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THE SHAKESPEARE EXPERIENCE, AN INTRODUCTION

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THE SHAKESPEARE EXPERIENCE, AN INTRODUCTION

by

JOHN BOUCHARD

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ABSTRACT

The Shakespeare Experience, an Introduction

John Bouchard

Shakespearean drama is communally performed to celebrate and re-create the life of its attendant culture. This celebration and re-creation is the action by which a transcendent Shakespearean theatre convokes of its many audiences a greater audience extending through time. But this transcendent theatre's face is perennially transformed by history: for the Shakespearean theatre's scenic and gestic acts change in kind from performance to performance, in nature from culture to culture. The experiences of Shakespearean theatre are shaped by the complex and ambiguous relationship of any performance, or reading, with a generative culture, and with the many cultures Shakespearean theatre circumscribes and expresses.

Neither our literary nor performance-oriented commentaries on the plays have accounted for the variability of Shakespeare experiences. The former have located authentic "Shakespeare experience" in supposedly objective meanings infolded in the scripts; the latter in projected "original-authentic" experiences of the Renaissance theatre: yet history demonstrates both that "objective" meanings are necessarily read into as they are read out of the scripts, and that every Shakespearean production is a substantially
new creation to whose particular historical context authentic meanings and experiences are bound. A transparency before the endless creations of cultures characterizes Shakespearean drama, and reflects, I believe, the identifying feature of authentic Shakespeare experiences: the emotional/intellectual transformation of on-stage and off-stage participants.

Transformative Shakespeare experiences are invoked initially by the scripts' unique presentational sketch—which survives history's changing intentions to encourage persistently a heightened self-consciousness in our theatrical playing. The sketch, influencing patterns of performance and response much as a pencil sketch influences probable patterns of eye movements, induces both extreme fascination and extreme self-consciousness in an audience by: verbal eloquence, presentational speech conventions, gestic language and gestic eloquence, and a playfulness accommodating "multiconscious" participation in theatrical creation. The extremes of response called for by Shakespearean presentationalism lead us, more consistently than responses to any other literature or drama, to experience the emotions of the moment within the frame of the concrete details of our own lives, and to allow our apprehension of theatrical images to transform the emotional/intellectual structure of our perceptions.
For my parents; my allweather friends; my teachers, Homer Swander and J. Dennis Huston; the special few from Baker College, and from Bolsover and Rice Boulevards, who have sheltered me and nourished my spirit;

and for Spire
CONTENTS

1. Introducing the "Introduction" 1

2. The Call to Transformative Experience 34
   I. Presentational Intentionality 34
   II. The Shakespearean Presentational Sketch 62
       Verbal Eloquence 62
       Presentational Speech Conventions 87
       Gestic Language and Gestic Eloquence 117
       Playfulness 142

3. The Nature of Transformative Experience 155

Notes 176

A Selected Bibliography 188
Chapter One: Introducing the "Introduction"

Shakespearean drama is, and has essentially always been, communally performed to celebrate and re-create the life of its attendant culture. This celebration and re-creation is the common action of the Elizabethan at the Globe and the modern at Peter Brook's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: the action by which a transcendent Shakespearean theatre invokes an audience of its audiences—and its readers performing incipient theatrical acts—extending through time. In part a ritual enactment, Shakespearean theatre fundamentally differs from other ritual theatres. The Noh, Kalikali, Kabuki, Greek tragic, and medieval Christian theatres play out human and divine action enduring and transcending history: fixed masks, make-up, costumes, and gestures are the instruments of their eloquence; Shakespearean theatre conjures patterns of action substantially transformed by history: its scenic and gestic acts change in kind from performance to performance, in nature from culture to culture. Its simplest stage transformations can articulate cultural transformations. Henry Irving's *King Lear* staggering, weeping, from the stage in the arms of his fool at the
close of the play's second act called the nineteenth-century audience to participate in the pathos of the dissolution of family and society. Olivier and his fool, supporting one another, ran from the stage in a frenzied, modern, flight away from and into "nothingness," and Shakespeare's heaths became for audiences Camus' desert.¹

A Shakespeare theatre spanning generations of players and audiences types all theatre, "functioning," as Brecht describes the stage, "as a fashion show, parading not only the latest dresses but the latest ways of behaving."² Society--ideologically projected in its culture--finds as well an image of the future, for this reflecting theatrical instrument seems always available to serve as a public forum for the testing of new ideas and actions that exhort social change. Shakespearean performers and audiences, while witnessing their past in words responed and those gestures that continue to be re-enacted, also play out in the theatre what their society is and what it may become. Their experience is shaped by the complex and ambiguous relationship of any performance, or reading, with a generative culture, and with the many cultures Shakespearean theatre circumscribes and expresses. This experience radically transformed by and simultaneously transcending history is the subject of this "Introduction." "Shakespeare experience,"³ where it is celebrated as the essential
cultural act of a society, is the paradigmatic artistic experience: representing by its many performances the performative nature of our cultural and individual perceptions as they animate, and so subjectively appropriate, artistic creations. While we are drawn to speak as if there are absolutely objective responses, or meanings, to art, there are in fact none. "Shakespeare's" dramatic and metadramatic meanings delivered to us by Goddard, Burckhardt, or Calderwood inescapably belong (as Johnson's, Coleridge's, and Hazlitt's judgments belonged) to the critics and their cultures.⁴ Jan Kott is of course right: for each age, Shakespeare proves to be a contemporary—although not one who, as in Kott's design, is divorced from his many pasts.⁵ Shakespearean meanings, like the experiences from which they are deduced, are spun from all previous cultures that have created and passed on "objective" Shakespearean perspectives read into as they are read out of scripts and performances. Here is the art Maurice Merleau-Ponty envisions opening "the field from which it appears in another light. It changes itself and becomes what follows."⁶

Shakespeare's performance critics, who assume that merely reading drama is partial, or potential, theatrical action, have insisted upon a new attention to the theatrical experiences from which we are tempted to find literary
meanings. But performance criticism has for the most part substituted for one critical fiction of objective or authentic meaning another critical fiction of an original-authentic experience. "The search is on," J. L. Styan writes in The Shakespeare Revolution, "for the theatrical effect and experience of the original performance;" and the movement to recover Elizabethan playing conditions and the aesthetic and sociological bases of Renaissance drama has obviously served this pursuit. But the nature of the experience we are finally able to understand frustrates this search as surely as it frustrates the quest for objective meaning; for Shakespeare's drama, which reached the public in print by an afterthought, demands the creative primacy of the theatrical moment. It provokes in every production a new creation to whose context meaning and experience are bound. History's multiple experiences deny a determination of a singular authenticity, and exclude any total psychic re-creation of original experience. Shakespeare's plays have not covetously preserved their initial context in the theatre (unlike the plays of other ritual theatres), and were we to mimic in detail Shakespeare's own productions on our stages we would still invariably perform substantially new actions determined by the changed motives and habits of perception of contemporary players and audiences. If for
a moment we imagine the modern Shakespearean theatre entirely converted to Elizabethanism, the plays themselves ask us with our next thoughts to imagine a theatre converted from Elizabethanism.

