairie Théâtrale (Paris, 1928), and pagination will be given within the text of my chapter. This quotation, p.9.

34. The approach to the staging of Hamlet as a star-vehicle has had its loud opponents, in England at least. See, for example, Percy Fitzgerald, Hamlet as it Should be Arranged for the Stage (London: Jarold and Sons, N.D.), pp.75-7.

35. Jones' article was 'The Oedipus Complex as an Explanation of Hamlet's Mystery,' The American Journal of Psychology, Vol. XXI, No. 1 (January 1910), pp. 72-113. The book was Hamlet and Oedipus (New York: W.W. Norton, 1949, reissue 1976). In his autobiography (to which my attention was drawn by Dr. Gros Louis, op. cit. [Note No.3 to Introduction above], Note 24 to Chapter VII), Rice recorded that in writing Cue for Passion he 'took up a theme' which he had 'put aside twenty years earlier' and which was 'derived from an essay by...Ernest Jones' (Minority Report, London: Heinemann, 1963, p.254). He does not mention Jones' book. However, Cue for Passion seems to me to reflect that emphasis upon the suicidal nature of Hamlet's vengeance which is one of the differences between the 1949 book and the 1910 article. I have therefore summarised Jones' theory as it is presented in Hamlet and Oedipus. Quotations, which are identified within my text, are from the 1976 reissue; and I have included in square brackets the pagination in the original article of passages carried over from it.

36. Elmer Rice, Cue for Passion: A Play in Five Scenes (New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1959), p.116. All subsequent quotations from Cue for Passion will be identified within the body of my chapter.

Directed by the author, the premiere production of Cue for Passion opened at Henry Miller's Theatre, New York, on 25 November 1958. Dr.Gros Louis, who discusses the play on pp.233-252 of her thesis (c.f.Note No.3 to Introduction above), reports that the production closed on 27 December of that year but still deems the play (p.234) 'one of the best Shakespearean adaptations.' Professor Cohn, who summarises its plot on pp.177-199 of her Modern Shakespeare Offshoots (c.f>Note No.4 to Introduction above),
does not seem to agree with Gros Louis' opinion. Nor does Frank Durham in Elmer Rice (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), pp.135-137. Neither do I, but I wish to record my gratitude to Professor Eugene Waith of Yale University for drawing my attention to Rice's play.


I have not traced a production of this play. The published text was reviewed in the Times Literary Supplement for 20 June 1958, p.350, and in Drama for Autumn 1958, p.43. It is also discussed in Gros Louis, op.cit. (Note No.3 to Introduction above), pp.226-233, and is summarised in Cohn, op.cit. (Note No.4 to Introduction above), pp.195-196.


It was in The Interpretation of Dreams that Freud published the theory of an Oedipal Hamlet which Jones was to develop. A footnote to p.365 of the Pelican revised edition of the Hogarth edition points out that Freud had arrived at this theory some three years before Die Traumdeutung was first published, in 1900.

39. For example, 'ANDREW: The Prince of Denmark called many things, and one was the paragon of animals' (p.66), and 'CLAUDE: Does she know that Danes' Hill is our prison?' (p.81).

40. Philip Freund, Prince Hamlet (New York: Bookman Associates, 1953), p. 9. All subsequent quotations from Prince Hamlet will be identified within the text of my chapter.

41. This was reported in a letter of 2 November 1966 from Freund to Dr. Gros Louis, who discusses the adaptation on pp.254-268 of her thesis (c.f. Note No.3 to Introduction above) and pronounces it 'more dependent on its source than Cue for Passion...[but] also one of the better modern adaptations of Shakespeare.'

42. The Hawk and the Handsaw, by 'Michael Innes' (i.e. J.I.M. Stewart), was first broadcast by the B.B.C. on 21 November 1948. There is a typescript of the text in the Shakespeare Collection of the Central Reference Library of the Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.599860). The text is published in Rayner Heppenstall and Michael Innes, Three Tales of Hamlet (London: Gollancz, 1950), pp. 11-73. This quotation, p.53.
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45. Indeed, in the letter to Dr. Gros Louis which was cited in Note No.41 above, Freund reported that in writing his Prince Hamlet he had set out to answer questions which read to me like caricatures of those posed in Bradley's Notes A to C to Shakespearean Tragedy (pp.333-341). Freund's questions were: ""Why did Gertrude conspire to kill the better man? Was Claudius in fact superior? Was he Hamlet's father?"".


52. This point might be offered in support of my Chapter I argument about plays for amateurs being geared-down versions of West End ones. Written by a woman who had been active in the village theatre movement for decades, Hamlet Wears Homespun won its prize in a performance by a professional cast held in a West End theatre – the Duchess – on 6 November 1938.


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The play received a reading at the Ben Uri Gallery on 27 January 1957. The first production was on 19 May 1958 by the Meadow Players at the Oxford Playhouse, whence it transferred on 15 July to the Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith, playing there until 9 August.

Dr. Gros Louis, who discusses Kops' play on pp.268-276 of her thesis (c.f. Note No.3 to Introduction above), mentions an Off-Broadway production which ran at The Cricket Theatre from November 1958 to April 1959. Professor Cohn (op.cit. [Note No.4 to Introduction above], pp.190-192) summarises the plot.

57. Adrian Mitchell, *Mind Your Head: A Return Trip with Songs* was first performed at the Everyman Theatre, Liverpool, on 12 June 1973. The London premiere was at the Shaw Theatre on 30 January 1974. Together with Mike Westbrook's *Man Friday*, the text was published in Methuen Playscripts (London: Methuen 1974), pp.49-112. This quotation, pp.55-56.

58. Ibid., stage direction p.91.

59. Ibid., p.49.

60. Jean Canolle, *Hamlet de Tarascon*, in Les Oeuvres Libres, n.s. No.97 (June 1954), pp.229-300. This quotation, p.298. The play was first performed at the Théâtre La Bruyère, Paris, on 18 April 1954. Its hero cajoles his unwilling friends (an Horatio figure, a Laertes, and two Ophelias — a bifurcation which I think in this case is attributable to the matchmaking requirements of French farce rather than to direct influence from Laforgue) into staging a Murder of Gonzago which will prick the consciences of his mother and stepfather about the mysterious death of his father. Canolle gives regular notice that the most remarkable things about his Hamlet are his penchant for playing roles beyond his scope and his years of delay in passing his brevet élémentaire. The performance of the play-within-a-play breaks up — not because the stepfather
has a guilty conscience but because he is late for a business meeting. When the hero prods for a confession of murder, he is finally told the truth of his father's death: a heart attack in the arms of a small-town whore. At this point, the Hamlet figure abandons his tragic pretensions (though not the diction) and proclaims that he and his world are not disposed to tragedy because they are not of tragic stature, and that for them, as for Don Quixote and Cyrano and others who escaped mediocrity by the servants' door instead of the palace staircase, this question is the one to ask.

61. Rumblelow's notes are quoted from a copy of the programme for the 1975 production of his Hamlet, which I saw on 7 March 1975 at The Theatre at New End in London.

62. This and the next two quotations are from drafts, of a statement by Papp about the play, which I consulted in the files of The New York Shakespeare Festival Theatre. I did not see the production. However, at least the last of these quotations was included in the programme, whence it is quoted by Professor Cohn (op.cit., Note No.4 to Introduction above) in her comments on the play.

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64. This quotation is from Marowitz' introduction to the published text of the third, last and longest version of his Hamlet Collage (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), pp.10-11. Except where otherwise specified, all subsequent quotations either from the Hamlet Collage or of Marowitz' interpretation of Hamlet will be from this text and will be identified within the body of my chapter.

Marowitz' Hamlet collage went through several versions. The first was devised for the Royal Shakespeare Company's 'Theatre of Cruelty' Workshop and Season at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art in January, 1964. The text of this version, which had a playing time of 28 minutes and a cast of nine performers, was published in Plays and Playerz, Vol.XI, No.3 (May, 1964), pp.23-30, 47-48. The second, with playing time expanded to an hour and the cast to eleven (both expansions attributable to the restoration of the figures of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern), was presented by In-Stage for the Literarische Colloquium at the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, on 20 January 1965. This text is not published, although its cast list is printed with the final version published by Penguin. The final version, with playing time raised to 75 minutes and cast constant at eleven, was toured by In-Stage in Italy then received its London premiere at the Jeannette Cochrane Theatre. There were revivals in London at Marowitz' Open Space Theatre in 1969 and at the Bankside Globe (and thence The Open Space) in 1975. Writing in Shakespeare Newsletter for February-March, 1970 (Vol.XX, Nos.1-3, pp.2-3), Louis Marder reported that at that time the collage had been performed in 25 countries.

65. This quotation is from a note by Papp which is in the files of the New York Shakespeare Festival. He continues: 'What this meant exactly, I did not know...But I did feel an impatience with the manner in which the play had been presented in the past, my own 1964 production not excluded.'


67. On the modifications made in Papp's Naked Hamlet, see his 'Note on the Text' of the printed version; Joe Papp and Ted Cornell, William Shakespeare's 'Naked' Hamlet: A Production Handbook (London: MacMillan, 1969), pp.31-33 See also the various alterations recorded and improvisations recommended throughout both the dialogue and the stage directions.
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In the programme note to the 1975 production of his Hamlet (c.f. Note 61 above), Rumbelow records that 'The concepts remain the same' as in his 1972 production, but 'there are big differences in staging.' I cannot say what these differences may have been: I saw only the later production, and a comparison of my notes on and memories from it with Professor Cohn's report (in op.cit. [Note No.4 to Introduction above], pp.315-317) has not enabled me to reconstruct very many differences — beyond the point that where the roles of Polonius and the Gravedigger had been doubled in 1972, in 1975 the former was played by a man and the latter by a girl.

On the changes in Marowitz' version, see Note No.64 above and also pp.41-42 of Marowitz' introduction to the Penguin edition cited there.

68. Papp, Introduction to the printed text, cited in the immediately preceding note, of his 'Naked' Hamlet, p.20.


70. Rumbelow, programme note cited in Note 61 above.


72. Rumbelow's other Shakespearean adaptations were of: Macbeth (1969), Julius Caesar (1971), The Tempest (1972), King Richard II (1973), King Richard III (1973), and King Lear (1973). None has been published and, beyond Rumbelow's 1975 revival of Hamlet, I have seen only his Leir Blindi. This, like the Hamlet, I found visually astonishing, especially for a storm sequence in which lighted matches were tossed around a darkened stage. For an account of Rumbelow's Shakespearean adaptations as a group, see Chapter 6 of Professor Cohn's Modern Shakespearean Offshoots, op.cit. (Note No.4 to Introduction above), pp.310-320.

73. In his 'Notes on the Theatre of Cruelty,' op.cit. (Note No. 66 above), p.356 of their original publication in Tulane Drama Review.
Marowitz recorded of the Royal Shakespeare Company workshops:
'one of the main objects behind the work was to create a
discontinuous style of acting, i.e., a style which corresponded
to the broken and fragmentary way in which most people
experience contemporary reality.' The last clause was denied,
though not argued, by J.W. Lambert in his review of Marowitz'
The Act of Being in the Times Literary Supplement for 4 August
1978. Marowitz also reported how the performers were made
to use 'improvisation (personal and organic material rather
than theatrical dornées)...simply as rhythmic matter' and how
the original inspiration for the Hamlet collage had come from
a play by Lionel Abel which, being 'originally intended for
radio,...consisted of a series of short, discontinuous scenes
in which the female character became, by turns, everybody in
the male character's life' (p.157).

In an article entitled 'On Taking Liberties', which was printed
as an introduction to the published text of the earliest version
of the Hamlet collage, Marowitz wrote: 'The object of this
piece was...Firstly, to demonstrate a technique — i.e., to see
whether the public consciousness of Hamlet was imbedded deeply
enough to allow something of the play to be presented discontinuously
— without the crutch of narrative....The fragment was predicated
on this collective memory of the play which exists, in one form
or another, in the minds of any modern audience' (op. cit.,
[Note No. 64 above]/, p.22). The point is reiterated in Marowitz'
Introduction to the text published by Penguin (op. cit.,
[Note No. 64 above]/, pp. 12-13 especially).

'On Taking Liberties' continues: 'But the premise wasn't simply
a stylistic one, viz. to write an exercise in discontinuity. For
I believe that if one were to penetrate the mind of a psychotic
(i.e. Hamlet) one would find reality streaming through in just
this way — not in one orderly channel, but in dozens of disorderly
ones — and all at once. The boy is in...a stressful situation....
A person in such a situation doesn't see reality unfolding like
leaves in a family album — one by one in steady succession, but
like the images of a modern film — fifty frames a minute, full of
cross-cuts, slow dissolves and endless montage' (pp.22, 48).

The Times, 6 August 1975

Catherine Itzin in Plays and Players, Vol. XXII, No. 10 (July

Marowitz, 'Notes on the Theatre of Cruelty', op.cit.

See Peter Ansorge's interview with Marowitz, op.cit. (Note No.
63 above), p.21. I have omitted Marowitz's adaptation of
The Merchant of Venice from this account because I have not seen
it in production, which seems to me a necessary precondition for
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comment on any adaptations which are so performance-centred as Marowitz' are.


82. See 'Denmark's Dynamic Duo,' Evening Standard, 12 April 1967.

83. See Ronald Bryden in the Observer Review for 16 April 1967.


An interview by William Hedgepath in Look for 26 December 1967 remarks: '...Stoppard has been likened to: Harold Pinter, John Osborne, Lewis Carroll, Beckett, Kafka, Brecht, Giraudoux, Picasso, Pirandello, Shakespeare and Walt Disney. "My lord," he said, "it would be impossible to write a play which wasn't like one of those guys."

86. Bryden, op. cit. (Note No. 83 above).


88. Besides the interviews by Sean Day-Lewis, Dan Sullivan and Jon Bradshaw, and the article by Kenneth Tynan, which are cited in Note No. 106 to Chapter I above, and the Sunday Times interview cited in the immediately preceding note, interviews with Stoppard which I have found helpful are those of: Keith Harper, 'The Devious Route to Waterloo Road,' Guardian, 12 April 1967; interview in The New Yorker for 4 May 1968; and 'Ambushes for the Audience: Towards a High Comedy of Ideas,' Theatre Quarterly, Vol. IV, whole No. 14 (May-July 1974).

89. On the one-act Rosencrantz and Guildenstern which was performed at Questors, see: Alfred Emmott, 'Rosencrantz in Embryo,' Theatre Quarterly, Vol. V, whole No. 17 (March-May 1975), pp.95-96; on what Charles Marowitz saw performed in Berlin, see his Confessions of a Counterfeit Critic (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973), pp.123-124.
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90. Interview with Sean Day-Lewis, op.cit. (Note No. 106 to Chapter I above).

91. Typescript, in the Lincoln Center Theater Collection of the
New York Public Library (NCPF), for the American premiere of
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead at the Alvin Theater,
New York, on 19 October 1968.

92. The acting edition of Stoppard's play was published in London
by Samuel French in 1967. The cuts which the author suggests
make possible a great variation in the playing time.

93. Theatre Quarterly interview, op.cit. (Note No. 88 above), p.6.

94. Quotation from a typescript loaned to me by Robert Grigor-
Taylor of Inter-Action Productions, whose Dogg's Troupe
performed Stoppard's mini-Hamlet.


96. Tom Stoppard, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (London:
quotations of the play will be from this edition and will be
identified within the text of my chapter.

97. Normand Berlin, 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead: Theater
of Criticism,' Modern Drama, Vol. XVI, Nos. 3 and 4 (December
1973), pp.269-277. This quotation, p.274.

98. Sean A. Mansat, 'Rosencrantz et Guildenstern sontmorts,' in
Les Langues Modernes, Vol. LXIV, No. 5 (septembre-octobre 1970),
pp.396-400.