A transparency before the endless creations of cultures characterizes Shakespearean drama; and to understand its experience is to consider many "authentic" experiences. Our best performance critics, sometimes in spite of their own designs, do so. Marvin Rosenberg's historical-critical series on Shakespeare's tragedies in the playhouse speaks past his readings of the plays to show the vast ranges of interpretive acts that the plays bear in performance, and the intricate theatrical/social dialectic from which these acts are generated. In practice, John Styan's history of twentieth-century approximations of original Shakespearean experience, like Rosenberg's observations, argues a transformation of experience according to historical determination; and Styan finds in the shifting determinations of our century a truly revolutionary expansion of the parameters of Shakespeare experience through the theatres of Granville-Barker, Playfair, Jackson, Guthrie, and Brook.

The dominant theme of both Rosenberg and Styan is the historical transformation of the Shakespeare experience. The idealized Elizabethan experience is for Styan, in fact, a model of the many-layered imaginative participation.
(without the limitations of Rosenberg's belief in theatre experience as solely empathic action) that patterns and encourages widely various theatrical experiences. Because he is not as sympathetic to past cultural appetites as he is to our century's, Styan applies his model less flexibly to past Shakespearean theatres:

The nineteenth-century actor-manager's work must be seen against the inadequate state of scholarship, the imperious demands of the proscenium-arch stage, the recal-citrant traditions of the theatre, and his primary loyalty to his audience.¹⁰

He asks of Victorian popularizers of Shakespeare like Beerbohm-Tree, "More see Shakespeare, but was more of Shakespeare seen?"¹¹ If the answer seems evident to a modern, that is only because our perspective is modern, and we have exhausted the life of Beerbohm-Tree's theatre to turn to new sources of life for our own. More of Shakespeare probably was seen."¹² A performance becomes a part of our Shakespeare experience when it is communally celebrated and recognized as Shakespearean theatre, and it refashions our understanding of the field of Shakespeare's drama. Rosenberg shows us that the Lear experience embraces Irving and Olivier--and Edmund Kean, who acted King Lear without the fool of the Jacobean stage. Productions of the scripts will continually reveal more of what we feel to be
that essential Shakespeare experience which transcends
its performative lives only by embracing historical trans-
formations. The methodologies we choose to describe this
experience should be as representative of imaginative
variety as Styan's, and of cultural variety as Rosenberg's.

All Shakespeare experiences declare their relationships
with cultural and social history as they enact through time
a dialectic of social change. We find societies as well
as Shakespeare's drama portrayed upon our stages, and
history's Shakespearean theatres ultimately offer us the
same record of social progress that Marx and Engels sketch
in the Manifesto:

When people speak of ideas that rev-
olutionize society, they only express
the fact, that within the old society,
the elements of a new one have been
created, and that the dissolution of the
old ideas keeps pace with the dis-
solution of the old conditions of
existence.13

Ideas and experiences of a past Shakespearean theatre,
that is, repeatedly project actual new social frameworks
of response. So, for example, Dr. Johnson's commentaries
and experiences which draw so conspicuously upon the
values, fears, and pleasures of the eighteenth century seem
to us also to hold the infolded nineteenth and twentieth
centuries. Johnson's culture's Falstaff teaches that:
... no man is more dangerous than he that with a will to corrupt, hath the power to please; and that neither wit nor honesty ought to think themselves safe with such a companion when they see Henry seduced by Falstaff.¹⁴

But the tension in Johnson's description of this Falstaff who is at once "obsequious and malignant," "corrupt and despicable," and who yet "makes himself pleasing to the prince that despises him . . . by the unfailing power of exciting laughter" anticipates the levelling understanding of a twentieth century whose Falstaffs—to convert stage figures and audiences to the spirit of social anarchy—can delight by unambiguously mirroring the legitimized rapacity of the politically and economically powerful.¹⁵

If our experience and culture is incipiently within Johnson's, his is no less implicitly in ours. In Johnson we recognize together what our culture has transformed (his faith in social and political structures) and what it has preserved (the insinuated attack upon these structures); and the relationship of the two cultures begins to reveal the shape of an expanding, multifaceted, Falstaff experience we are led to intuit outside the theatre. Our Shakespeare experiences are responses to fluid archetypes in fluid social contexts: Falstaff's many historical lives in the popular imagination and in the theatre contribute to the
very nature of Shakespeare's creation.

Cultural transformations of Shakespeare experiences are inextricably joined to their specific theatrical transformations. When Johnson speaks of an essential Falstaff, he clearly invokes many of the responses which Kemp, Betterton, Bullock, Mills, Quin, and Shuter had introduced into culture.16 Representing its societies, the theatre always pursues also its own internal dialectic of changing aesthetics and technology which it impresses upon cultures— Influencing, if not specifically determining, tastes and beliefs. As Brecht insists:

There is no play and no theatrical performance which does not in some way or other affect the dispositions and conceptions of the audience. Art is never without consequences, and indeed that says something for it.17

Visual and verbal stage language is charged with the incantatory force that Kenneth Burke finds in words which incite "men to make themselves over in the image of their imagery,"18 and when men come in a social group to the theatre they invite the stage to work upon them as a society: winning them both to theatrical and behavioral styles. In truth, aesthetics and behavior are permanently interdependent where the act of performance always urges an audience to convert understanding of stage action to
understanding, and creation of, action in the world.\footnote{19} Theatre, unlike literature, is a social force that directly influences its community of participants. This, Sartre finds, is its attraction:

A book can speak in a murmur; drama and comedy have to shout. This may be what attracts me about the theatre: the assault and the heightened tone and the risk of losing everything in a single night.\footnote{20}

Most individual theatres that survive single nights spend their exhortative force as they are claimed by their societies: Restoration, Victorian, and perhaps now Ibsonian theatres have been supplanted by the new theatres of new cultures. But Shakespearean theatre's cultural/social potency is revived persistently by succeeding ages. The vitality of one Shakespearean theatre dissipates before the following Shakespearean theatre, as in our time the psychologizing Shakespeare has--answering Brecht's, Artaud's, Sartre's, even Shaw's prophetic accusations of uselessness--begun to be supplanted by apsychological, didactic, impressionistic, and emblematic Shakespeares.

Our responses to, and our expectations of, Shakespearean performance come then simply from the influence of culture upon theatre and theatre upon culture; and all our assertions of Shakespearean universals are founded
upon this fragile temporal framework. Each society's Shakespearean theatre—projected from the study as well as from the stage—answers contemporary appetites that have been encouraged partially by the theatre itself. It is the vitality of this interplay that fairly measures the life of an age's Shakespeare: not the values of preceding or succeeding ages. Nineteenth and early twentieth-century Shakespearean spectacles which now appear conspicuously unaffectioning to us, in truth found powerful imaginative expressions of their times' expanding technological facility and their societies' assertion of, and passion to marvel at, new powers of creation. The world which looked to be imminently malleable through mechanization became actually re-presentable upon the stage; and in turn this "representational" Shakespeare cultivated the popularity of its own stage illusions by inflaming and nurturing the historical period's Pygmalion impulse to realize the imaginary. It developed and satisfied the audience Sartre saw that "needed the film but had no inkling of what it could be, ... it had not yet been invented." 21 The nineteenth-century Shakespearean grand representationalists like Charles Kean (whose Henry V "sent Henry in triumphant procession along the South bank with old London Bridge in the background, maidens dressed up as angels rattling their tambourines to the fore, and ships,
flaunting their pennons, moored at quayside"\textsuperscript{22}) and Henry Irving (whose \textit{Much Ado About Nothing} set the aborted wedding in a thirty-foot high church "from which hung the golden lamps universally used in Italian cathedrals, its painted canopy overhanging the altar, its great iron-work gates, its altar with cases of flowers, and flaming candles rising to a height of eighteen feet, its stained-glass windows and statues of saints"\textsuperscript{23}) passed on and shaped the illusionist movement that culminated in the film spectacles of Griffith and De Mille in the early twentieth century.

Through both its successes and its limitations one Shakespearean theatre, in the historically shifting interplay of theatre and society, helps determine the qualities of its successor. Nineteenth-century illusionism gave birth, as well as gave way, to our openly presentational, non-illusory, Shakespeare (including the Shakespeare of Elizabethan revivalism). It was the achievement of illusion at the turn of the century that itself began to expose the communicative restrictions of precise stage representation to an age whose aesthetic and social needs were coming to demand of its own playwrights new theatrical styles. Almost at the same time, the progress of photographic technology in pursuit of the realized visual image was beginning to devalue—as it
eventually did—stage images through more perfect illusions of the physical world. When Ionesco remembers his own early sense of the "vulgar," "transparent" tricks of the stage in light of the belief which film inspires, he traces the partially stage-determined conditions for the creation of not only his own drama, but of much modern Shakespearean theatre as well.

The theatre I am describing, for the moment from the broadest historical perspective, transforms itself by helping transform its audiences. Societies act out their struggles of progress both upon and through their Shakespearean stages. I find "social realism" to be the continuous activity of Shakespearean drama—by far more effectively practiced in Johnson's theatre, which demands the eventual accommodation of society through a Falstaff who confronts and compromises it, than in the Moscow Art Theatre of our times. The transcendent Shakespearean theatre, like the essential Falstaff, appears infinitely able to dissolve the familiar world through words and gestures, and in doing so to change those whom it touches. Theatre history suggests the pervasive tendency—fulfilled, I believe, more completely and consistently than by any other theatre or literature—of Shakespearean performance to substantially transform its audiences: to invite conversion of "play world" aesthetic responses to "real world"
emotional and intellectual movement. Falstaff prods
Johnson to moralize publicly (and represent an age)
because the critic's values beyond the immediate theatrical
experience are genuinely seduced by the pleasure in
"licentiousness . . . not so offensive but that it may
be born for his mirth."26 Shakespeare's Falstaff, like
the plays, tempts first revolutionary individual, and then
social, transformation. This sole temptation, the call
to change, is the signifying ideology, enduring the many
ideologies found in performances, of Shakespearean drama.

And so I take literally the commonplace that Shake-
pearean drama is uniquely affecting. Every response to
art is an emotional/intellectual transformation of one
sort or another; but Shakespeare's art—in its many his-
torical forms—in invites radical redefinition of individual
and collective audience identities that outlive the
theatrical moment. Habitual perceptions and actions tend
to be subverted and reformed by the demands of individual
performances: performances which in time urge the trans-
formation of that vast historical audience which includes
our critics, players, and producers. Shakespeare's "social
realism" reflects a more immediate and intimate "realism"
that impresses itself upon cultures; for history's more
visible conversions pattern the countless individual con-
versions of unnumbered performances of Shakespeare's plays;
and the stage completes the incipient action of scripts that inspire, and offer at least the bare frameworks for, significantly transforming audiences. Scripts and performances alike are "realistic," as Francis Fergusson claims when describing analogic action in *Hamlet*, merely because of their probable real impact:

And stretching beyond the play in all directions are the analogies between Denmark and England; Denmark and Rome under "the mightiest Julius"; Hamlet's stage and Shakespeare's stage; the theater and life. Because Shakespeare takes all these elements as "real," he can respect their essential mystery, not replacing them with abstractions, nor merely exploiting their qualities as moodmakers, not confining us in an artificial world with no exit. He asks us to sense the unity of his play through direct perception of these analogies; he does not ask us to replace our sense of a real and mysterious world with a consistent artifact, "the world of the play."27

The transformative movement from theatre to life is the "real" (the pun is almost necessary) authentic quality of the Shakespeare experience—although the experience is far rarer than we either assume or wish, because all productions, obviously, cannot transform all audiences. Even with revolutionary intentions performers too often fail to make, and audiences fail to draw, "real" analogies. Still, transformational experiences reaching profoundly beyond the
stage, beyond theatrical arenas, have been the life of Shakespearean theatre: the distinguishing performative acts that finally do determine whether or not "more of Shakespeare" was seen. The Shakespearean performance, like its cousin the performative speech act, either fires or misfires, is happy or unhappy: it fires and is the source of Shakespeare experience when it transforms us; it misfires when it does not.28

It then follows that an authentic Shakespeare aesthetic (the conditions for the successful performative act) would reshape itself to every social context, addressing stage representations as social actions. This aesthetic would be more comprehensive and at last more demanding than the imagined literary/theatrical aesthetic which demands mere belief in the stage image—the aesthetic by which our critics continually misvalue Shakespeare on the stage. The former sensibly asks us to find "more of Shakespeare" in directors like Granville-Barker, Guthrie, Welles, Brook, and Kosintsev; the latter has perversely found less. In North America, there is after all infinitely more Shakespeare in the various social actions of festival, campus, and small theatre stages than in all the elegant and empty representations of the established theatres of San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York.