99. Quotation from a copy of the programme in the Lincoln Center
Theater Collection of the New York Public Library.

100. Immediately before this exchange, Ros and Guil are made to register
the fact that the two Spies are wearing clothing identical
with their own, and Ros is assigned a speech of aborted recognition.
The passage is one which was cut from the New York premiere — in
my opinion, wisely so.

101. See Nathan Cohen, 'This Rosencrantz Is a Very Dull One,'

102. See C.J. Gianakaris, 'Absurdism Altered: Rosencrantz and
Guildenstern Are Dead,' Drama Survey, Vol. VII, Nos. 1 and 2
(Winter 1968-69), pp.52-58 and especially p.57.

103. One might argue that the exchange which closes Act II shows
Ros and Guil deciding to go to England; but I think Stoppard
is here playing with the ambiguity, itself wrought out of the
last Shakespearean passage quoted in this act, as to whether
they are deciding to go offstage or to England.
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2. Ibid., p.436.

3. Published in London by Faber and Faber. Quotations from A Place Calling Itself Rome will be from this published text and their pagination will be given within the body of my chapter.

4. The Shakespearean act and scene divisions are those which are retained (in square brackets) as traditional in John Dover Wilson's New Cambridge Shakespeare edition of Coriolanus, (Cambridge: University Press, 1960). Quotations from Coriolanus will be from this edition and their lineation will be given within the body of my chapter.

5. '...neque enim possunt carmina / quamvis optime composita/ ex alia in alien linguam/ ad verbum sine detrimento sui decoris ac dignitatis transferri' — Leningrad manuscript of the Ecclesiastical History, ed. O. Arngart, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile, II (Copenhagen: 1952), fol.107v.

6. In G.I. Duthie, ed., Papers Mainly Shakespearean (Edinburgh: 1964), pp.40-57. Gordon's article ends: 'This great play... is a show of the civil life. The city must stand and must continue, for outside it there is the monstrous, or the nothing. But within the walls absolutes turn out to be instrumental; the words that identify and bind become words that debase and destroy... Words are torn from what they signify. They pass into their antonyms. Deeds are not — deeds. Names are not — names. The absoluteness of the self, the I cannot be maintained; but the necessary relationship of the I with name or fame destroys. In this city to speak is to be guilty.' (p.55). The basis of Gordon's argument is research into 'the great dictionaries, concordances, and indexes, especially the articles fama and gloria in the Thesaurus linguae latinae' (note, p.57). The article attends more directly to the multiple senses of some of the crucial terms in the play than to their rhetorical organisation, but I think that a look at the latter — wherein antithetical schemes and paradoxical figures stand out — confirms Gordon's argument.

7. Interview with Kenneth Tynan, The Observer, Part I, 30 June 1968, p.21. Osborne immediately adds another reason for abandoning the project, on which he'd been at work the year before: 'And the awful thing is that it acts itself out every day. When the trouble in Nigeria started, I suddenly realized that I'd anticipated it and not written about is soon enough.'
8. The Language of Modern Drama (London: Dent, 1977), pp.20-21. Evans goes on to point out that 'Prose as one kind of literary language has become confused with ordinary speech' and concedes to the confusion in proposing that 'Twentieth-century drama is distinguished by the extent to which the language of man in his society — commonly prose — and the language of man in his private world — habitually poetry — have both been exploited.... So, an antithesis exists between two kinds of consciousness and two kinds of communication.' (ibid., pp.21-22). Evans' study is organised around the antithesis so proposed. It is on the whole a useful one, but I think that the chapter on the English poetic dramatists of the 1930's would have been better served by a retraction — pro tem — of the concession to the common understanding of prose vs. poetry. The antithesis becomes increasingly cumbersome in later chapters on Pinter and on American playwrights, and in a final chapter on 'Drama in Contemporary Britain' it is finally abandoned in favour of a distinction between two kinds of prose drama — the prose-literary and the vernacular.


11. In a letter of 30 April 1979, Osborne's agents have reported to me: 'that A Place Calling Itself Rome has not yet been performed either professionally or otherwise although there has been interest from various West End producers'.

12. One egregious exception to this rule might be the 1934 production of King Lear at Hart House Theatre, University of Toronto, in which four white blocks were shoved into varying positions as 'symbolic elements'. The audience were puzzled. (See G. Wilson Knight, Principles of Shakespearian Production /First published 1936, Pelican edition Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1949/, pp.128-132, and especially 129.)


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16. For example, H.W. Lindsey, Shakespeare's 'Coriolanus', A Complete Paraphrase (London: The Normal Press Ltd., 1915), in the Normal Tutorial Series, gen. eds. E.E. Denney and P. Lyddon-Roberts. A single speech, Coriolanus' to Virgilia, in Act II, scene i, should more than suffice: 'Welcome, dearest, so lovely and quiet! Why, you are actually crying and I have returned victorious. In what manner, I wonder would you have received my corpse had it arrived in Rome instead of myself? Not with hilarity, surely!.....'

17. I have not seen this in script or production.

18. A select list of major critics in this school with some crude summary of their respective points of focus:

Caroline Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells Us (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1935). Images of animals and of bodily tension or strife or injury.


L.C. Knights, 'King Lear as Metaphor', paper read to a joint meeting of the Midwest Modern Language Association and the Central Renaissance Conference at the University of Nebraska in April 1962 and published in, int. al., Knights' Further Explorations (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965), pp.169-185. Keywords 'love', 'nothing', 'unnatural'/Nature', 'fool', 'Need' and 'Justice'.


Mention should also be made of:

William Empson, 'Fool in Lear', The Structure of Complex Words (London: Chatto and Windus, 1952), pp.125-157, which with the immediately preceding essay on 'The Praise of Folly' (ibid., pp.105-124) emphasizes the Erasmian antecedents of the Fool as the only critical escape route from the despairing conclusions reached by the key-words approach.
Mark Kanzer, 'Imagery in King Lear', American Imago, vol xxii, nos.1-2 (Spring-Summer 1965), pp.3-13, which is a straight Freudian reading from a psychoanalyst, and which to the extent that it invites speculation about Shakespeare's psychology, seems to me something of a throw-back to Spurgeon.

19. Harley Granville-Barker's 'Preface to King Lear' (1927, partly revised 1935, in Prefaces to Shakespeare, vol.I, London: Batsford, 1958, pp.261-334, might as well be noted under this heading, though it covers too much too well to be hived off into any single approach. The passage on 'The Method of the Dialogue' (pp.278-283) is, however, most attentive to the connexion between that method and plot and character. More typical of this approach are:


Of more recent work along these lines the most helpful for King Lear in particular seems to me to be:


21. Russell A. Fraser, Shakespeare's Poetics, in Relation to 'King Lear' (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962). Fraser attends to motifs of: Providence; Kind; Fortune; Anarchy & Order; Reason; Will; Show & Substance; and Redemption — as 'fixed or crystallized' in 'emblems or icons' (p.15).


My source for this reference was John W. Veltz, Shakespeare and the Classical Tradition: A Critical Guide to Commentary 1660-1960 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1968.)

An examination of the 19 entries indexed under 'Iconography' in this usefully annotated bibliography is revealing of how sparse English-language coverage of this area of Shakespearean studies had been up to 1960. One of those 19 (no more!) entries is, moreover, for the Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature,
and comparative glances at entries in its 1940 and 1974 editions gives some index of attempts to fill in the gap. In the 1940 edition, entries on Renaissance English 'Emblem Literature and Heraldry' totalled two columns, while those for Shakespeare's 'Language, Vocabulary, Style and Prosody' totalled just under four columns. In the 1974 edition, entries for the former had shot to more than six columns, while those for the latter remained almost steady at four-and-a-half columns.

24. One of the plays denied critical discussion is Molnar's Prologue to 'King Lear' (1921), which exists in English both as a published translation (1943) from the Hungarian and an unpublished adaptation (1947) for television. It seemed to me that the changes of verbal language and of medium rendered the linguistic questions for this play eccentrically and (as I am entirely ignorant of the original language and not well versed in television techniques) unmanageably complicated.

Again on account of relative unfamiliarity with the medium of its production, I decided not to discuss Tiller's Conscience of the King (1952), a radio play-within-a-play. The script seems to me to be of interest mainly as documentation of diffusion of critical opinion about King Lear. In The Conscience of the King difficulties in last-minute recasting of the part of the Fool prompt a BBC producer to turn a cast meeting into a seminar on Empson's interpretation of that role (on which, see Note 17 above). The BBC cast having become clear only that Shakespeare made King Lear revolve upon the Fool, 'Shakespeare' himself turns up to explain his play in pseudo-Elizabethan paradoxes:

Polly and pride that, spinning the cloak of nobility and kingship, spin only the shroud they must lie in; the gold cloth of reason growing thin and out-at-elbows, that motley shows through it. And yet, beneath the motley, all truly noble and enduring. (From this point onwards, his voice begins to fade and recede.) Contraries play Bo-peep for ever: kings go among fools and become fools, fools are the staple of wisdom and true faith; face peereth around face, matter about impertinency, the bauble round the sceptre, truth round disguise and treachery; and so about again. Nothing standeth and is sure, save that the wheel will turn and the fruit will ripe and fall. Is the fool's motley green cloth upon red, or red upon green? That is my question and my play; and to pose that question is the office of my Fool. Let there never be such a riving into motley, yet the conscience of kingship abideth in the king, and will serve him when the wise man flees.....

(Typescript in the Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library / Acquisition No. 6247337, p.42.)
Three adaptations — Salomon's King Lethal (ca. 1971), Rumbelow's Leir Blindi (1973) and Illingworth's It Used to be Fun (1974) — were excluded from close critical discussion because I was unable to examine their texts. Of Salomon's King Lethal I know only what was in the extremely unfavourable reader's report, dated 11 January 1972, for the script-reading service of the Theatre Communications Group in New York. From this report the adaptation appears to have been a topical burlesque with allegorical elements: King Lear was Richard Nixon, with his evil daughters Rulie and Genericia and their spouses Cornhower and Coax. The third daughter was Joyeux /sic/, representing the nation's youth and married to the Earl of Berkeley.

I have seen Rumbelow's Leir Blindi but have had no reply to a letter requesting a look at or loan of the script. The adaptation is summarised, rather too briefly and impressionistically to be of any help to me, on pp. 318-320 of Ruby Cohn's Modern Shakespeare Offshoots (op.cit., note 9 above), in the course of a chapter on Rumbelow's six Shakespearean adaptations for the Triple Action Theatre.

Illingworth's It Used to be Fun does not seem to have survived its author. Both the Avon Touring Company, for whom it was written, and Illingworth's widow have reported to me that they do not have a copy of the script. Both have also been generous with offers of assistance in finding out more about the production, but I think access to a text is an indispensable precondition for the kind of criticism I am undertaking in this chapter.

I ruled out extended attention to Pilikian's The Copy for 'Mahumodo' (1964), the only pastiche on the list of adaptations of King Lear. With its 'non-exaction of characters' and its 'philosophy of multiple meaningless' (see Chapter I above, pp.35-36), it did not seem to me likely to sustain consideration of the second area of linguistic problems.

As this chapter was on its way to the typist, I noticed an advertisement for yet one more adaptation of King Lear — Square One's Leargame. According to the listing for it in Time Out No.417 (27 April - 3 May 1979), p.27, this set out 'to explore the themes of personal alienation and political manipulation in an adapted version of King Lear'.

25. Letter from Manley to the Birmingham City Librarian, 9 April 1943, p.1. This covering letter is bound with the typescript of the play, now in the Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library. Acquisition Number 539871.

26. Manley makes no mention of Nahum Tate's adaptation in his covering letter, but it is hard not to imagine one is hearing echoes here.
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27. Typescript in the Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library, as cited above (note 25), p.25. Subsequent quotations from this typescript of Manley's adaptation will be identified within the body of my chapter.


29. Ibid., p.6.

30. Ibid., p.2.


The Bradleyan antecedents of Manley's adaptation cannot, I think, be overemphasised. The passage which I proceed to quote from Manley's letter reads to me like a fusion of the author's autobiography with Bradley's defense of the psychological plausibility of Lear's division of his kingdom:

'Shakespeare...has done a good deal to soften the improbability of the legend.....That...which is censured as absurd, the dependence of the division on the speeches of the daughters, was in Lear's intention a mere form, devised as a childish scheme to gratify his love of absolute power and his hunger for assurances of devotion. And this scheme is perfectly in character. We may even say that the main cause of its failure was not that Goneril and Regan were exceptionally hypocritical, but that Cordelia was exceptionally sincere and unbending. And it is essential to observe that its failure, and the consequent necessity of publicly reversing his well-known intention, is one source of Lear's extreme anger. He loved Cordelia most and knew that she loved him best, and the supreme moment to which he looked forward was that in which she should outdo her sisters in expressions of affection, and should be rewarded by that "third" of the kingdom which was the most "opulent", And then — so it naturally seemed to him — she put him to open shame.'


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33. Ibid., pp.3-4

34. Higgins' self-advertisement includes an emendation — from "do what you like" to "put up with it" — which I have not reproduced in my quotation.


36. Ibid., p.5.

37. This and all subsequent quotations quotations from Shakespeare's King Lear are from Kenneth Muir's 1952 revision of W.J.Craig's 1901 edition for the New Arden Shakespearean. Numbering of lines follows that of the Arden Shakespeare Paperback edition (London: Methuen, 1964). Subsequent quotations will be identified within the body of my chapter.

38. Bernard Gilbert, King Lear at Hordle and Other Rural Plays, 'The Old England Series', II (London: W.Collins Sons & Co., 1922), p.48. Subsequent quotations from the play, from Gilbert's preface, and from the surrounding apparatus will be identified within the body of my chapter.

39. One wishes that Gilbert had consulted Harold Brighouse's preface to his Three Lancashire Plays (London: French, 1920), pp. 7-19, where (pp.15-16) cautions are read about the advisability of using dialect to serve verisimilitude alone.

40. That Gilbert Pinion is Charles Pinion's grandson is not apparent here, nor in fact anywhere in the dialogue of King Lear at Hordle.

41. e.g., Albert's unseen father, who resisted the match with Martha, or Lawyers: White and Walton, over in Ely, who have helped draw up the deeds of gift.

42. A publisher's advertisement at the end (p.229) of the last volume published itemises the seven volumes so far published — all in London, the first four by Collins and the last three by Palmer — and makes further promises. (I assume that they were not kept, as only the first seven volumes are in the British Library. The sixth, though in the catalogue, appears to be missing.)

Pt. 1 Old England. THE GOD'S-EYE VIEW. 1921
Pt. 2 KING LEAR at Hordle and Other Rural Plays THE PEACE-PLAYS. 1922
Pt. 3 Tyler of Barnet. THE NOVEL. 1922
Pt. 4 The Rural Scene. THE POEMS. 1923
Pt. 5 Cross Lights. THE TALES. 1923
Pt. 6 Ely Market. THE MOVING PICTURES. 1924
Pt. 7 Canon Makepeace. THE SYMPOSIUM. 1925

The Parts to follow include the Letters, War-Plays, Adventures, Wanderings, Reminiscences, History, Dream, and the Pageant.

These Parts are not sequels, but differing aspects of the same
scene over the same period. When completed OLD ENGLAND will be republished as one work.

43. Ibid., p.298.

44. Publisher's advertisement at the end of King Lear at Hordle and Other Rural Plays, p.264.

45. I am here and at several points in subsequent paragraphs especially indebted to John Ellis' and Rosalind Coward's account of the critical concept of 'intertextuality' as developed by Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva. See Languages and Materialism, op.cit., note 12 above, p.52.

46. Allardyce Nicoll (*Hand-List of Plays*, English Drama 1900-1930: The Beginnings of the Modern Period /Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973, p.667) records that King Lear at Hordle was licensed for performance at the Carver Recreation Club, Marple, on 19 March 1923. He records that three other plays in the volume King Lear at Hordle and Other Rural Plays were likewise licensed, but none of them for performance at the same place, let alone on the same night.