Our theatres repeatedly teach us, most often unpleas-
antly, that the conditions for the firing or misfiring (the success or failure if you will) of Shakespeare's plays in performance are only tangentially related to the technical talents of actors and directors. These conditions are in fact more nearly determined by the relationship of collective action in the theatre to social, theatrical, even regional history. History has a double effect upon performances. Its conventions—and conventional ways of perceiving—first offer a ground for communication and understanding, nurturing that "idea of a theater" by which playwrights and performative artists create, and audiences participate in a final creation.29 But history will also hold performers and audiences in thrall to conventionality. Cultures grow fond of their reflections upon the stage, and will—as the Restoration's heroic tragedies should remind us—preen before habitual conceptions, valueless mockeries of life. History will impose upon theatre the same "mental set"—both life-nurturing and life-taking—E. H. Gombrich discovers imposed upon representational art, so that "a representation cannot be divorced from its purpose and the requirements of the society in which the given visual language gains currency"30 and that "the relatively rigid vocabulary of . . . tradition acts as a selective screen which admits only the features for which schemata exist."31
Gombrich values most in *Art and Illusion* representations that both appropriate and transform history's codes, conventions, and schemata. These representations genuinely reshape history's "mental set." The most humble Shakespearean performance which transforms its audience strikes this same peculiar historical stance, re-creating in its own image an audience's "mental set" or "idea of a theater." Shakespeare's scripts in these performances ask audiences to create according to historically impressed theatrical, cultural, and individual codes—in order then to abandon these constructs, betrayed by art as artifice: mere fictions. The new visions generated by these performances are substantial emotional/intellectual conversions (of both social and aesthetic experience) that enforce themselves back upon history—if less surely than the experiences sustained by the surviving artifacts of representational art—promising new schemata as the bases for future experiences. Barry Jackson's 1925 "modern dress" *Hamlet*, for example, depended upon his era's unflinchingly pious attention to the play as historical fable in order to shock audiences by theatrical sacrilege out of a distancing "historicizing" engagement to performances, and thereby to renew the immediacy of the play experience. At once, the manipulation of historical period upon the stage was opened for the following era as an instrument
for deeply influencing theatrical response.

But Shakespearean conversions do not always transform collective and individual history in the single explosive night of theatre that Sartre envisions. Performances more often become at least historically transformative as the few converts among an audience of disbelievers (the historically intransigent) begin to subvert the predispositions of following audiences. Which of this century's historically transformative productions haven't been controversial: opening to more resistance than approval from professional critics? The run of Shakespeare's or any other author's plays serves as a potential short-term mechanism for social conversion. For those who are in effect the first few initiates to vision, or conversion, a production reveals that what seems to others to be a play's accidental qualities, or even the playwright's misjudgments, are really the play's secrets--essential emotional/intellectual bases of conversion: so over a period of time a run of performances argues that what at first looked like a production's follies are the production's true virtues--its unique impressions upon theatrical/social history. Yet it is in the nature of productions that they lose their historical force at the very moment of greatest, or widest, conversion. Kenneth Burke's "dramatistic" framework for understanding human
action, especially literary and philosophic acts, describes
the social arena from which he borrows his perspective:

We might almost say [Burke is speaking
of philosophic principles] that the pre-
dominance of a principle is per se
evidence that this principle has out-
lived its usefulness; for by the time
it has penetrated from the busy centers
of thought to the sluggish periphery
of mankind, the situation for which it
was designed has certainly altered.32

By the time the conversions of any historically trans-
formative production have penetrated to their own widest
possible audiences, they have similarly outlived their
usefulness; and where there have been Shakespearean con-
versions, their production's immediate Shakespeare
experience becomes lost to history.

Peter Brook's landmark Shakespeare productions of
1962 and 1970 detail as clearly as any productions I
know the development of social and historical impressions
(and in one case the dissipation of the impression also)
through a play's run. Both productions initially, pre-
dictably, angered many of their professional critics. The
best Robert Speaight could offer to say of the Brook King
Lear was that "the result was belauded by everyone who
likes to take their Shakespearian interpretations from
East Berlin, and resists Aristotelian purgation."33 Kenneth
Hurren in The Spectator labelled Brook's A Midsummer
Night's Dream "a tiresomely self-indulgent display of directorial gimmickry." 34 Yet the visionary impact upon some in the audiences of both plays was virulently contagious during their opening English runs, and grew with the international tours the productions generated.

Each production, however, ran in the end a different race. By the last performance of Brook's Dream, the production had offered, arguably, the century's most significant theatrical/social conversion in the West of both extra-theatrical and infra-theatrical notions of perception and of social community. Here was a model of Brecht's belief in a theatre demanding from an audience extraordinary ranges of imaginative and emotive activity intended to spill from the playhouse into the world (just as the actors themselves spilled from the stage to clasp hands with the audience upon Puck/John Kane's offer: "give me your hands, if we be friends") 35. Robert Speaight, either now reconciled to, or blissfully unaware of, the affinities of Shakespeare and Brecht, declared: "there was never a moment's doubt after the opening performance that this one [production] had taken its place in history." 36 Brook's version of Shakespeare's comedy resolutely denied in practice the theory of theatrical response as simply empathic action: the Coleridgean assumption that infects, and has for over a century infected, all mainstream English
and American Shakespearean criticism. Twelve years after its opening, and as I write this seven years after its last performance, the production continues to demand revolutionary methods of understanding response in Shakespearean theatre.

With the Brook King Lear, time visibly eroded, as it will eventually with his Dream, the breadth of the show's social conversion and historical impact. In retrospect, the production's grounds for individual transformation and social conversion are apparent. First, through cutting and through continuous alienation effects, Brook renewed a rapidly fossilizing "classic" by emptying the play of the cultural sentimentality that lingered in its productions in the theatre--perpetual stage reflections of the memory of the Tate Lear and A. C. Bradley's post-Tate understanding of "redemptive" design in the play's presentation of vast human suffering. Second, Brook brought the Shakespearean theatre into intimate contact with the modern world: it wasn't Kott's vision that Brook made his audience face, but the sustained image of the human animal robbed of meaningful action that seemed to many the peculiar legacy of modern man. But by the production's translation into the 1969 film--which, although in a different medium, attempted to revive the second "modernizing" transformative quality of the initial run--Brook's
King Lear no longer brought conversion with it: simply because theatrical, social, and cultural history had so radically changed.\textsuperscript{39} Since Brook's breakthrough, the Shakespearean stage had continued to provoke direct contact with the modern world, and the world in 1969 looked past human futility to insist upon human action—to insist for one thing upon an end to the Vietnam war. History apparently asked for no less than the reintegration into the play of the cuts (such as Gloucester's helping servants) that helped inspire the initial, now changed, Shakespeare experience of the 1962 production. Together, the two Brook plays represent the fate of Shakespeare experience in the theatrical run; and the idea of the run itself leads back to, as it patterns, the theatrical/social dialectic which partially articulates, and is in part articulated by, transformative Shakespeare experiences.

Because I find Shakespeare experience only in "real-world" transformations, I have in this first chapter featured history's insistent dialectical progression, while I have neglected history's apparent constancies. Simultaneously, my primary concern until now has been with collective, rather than individual, response (with the single identities struck by the shared actions of an audience, a performance's series of audiences, or history's own expanding audience of generations of players, producers,
designers, and audiences). Both of my concerns, or emphases— and here I stand among many pre-moderns in considering the privileges of changing tastes and times and in acknowledging the impact of collective identities—are rarely overtly shared by contemporary critics. (The few exceptions come readily to mind: Kott, Styan, Rosenberg, Anne Barton, Bernard Beckerman, John Russell Brown, Michael Goldman.) Yet history unquestionably pressures each of our interpretations of Shakespeare experience: unless we untenably presume that the interpretations of other ages (and other contemporaries) are merely primitive; and our individual responses in the theatre are always intertwined with the independent relational life of an audience's collective response: where "from this variable reaction arises an alien reality for which no one is wholly responsible." The fact is that if you or I laugh or cry in a playhouse, we allow for (and at times draw motivation from) a participatory or non-participatory, approving or disapproving, group defined by many common emotional/perceptual-imaginative activities and one common stimulus.

All of the following pages are designed to reevaluate—according to my understanding of collective audience identities and the insistent progression of history—how we assume we react to, and what we think to be permanent in,
Shakespearean theatre. The plays do, obviously enough, encourage verifiably recurrent patterns of experience through time; even while identical, or nearly identical, scripts yield uncountable possible acts and responses. All that history claims for these experiences, though, is that they approach (and so suggest) permanence. Repeated experiences only witness that different societies either explicitly or implicitly renew patterns of transformative Shakespeare experience: patterns that might not serve future generations. (Do Much Ado About Nothing and The Merchant of Venice continue to be "problems" outside what we feel to be the transformative pattern of Shakespearean comedy?) The broader patterns or areas of transformation society tends to identify generically: so we become familiar with the "forms" of Shakespearean tragedy, comedy, romance, English history, and other more ingenious categories. Individual plays themselves define narrower ranges of experience (although Rosenberg continues to demonstrate brilliantly that the closer we look at even the narrowest patterns, the more our attention is drawn, as in life, from single to multiple vision.)

The theatrical/social dialectic stands in this first chapter as model and first term for describing Shakespeare experience because it implicitly traces the most expansive recurrent pattern of response to Shakespeare's plays. The
Shakespearean theatre's repeated participation in the transformative pattern of history itself embraces every pattern of transformative experience that our societies recognize; and every recurrent pattern of transformative experience in Shakespearean theatre is a structure of the system of collective responses which produces the Shakespearean theatrical/social dialectic. Within the Shakespearean dialectic, society's collective responses change from one Shakespearean theatre to the next according to recurrent areas, or "rhythms" in Susanne Langer's terminology,42 of transformation. At the same time, however, every repeating collective pattern of response expresses that ambiguous relationship between collective and individual experience which is inherent in the theatrical/social dialectic (in Marxian terms between the superstructure and the infrastructure of theatrical history). Collective response—which requires attention as a unique or "alien" phenomenon—cannot be disentangled entirely from the individual responses which it significantly represents and from which it originates. And writers, who live both experiences at once, never altogether avoid speaking of both responses (no matter where their attention is directed). The best one can do at least in addressing collective response is to say that one is featuring it—while self-consciously framing the subjectivity at the heart of
the effort to transcend the limits of one's own experience and perception.

The greatest of Shakespeare's commentators, necessarily or naively ignoring the constrictions of subjectivity to speak of common experiences (often in the cause of objective truth), indeed have won for their own individual experiences privileged functions in the theatrical/social dialectic. From outside the usual relationship of individual to collective experience, their responses work directly upon the superstructure of collective response. Writers, intuitively drawing upon the incantatory force of their language, rarely voice society's collective responses without also helping shape those responses. Thus Shakespeare's most useful critics (who comment in many mediums) participate in the creation of, while they describe, Shakespeare experience. Johnson helps make the collective eighteenth-century Falstaff experience he also records; Dryden's *All for Love* and his collaborative *The Tempest* work upon his society as commentaries exemplifying and urging Restoration Shakespearean adaptation; even Coleridge's and Lamb's professed distaste for Shakespeare's "imperfect" representation in the playhouse, reflects and fires their times' compulsion for perfecting Shakespearean illusions in the theatre. When the critic moves from experience to the act of writing he joins the side of the performers:
creating fictions that need completion in the theatre. "He is," writes Peter Brook, "a pathmaker;" and if the writer is compelling enough, the path should lead into the theatre—as it did for Brook after reading Kott.

In Shakespeare's historically influential critics, the impulse to perform in writing—whatever its other components may be—is often either a direct or indirect response to the frequent misfirings of any age's Shakespearean theatre. Brook's indictment of modern Shakespeare productions speaks for other eras as well as for ours—and underscores the historical strength of the transformative Shakespeare experience which survives and revives the theatre when the experience is almost overwhelmed by the accidents of theatrical production and reception:

... nowhere does the Deadly Theatre install itself so securely, so comfortably and so slyly as in the works of William Shakespeare. The Deadly Theatre takes easily to Shakespeare. We see his plays done by good actors in what seems like the proper way—they look lively and colourful, there is music and everyone is all dressed up, just as they are supposed to be in the best of classical theatres. Yet secretly we find it excruciatingly boring—and in our hearts we either blame Shakespeare, or theatre as such, or even ourselves. To make matters worse there is always a deadly spectator, who for special reasons enjoys a lack of intensity and even a lack of entertainment, such as the scholar who emerges from routine performances of the classics smiling because nothing has distracted him from trying over and
confirming his pet theories to himself,
whilst reciting his favourite lines
under his breath.44

Although they don't become the deadly scholars Brook
dreads, critics of social worth are not all the vital
participants in the theatre that directors should crave.
Some, like Coleridge, react only to what they believe to
be the invitation to transformation issuing immediately
from the scripts; and their intolerance for ideas and
performances which seem to have outlived their usefulness
can isolate them from the transformative experiences of
their own times. Thus surprisingly little distance really
separates those who speak for, while they are reshaping,
their age's Shakespeare experience from those whom we
think of as iconoclastic commentators unable to alter
society's "mental set" (but whose projections are, never-
theless, able to address possible future social arenas).
A few of the iconoclasts do find their futures: William
Poel's once-suspect vision of transformative experience
through revived Elizabethan playing conditions is realized
now every year on permanent thrust stages in England and
America.