47. The other Shakespearean plays which are quoted in How Pleasant to Know Mrs.Lear are Twelfth Night and Macbeth. All the Shakespearean quotes are ascribed to either the suffragette sister (Britannia) or the stage-struck serving-maid (Salome), who at her first entry and the play's opening 'produces from her blouse, like a conjuror, an enormous "Complete Works" of Shakespeare, opens it and strikes an attitude between the table and the fireplace. She keeps the featherduster in her left hand' while proceeding to read. (C. Causley, How Pleasant to Know Mrs.Lear /London: Frederick Muller, Ltd., 1944, One-Act Plays, No. 44, pp.129-152. This quotation, p.131.


49. In the first of two paragraphs which dismiss Mr.Lear with a less-than-exactly-accurate plot summary, Ruby Cohn (Modern Shakespeare Offshoots, op.cit., Note 9 above, p.252) says that Craine is 'roughly modeled on Somerset Maugham, the celebrated uncle of Robin'. She does not offer any evidence, beyond this fact of familial connexion, for the identification, nor for her subsequent hypothesis that the three Craine daughters may owe something to Robin Maugham's three sisters.

50. 'P.D.', reviewing the premiere of Maugham's Mr.Lear for the Worthing Gazette (26 Sept.1956), moreover, recognised West End material when he saw it: 'Would it go in the West End? Quite easily, in my opinion, with a certain amount of second-act tightening.'
51. Robin Maugham = Robert Cecil Romer, Viscount Maugham, Mr. Lear: A Comedy in Three Acts (London: English Theatre Guild, 1956), p.12. All subsequent quotations from Maugham's Mr. Lear will be identified within the body of my chapter.

52. Emlyn Williams, The Light of Heart: A Play in Three Acts (London: William Heinemann, 1940; Heinemann Drama Library, 1957), stage direction p.68. Subsequent quotations will be from this text and will be identified within the body of my chapter.

53. Most notably, when Maddoc Thomas is first offered the part, his initial excitement (accompanied by a convenient burst of offstage music from the Royal Opera House nearby) is checked by the self-posed question: (pp.62-63):

   MADDOC: But would I remember King Lear?...... Isn't it one of the longest — oh, God, don't let it be like Hamlet — it'll fall through, I expect... (The music dies away.)

54. A desperate parallel could be pulled out of the fact that Catrin's fiancé declares himself to be a bastard, but Williams seems to have introduced this point mainly in order to establish the character's personal insecurity.

55. The tour was in November of 1940. The original production, which had opened on 21st February of that year, had been cut short in May by developments in the war. See Richard Findlater, Emlyn Williams, Theatre World Monographs No.8, (London: Rockcliff Publishing Corp., 1956), p.56.


57. ibid., p.40.

58. It is interesting in this connexion to compare the opinions and practice of Michel St.Denis and Jonathan Miller as to whether or not Shakespeare should be staged in any style of performance other than that assumed by the playwright and implicit in his texts. St.Denis (Theatre: The Rediscovery of Style (London: Heinemann, 1960), Part II, 'Classical Theatre & Modern Realism', especially pp.76-89) strongly opposes the practice. Miller (T.S.Eliot memorial lectures at the University of Kent at Canterbury, 28 November - 1 December 1977) strongly recommends it. Without rehashing the arguments on either side, I would think it impossible that a coherent defence of the practice as programme — rather than as one/two/even three-off experiment — could have been made at a time when naturalism was still supplying the professional theatre
with its dominant idiom. As an argument from within the assumptions of theatrical naturalism, a 1949 article by Arthur Mizener is intriguing both for its recognition of the theatre's dependence upon conventions and yet also for its insistence upon their invisibility: '...the one necessary characteristic of a convention is that it should be conventional — i.e., like good conventions in any sphere, accepted habitually and unselfconsciously....A set of conventions...may be manipulated in all sorts of ways. But it must be coherent. We must not be made conscious of the artificiality of a set of conventions by insertion among them of one devised for different imaginative conditions; and the basic imaginative assumption of the set as a whole must not be violated by the way that they are handled' ('Poetic Drama and the Well-Made Play', English Institute Essays 1949/50 New York: Columbia University Press, 1950, pp. 33-54. This quotation, pp.42 and 44.)

59. As I was writing this chapter, I came across a small reminder of this access of freedom in an appraisal of a year's worth of new playwriting at the Royal Shakespeare Company's experimental London theatre, the Warehouse:

There is...an...important assumption underlying much Warehouse work: that the stage enjoys the same geographical freedom as film or TV drama. Most plays written this century take place in rooms. Not any longer. Various Warehouse plays over the past year have taken the characters to the middle of the Serpentine, a beach at Elyth, the mines of an off-shore island and the banks of an Oriental river. In short, a dramatist can now put on the stage anything. (M. Billington, Guardian 20 September 1978 p.10).

What Billington does not make clear here is that the stage dramatist is now also free, as in film or television, to take away something as promptly as he's put it on stage.


61. This quotation is from the text of King Lear's Wife as printed in Bottomley's Poems and Plays (London: Bodley Head, 1953), pp.129-163. This quotation, p.139. Subsequent quotations from the play will be from this text and their pagination will be indicated within the body of my chapter.

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reviewer (of Bottomley's King Lear's Wife and Other Plays (London: Constable & Co., 1920)) wondered whether Mr. Gordon Bottomley — though calling his creations by their Shakespearean names in his heart — would not have done better to call his monarch Cole or Cadwallader in print... It is a play which would not be spoiled if, in a pet, he had called the protagonists Smith, Jones, and Robinson.' (From a laudatory gobbet quoted, in many al., in the concluding pages of the second, revised edition of King Lear's Wife and Other Plays (London: Constable & Co., 1922, p.218.)


64. As Priscilla Thouless put it: 'Gordon Bottomley needs the stimulus of other minds than his own, whether the stimulus is to come from a picture, from a picture, from literature, or from ancient legend.' (Modern Poetic Drama (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1934), pp.159-70.

65. This dedicatory poem, dated 29th February 1916, was first published with the text of the play in the first edition of King Lear's Wife and Other Plays. (See note 60 above.) The Senate House Library of the University of London has a copy of this collection which bears on the flyleaf an inscription in Bottomley's hand: 'To Tom and Marie Sturge Moore from their friend Gordon Bottomley / Silverdale, Aug. 9th, 1920.' The Senate House also has a copy of the first published text of King Lear's Wife, that which had been given the place of honour in Edward Marsh's anthology Georgian Poetry II (London: The Poetry Bookshop, 1915), pp.3-47. Bound in with this text are the dedicatory poem and the three new songs which Bottomley wrote for the London Premiere of the play (His Majesty's Theatre, 19 May 1916) after the Lord Chamberlain had censored the Corpsewasher's song at the world premiere (Birmingham Repertory Theatre, 25 September 1915). Both the poem and the song are in Bottomley's autograph, and the songs also bear extensive additions and emendations in another hand, identified as Sturge Moore's in the Senate House Library catalogue.

66. The sonnets were first published in Bottomley's Poems at White-Nights: A Book of Verse, Unicorn Books of Verse, No.5 (London: Unicorn, 1899), pp.82-3, 86 and 87. They are reprinted in Bottomley's Poems of Thirty Years (London: Constable & Co., 1925), pp.116-118, where dates of composition are indicated. The prologue was also first published in Poems at White-Nights (p.74), but I have not found it reprinted elsewhere.

The song was first published in Bottomley's Chambers of Imagery, 2nd series (London: Elgin Mathews, 1912), pp.34-35. It is reprinted in Poems of Thirty Years, pp.59-60.

68. Bottomley explained this retrospectively: 'Beginning with such proportions and length as Maeterlinck had used, the form gradually extended its balance; until...I was consciously enlarging my conceptions of a one—act design to accommodate a large range of material, and accepting the fifteen hundred or so lines of the classic Greek plays as the ideal size for a one—act piece' (A Stage for Poetry, op.cit. [note 62], p.3).

69. Crookback's Crown is further fleshed out by an unspecified number of supernumerary 'OFFICERS in attendance upon the King and Lord Stanley: MONKS AND SERVITORS of the Bishop's train: MEN-AR-ARMS.' The text of Crookback's Crown was posthumously published in Durham University Journal, vol.XXXix [new series vol.viii], nos. 1 and 2 (December 1946 and March 1947), pp.1—12 and 43—57. This quotation, p.1.

70. With the observing third figure indicated in square brackets, the series may be summarised as follows: Merryn; Lear & Physician; Goneril & Ugæ; Goneril & Gormflaith; Lear & Gormflaith; Ugæ; Goneril & Merryn; Goneril & Lear; Goneril & Gormflaith, Younger and Elder Corpsewashers; Corpsewashers, Goneril & Lear; Younger and Elder Corpsewashers.

71. The only figure who remains on stage throughout the play is the title figure, who is on her deathbed and in a fluctuating state of consciousness. Every time Bottomley clears the stage to set up another two—part conversation, he has to account for the abandonment of a dying queen by her family and household. Every time he matches up a new pair of speakers, he has to account for their convergence in the deathchamber.

72. From Coleridge's manuscripts and marginalia on Troilus and Cressida, in Coleridge on Shakespeare, ed. Terence Hawkes (First published in the U.S.A. by Putnam under the title Coleridge's Writings on Shakespeare in 1959; this quotation from the Penguin edition of 1969, p.270).

Priscilla Thouless again puts it well: 'There is in King Lear's Wife no background, no sense of continuous life flowing behind the people.' (op.cit. [Note 64 above], p.173)
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73. D.K. Gros Louis writes in her thesis that 'Selfishness is its theme' (op.cit. p.5 and note No.3 to my Introduction, p.20).


75. This quotation from Cruchian is from the text printed in the 1953 edition of Bottomley's Poems and Plays, op.cit. (note 61 above), p.170.

76. op.cit. (note 69 above) p.1.

77. The incident is the ill-omened theft of Richard III's crown by a patriotic Highlander named MacGregor. Bottomley specifies and quotes from his sources in an authorial note appended to the published text (ibid., p.57).


80. For example, John Freeman, reviewing the first edition of King Lear's Wife and Other Plays in The Bookman: 'The new play is a beam of light through the darkness of the old.' (Quoted in concluding pages of the second edition - see above, note 62, p.216).

81. See J.R. Bessinger, A Short Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon Poetry: In a Normalized Early West-Saxon Orthography (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), p.37, col.1. Following J.F. Madden's and F.P. Magoun, Jr.'s figures in A Grouped Frequency Word-List of Anglo-Saxon Poetry (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1957, 1960). Bessinger says that the word Hygd (feminine or neuter noun)/Hyge (masculine noun)/Hygdis (adjective or suffix) has a frequency of 571. 'The range,' according to Bessinger's preface (p.vi), 'is from unique occurrences to 15774'.

82. In a letter of late April 1914, shortly after he had received the completed text of King Lear's Wife and wired Bottomley his congratulations, Edward Marsh objected to the name of the title figure: 'What is the eye or ear to make of Hygd? Your Queen's name ought to become a sacred and familiar thing to everyone who cares for poetry — you must not make us gerk it up like a cough.' On the 30th of April Bottomley claimed for the name 'a kind of gaunt monolithic dignity which rather satisfies me'; and the following year, in connexion with the play's first production, he again resisted appeals for an alteration: 'Truly I don't want it to be mellifluous. I want it to be gaunt and Stonehengy and hard.' (Marsh's correspondence remains unpublished in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, and it is only through secondary sources that I have any acquaintance with the letters to Marsh from and
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85. The phrase is varied from Raymond Williams' phrases, 'the limitations of probable conversation' and 'the bounds of likely conversation', in the Introduction to his Drama From Tennyson to Eliot (first published Chatto & Windus 1952, Peregrine edition Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), pp. 28, 29.

86. 2 October 1915 (vol. xxxii, new series no. 126), p. 7.

87. 'Some Poets of Today', The Nineteenth Century, vol. LXXX, whole no. 477 (November 1916), pp. 1003-1022; reprinted as 'Some Modern Poets' in Mais' From Shakespeare to O. Henry; and again in Rogers' anthology, op. cit. (note 67 above), pp. 160-176. This quotation is from the text as printed in the last named, p. 165.

88. op. cit. (note 80 above).

89. op. cit. (note 67 above).


Confirmation of Rogers' identification — and some evidence that Strachey's criticism long rankled with Bottomley — may be found in an autograph letter bound in with a presentation copy of Bottomley's Lyric Plays (London: Constable & Co., 1932) which is now in the Senate House Library of the University of London. Sending this copy to Allan Bright on 26 August 1939, Bottomley wrote 'St. Loe Strachey, once of "The Spectator", told me long ago that my work was too like that of the housepainter in his village, who spoil his oak-graining with too many knots: to which I replied he was mistaken — my knots were not painted ones, they were the roots of real timber.' The simile reported as Strachey's had been made in the review published in The Spectator some twenty-three years earlier.


93. 'Some Aspects of the Style of King Lear', op. cit. (note 18 above)
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96. op.cit. (note 62 above), p.184

97. First published Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951. I have some reservations about the Stanislavskyan extremes to which Joseph takes his argument, particularly in the second (1964) edition of the book, but I am convinced by his account of gesture and line-delivery. Also pertinent to my purposes of quibbling with McCarthy is Joseph's insistence (pp.102-3, second edition) that when the text of an Elizabethan play departs from realism into asides, monologues, and soliloquies, there is no reason to think that the actors broke character.

98. Priscilla Thouless (op.cit. Note 64 above, pp.163-165 and 177) gives a good account of the pictorial quality in Bottomley's lyrics and plays alike.

This she relates to the influence upon him, as a young man, of Rossetti and, as an adult, of Shannon and Ricketts, 'who perhaps not unfairly may be described as literary painters, that is to say painters who depend more upon the associations which their work can arouse in the mind of the beholder than upon the relations of form and colour in the painting....For Gordon Bottomley both arts are different sides of the same coin, for to him they both bring into ordinary life the world of romance and legend, and both arts present visually, one in paint and the other in words, the objects the painter and poet sees in his mind' (ibid., pp.164-5, my underscoring).

Alan Pryce-Jones also offers some irresistibly quotable comments in this connexion. Discussing the fourth Georgian Poetry anthology but illustrating his remarks with a long quotation from the opening scene direction of King Lear's Wife, he writes: 'The twin ghosts which hover over this landscape are those of Keats and Miss Muffet. One looks into page after page with an astonishment like that engendered by a "Studio Year-Book of Decorative Art" of the same period; there is very little difference between the inspiration which prompted Lancelles Abercrombie or John Drinkwater to verse and that which turned to embroidered and applique panels, stained glass depicting a bobby-haired chorister walking towards his rickety, but celestial, city, or "Dryad" furniture in painted wicker.' (The Georgian Poets!, Penguin New Writing 35 1948. Reprinted in Rogers' anthology, op.cit. Note 67 above, pp.353-372. This quotation, p.358.
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105. Biographical information here mainly from C.C. Abbott’s introductions to Poet and Painter, op.cit. (Note 74 above), pp.xi—xxix, and to Bottomley’s 1953 Poems and Plays, op.cit. (Note 61 above), pp.9-19. Some further information has been taken from Hassall’s biography of Marsh, op.cit. (Note 82 above), pp.247, 277-279, and from the letters in Poet and Painter, passim.

King Lear’s Wife was written at a slow pace — 12 to 20 lines a day — from 1911 until late summer of 1913; and revisions were not completed until Easter of the following year. For the bulk of composition, see the working procedures described in an unpublished autobiographical note from which Abbott quotes at length in his introduction to the 1953 Poems and Plays, p.15.


107. See Bottomley to Nash, 19 September 1922: ‘Thirty-one years ago I read “The Stage” every week and believed all it said. From this you can make a positively mathematical calculation of the distance I have travelled in the time’, (Poet and Painter, op.cit. ‘Note 74 above’, p.158).


A footnote to p.61 of Poet and Painter (op.cit. Note 74 above) quotes Bottomley without specifying a source: ‘I do not expect ever to see the play better done or with so beautiful an ensemble’ as at the Birmingham première.


Bottomley’s praise of the building is from a letter of 26 August 1917 to Paul Nash, in Poet and Painter, op.cit. (Note 74 above), p.87.

111. A Stage for Poetry, op.cit. (Note 63 above), p.13. In an article on ‘Gordon Bottomley and Poetic Drama,’ C. Carmer reports that the costumes and decor for the Birmingham Repertory production were the work of Barry Jackson himself (Theatre Arts Monthly, vol. XIV, No. 2 [February 1936], p.158).

112 According to Bottomley’s years-later account in A Stage for Poetry, the Birmingham Repertory production was distinguished by ‘perfect delivery of the verse (first object of John Drinkwater’s sedulous care)’ (op.cit. ‘Note 63 above’, p.13). That the verse was not, however, uniformly perfect in delivery is indicated by the opening-night review in the Birmingham Daily Mail for 27 September 1915: ‘Miss Mary Merrall, as the ante-
dated Anne Boleyn, acted very ably...but we could not tell from her delivery whether her part was written in prose or verse' (p.5).

113. See Ross, The Georgian Revolt, op.cit. (Note 82 above), pp.368-369. Ross quotes from an unpublished letter (now in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library) from Drinkwater to Marsh on 1 October 1915, the last night of the week's run: 'The houses have been bad...A "fit audience find though few"...

114. Press opinion of the relative merits of Kathleen Orford's performance as Hyyd and Margaret Chatwin's as Goneril went, for example, as follows: 'Miss Chatwin was not well cast as Goneril, but she did enough to show that she could have managed the part of the broken-hearted Queen much more effectively than the lady who actually attempted it' (Birmingham Daily Mail, op.cit. [note 112 above]); 'Miss Kathleen Orford lacks...visionary temperament and...technical equipment, and despite her sincerity, the result was a failure' (Birmingham Daily Post, 27 September 1915, p.5); 'The acting did not improve matters; excepting Mr. Ion Swinley as Lear, and Miss Margaret Chatwin as Goneril, the players failed to rise to the tasks imposed upon them' (Birmingham Evening Despatch, 25 September 1915, p.3); 'Miss Margaret Chatwin...was very good' (Birmingham Weekly Mercury, op.cit. [note 86 above]).

In contrast, Abercrombie's previously-quoted (p.419 and Note 94 above) condemnation of Chatwin's performance as Goneril was coupled with a concession that Kathleen Orford Drinkwater 'spoke magnificently'. Of the latter, Bottomley was later to write to Nash: 'I wish you could have seen her play my Queen Lear; she was the real thing, and made the part into melody and steered superbly clear of Lady Tree's irrelevant realism.' (26 August 1917, in Poet and Painter, op.cit. [Note 74 above], p.87).

115. Hassall's biography of Marsh reports that in December of 1915, by which time negotiations for the benefit matinee of May 1916 had been underway for some months, Viola Tree was planning 'to borrow the scenery of Die Walküre from Covent Garden for King Lear's Wife' (op.cit. [Note 82 above], p.376). This would seem to me to indicate that whatever scenery was eventually adopted for the production, it was likely to have been borrowed goods.

116. Bottomley to Nash, 20 January 1922: 'Viola Tree...wanted me to have the curtain at Lear's exit two lines after her own, and to cut out the finale of the corpse-washers; and when I wouldn't she cut out half of it all by herself.' (Bottomley proceeds to compare Viola Tree's cutting of his play with Ellen Terry's of Ibsen's The Vikings at Helgeland in Gordon-Craig's production of 1903; and the choice of comparison reveals how firmly that production was fixed in his mind.) Bottomley to Nash 19 March 1922: 'I doubt if Viola Tree is even neat-minded: she simply wanted the curtain for herself.' (Poet and Painter, op.cit. [note 74 above], pp.133, 139.)
117. Bottomley's public judgement, in A Stage for Poetry, of the work of Lady and Viola Tree in King Lear's Wife, was cagily flattering: 'The outstanding performances were Lady Tree's fine tragic conception of the Queen and a handsome, vital presentation of Goneril by her daughter Viola' (op. cit., Note 63 above, p.13). In private, and nearer the time of the production, his comments were less charitable. See the 26 August 1917 letter from Bottomley to Nash, quoted in Note 114 above. See also Nash' letter of 1 January 1917 citing Lady Tree's acting as among 'the miserable ineffectualities of that performance' of King Lear's Wife, and Bottomley's reply on 7 January 1917: 'I am delighted to hear that you liked Lady Tree's performance of Queen Lear as much as I did. I liked Lady Tree, for she seemed rather a dear and proved much more considerate than her daughter, as well as more conscientious about her work' (Poet and Painter, op. cit. Note 74 above, pp.81, 83-84). Hassall's biography of Marsh gives some hints that Viola Tree's mind may have been preoccupied with Ivor Novello, who composed the settings for the songs for the London production of King Lear's Wife (op. cit. Note 82 above, pp.376-377 and 392).

118. In that 7 January 1917 letter cited in the immediately preceding note, Bottomley wrote: 'I look forward to a day when actors and actresses will not spoil everything for you; for the Birmingham premiere of King Lear's Wife assured me this need not be. Sometimes I wonder if a perfect solution would not be the banishment of actresses; for it is harder to find good actresses than good actors. The Elizabethans did without them, and the Elizabethans knew quite a lot. I have just been hearing wonders of the Japanese court theatre, where plain men play beautiful women more beautifully than beautiful women could!' (Poet and Painter, p.84). One wonders from whom Bottomley first heard of the Noh drama; but it was very likely through the example of Yeats that he interested himself in its conventions. By 1929 he would identify the Noh drama as the ancient analogue of that 'subtler form of drama' to which he had turned and Yeats as 'the first user of our tongue to seek in an acclimatisation of this foreign form an escape from the difficulties and impossibilities with which the alienation of the modern theatre has confronted the dramatic poet' (authorial 'Note' to Bottomley's Scenes and Plays, London: Constable, 1929, p.121).

119. On Sybil Thorndike, see Bottomley to Nash on: 11 July 1922 ('She must be pretty nearly our best living actress'); 16 January 1924 ('It is the noble Sybil who reconciles me to the affair' of Basil Dean's Playbox production of Cruach at the St. Martin's Theatre); and again on 27 March 1924 ('Sybil clearly was superb, but there seems to have been little ensemble to give her a suitable setting') — Poet and Painter, op. cit. (note 74 above) pp.150, 177 and 179.
On the Scottish National Players, see Bottomley to Nash on: 27 March 1923 ("Gruach in Glasgow was a dream of delight...... the Scotch voices are lovely, the Scotch players act with the intensity of people who are new to art and in a passion of love with it, and they got inside the psychology of my people as English players rarely do..."; and 2 January 1924 ("...we have been in Scotland Gruaching...if you heard the voices of the Scottish sirens you wouldn't wonder at our unwillingness to come home so long as they were turning me into celestial music nightly") — ibid., pp.171,173. And in A Stage for Poetry (op.cit. [Note 63 above], p.18) Bottomley credits the Scottish National Players with relieving him of any self-doubts brought on by reviewers' recommendations that he return to lyric verse. The difference between the theatrical conditions under which the Scottish National Players worked in the mid 1920's and those of the West End during the same period is evident from Sir Tyrone Guthrie's account of his years (1926-28) with the company. See his A Life in the Theatre (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), paperback edition pp.46-53.

The kinship between Terence Gray's ideas and those which Bottomley adopted in the 1920's is striking — particularly so in the emphasis which both placed upon stylised speech in conjunction with stylised movement. Compare for example, the comments which each made on this subject in articles published in the same volume of the same periodical: Gray's 'Verse Speaking and Movement in the Modern Theatre,' Drama, vol.VI, no. 5 (February 1928), pp.69-70; and Bottomley's 'A Note on Dramatic Poetry,' Drama, vol.VI, N.o.10 (July 1928), pp.146-148 and especially p.148. By 1930 Bottomley could write: 'only one professional theatre-man will interest himself in my experiments, and that is Terence Gray of the Cambridge Festival Theatre' (Poet and Painter, op.cit. [Note 74 above], p.198.

The editor's footnote to this sentence remarks, 'There is some account of Terence Gray...in GB's unpublished Chronology,' but I have not traced this autobiographical fragment; and the passages quoted from it in Abbott's previously cited [Note 61 above] Introduction to Bottomley's Poems and Plays do not include any remarks about Gray). Years later, in an article published near the end of his life, Bottomley wrote that 'the Cambridge Festival Theatre was so far the only attempt made in England at fundamental innovation in the theatre, and the creation of a universal stage' ("A Note on Poetry and the Stage," op.cit. [Note 83 above], p.27).

120. A Stage for Poetry, op.cit. (Note 63 above), p.18.

121. Bottomley's work in the late 1920's and early 1930's was linked with the experiments of the Scottish Association for the Speaking of Verse and with the Oxford Recitations, verse-speaking contests organised by John Masefield in 1923-29. See Bottomley's Stage for Poetry, op.cit. (Note 63 above), p.19; the authorial note appended to his 1929 Scenes and Plays, op.cit. (Note 119 above), pp.120—123; the authorial note which prefaces his Lyric Plays (London: Constable, 1932), pp.vii-x; and his 6 January 1930 letter to Nash in Poet and Painter, op.cit. (Note 74 above), p.197. A general account of the Oxford Recitations may be found in Constance Babington Smith, John Masefield: A Biography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp.189-191.
122. The specific influence of Yeats upon Bottomley in this respect has been variously appraised. See: H.H. Anminah Gowda, The Revival of English Poetic Drama in the Edwardian and Georgian Period (Bangalore: Government Press, 1963), p.77; Nicoll, English Drama 1900-1930, op.cit. (Note 46 above), pp.301-302; and Thoulse, Modern Poetic Drama, op.cit. (Note 64 above), pp.169-170 and 179-185. Bottomley himself tended to emphasize the differences in their respective approaches to a shared goal. Writing to Nash about his first play, for example, he insisted that any seeming similarities between it and Yeats' work were consequent upon shared derivation from Maeterlinck and Fiona MacLeod. (See Poet and Painter, op.cit. (Note 74 above), p.231.) Or again, in the authorial note appended to the 1929 Scenes and Plays, Bottomley acknowledges that he has borrowed 'Mr. Yeats' fortunate invention of the Curtain Bearing and Folding device for setting the stage when there is no prosenium or scenery,'but notes at the same time that 'this precise solutions...are not possible to any one but himself' (op.cit. (Note 118 above), p.121).
While I think it undeniable that Yeats' work exerted some measure of direct influence upon Bottomley, I would emphasize that their shared ambitions for poetry as an imitation of spiritual/intellectual — as emphatically opposed to material — phenomena were very widespread among early twentieth-century proponents of verse drama. Good examples contemporary with Bottomley would include Abercrombie's 'The Function of Poetry in the Drama,' The Poetry Review, vol. I No.3 (March 1912); pp.107-118; and Halcott Glover, Drama and Mankind: A Vindication and a Challenge (London: Ernest Benn, 1923). It should also be noted that in proposing a division of drama into imitation and passion, William Archer ('The Essence of Drama' in The Old Drama and the New, London: William Heinemann, 1923, pp.1-25) assumes a dichotomy which seems to me fundamentally similar to that assumed by the champions of verse drama. (Discarding rather than enshrining the emotional values represented by verse, Archer did of course proceed in a very different direction. One even finds him, in his prefatory justifications of his Beatris Juana and Lydia, defending his adoption of verse in these plays 'rather as dialect than as a poetical form' (Three Plays, (London: Constable & Co., 1927), p.94.)

The Idealist opposition has proved very durable in discussions of verse/poetic drama. See, for example, Charles Morgan, Dialogue in Novels and Plays, Herman Ould Memorial Lecture No.1 (Aldington, Ashford, Kent: Hand and Flower Press, 1954), especially p.16. And it seems to me to be the direct ancestor of Gareth Lloyd Evans' antinomies, as quoted above (p.8 and note 8).

NOTES: CHAPTER FOURS

123. In *A Stage for Poetry*, Bottomley divides his dramatic work into 'Plays for a Theatre Outworn' — i.e., 'my plays collected in the two volumes King Lear's Wife and Other Plays and Gruach and Britain's Daughter' — and 'Plays for a Theatre Unborn' — i.e., most of his later work (op. cit. Note 63 above, pp. 2-3).


125. Bottomley to Nash, 12 December 1919: 'The Elizabethan drama is our nation's greatest success and pride because Shakespeare and the others had to satisfy the public and keep their theatres open before they could begin to satisfy their artistic consciences and such carping colleagues as Jonson: if their theatres didn't pay they were done for' (*Post and Painter*, op. cit. Note 74 above, p. 117).


127. 'Author's Preface' to *Lear* (London: Methuen, 1972), pp. x-v-xiv. All quotations from Bond's *Lear* will be from this published text and their pagination will be given within the body of my chapter.


Later interviews with Bond which I have found helpful have included: Tony Coul, 'Creating what is normal', *Plays and Players*, vol. XXIII, no. 3 (December 1975), pp. 9-13; and John Walker, 'Man with a Cure for Violence', *Observer Magazine*, 18 July 1976, pp. 6-7.

129. The same problem also becomes quite pronounced in an exchange between Irving Wardle and Bond in the *Gambit* 'Discussion with Edward Bond' (cited immediately above), pp. 11-12.

130. Richard Scharine has pointed out that Bond's spare, functional poetry...is almost completely devoid of simile' (*The Plays of Edward Bond* / Lewisburg, Penn.: Bucknell University Press, and London: Associated University Presses, 1976/7, p. 282). Bond's own working definition of 'poetry' is given in this statement: 'I think my plays are poetry. You see this is what I dislike about the poetic drama that one gets nowadays; it's added something to prose. Poetry is what you have left when you take the prose away. Poetry is a simplified form of prose' (*Gambit discussion*, op. cit. Note 128 above, pp. 34-35). Such a definition does not necessarily preclude the use of simile (though arguably it renders this less likely); but I think that, in *Lear* at least, Bond's argumentative method
and assumptions do forbid its use. If the image of man as a caged animal were to be construed as a simile rather than as a literal description, the argument which it encapsulates could be dismissed as, at best, half the story.

131. The two monograph-length studies of Bond which have been published in the U.K. to date — Simon Trussler's Edward Bond, ed. Ian Scott-Kilvert, Writers and Their Work No. 249 (London: Longman Group Ltd. for the British Council, 1976) and Tony Coult's The Plays of Edward Bond: A Study (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977) — could be instanced as exemplifying these tendencies. Coult's booklet is, however, a rather more extreme specimen of the second school than Trussler's is of the first.

132. See his comment on the central character of The Pope's Wedding: 'Scopey doesn't understand his situation, not at all, but I wanted the audience to understand the way it could happen to Scopey, who I suppose is a typical member of the audience in a sense....If one took any other member of that crowd, one could write the same sort of play around him. It's just contingency — you have to focus on certain people!' ('Drama and the Dialectics of Violence,' op.cit. [Note 128 above, p.7)."

133. Bond has said that the choice of subject matter from the past is 'a consequence that arises from one's attempt to understand the present. I imagine that at some time I will start writing plays that are set in the future. In any case, as far as I'm concerned, all my plays are about the present. It's just that in order to carry out my analysis, I found it helpful to distance the subject sometimes and to try and look at things that go wrong when they begin to go wrong' (Plays and Players interview with Tony Coult, op.cit. [Note 128 above, p.10).