But criticism has no effect upon theatrical/social
history without the productions it implicitly seeks and
may help shape. When in 1977 I adapted Bernard Shaw's
idiosyncratic observations about Shakespeare's witty men and women to a university production of Much Ado About Nothing, the play produced a sudden movement in the university community's theatrical/social dialectic (magnified in intensity by the relative intimacy of the community) that Shaw's academically discarded comments anticipated.46

Shaw outrageously proposed in an 1898 review of a production that "the main pretension in Much Ado is that Benedick and Beatrice are exquisitely witty and amusing persons. They are, of course, nothing of the sort."47 The two characters Shaw saw living beneath Shakespeare's word-music were vulgar and unlikable--addicted to coarsely insulting one another in public. If their language was finer, their conduct was no better, and their character more suspect, than that of the costers and flower-girls of the London streets:

When a flower-girl tells a coster to hold his jaw, for nobody is listening to him, and he retorts, "Oh, you're there, are you, you beauty?" they reproduce the wit of Beatrice and Benedick exactly. But put it this way. "I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you." "What! my dear Lady Disdain, are you yet living?" You are miles from coster-land at once. When I tell you that Benedick and the coster are equally poor in thought, Beatrice and the flower-girl equally vulgar in repartee, you reply that I
might as well tell you that a nightingale's love is no higher than a cat's.
Which is exactly what I do tell you, though the nightingale is the better
musician. 48

The 1977 university *Much Ado* brought the figures of
Benedick and Beatrice obviously closer to the coster and
the flower-girl. Against theatrical tradition, the
wit-battles were made more vitriolic and coarsened—we
allowed, for instance, our audiences to hear the aural
puns in the actor/Benedick's reply to the actress/Beatrice:
"I would my horse (whores) had the speed of your tongue,
and so good a continuer (cunt-in-you-er)" (I.i.141-2).

To rid the play of actor/characters who seem to have been
sentenced in the theatre to an overmannered posturing
through their lines, all the actors were set in nearly
continuous motion. This resulted: first, in making the
animus in the stage Beatrice's and the stage Benedick's
stalking each other as clear as the attraction to those in
the audience apt to be lulled to sleep by nightingale songs;
and second, in pointing to the bawdy-house texture of the
joking of the three male principals. For once, the play's
wit offered an emotional and intellectual framework which
accommodated those pseudo-problems that usually do
intrigue and challenge contemporary audiences—the
actor/Claudio's smallness and obtuseness, the stage
Beatrice's savage "Kill Claudio" (IV.i.289), and the actor/Benedick's disturbing acquiescence in proposing the challenge. Our Benedick and Beatrice never did disentangle their affection from resentment: even though affection ascended, for the moment, in the last scene of the play. It was as if the play ended with both pairs of stage lovers stopping to dance on the edge of a figurative precipice before they dangerously jumped into the marriages the comedy projects.

Some responses to the production were expected. Many scholars, and their students, felt they had been cheated of the Benedick and Beatrice they had imaginatively brought with them from the classroom into the theatre: others were just unpleasantly unsettled by the play's physicality. Yet most of the audience in the theatre at each performance--other scholars, most students, and people from outside the university--were engaged unexpectedly by, in effect, a new play. Within the theatre, the play's "wit" was now suddenly very broadly funny and simultaneously disturbing. The production, I think, offered a transformative experience. Although the production was vigorously resisted by the community's "idea of a theater," it also began to reshape that "idea" in performance. And for those whose idea of witty lovers had been engendered by pairs of warring film lovers--
Gable and Colbert in *It Happened One Night*, Grant and Hepburn in *The Philadelphia Story*, Tracy and Hepburn in a series of films—Shakespeare's lovers reclaimed their uniqueness, instead of proving, as they usually do on the stage, to be outdated and worn precursors of the far more attractive film pairs.

But the limited run of a university production prevents me from more than supposing the invitation and acceptance of transformative experience. With this production, Shakespeare experience could never be verified historically. Which productions are at last transformative in the theatrical/social dialectic of Shakespearean production that extends over centuries is in varying degrees determined by chance. That there are transformative experiences—seized upon by the theatre's theatrical/social dialectic to determine the nature of what we recognize as authentic Shakespeare experience—is a historical certainty.
Chapter Two: The Call to Transformative Experience

I. Presentational Intentionality

Why could I not accept the truth of theatrical reality? Why did it seem false to me? And why did the false seem to want to pass as true and take the place of truth? Was it the fault of the actors? Of the text? Or my own fault? I think I realize now that what worried me in the theatre was the presence of characters in flesh and blood on the stage. Their physical presence destroyed the imaginative illusion. It was as though there were two planes of reality, the concrete, physical, impoverished, empty and limited reality of these ordinary human beings living, moving and speaking on the stage, and the reality of imagination, face to face, overlapping, irreconcilable: two antagonistic worlds failing to come together and unite.1 (Eugène Ionesco)

Film has usurped forever the realistic illusions of theatre, whose mimicking of visual reality seems embarrassingly clumsy by comparison. Yet Ionesco's admittedly "unsanctified" vision of what is left for us of theatrical reality describes no more, and no less, than the perpetual nature of not only theatrical, but all imaginative, acts. From the one world of experience we are always called to reconcile--within the theatre, standing before
a Degas, even watching *Bicycle Thieves*--the two "antagonistic worlds" of the real and the imaginary that art seems to articulate. The two worlds are but two ways of seeing, the imaginative and perceptual consciousnesses, that together render imaginative creations. In the theatre the actor visibly performing his role is the living sign of the perception and the image depending upon, and competing with, one another for existence.

Our images are "procedures," Sartre conjectures in an early critique of theories of imagination, "for rendering objects present in a certain way."² The same perceptions of the object world that might frustrate these "procedures" --as the actors did for Ionesco, or the brush strokes might for us with Degas' ballerinas--are what enable us to assume an imaginative consciousness through which we envision as present images, like Hamlet or a Degas dancer, that we simultaneously recognize as absent. To unrealize an object, create an image, we must first accept a perceptual world our imaginings can unrealize. Sartre concludes in his *The Psychology of Imagination*:

... it is just this "being-in-the-world" which is the necessary condition for the imagination. ... the concrete situation of the consciousness in the world must at each moment serve as the singular motivation for the constitution of the unreal.
In placing the imaginative consciousness in relation to perception, Sartre reinvests the imagination with the potency claimed by the nineteenth-century romantics; for if our imaginings arise out of perception, our perceptions—which are themselves procedures for rendering objects present—can be released from many of the limits of social and psychological determinisms by our transforming imaginations. Martin Luther King's "dream" is an imaginative consciousness demanding status as a perception. The imaginative consciousness is for Sartre "like a wave among waves. It feels itself to be a consciousness through and through and one with the other consciousnesses which have preceded it and with which it is synthetically united."4 Imaginative consciousnesses aroused by art are extensions of, not substitutions for, the potentially transformative processes of consciousness in everyday life. In a sense they offer more life by demanding a heightened, if rarely specifically articulated, awareness of the creation of the image consciousness and its relationship with the world of perceptions.