On the anachronisms, see the postcard from Bond to Gaskell which is quoted (without specification of date) in Gregory Dark's published casebook on the Royal Court premiere of Lear: 'I think we should keep the anachronisms. They're rather important and part of my style — and the design has to solve this problem.... The anachronisms are for the horrible moments in a dream when you know it's a dream but can't help being afraid. They are like a debt that has to be paid. Or as if a truth clutched at anything to save itself from drowning. So the anachronisms aren't careless or frivolous touches — they are like desperate facts' (Theatre Quarterly, vol. II, whole No.5, [January-March 1972] p.22).

On the medley of idioms and styles of speech, see Coult's remarks as quoted in the body of my chapter (p.435). Possibly relevant in this connexion is an article by Bond which was published in 1966 in connexion with a Royal Court production of Middleton's Chaste Maid in Cheapside: 'The Jacobean playwright worked partly by creating in the audiences the pleasures both he and they condemned — the pleasures of the strong and cunning, and this meant that Middleton is often lubricious, sadistic and satirical. These pleasures are found in human nature side by side with the wish to be kind and compassionate, and the Jacobians were uninhibited enough to be entertained and amused by them. The social value of the experience was achieved by the use of wit and compassion, and
the other formal dramatic arts....Middleton's language reflects and describes the audience's emotional response' ('The Greatest Hack', Guardian, 13 January 1966, p.6).

On the drawing of parallels within Lear, see Scharine, op.cit. (note 130 above), pp.201-1 and 217-219, where parallels across to Shakespeare's King Lear are also drawn. Scharine subsequently (pp.271-277) discusses internal paralleling in Bond's plays in general. See also Horst Oppel, 'Success and Failure of Bond's Approach to Shakespeare's Tragedy', Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur: Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse (Mainz), Jahrgang 1974, No. 2, pp.14-15. Oppel points out: 'The repetition of individual scenes or of whole series of scenes is...a continuous experiment in probing the depths of misfortunes that transform people into slaves.'

The overall effect of Bond's dramaturgic characteristics is perhaps best summarised by a remark he made in an interview given while he was at work on The Pool: 'I don't like the idea of telling a story any more. What you ought to say to an audience is "I've looked at this and this, now what do you think about it?"' (interview with Hugh Hebert in The Guardian, 14 August 1974, p.10).

134. Nor, on the other hand, is it ever possible to judge a figure in isolation. Oppel (op.cit. Note 133 above, p.10) accurately describes the preclusion of such judgment, though in phrasing which suggests he disapproves: 'Throughout the whole play, the true motivations for cause and effect are misjudged and shrouded in the pseudo-logic of symbolic references, such that it is almost impossible to differentiate between the guilty and the innocent. Of course, Bond's Lear does this and that, which constitutes a grave injustice. And he is punished in this way or that way, but he is not punished for doing this or that. Those who punish him will be punished themselves, but again not because they wronged Lear.'

135. Notably, in the Gambit discussion, op.cit. (Note 128 above) p.19: 'I dislike anybody who imagines the answers to life are cerebral and that the problems are cerebral....I don't think there is disagreement between cerebral questions and physical questions at all.'

Bond's insistence on the embodiment of intellect helps to make sense of some otherwise puzzling pronouncements from him. One is his curious remark that 'ghosts are always nasty & corrupt' (Dark's casebook, op.cit. Note 133 above, p.27; see also Gambit discussion, op.cit. Note 128 above, p.16). The other is his intense antipathy towards academics (who come in for caricature in Lear in the person of the Fourth Prisoner) and abstract inquiry. Especially memorable in this last connexion is Bond's comment on German response to The Sea: 'They had trouble seeing the sea's metaphysical significance. When it had nothing to do with metaphysics whatsoever' (Hugh Hebert interview in The Guardian, op.cit. Note 133 above, p.10).
NOTES: CHAPTER FOUR


137. '...Mirror Scene (II, i)...betrays its model — Shakespeare's Richard II (IV, i)' — Oppel, op.cit. (Note 133 above), p. 9.

Jane Howell, who assisted William Gaskill on the direction of the première productions of Narrow Road to the Deep North and Bingo, has said of actors playing in Saved and Narrow Road to the Deep North 'that they're concerned with the actual thing they are doing, I mean, there is always a physical action being presented which they play' (Gambit 'Discussion with Edward Bond', op.cit. /Note 128 above/, p. 29). And Bond himself has said that 'I think there are special ways of doing my plays, there are special ways of speaking my language... The plays...have to be played with the efficiency of athletes or acrobats. They're very closely written and the language ought to be followed exactly as it's written' (Coult, interview for Plays & Players, op.cit. /Note 128 above/, pp. 10-11. I would simply emphasise that when Bond's verbal language is followed exactly as it is written, the physical action becomes apparent — whether to the reader or to the audience.

138. By my tally:

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<th>PASSAGE QUOTED FROM</th>
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<td>II, 6</td>
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139. Modern Shakespeare Offshoots, op.cit. /Note 9 above/, p. 265.

140. See Gregory Dark's published casebook on the Royal Court production, entries for 29 July — 'A meeting with Yves Simard, our Graphic Designer, about the publicity poster....Yves felt the central image was of a caged beast — the poster should show this and the violence in the play. Bill Gaskill, who directed the production, felt that the poster should either depict Shakespeare's archetypal figure of the old man, or that, it should fight directly against any suggestion of what Shakespeare's Lear could possibly be' — and 5 August — 'After rehearsals, we returned to the Court to see Yves' poster design — a hog with blood running from its mouth with bars in the background and wallowing in straw. Bill thought it was too jolly — though Edward uses comic elements, he doesn't use crude effects and the poster needed more dignity and to show the experience of pain and suffering in the play. Edward Bond was telephoned for his advice...He liked the image of an animal in a cage, but
thought it should be a monkey rather than a pig, perhaps crouched in the corner' (op.cit. Note 133 above, pp.24-26).

Bond's refinement upon Simard's design was adopted.

141. For example: 'Shakespeare took this character, and I wanted to correct it so that it would become a viable model for me and, I would like to think, for our society. Shakespeare does arrive at an answer to the problems of his particular society, and that was the idea of total resignation, accepting what comes, and discovering that a human being can accept an enormous lot and survive it. He can come through his storm. What I want to say is that this model is inadequate now: that it just does not work. Acceptance is not enough....Shakespeare had time. He must have thought that in time certain changes would be made. But time has speeded up enormously, and for us, time is running out' (Hall's interview for The Guardian, op.cit. Note 128 above, p.10). And again: 'I wanted to explain that Lear was responsible, but that it was very important that he could not get out of his problems simply by suffering the consequences, or by endurance and resignation. He had to live through the consequences and struggle with them' ('Drama and the Dialectics of Violence', op.cit. Note 128 above, p.9).

142. See Gregory Dark's published casebook on the Royal Court production, entry for 13 June: 'Much talk...as to where we should store the wall...Talk as well as to whether we ought to see the wall in the two early scenes set near the wall, or whether we should save it for the last scene....We decided...that the wall...should be stored in the wings...and that we would wait for the last scene to show it' (op.cit. Note 133 above, p.23).


144. 'I find it curious the way that an image can dominate whole groups of people and, when one looks at the same image a little later, it's very, very funny. If you see newsreels of Hitler today, they are terribly funny. He has all the gimmicks of a comic...He is exactly as Brecht has made us see him. But somebody as grotesque as that had this incredible influence and produced this incredible damage. I wanted to use mythical figures and mythical periods because...we're living in a mythical time right now. I wanted to show how people are trapped by those myths and how they must shake them off if they're ever to be really free' (Bond, interviewed by Marowitz for New York Times, op.cit. Note 128 above, p.5).

145. Op.cit. (Note 130 above), pp.181-222, especially 200-201 and 205. Scharine is, however, much more interested in expounding Bond's argument in terms of Lear's development through the play than in attending to the language which carries that argument.
NOTES: CHAPTER FOUR

146. One of the very important things in the play was to re-define the relationship between Cordelia and Lear. Cordelia in Shakespeare's play is an absolute menace...a very dangerous type of person, and I thought that the other daughters, though I'm not excusing them, were very unfairly treated and misunderstood. What I wanted Lear to do was to recognize that they were his daughters — they had been formed by his activity, they were children of his state, and he was totally responsible for them. (Bond in 'Drama and the Dialectics of Violence', op.cit. [Note 128], p.10).

147. The phrase is from Bond's preface to Lear: 'I have not tried to say what the future should be like...If your plan of the future is too rigid you start to coerce people to fit into it. We do not need a plan of the future, we need a method of change' (p.xiii).

148. For the Shakespearean explanation, see Cohn as quoted on p. 442 above. See also Oppel, op.cit. (Note 133 above), pp.9-10, where it is asserted that 'occasionally one gets the impression that Bond simply cannot free himself from Shakespeare's diction. A whole list of echo words can be registered that carry over from one tragedy into the other. . . .'. Worth (op.cit. [Note 143 above], p.180) discusses the autopsy scene as a fantastic projection of the Shakespearean metaphor — 'Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart' (Act III, scene vi, lines 76-77 [Arden edition]). However, in a footnote to this discussion she points out that Bond has informed her 'that he didn't consciously have Shakespeare's lines in mind at this point. He was thinking, rather, of Rembrandt's autopsies.'

Scharine (op.cit. [Note 130 above]), whose book persistently proclaims the detection of womb images, devotes several pages (267-271) of its final chapter to 'Christian symbolism' in and 'Oedipal aspects' of Bond's plays, and concludes (p.271): 'To isolate all of the Christian and Oedipal symbolism to be found in Bond's plays is probably a hopeless task. It is sufficient to say that in some sense each Bond plot repeats the basic elements of the Christ/Oedipus legend: God/Laius/Society destroys Christ/Oedipus/Innocents in order to save His followers/himself the system.' Authorial resistance to this line of interpretation is, not surprisingly, firm. Having catalogued what he takes to be images of uterine regression (including, from Lear, the Gravedigger's Boy's house), Scharine notes (p.270): 'Bond himself objects strongly to the womb designation of the above images, arguing logically that the desire of his characters for protection is not made more meaningful or more valid by labelling it a desire to return to the womb. Indeed, such a designation is made at the cost of each scene's political dimensions.'

Coult offers the biographical explanation: 'Walking around the Cambridgeshire village where Bond now lives, it is possible to catch echoes of the spare landscapes of the plays, particularly from the flat acres of soil, cross-hatched by ditches, the horizon broken by river-banks and trees. If you drive up the Ely road, you come across the ancient earthworks called Devil's Dyke...It appears as the wall which protects and imprisons the kingdom in Lear' (Plays and Players interview, op.cit. [Note 128 above], p.11).
NOTES: CHAPTER FOUR

149. This 'fairy story' — Bond's own designation for The King With the Golden Eyes — was written at Christmas of 1969 (Gambit 'Discussion with Edward Bond', op.cit. [Note 128], p.34). It is published with The Pope's Wedding (London: Methuen, 1971, pp.96-99). It is in the Theatre Quarterly interview, 'Drama and the Dialectics of Violence' (op.cit. [Note 128], p.11) that Bond refers to it as 'one of my notes, as it were, for Lear'.

150. Dark's published casebook on the Royal Court premiere, op.cit. [Note 133 above], p.26.

151. Gregory Dark, I AM A POET: The sad story of the 'Lear' rehearsals, Burgtheater, November 1972 - January 1973 / unpublished casebook on the Vienna production/. This quotation is from p.19 of the typescript, which was loaned me by Malcolm Hay and Philip Roberts.

152. Passion is published with Bond's Bingo (London: Methuen, 1974). This quotation, p.66.

153. Scharine, op.cit. [Note 130 above], p.204.


155. 'I just naturally write plays...The idea of writing a novel doesn't appeal to me, there are so many words: I hate words, you see, and all that sort of description that goes into them' (Gambit discussion, op.cit. [Note 128 above], pp.5-6).

156. Bryden interview for The Observer, op.cit. [Note 128 above], p.22.

157. This statement is based on a careful reading of Dark's published casebook on the production, op.cit. [Note 133 above]. It is of course possible that Bond made many changes which escaped Dark's attention and/or his account. Some evidence against this qualifying hypothesis, however, may be found in what Keith Johnstone reported to Scharine about his production of The Pope's Wedding at the Royal Court in 1962: 'The play came in as produced. I altered nothing. Edward wouldn't let me make cuts' (letter of 25 March 1971, quoted in Scharine, op.cit. [Note 130 above], p.45). If Bond as an unknown and unproduced playwright was so insistent that his text remain intact, I think him unlikely to have been more malleable when he was a prized (though hardly profitable) horse in the Royal Court stable.


159. Theatre Quarterly interview, 'Drama and the Dialectics of Violence', op.cit. [Note 128 above], pp.6-7.

160. Ibid. pp.6, 12. It should perhaps be made clear that 'the play' in this quotation does not refer to Lear in particular.
NOTES: CHAPTER FOUR


162. Bryden interview, op.cit. / Note 128 above/.


165. Van Laan draws 'a distinction between a play's two "levels": the immediate action, or concrete situation, and the action of depth, or the accumulated implications that endow the concrete situation with more than local significance' (ibid., p.3). Subsequently he sketches out variously weighted relationships between these 'levels' and asserts: 'Whatever their relationship, the two levels exist...in drama generally. In the well-ordered play the two levels are fused throughout. From their interrelated and simultaneous development emerges the basic meaning of the whole' (ibid., p.67, my underlining). Van Laan's operating assumption that such meaning is the ultimate object of critical inquiry becomes visible at various other points in the book — pp.9, 38-39 and 149, for example. That he sees 'the action of depth' as the primary line to this (vanishing) point is apparent from the fact that his Part III, which treats of it, occupies pp. 113-316 of his 368 pages of text.

166. Van Laan's working definition of 'formal realism' is 'a dramatic mode whose primary characteristic is its fidelity to the familiar surfaces of everyday life' (ibid., p.6).

167. Ibid., and see also further on in the same paragraph: 'Visual symbols like the setting or lighting...depend on the designer's creative reading of a limited word picture or the technician's response to an unverbalized sense of mood or atmosphere.' (As is apparent both here and in the passage quoted in the next note, Van Laan construes language as a verbal system of signification only.)

168. '...verbal effects...which work in conjunction with each other and with nonverbal devices of sight and sound to produce intermediate impressions whose implications establish non-concrete and nonverbal revelations of the action of depth. These intermediate impressions are elements of structure. Every character and episode, both in itself and in relation to other structural components of the same order, has a particular significance which, though not concretely embodied in any specific device, is the product of language, and which must be perceived if the whole import of the play is to be experienced!' (ibid., p.214).
169. The Idea of a Theater...The Art of Drama in Changing Perspective (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949). See especially Chapter I, which, offering an analysis of Oedipus Rex as a normative model which hangs over all subsequent discussion in the book, asserts: 'The meaning, or spiritual content of the play...is the tragic action...This action has...a shape: a beginning, middle, and end, in time. It starts with...reasoned purpose...But this aim meets...evidence which do not fit, and therefore shake the purpose...and so the characters suffer...From this suffering or passion,...a new perception of the situation emerges; and on that basis the purpose of the action is redefined, and a new movement starts. This movement, or tragic rhythm of action, constitutes the shape of the play as a whole; it is also the shape of each episode...It is this tragic rhythm of action which is the substance or spiritual content of the play... ' (Anchor Books edition /Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1953/», pp.38-39. The underscoring at the beginning and end of the quotation is mine, but that in the middle records Ferguson's italics).


171. Ibid., p.21


173. Le language dramatique, op.cit. [Note 169 above], pp.175-176.

174. The devaluation of oral utterance in favour of printed is a concern which long antedates McLuhan. In 1930 Granville-Barker asked: 'Has the power of the spoken word declined in these days when we read as unthinkingly as we eat?......The trouble is rather that we no longer write with the living voice in mind......Long after silent reading had become a common habit writers wrote under the old obligation......But newspaper reading teaches our eyes to skim along the lines and snatch at the sense, and newspaper writers, knowing they will have no more attention, are apt to spin out loose sentences and say everything twice over......The dramatist alone must write not only with economy, but still to be spoken aloud' (On Dramatic Method, being the Clark lectures for 1930 /London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1931/», pp.32-33)

A rare instance of optimism inspired by the second area of devaluation was supplied me by B.L.Blowhay: 'I think the cinematograph will help...people can find movement and colour so much more easily there that there will be a tendency to attach more importance in the theatre to the spoken word' (The Theatre and the Drama of Ideas, The Poetry Review, vol.VI /1915/», p.555).
175. One instance of commendable caution in this connexion is given by Kenneth Hudson. After quoting critical claims about Shakespeare's verbal language being instinctively recognisable as the real language of real men, he points out: 'Statements of this kind are difficult to check or contradict, for the excellent reason that a time-machine has not yet been invented and that we have no recordings of Elizabethans talking...They are wholly dependent on the written word and on this somewhat unreliable tool, "instinct"' ('Shakespeare's Use of Colloquial Language', Shakespeare Survey, xxii (1970), p.40). Hudson then goes on to say that 'evidence, is to be found, mainly in letters, legal depositions and other court records, conversation manuals, and the works of other dramatists. The evidence we are looking for is of speech as it flowed from people's mouths' (ibid., p.41). These, the last especially, do not seem to me to constitute such a record of absolutely unmediated utterance in the oral vernacular as one would require for a valid comparison of Elizabethan and contemporary speech patterns.

176. The point was noted by Gaskill on 16 August 1971, in the rehearsals for the Royal Court production. (See Dark's published casebook, op.cit. [Note 13 above], p.28). It recurs in Worth, op.cit. [Note 143 above], p.185; Scharine, op.cit. [Note 130 above], pp.279-280 and passim; and Coulth, op.cit. [Note 131 above], passim.

Introduction

i. purposes

These appendices do not exhaust the bibliographical information available about twentieth-century adaptations of Shakespearean drama, nor even of Shakespearean tragedy. They rather digest, in tabular form, information about adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*, around which I have centred discussion in my Chapters II, III and IV respectively. As figures from two or even all three of these Shakespearean tragedies often converge in a given out-of-place assembly, I have also, in order to keep duplication of entries to a minimum, included a separate appendix for adaptations which fall within that category.

The appendices are offered in part to give evidence of the extent of the field of Shakespearean adaptation in English in this century, in part to make clear how narrowly and selectively I have had to focus upon this field for my purposes of critical discussion, in part to enable me to restrict entries in my bibliography proper to secondary sources which I have found most useful, and in greatest part to spare others interested in this field a great deal of tedious work.

ii. sources

My bibliographical sources for references to Shakespearean adaptations have been various. Probably the most helpful single source is the seven-volume accessions catalogue for the Shakespeare Collection in the Central Reference Library of the Birmingham Public Library, as cited in Note No. 26 to my Introduction and again in my bibliography. Catalogue and collection alike were indispensable for my research. Gordon Ross Smith's *Classified Shakespeare Bibliography 1936-1958* was
of some help in the early stages of my research, as, at a slightly later stage, were the 'adaptations' entries in the individual bibliographies for single Shakespearean plays: these too are listed in the first part of my bibliography. Also entered there are descriptive guides and indices to plays available for performance: these I found especially useful for uncovering adaptations intended for the amateur market.

By the time that I came to read either Dr. Gros Louis' thesis or Professor Cohn's book, both of which are entered in that part of my bibliography which records critical/factual sources, this thesis had been planned and, in part, written. The former did, however, direct me to fourteen English-language adaptations, five of them adaptations of tragedies, of which I had not been aware; and I have acknowledged my bibliographical debts to Dr. Gros Louis in notes to my text whenever it turns to discuss an adaptation to which her thesis had introduced me. (I have also, in my notes, included cross-references to both this thesis and to Professor Cohn's book whenever our respective critical attentions have converged on the same texts.)

At a late stage in my research, Katherine Itzin's British Alternative Theatre Directory (which appears in the first part of my bibliography, as also in Note No. 151 to my Chapter 1) brought to my attention some very recent adaptations by Fringe playwrights. The agents of these and other contemporary playwrights have, to a man or woman, been extremely helpful in answering my inquiries and lending me unpublished scripts; and I would like here to record my gratitude to them and to their office staff.

Two further bibliographical debts are to the cataloguing systems of the New York Public Library and the British Drama League Library,
both of which have alphabetised entries by title as well as by author and both of which enabled me to discover items which I would otherwise have overlooked. The staff of both libraries, moreover, were lavish with assistance. And throughout my research, but especially for adaptations which have escaped any bibliographical register and/or which fell outside the temporal and spatial limits of my own theatre-going, I have been indebted to the memories of many individuals and to the generosity with which they shared information and, in some cases, records and/or unpublished scripts.

iii. explanation of entries

DATE: Adaptations are listed in chronological order. Wherever different dates have been recorded for any two or more of copyright, publication, or first performance, I have entered the adaptation according to the earliest of these.

FORM records: whether an adaptation is in prose, verse or both; the inclusion of songs and/or the extensive incorporation of Shakespearean text; and, for the stage adaptations, number of scenes or of acts.

CATEGORY follows the system of classification which is set out in my Chapter I and disregards self-descriptive subtitles, which are preserved in TITLE entries.

PRODUCTION is of première, when known, and also in the case of translations or adaptations from another language into English, of the première of the English-language version.

PUBLICATION is always of the first published text, and generally also of any subsequent publications of which I am aware.

LOCATION is of texts, published or unpublished. In the cases of published texts which are widely available — either because they are still in print and/or because their literary reputation has been sufficient
to gain them entry into any university library — entries under this heading are far from exhaustive. In one or two cases, however, I have been unable to trace an adaptation through the catalogues of the British Library and the Library of Congress, and I do not know where, if anywhere, it may be found. These elusive adaptations are the ones for which question marks follow this heading.

INFORMATION indicates my source of information (generally very limited) for adaptations which I personally have not seen in either production or published text. All these adaptations are marked off, at the beginning of the respective entries for them, with asterisks.
APPENDIX I

OUT-OF-PLACE ASSEMBLIES OF SHAKESPEAREAN FIGURES

1. **DATE**: 1892  
**AUTHOR**: Marvin Merchant Taylor  
**TITLE**: The Shakespeare Wooing; A Play of Shreds and Patches Taken from the Works of William Shakespeare  
**FIGURES**: Romeo, Launcelot, Lady Macbeth, Ophelia, and the Three Witches from Macbeth  
**PUBLICATION**: Boston: W.H.Baker & Co., 1915 (copyright 1892)  
**LOCATION**: Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.276243)

2. **DATE**: 1899  
**AUTHOR**: Pauline Phelps  
**TITLE**: Shakespearean Conference: A Drama  
**FIGURES**: Cleopatra, Lady Macbeth, Juliet (Romeo and Juliet), Desdemona, Miss Cawdor (a Witch from Macbeth), Romeo, Hamlet, Macbeth, Shylock.  
**PUBLICATION**: New York: E.S.Warner, 1901 (copyright 1899)  
**LOCATION**: New York Public Library (N.A.F.H. p.v.564)

3. **DATE**: 1900  
**AUTHOR**: Sara Hawks Sterling  
**TITLE**: Hamlet's Brides: A Shakespearean Burlesque in One Act  
**FIGURES**: Hamlet, Portia (Merchant of Venice), Rosalind, Juliet, (Romeo and Juliet) Beatrice, Viola.  
**PUBLICATION**: Boston: W.H.Baker, 1900, 1915  
**LOCATION**: Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.276343)  
New York Public Library (N.A.F.H. p.v.465)
4. DATE 1909  
AUTHOR Oscar Fay Adams  
TITLE The Shakespearean Fantasy  
FIGURES Miranda, Ferdinand, Prospero, Trinculo, Stephano, Caliban, Juliet's Nurse, Peter, Mercutio, Romeo, Ophelia, Hamlet, Lear, Lear, Pool, Falstaff, King Richard II, King Henry VI, Constance from As You Like It: Jaques from A Midsummer Night's Dream: Bottom, Flute, Starveling, Quince, Snout, Titania and Fairies, Puck  
LOCATION British Library (011765.g.32)

5. DATE 1915  
AUTHOR John William Postgate  
TITLE Falstaff in Rebellion; or, The Mutineers of Eastcheap, A Shakespearean Travesty  
FIGURES Falstaff, Sir Toby Belch, Nym, Bardolph, Pistol, Captain Bobadil, Mercutio, Sklylock, Claudius (Hamlet), King Hamlet's Ghost, Macbeth, Bottom, Polonius, Dogberry, Verges, Antony, Othello, Francis, Ostlers, Malvolio, Mistress Quickly, Lady Macbeth, Maria, Viola, Desdemona, Ophelia, Also: Shakespeare, Jonson, Greene.  
PUBLICATION Boston: W.H.Baker and Co., 1915  
LOCATION New York Public Library (N.B.L. p.v.1001)

6. DATE 1916  
AUTHOR Julia Hall Bartholomew  
TITLE The Women of Shakespeare  
FIGURES Female characters grouped by origins in: Comedies, English History Plays, Tragedies, Classics (Troilus and Cressida and the Roman History Plays), Romances (Measure for Measure, Much Ado About Nothing, The Merchant of Venice, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, The Tempest). Also, Queen Elizabeth and ladies of her Court  
PUBLICATION in Bartholomew's Two Masques (Boston: Gorham Press, 1916)  
LOCATION New York Public Library (N.B.M.)
7. DATE: 1919  
AUTHOR: Mabel M. Moran  
TITLE: The Shakespeare Garden Club: Comedy Fantasy in One Act  
FIGURES: Mistress Page, Mistress Ford, Perdita, Desdemona, Cordelia, Katherine (The Taming of the Shrew), Jessica, Rosalind, Portia, Juliet (Romeo and Juliet), Ophelia, Rosalind, Cleopatra, Lady Macbeth. Also Anne Hathaway.  
PUBLICATION: New York: Dramatists Play Service, revised version 1938, copyright 1919  
LOCATION: British Library (11792. aaa.50) Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.496022)

8. DATE: 1923  
AUTHOR: Denton Jaques Snider  
TITLE: The Redemption of the Hamlets (Son and Father)  
FIGURES: Hamlet, Horatio, Florizel, Perdita, Portia (The Merchant of Venice and Julius Caesar), Helena (All's Well That Ends Well) Hermione, King Hamlet's Ghost  
PUBLICATION: St. Louis, Missouri: William Harvey Miner Co., 1923  
LOCATION: New York Public Library

9. DATE: 1923  
AUTHOR: Denton Jaques Snider  
TITLE: The Shakespeariad: A Dramatic Epos  
FIGURES: Prospero, Caliban, Hamlet, Ariel, Horatio, Rosalind, Hermione, Portia (The Merchant of Venice and Julius Caesar), Desdemona, Imogen  
PUBLICATION: St. Louis, Missouri: William Harvey Miner Co., 1923  
LOCATION: Shakespeare Collection of The Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.308666)

10. DATE: 1935  
AUTHOR: Clive Sansom  
TITLE: Celestial Meeting: A Stage Sketch for Three Women Only  
FIGURES: Viola, Desdemona, Lady Macbeth  
LOCATION: British Library (117/80.aa.51) Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.439719)
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Alex Atkinson</td>
<td>They Cannot Be Forgotten</td>
<td>Macbeth, Antony, Romeo, Lear, etc.</td>
<td>British Drama League Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Stuart Ready</td>
<td>Vassals Departing: A Fantastic Comedy in One Act</td>
<td>Lear, Iago, Desdemona, Hamlet, Bottom, Cleopatra, Rosalind.</td>
<td>British Library (11791.6.1/1042)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Victoria Schrager</td>
<td>How Like A God</td>
<td>Katherine (The Taming of the Shrew), Juliet (Romeo and Juliet), Desdemona, Rosalind, Portia (The Merchant of Venice), Viola. Also Anne Hathaway and Lady Anne Bacon</td>
<td>Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.519134)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Charles George</td>
<td>When Shakespeare’s Ladies Meet: a Comedy for the Fair Sex in One Act</td>
<td>Juliet (Romeo and Juliet), Portia (The Merchant of Venice), Desdemona, Cleopatra, Ophelia, Katherine (The Taming of the Shrew).</td>
<td>Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.544913), New York Public Library (C-10.9412)</td>
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<td><strong>15.</strong></td>
<td>DATE: 1945</td>
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<td><strong>AUTHOR:</strong> Charles George</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TITLE:</strong> When Shakespeare's Gentlemen Get Together: A Much-Ado-About-Nothing in One Act</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FIGURES:</strong> Hamlet, Romeo, Antony, Othello, Petruchio, Shylock</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLICATION:</strong> Boston, Massachusetts: Bakers Plays, /1945/</td>
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<td><strong>LOCATION:</strong> New York Public Library (N.B.L. p.v. 693)</td>
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| **16.** | DATE: 1951  |
| **AUTHOR:** Charles George  |
| **TITLE:** When Shakespeare's Ladies Sing  |
| **PUBLICATION:** /New York/: S.French, 1951  |
| **INFORMATION:** Dorothy Herbert West and Dorothy Margaret Peake  |
| **LOCATION:** Play Index 1949–1952  |
| **INFORMATION:** (New York: H.W.Wilson Co., 1953)  |

| **17.** | DATE: 1955  |
| **AUTHOR:** Emma Farrow  |
| **TITLE:** Perdita at Home: A Comedy in One Act  |
| **FIGURES:** Florizel, Perdita, Rosalind, Celia, Viola,  |
| **LOCATION:** (The Merchant of Venice)  |
| **LOCATION:** unpublished typescript in Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.665018)  |

| **18.** | DATE: 1968  |
| **AUTHOR:** Anne Coulter Martens  |
| **TITLE:** Rosemary for Remembrance  |
| **FIGURES:** Shakespearean heroines, also Anne Hathaway  |
| **PUBLICATION:** in Martens' Popular Plays for Teenagers  |
| **LOCATION:** (Boston: Plays Inc., 1968)  |
| **INFORMATION:** Estelle 'A. Fidell, Play Index 1968–72  |
| **INFORMATION:** (New York: H.W.Wilson Co., 1973)  |
## APPENDIX II

**DRAMATIC ADAPTATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S ROMEO AND JULIET**

**IN ENGLISH SINCE 1900**

### 1. DATE 1901
   **AUTHOR** Willis Steell  
   **TITLE** A Juliet of the People  
   **FORM** one-act verse  
   **CATEGORY** transposition  
   **PRODUCTION** January, 1901, Madison Square Theatre, New York  
   **PUBLICATION** (New York: McBvoy Publishing Co.,) copyright 1919  
   **LOCATION** New York Public Library (NBF.pv.15No.6)

### 2. DATE 1902
   **AUTHOR** William Hawley Smith  
   **TITLE** The New Hamlet Intermixed and Interwoven with a Revised Version of Romeo and Juliet  
   **FORM** two-act verse  
   **CATEGORY** travesty transposition  
   **PRODUCTION** purportedly on the Smith family farm near Chicago, probably nowhere  
   **PUBLICATION** Chicago: Rand McNally and Co.  
   **LOCATION** British Library (l1762.de.15), Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Central Public Library (Ac. No. 217162)

****

### 3. DATE 1905
   **AUTHOR** J.E. Owens  
   **TITLE** Romeo and Juliet  
   **CATEGORY** 'burlesque' (probably travesty)  
   **PUBLICATION** Omaha, 1905  
   **INFORMATION** Tannenbaum Romeo and Juliet bibliography, No.998