The theatre, as Ionesco at first observed with dismay and later on with appreciation, displays with a peculiar intensity the relationship and coexistence of perceptual and imaginative consciousnesses. Where designs of paint or stone or the permanently recorded projections of film often
encourage the ascendancy of, as they arouse, the image consciousness (they make us in Sartre's view "seek in vain to create in ourselves the belief that the object really exists by means of our conduct towards it"5); the palpable present lives of men and women acting in a play resist the independence of the image and fix it in the perceptual world. All directors, with most theatregoers, have their own stocks of theatrical accidents which expose the near equivalence and interpenetration of the two consciousnesses in the playhouse. When I directed The Winter's Tale, the actress playing Paulina once literally slipped on a banana peel (left on the stage by a forgetful Bohemian extra) immediately before the resurrection of the actress/Hermione, and the audience chose to ignore the perceptual fact, remaining absolutely silent to enable the scene's image-making to be completed. During the run of Much Ado, our Benedick came-up cold one performance in the middle of the II.iii. soliloquy in which he professes to both himself and the audience he "will be horribly in love" (1. 235) with Beatrice. Without breaking character, he declared "I have forgot what I was to say," then ran through one of the two rear passages to glance at a script. After several uncomfortable seconds, he reappeared through the other doorway gleefully declaring, again apparently in character, "I have remembered me" and finished the soliloquy.
The audience squealed with delight both at "I have remembered me" and at the end of the soliloquy, for the actor's dexterity in solving the real-life problem seemed to enrich the character's lines. But whose wit had worked upon the audience: the actor's or the character's? Surely both of theirs.

Audiences and actors alike, who unrealize perceptions of self in creating characterizations on stage, are drawn in the theatre into what might be called consciousness's field of indeterminate commitment: in which the image and perceptual consciousnesses share our attention, and can quietly shift one into another. The meeting of the two consciousnesses, that interface between one "wave" and the next, from which our extra-theatrical actions tend to originate is repeated for its own sake in the theatre. Merleau-Ponty claims that painting celebrates the enigma of the visible. Theatre celebrates, as it participates in, the enigma of human action--which, however slightly, unceasingly transforms the world in which we live.

The Shakespearean theatre represents the transformative action of theatre itself at the peak of its historical force. Transforming and transformed by various societies, Shakespeare experiences repeatedly defy the present's almost insurmountable will to make of past creations mere "improbable fictions." The plays have relentlessly and
continually held consciousness in the field of indeterminate commitment: simultaneously imposing perceptual and imaginative consciousnesses upon each succeeding historical audience. Even through the extended historical movement to illusionism, actors, and often sets, have been drawn by the Shakespearean theatre to serve as agents for the perceptual as well as the imaginative worlds. Actresses playing Cordelia in the recovered Lear, for instance, would unfailingly immediately bracket for perception the Lear fiction and their own playing when they asked and answered for their audiences "What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent" (I.i.62); actors as Hamlet continued to step out of a pretense Denmark to share soliloquies that worked outside the fiction-making as perceptual puzzles, commentaries upon the fiction, and simple set pieces for histrionic displays.

The famous histrionics of the nineteenth-century tragedians were in fact responses to the same appeal the scripts have made upon generations of Shakespearean actors to assert their share, the weight of their own lives, in the act of creation on the stage: so it was a Shakespearean and not solely a personal impulse that made Olivier wish in playing Othello to "lead the public towards an appreciation of acting . . . to watch acting for acting's sake."7 If it seems to us that Irving's playing at its best was
crude and extreme compared to Olivier's, or Ellen Terry's was to Glenda Jackson's; this is largely because of the strength of the Lyceum's illusions against which the earlier players were compelled to assert their own lives. Yet the most seductively illusory sets and cycloramas of turn-of-the-century Shakespeare ultimately answered the stage Viola's question (asked in many ways through all the plays both to and for audiences) as Shakespeare's own bare theatre had to:

\[
\text{Vio. What country, friends, is this?} \\
\text{Cap. This is Illyria, lady.} \\
(\text{TN I.ii.1-2})
\]

That is, this is an illusion created by actors within a building. Shakespeare's plays have us join in the possibilities and limitations of action promised at once by perceptual and image consciousnesses. The imaginative worlds we are invited into are defamiliarized, or bracketed, in the playing; and so refamiliarize us with our own perceptions of what the "real" world is and what it might become.

Few writers have attended to Shakespearean drama's particular interdependence of image and perceptual consciousnesses since S. L. Bethell's forties' study of "multiconsciousness" in the Shakespearean theatre.\(^8\) Anne Righter's very influential \textit{Shakespeare and the Idea of}
the Play which offers a history of the development of
imaginative participation in the early English theatre,
only partially represents the character of the complex
relationship of Shakespeare's plays in performance to
their audiences. Her deduction that Elizabethan, and
especially Shakespearean, plays became "self-contained"
by relying essentially upon metaphorical association to
create a "sense of rapport" with the audience is a scholar's
fiction. Sixteenth-century audiences would not have seen
Cordelia speak her opening words from within a
"self-contained" Lear world; they would have seen the
boy actor playing Cordelia insisting the audience recog-
nize its own imaginative participation in the fiction.
So too, there is no reason to believe that asides and
soliloquies in Shakespeare's plays were appreciably more
"self-contained" than they would have been in the Mys-
teries or Moralities. Just as Styan urges, and directors
of Shakespeare on thrust stages discover, Shakespeare's
actor/characters when given the opportunity must have
spoken most of the time directly to the audience and
avoided the "mumbling into the beard or bosom in a simu-
lation of naturalistic thinking" which Jack Benny, as
that "great, great, Polish actor" Joseph Tura, parodies
in Lubitsch's To Be or Not To Be.

The Renaissance audience understood, better than we,
that play worlds--stage fictions--are conscious activities mutually performed in the theatre: not alien psychic objects passively apprehended by the playgoer. The pervasive metaphorical association of play and life in Renaissance drama rarely suggested the apparent "self-sufficiency" of entirely illusory play worlds; rather, this literary commonplace adapted to a stage nakedly harboring real men and women associated the fiction-making, as indistinguishable from the fictions, of the theatre with the perceptual activity of players and audience: in other words, one kind of creation, or reality, with another. The actor/Berowne's final words in Love's Labor's Lost, then, would in Shakespeare's theatre simply have acknowledged the fiction-making and the awareness of fiction-making of players and audience as simultaneous activities performed in the one, experiential, world:

Ber. Our wooing doth not end like an old play:
Jack hath not Gill. These ladies' courtesy
Might well have made our sport a comedy.
King. Come, sir, it wants a twelvemonth
an' a day,
And then 'twill end. Ber. That's too long for a play.
(V.ii.874-8)

Until the emergence of the professional theatre in the Renaissance, the traditionally active intertwining of image and perceptual consciousnesses in English drama
had been addressed by the religious framework of the Mystery and Morality plays. The earlier plays directed audiences to participate in a "spiritual"--or image--life intersecting and distinct from an "earthly" life--the common life of perception--unself-consciously lived by all men. This simple pattern led directly from the Mysteries through the Moralities to the Renaissance theatre; and was the controlling action of every religious play that seems also in retrospect pointed towards a secular theatre. When the three player/shepherds of the Wakefield Group's Second Shepherd's Play entered separately lamenting the familiar trials they and their audience (their actual neighbors) must endure together on "this earth," they at the same time implicitly invoked another imaging or "spiritual" dimension of life into which the act of fiction-making was to draw actors and audiences. From the first moment of the play, the audience's imaginative participation allowed an embracing of an "other" worldly vision that arose alongside "this world" perception: enabling the audience to be transported with the player/shepherds to the play's imaging of the Nativity. With the Mysteries, and later the Moralities, the acting out of social identifications of "spiritual" and "earthly" lives constantly reminded audiences that each realm was in reality an activity
(a spiritual or earthly way of living, or apprehending) extending beyond the stage into daily life.