### 4. DATE 1905
   **AUTHOR** Frank Dumont  
   **TITLE** Reamy-E-Owe and Julie-Ate  
   **FORM** one act prose  
   **CATEGORY** travesty  
   **1ST PRODUCTION?**  
   **PUBLICATION** New York: Witmark and Sons, 1905  
   **LOCATION** British Library (11779.ff. 73/1)  
   New York Public Library
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Walter Ben Hare</td>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>A Rustic Romeo</td>
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<td>**</td>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>two-act musical comedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>PUBLICATION</td>
<td>Chicago: T.S. Denison &amp; Co., (1912)</td>
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>1915</th>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>James Francis Cooke</td>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Romeo of the Rancho: A Comedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>one-act prose</td>
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<td>**</td>
<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>play-within-a-play</td>
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<td>**</td>
<td>PRODUCTION</td>
<td>??</td>
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<th>**</th>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>&quot;Poet-Scout&quot; (= Alex J. Brown)</td>
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<td>**</td>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Romeo an' Juliet</td>
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<td>**</td>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>verse monologue</td>
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<td>**</td>
<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>travesty</td>
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<td>**</td>
<td>RECITATION</td>
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<td>**</td>
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<td>in Frank C. McHale, ed., Pieces That Have Won Prizes (New York: Noble &amp; Noble, 1917, pp.78-80)</td>
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<th>**</th>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Henry Wagstaff Gribble</td>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Juliet and Romeo</td>
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<tr>
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<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>play-within-a-play</td>
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<td>**</td>
<td>PRODUCTION</td>
<td>Boston, B.F. Keith's Palace, 9 August 1920</td>
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<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Dorothy Speare</td>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>'Romeo and Juliet: A Tragedy in One Act and an Epilogue' (No. 4 in 'The Parody Outline of Literature Series')</td>
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<td>**</td>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>one-act prose</td>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>travesty transposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>PRODUCTION</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication</td>
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<td>in <em>The Bookman</em> (New York), vol. LVII, no. 1 (March, 1923) pp. 7-17</td>
<td>British Library (PP 6365.b) New York Public Library</td>
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10. **DATE** 1927  
**AUTHOR** Hope H. Moulton  
**TITLE** Romeo and Juliet  
**FORM** one-act prose  
**CATEGORY** travesty transposition  
**PRODUCTION** ?  
**PUBLICATION** Boston (Mass.): Walter H. Baker Co., 1927  
**LOCATION** Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac. No. 403884)

11. **DATE** 1927  
**AUTHOR** Edward Childs Carpenter  
**TITLE** Romeo and — Jane  
**FORM** four-act prose  
**CATEGORY** allusive transposition  
**PRODUCTION** ?  
**PUBLICATION** New York & London: Samuel French, 1927  
**LOCATION** British Library (01781.g.1/153) New York Public Library (SEL.p.v.169. no.2)

12. **DATE** 1931  
**AUTHOR** John van Druten  
**TITLE** There's Always Juliet  
**FORM** two-act prose  
**CATEGORY** allusive comedy  
**PRODUCTION** London, Apollo Theatre, 12 October 1931  
**PUBLICATION** London & New York: Samuel French, 1931  
**LOCATION** British Library (11791.t.t.1/202)

13. **DATE** 1933  
**AUTHOR** Ivor Novello  
**TITLE** Proscenium  
**FORM** three-act prose, with a prologue and with a masque between scenes of Act III  
**CATEGORY** play-within-a-play  
**PRODUCTION** London, Globe Theatre, 14 June 1933  
**PUBLICATION** London: Samuel French, 1934  
**LOCATION** British Library (11791.t.t.1/250)
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<td>1939</td>
<td>Edith Sitwell</td>
<td>Romeo Coates: A Portrait of Failure (adapted from</td>
<td>radio, one-act prose</td>
<td>allusive, partly play-within-a-play</td>
<td>BBC Regional Programme, 23 February 1939</td>
<td>typescript in Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No. 498984)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941/2</td>
<td>Robert Herring</td>
<td>Harlequin Mercutio: or, A Plague on Both Your</td>
<td>'verse pantomime' in seven parts</td>
<td>transposition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>serial publication in British Library and in London University Senate House complete Transformation II text in Shakespeare Collection in Birmingham Library (Ac.No.543517)</td>
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21. DATE 1942  
AUTHOR Charles Samuel Levy  
TITLE Romeo Comes to Town  
FORM one-act prose  
CATEGORY travestie from another point in time  
PRODUCTION ??  
PUBLICATION in Levy's Ten Short Plays (Denver: Mitchell Press, 1942), pp.87-104  
LOCATION New York Public Library (NLM/Levy)

22. DATE 1944  
AUTHOR F.A. Carter  
TITLE Romeo and Juliet  
FORM verse monologue  
CATEGORY travestie  
PRODUCTION ??  
PUBLICATION in Carter's Haywire Shakespeare (London: Samuel French, 1944)  
LOCATION British Library (11658.aa.52)

23. DATE 1945/6 (1949)  
AUTHOR Jean Anouilh  
ADAPTOR Donagh Macdonagh  
TITLE Romeo et Jeanette /The Fading Mansion  
FORM four-act prose  
CATEGORY transposition  
PRODUCTION Paris, Théâtre de l'Atelier, 4 December 1946 (London, Duchess Theatre, 31 August 1949)  
PUBLISHED in Anouilh's Nouvelles Pièces Noires (Paris: Table Ronde, 1946)  
(unpublished typescript of The Fading Mansion in British Drama League Library MS 149[1])

24. DATE before 1948  
AUTHOR John Leister  
TITLE Overboard for Juliet  
FORM three act prose, some quotations of Shakespearean verse  
CATEGORY play-within-a-play travestie transposition  
PRODUCTION ??  
PUBLICATION undated typescript in New York Public Library, Lincoln Center Theater Collection (NCP4Leister)
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<td>Author</td>
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<td>Title</td>
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<td>Production</td>
<td>Phoenix Theatre, London, 8 September 1948</td>
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<td>Author</td>
<td>Vanita Sutton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Romeo Owed and Julie Et</td>
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<td>Category</td>
<td>travesty</td>
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<td>Publication</td>
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<td>D.K. Gros Louis, Shakespeare By Many Other Names,</td>
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<td>Author</td>
<td>Thomas B. Morris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>A Garden in Verona</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Robert Nathan</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Juliet in Mantua</td>
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<td>Form</td>
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<td>Author</td>
<td>Peter Ustinov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Romanoff and Juliet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>three act prose, with songs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>transposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>London, Piccadilly Theatre, 17 May 1956</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>British Library (9089.t.125)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>1956</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Arthur Laurents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>West Side Story</td>
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<td>Form</td>
<td>two act musical comedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>New York, Winter Garden, 26 September 1957</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>widely available</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
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<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Tom Bernard Taggart</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Don Lathrop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Ewan MacColl</td>
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</table>
35. DATE 1970
AUTHOR Hannah Weiner
TITLE Code Poem: Romeo and Juliet
FORM 'the International Code of Signals... for ships at sea'
CATEGORY transposition
PRODUCTION ?
PUBLICATION in Tulane Drama Review, vol XIV, no. 4 (September 1970), pp. 105-109
LOCATION British Library
London University Senate House
British Drama League Library etc.

36. **
DATE circa 1970
AUTHORS Les Tretceaux Libres
TITLE Requiem for Romeo and Juliet
FORM multi-media mime
CATEGORY transposition
PRODUCTION Oval House, London, Spring 1970
Young Vic and Mercury Theatres, London, March 1971

37. DATE: 1971
AUTHOR Lindsey Barbee
TITLE Enter Juliet
FORM ?? (probably prose)
CATEGORY play-within-a-play
PRODUCTION Amateur
PUBLICATION in D.D. Durrell and B.A. Crossley, eds. Teen-Age Plays for Classroom Reading (Boston: Plays Inc., 1971)

38. DATE 1972
AUTHOR David Edgar
TITLE Death Story
FORM two-act prose, with some verse and song
CATEGORY transposition
PRODUCTION Birmingham, Birmingham Repertory Studio Theatre, November 1972
PUBLICATION typescript, dated 17 October 1972, c/o author's agent, Michael Imison of Dr. Jan van Loewen, Ltd.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Tom Gallacher</td>
<td>The Scar</td>
<td>one-act prose</td>
<td>play-within-a-play</td>
<td>produced with Elizabeth Ornbo, BBC Schools Radio,</td>
<td>broadcast 14 February 1973</td>
<td>unpublished typescript, dating from before November 1972, c/o author's agent, Michael Imison of Dr. Jan van Loewen Ltd.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Andrew Davies</td>
<td>Rohan and Julie</td>
<td>34-scene prose</td>
<td>transposition, with elements of play-within-a-play</td>
<td>EI5 Acting School, London, 1975</td>
<td></td>
<td>undated typescript, c/o author's agents, Harvey Unna and Stephen Durbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Steve Gooch</td>
<td>Back Street Romeo</td>
<td>12-scene prose</td>
<td>transposition</td>
<td>London, Half Moon Theatre, 7 March 1977</td>
<td></td>
<td>undated typescript, titled Working-Class Romeo, c/o member of première production company</td>
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</table>
# APPENDIX III

## DRAMATIC ADAPTATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET

IN ENGLISH SINCE 1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>before 1901</td>
<td>St. John Hankin</td>
<td>The New Wing at Elsinore</td>
<td>two-scene, part verse, part prose</td>
<td>novel vantage point, with elements of travesty</td>
<td>Originally published in <em>Punch</em>, then in Hankin's <em>Dramatic Sequels</em> (London: Martin Secker, 1901, 2nd ed. 1925), pp.17-30</td>
<td>British Library (11781.ce.36) \nShakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>William Hawley Smith</td>
<td>The New Hamlet: intermixed and interwoven with a revised version of Romeo and Juliet</td>
<td>two-act verse</td>
<td>travesty transposition</td>
<td>purportedly on the Smith family farm near Chicago, probably nowhere</td>
<td>British Library (11762.de.15) \nShakespeare Collection of Birmingham Central Public Library (Ac.No.217162)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>'Shakespeare II'</td>
<td>The Overman: being the serio-comic history of a twentieth-century Hamlet</td>
<td>three-act prose</td>
<td>transposition</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>\nShakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.547975)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Frank Dumont</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Hamlet, Prince of Dunkirk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>one-act prose</td>
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<tr>
<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>travesty</td>
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<td>PRODUCTION</td>
<td>??</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUBLICATION</td>
<td>New York: M. Witmark and Sons, 1905</td>
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<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>British Library (11779.ff.3/1)</td>
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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>James Wilson Sewell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Hamlet: A Travesty in one act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>one-act prose, with songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>travesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRODUCTION</td>
<td>??</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUBLICATION</td>
<td>in Sewell's Rhymes on Route (London: Elliott and Sons, 1910), pp. 179-249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>British Library (G11650.K.5) Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.532451)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>1911</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Frederic G. Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>The Heart of his Mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>3-scene prose and verse, including extended quotation from Shakespeare's Hamlet</td>
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<tr>
<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>play-within-a-play</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRODUCTION</td>
<td>toured the United States in 1911</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUBLICATION</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>typescript in Lincoln Center Theater Collection of New York Public Library (NCP p.v./450/27)</td>
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<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Lincoln Phifer</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Hamlet-in Heaven</td>
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<tr>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>five-act prose</td>
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<tr>
<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>novel vantage point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRODUCTION</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLICATION</td>
<td>Girard, Kansas: L. Phifer, 1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>New York Public Library (N.R.L.p.67)</td>
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8. DATE 1923
   AUTHOR Newman Levy
   TITLE Hamlet
   FORM verse monologue
   CATEGORY travesty, with elements of play-within-a-play
   PRODUCTION ??
   PUBLICATION in Levy's Opera Gayed (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1923), pp.41-43
   LOCATION British Library (011648.h.59)

9. DATE 1923
   AUTHOR Denton Jaques Snider
   TITLE The Redemption of the Hamlets (Son and Father)
   FORM two parts, one of four and the other of five acts, verse
   CATEGORY novel vantage point, with out-of-place assembly
   PRODUCTION ??
   PUBLICATION St. Louis, Missouri: William Harvey Miner Co., 1923
   LOCATION New York Public Library (NBG)

10. DATE 1927
    AUTHOR Hope H. Moulton
    TITLE Hamlet: A Burlesque in one act
    FORM one-act prose
    CATEGORY travesty
    PRODUCTION ??
    PUBLICATION Boston, Massachusetts: Walter H. Baker Co., 1927
    LOCATION Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public
    Library (Ac.No. 403383)

11. DATE 1927
    AUTHOR Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie
    TITLE Hamlet Unmasked: A Condensation, Systematization
    and Focussing of the Shakespearean Play
    FORM prologue and five scenes in verse
    CATEGORY transposition
    PRODUCTION New York National Arts Club, February 1927
    LOCATION New York Public Library (N.B.L.p.v. 181 no.12)
    Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Library
    (Ac.No. 378085)

12. DATE 1928
    AUTHOR Oscar W. Firkins
    TITLE The Undying Prince
    FORM one-act prose
| **DATE** | 1928 |
| **AUTHOR** | George S. Brooks |
| **TITLE** | Fortinbras in Plain Clothes: A Sequel to 'Hamlet in Modern Dress' |
| **FORM** | one-act prose |
| **CATEGORY** | travestied novel vantage point |
| **PRODUCTION** | ?? |
| **LOCATION** | British Library (12711.dd.29) |

| **DATE** | 1931 |
| **AUTHOR** | Mrs. J. Darmady |
| **TITLE** | The Mousetrap |
| **FORM** | one-act verse |
| **CATEGORY** | novel vantage point, with play-within-a-play |
| **PRODUCTION** | ?? |
| **LOCATION** | British Library (X989/37656) Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.381646) |

<p>| <strong>DATE</strong> | 1931 |
| <strong>AUTHOR</strong> | Harold Charles Cibard Stevens |
| <strong>TITLE</strong> | 'Hamlet' in Modern Rush |
| <strong>FORM</strong> | one-scene prose |
| <strong>CATEGORY</strong> | travesty |
| <strong>PRODUCTION</strong> | Arts Theatre, London, 28 June 1931 |
| <strong>LOCATION</strong> | British Library (011761.i.24 and 11767.a.8) New York Public Library (NCP p.v.607) |</p>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Ashley Dukes</td>
<td>The Players' Dressing-Room: a tragic comedy in one act</td>
<td>one-act verse</td>
<td>novel vantage point, with play-within-a-play</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>New York: S. French, (1936)</td>
<td>British Library (11780.c.85)</td>
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20. DATE 1939
AUTHOR Philip King
TITLE Without the Prince: A Country Comedy in Three Acts
FORM three-act prose
CATEGORY play-within-a-play
PRODUCTION Grand Opera House, Harrogate, 30 January 1939
PUBLICATION London: S. French, 1931
LOCATION British Library (11791.t.1/629)

21. DATE 1940
AUTHOR Wallace McCook Cunningham
TITLE The Tragedy of Francis Bacon, Prince of England
FORM five act verse and prose, much of it quotations from Shakespeare's Hamlet
CATEGORY (anagrammatic) play-within-a-play
PRODUCTION Los Angeles: The Philosophic Press, 1940
PUBLICATION British Library (ll767.cc.23)
LOCATION Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library (Ac. No. 530591)

22. DATE 1941
AUTHOR Robert Herring
TITLE Harlequin Mercutio: or, A Plague on Both Your Houses: A Ride Through Raids to Resurrection
FORM verse pantomime in seven parts
CATEGORY transposition
PRODUCTION serial in Life and Letters Today (London, 1941-2): Parts 1-3 in Vol. XXXI (pp.187-195); Parts 4 and 5 in Vol. XXXII (pp. 38-47); Part 6 omitted; Part 7 in Vol. XXXII (pp.137-142) complete text in S. Schimanski and H. Treece, eds. Transformation II
PUBLICATION serial publication in British Library and in London University Senate House, complete Transformation II text in Shakespeare Collection in Birmingham Library (Ac. No. 543517)
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<th>Form</th>
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<th>Publication</th>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Cyrus Friedman</td>
<td>&quot;Hamlet: Translated into Plain English&quot;</td>
<td>five-act prose</td>
<td>travesty</td>
<td>Portland, Oregon; publisher not specified, 1943</td>
<td>Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac. No. 550176)</td>
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<td>British Library (Ac. No. 11658.as.52)</td>
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<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>PRODUCTION</td>
<td>PUBLICATION</td>
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29. DATE 1948
AUTHOR Thomas B. Morris
TITLE Ophelia: A Play for Women in One Act
FORM one-act prose
CATEGORY novel vantage point
PRODUCTION ??
PUBLICATION London: S. French, 1948
LOCATION British Library (11791.t.1/838)
New York Public Library (NAFH p.v. 580)
Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac. No. 60911)

30. DATE 1948
AUTHORS Vera I. Arlett and Harold Frederick Rubenstein
TITLE Hamlet in Aldwych: A Play in One Act
FORM one-act prose
CATEGORY novel vantage point
PRODUCTION ??
PUBLICATION in New Plays Quarterly, No. 3 (1948) pp. 47–66
LOCATION British Library (11784.a.a.24)
Shakespeare Collection of the Birmingham Public Library (Ac. Nos. 605301/3, 608442)

31. DATE 1948
AUTHOR Michael Innes (= J. I. M. Stewart)
TITLE The Hawk and the Handsaw
FORM prose
CATEGORY novel vantage point
PRODUCTION BBC Radio, broadcast 21 November 1948 (Imaginary Conversations, second series)
LOCATION British Library (11782.d.26)
University of London Senate House Library (YP/H472/950)
New York Public Library (*NCS)
typescript and published text in Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Library (Ac. Nos. 599860 and 605468)

32. DATE 1949
AUTHOR Percy Wallace MacKaye
TITLE The Mystery of Hamlet, King of Denmark: or, What We Will, A Tetralogy
FOR four separate plays, the first of four acts
and the others of five, all in verse
CATEGORY novel vantage point
PRODUCTION Pasadena Playhouse, Pasadena, California
April–May 1949
PUBLISHED New York: Bond Wheelwright Co., 1950, reissued
London: Bodley Head, 1952
LOCATION British Library (11767.h.37)
University of London Senate House Library
(YTA/ML486)
New York Public Library (812.M)

33. DATE 1949
AUTHOR Rayner Heppenstall
TITLE The Fool's Saga
FORM prose, with some verse
CATEGORY transposition back to Saxo Grammaticus' version of
Hamlet legend
PRODUCTION BBC radio, broadcast 27 June 1949
PUBLISHED in J.R. Heppenstall and M. Innes, Three Tales
LOCATION British Library (11782.d.26)
University of London Senate House Library
(YF/447E/950)
New York Public Library (*NGSD)
typescript and published text in Shakespeare Collection
of Birmingham Public Library (Ac. Nos. 605261 and
605468)

34. DATE 1953
AUTHOR Philip Freund
TITLE Prince Hamlet
FORM fourteen-scene prose
CATEGORY transposition
PRODUCTION —
PUBLICATION New York: Bookman Associates, 1953
LOCATION British Library (11792.c.34)
Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library
(Ac.No. 653837)

35. DATE 1953
AUTHOR Michael Innes (=J.I.M. Stewart)
TITLE A Smack of Hamlet
FORM prose
CATEGORY play-within-a-play
PRODUCTION BBC radio, broadcast 21 May 1953
(Discoveries in Shakespeare, No.3)
PUBLISHED —
LOCATION typescript in Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham
Public Library (Ac.No. 634679)
36. DATE 1954
AUTHOR Hugh Ross Williamson
TITLE King Claudius
FORM one-act prose and verse, including many quotations from Shakespeare
CATEGORY novel vantage point
PRODUCTION ??
LOCATION British Library (X989/26090)
Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac. No. 666960)

37. DATE 1957
AUTHOR Bernard Kops
TITLE The Hamlet of Stepney Green
FORM three acts, plus an epilogue, in prose but with some songs
CATEGORY transposition
PRODUCTION reading at Ben Uri Gallery, London 27 January 1957
production at the Oxford Playhouse, 19 May 1958, whence transferred to Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith
PUBLICATION London: Evans Brothers Ltd., 1959

38. DATE 1958
AUTHOR Michael Innes (a J.I.M. Stewart)
TITLE The Danish Tragedy
FORM prose and verse
CATEGORY play-within-a-play
PRODUCTION BBC radio, broadcast 5 March 1958
PUBLICATION —
LOCATION Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac. No. 665786)

39. DATE 1958
AUTHOR Elmer Rice
TITLE Cue for Passion: A Play in Five Scenes
FORM five-scene prose
cATEGORY transposition
PUBLICATION New York: Dramatists Play Service 1959
LOCATION most university/research libraries
<table>
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<th>Form</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</table>
43. **DATE** 1964/1966  
**AUTHOR** Tom Stoppard  
**TITLE** Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead  
**FORM** three-act prose  
**CATEGORY** novel vantage point, with elements of play-within-a-play  
**PRODUCTION** of Uhr version(s), in Berlin by actors from Questors Theatre in the summer of 1964 and at Questors Theatre, Ealing London, 4 October 1964; of extant version, at Edinburgh Fringe by Oxford University Dramatic Society, 24 August 1966 (shortened text), and by National Theatre at Old Vic, 11 April 1967  
**PUBLICATION** London: Faber and Faber, 1967  
**LOCATION** British Library X908/11211 Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac. No. 759531)

44. **DATE** 1966  
**AUTHOR** Michael Stewart  
**TITLE** Those That Play the Clowns  
**FORM** prose  
**CATEGORY** novel vantage point, play-within-a-play  
**PRODUCTION** ANTA, New York, 24 November 1966  
**PUBLICATION** —  
**INFORMATION** press cuttings in Lincoln Center Theater Collection of New York Public Library

45. **DATE** 1967  
**AUTHOR** Joseph Papp  
**TITLE** William Shakespeare's 'Naked' Hamlet  
**FORM** thirty-three scene prose and verse (mostly quotations from Shakespeare), with songs  
**CATEGORY** collage  
**PRODUCTION** Anspacher Theater of the New York Shakespeare Festival Theater,  
**PUBLICATION** London, Macmillan 1968  
**LOCATION** British Library (X950/168)

46. **DATE** before 1970  
**AUTHOR** Stanley Hart  
**TITLE** Sling's and Arrows  
**CATEGORY** travesty transposition  
**INFORMATION** reader's report, dated 7 January 1970, for Theater Communications Group
47. **
DATE 1970 or earlier
AUTHORS Alexander Maximillian and Dumont Senate
TITLE The Second Coming of Ophelia
FORM three-act multi-media
CATEGORY schematic transpositions
INFORMATION reader's report, dated 21 October 1970, for Theater Communications Group

48. **
DATE 1971 or earlier
AUTHOR Edwin Gordon
TITLE Yorick
CATEGORY novel vantage point
INFORMATION reader's report, dated 23 December 1971, for Playwright's Conference of O'Neill Foundation

49. DATE 1971
AUTHOR Paul Baker
TITLE Hamlet ESP
CATEGORY collage
PRODUCTION ??
PUBLICATION New York: Dramatists Play Service
LOCATION New York Public Library (812 Baker)

50. **
DATE before 1972
AUTHOR Lonnie Burr
TITLE In the Shape of the Clouds
FORM one-act prose and verse (including quotations from Shakespeare)
CATEGORY eludes classification, but would seem to have had elements of collage, transposition, play-within-a-play, and even (the figures from Hamlet being assigned names from other Shakespearean texts) out-of-place assemblies
INFORMATION reader's report, dated 16 January 1972, for Playwrights Conference of O'Neill Foundation
| **51.** | **DATE** | before 1972 |
| | **AUTHOR** | Jesse Zimmerman |
| | **TITLE** | Icarus |
| | **FORM** | five-act /prose/ |
| | **CATEGORY** | transposition |
| | **INFORMATION** | reader's report, dated 7 February 1972 for Theater Communications Group |

| **52.** | **DATE** | 1972 or earlier |
| | **AUTHOR** | Bill Wood |
| | **TITLE** | The Voltemand Commission |
| | **CATEGORY** | novel vantage point, with elements of topical burlesque |
| | **INFORMATION** | reader's report, dated 25 October 1972, for the Playwrights' Conference of O'Neill Foundation |

| **53.** | **DATE** | 1972 or earlier |
| | **AUTHOR** | Gil Garcia |
| | **TITLE** | Oh Hamlet, You Should Have Listened to Me |
| | **FORM** | one-act (prose and verse) |
| | **CATEGORY** | (dream) play-within-a-play |
| | **INFORMATION** | reader's report, dated 28 October 1972, for Playwrights' Conference of O'Neill Foundation |

<p>| <strong>54.</strong> | <strong>DATE</strong> | before 1972 |
| | <strong>AUTHOR</strong> | Alexander Panas |
| | <strong>TITLE</strong> | Running 'Gainst the Rain |
| | <strong>FORM</strong> | two-act (prose) |
| | <strong>CATEGORY</strong> | transposition |
| | <strong>INFORMATION</strong> | reader's report, dated 26 December 1972, for Playwrights' Conference of O'Neill Foundation |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Form</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Publication</th>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Steven Rumbelow</td>
<td>Hamlet</td>
<td>prose and verse (mainly quotations from Shakespeare)</td>
<td>collage</td>
<td>toured by Triple Action Theatre in 1972 and again, in a revised version, in 1975</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Andy Smith</td>
<td>Peyton Space</td>
<td>12-scene prose, with songs and some quotation of Shakespearean verse</td>
<td>travesty transposition</td>
<td>Albany Empire, London, 1975</td>
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TYPESCRIPT in British Drama League Library
<table>
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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>Tom Stoppard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Dogg's Troupe Hamlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>15 minutes' worth of quotation, plus prologue and epilogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>collage</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRODUCTION</td>
<td>by Dogg's Troupe on the Terrace of The National Theatre, London, summer 1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLICATION</td>
<td>— (a film is available from Inter-Action Productions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>typescript c/o performing company</td>
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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>1977</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUTHOR</td>
<td>C.P. Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>Ophelia</td>
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<tr>
<td>FORM</td>
<td>two-act prose</td>
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<tr>
<td>CATEGORY</td>
<td>novel vantage point</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRODUCTION</td>
<td>touring production by Oxford Playhouse Company</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUBLISHED</td>
<td>19 October–19 November 1977</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOCATION</td>
<td>typescript c/o Taylor's agent, Michael Imison of Jan van Loewen Ltd.</td>
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APPENDIX IV

DRAMATIC ADAPTATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S KING LEAR IN ENGLISH SINCE 1900

1. DATE 1915
   AUTHOR Gordon Bottomley
   TITLE King Lear's Wife
   FORM one-act verse
   CATEGORY novel vantage point
   PRODUCTION Birmingham Repertory Theatre, 25 September 1915
   in Bottomley's King Lear's Wife and Other Plays (London: Constable, 1920)
   LOCATION most university/research libraries

2. DATE 1922
   AUTHOR Bernard Gilbert
   TITLE King Lear at Hordle
   FORM three-act prose
   CATEGORY transposition
   PRODUCTION licensed for production by the Carver Recreation Club, Marple, on 19 March 1923
   PUBLICATION in Gilbert's King Lear at Hordle and Other Rural Plays, 'The Old England Series', vol.II, (London: W.Collins Sons & Co.), 1922), pp. 3-77
   LOCATION British Library (X 981/974)
   University of Birmingham Shakespeare Institute (PR 6013.15)
   British Drama League Library

3. DATE 1940
   AUTHOR Emlyn Williams
   TITLE The Light of Heart
   FORM three-act prose
   CATEGORY play-within-a-play
   PRODUCTION Apollo Theatre, London, 21 February 1940
   PUBLICATION London: William Heinemann, 1940
   LOCATION British Library (11782.c.36)
   Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No. 512858)
   British Drama League Library
4. DATE 1943 (first published 1921 in Hungarian)  
AUTHOR Ferenc Molnar  
TRANSLATOR Louis Rittenberg  
TITLE A Prologue to 'King Lear'  
FORM one-act prose  
CATEGORY play-within-a-play  
PRODUCTION in Eric Crozier's adaptation for BBC television, broadcast 16 and 17 December 1947  
PUBLICATION in Pál Tabori, ed., A Hungarian Anthology (London: John Bale and Staples, Ltd., 1943), pp.45-71  
LOCATION The translation published in Tabori's anthology is in:  
British Library (012208.dd.2/5)  
Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.542692)  
Crozier's adaptation exists in unpublished typescript in the Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.475850)

5. DATE 1943  
AUTHOR Edward Robert Manley  
TITLE Mr. Lear  
FORM five-act prose  
CATEGORY transposition  
PRODUCTION Rothwell Grammar School, Lofthouse, near Wakefield, 5 and 6 March 1943.  
PUBLICATION —  
LOCATION unpublished typescript in Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No.539871)

6. DATE 1948  
AUTHOR Charles Causley  
TITLE How Pleasant to Know Mrs.Lear  
FORM one-act prose  
CATEGORY allusive, with elements of transposition and play-within-play  
PRODUCTION ???  
PUBLICATION London: Frederick Muller, Ltd., 1948  
(One-Act Plays, No.44)  
LOCATION British Library (WP 11251/44)
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>FORM</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>PRODUCTION</th>
<th>PUBLICATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Terence Tiller</td>
<td>The Conscience of the King: A Study of the Fool in 'King Lear'</td>
<td>one-act prose</td>
<td>play-within-a-play, Shakespeare included as a character at end</td>
<td>BBC Radio broadcast 7 May 1952</td>
<td>Shakespeare Collection of Birmingham Public Library (Ac.No. 624733)</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>Joyce Dennys</td>
<td>The Lear of Albion Crescent</td>
<td>one-act prose</td>
<td>allusive transposition, with elements of play-within-play</td>
<td>???</td>
<td>London: Deane, 1956</td>
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<td>British Library (W.P. 11466/234)</td>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>Robert Maugham</td>
<td>Mr. Lear</td>
<td>three-act prose</td>
<td>transposition</td>
<td>Connaught Theatre, Worthing, 24 September 1956</td>
<td>British Library (W.P. 9089/157)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Robert Cecil Romer, Viscount Maugham</td>
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<td><strong>11.</strong></td>
<td><strong>DATE</strong> 1971</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AUTHOR</strong></td>
<td>Edward Bond</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TITLE</strong></td>
<td>three-act prose</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CATEGORY</strong></td>
<td>eludes classification, but there are elements of novel vantage point</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>Royal Court Theatre, London, 29 September 1971</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLICATION</strong></td>
<td>London: Methuen, 1972</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LOCATION</strong></td>
<td>most university libraries and many bookshops.</td>
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**12.**

| **DATE** | ca. 1971 |
| **AUTHOR** | Norman Salomon |
| **TITLE** | King Lethal |
| **CATEGORY** | burlesque transposition |

**13.**

| **DATE** | 1973 |
| **AUTHOR** | Steven Rumbelow |
| **TITLE** | Leir Blindi |
| **CATEGORY** | collage |
| **PRODUCTION** | 1973, by Triple Action Theatre in Poland and later in London |

**14.**

| **DATE** | 1974 |
| **AUTHOR** | David Illingworth |
| **TITLE** | It Used to Be Fun |
| **CATEGORY** | burlesque play-within-a-play |
| **PRODUCTION** | at Bristol Little Theatre, Bristol, by Avon Touring Company, ca. 4 April 1974, subsequently touring Avon for 10 weeks |
| **PUBLICATION** | — (the text appears to be lost) |
| **INFORMATION** | press reviews, programme, courtesy of Avon Touring Company |
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