In the secular Renaissance theatre, the comparison and identification of on-stage with off-stage life—that succeeded the Medieval comparison of spiritual and earthly life—was a persistent reminder, and catalyst, of the dizzying melding of consciousness's play-making and world-making which determines the texture of secular living. The adoption of this "play metaphor" in the secular theatre was, though, but a single element of a drama—in effect beginning with, and generated by, Marlowe's Tamburlaine—that directly confronted its audiences with the creational life of human consciousness as central subject as well as activity. Marlowe consistently blurred distinctions between all an audience might perceive and all it might imagine in the theatre. Through Marlowe's "tragic glass" the figure of the shepherd Tamburlaine who would wear the clothes of an emperor, who could reshape the world through imagination focused in language (as he converts the stage Theridamas in the play's first part), and whose conquests are qualified by the physical reality of mortality is virtually indistinguishable from the real actor who would costume himself as an emperor, fashion a vision of another world through his words, and whose imaginary achievements are qualified by both the physical
limitations of the theatre and the fiction's closure. We are faced with the same confusing of real and unreal with the secular Everyman Faustus--standing for an age unable or unwilling to embrace hereditary beliefs--whose feats of imagination are transparent comic stage tricks; but whose stage tricks are nevertheless transporting, if not sublime, feats of the imagination. As the religious theatres had by mutual enactment of players and audiences extended the extra-theatrical participation in "earthly" and "spiritual" living onto the stage, Marlowe's theatre began to assert the off-stage sense of the working of imagination upon perception and perception upon imagination into the heart of theatrical subject matter and experience.

For Shakespeare, provoking the intermingling of imagining and perceiving in the theatre was a practice central to the plays: a career-long obsession. The Elizabethan creation Richard III is and is not simply an actor in the theatre strutting through a performance; the Jacobean character Macbeth, feeling "his title/Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe/Upon a dwarfish thief" (Mac. V.ii.20-2), is also the actor whose king's garments uncomfortably betray the ghost of a man the role dictates he become; while Shakespeare's superman of the imagination in *The Tempest*--actor/Prospero/playwright--performs magic continually disclosing itself to the off-stage audience
as only stage pretense: which still possesses the authentic power to transform even off-stage reality.

However near Shakespeare's plays take us towards belief in their fictions (towards "self-contained" plays), the plays in performance always return audiences to awareness of fiction-making from the real world: to awareness of consciousness discovering unexpected possibilities for feeling, thinking, and acting in the world. In All's Well That Ends Well, fine actors can exploit Helena's and Bertram's atypicality to draw us into an attitude of belief in the characters' independent lives, but the simple conventional ending imposed upon our "realistic" stage creations unravels that attitude: exposing the play's artifice and our complicity in its making (I found in directing the play that audiences unfailingly laughed when in the last act the actor/king appeared to re-start the play's plot mechanism by offering, this time, the actress/Diana the husband of her choice). The deconstructing fiction projects past its boundaries an extremely complex emotional/intellectual challenge to our common understandings of human worth, honor, affection, and the relative rights of women and men. The ending that completes the fiction's making proves to be really an unmaking of belief in the fiction; and it is this unmaking which turns the stage king into the beggar/player: enabling--forcing--
the actor to assume the new role as epiloguist who both reminds us of the other players with whom we have contrived our theatrical playing, and of the nearness of our imaginings to our lives.

Bethell had found this "multiconsciousness" in Shakespearean theatre (an audience's participation on "more than one plane of attention at the same time"\(^{12}\)) the product of a "traditional and unconscious" use of convention that reached back to the Mysteries. The conventional tradition was no less the product of the social function of the early English theatre. Religious and, later, secular theatres celebrated, by offering a heightened participation in, the transforming power of human action perceived by and in the community from which an audience was drawn. Medieval audiences participated in the movement between earthly and spiritual realms (ways of acting) which they took to be the underlying pattern of human action; Renaissance audiences tested inside the theatre the limits of the popular extra-theatrical understanding of the transformative imaginative will. The impulse of English drama through the Puritan's closing of the theatres (which the Restoration in its own way briefly revived) literally spilled from the ideas and activities of the streets and open-air theatres onto the stage and then back again. In one period the liturgy, in another May
games and holiday fests, returned to communities as newly wrought performative actions—now neither as sacraments (the catchphrase "sacramental drama" probably now confuses rather than clarifies understanding the dynamics of the Mystery plays) nor as festival: but as participatory drama. How little in common this drama has with nineteenth and twentieth-century "realist" drama (which still dominates establishment theatre) whose impulse is to replace the real world with a doppelgänger fictive world we peer in at, in fixation, from the outer darkness of an auditorium. The conventionalism of the older drama—by inducing an active, aware, participation in theatrical creation—made matters of the stage matters of the house: of the real world.

The more extreme a theatre's conventions, the more clearly the theatre acknowledges its creative partnership with its audience; and this compact in a theatre of radical conventions is the spur for an extraordinary imaginative reach. Convention can juxtapose upon the stage past and present; history and legends; and gods, heroes, and common people. These groups were all to be found on Shakespeare's stage; but to the relative stylization of playing that accompanied the conventions of preceding theatres, the Renaissance—and especially the Shakespearean—theatre radically increased the naturalistic texture born by the
framework of English drama. Bethell's observation that Shakespeare's drama characteristically swings between convention and naturalism has become a commonplace of stage-oriented Shakespearean criticism. Righter's belief in the force of the naturalism in this movement signals for her the emergence of a static artifact—that "world of the play" which offers multiconscious participation only through analogy; while Maynard Mack sees in the shifting of convention and naturalism in the plays a pattern of Edward Bullough's understanding of aesthetic distancing in the theatre: through which audiences are variously "engaged and detached" by Shakespearean performance. Both Righter and Mack have but a part of the truth. Even at the height of Shakespearean artificiality—as in the Love's Labor's exchange ("Our wooing doth not end like an old play . . .") that parades the primary theatrical convention of willed pretense—audiences do not break off engagement with fiction-making: engagement is instead complicated by the reminder of the activity of imagination supporting an audience's fictions. And this doublemindedness results less from Righter's proposed analogy than from the social action of shared creativity in the Shakespearean playhouse: an action imprinted in the plays by conventions that have promoted a self-aware creativity in all following theatregoers who
have remained, in Bethell's words, "uncontaminated by abstract and tendentious dramatic theory."

Contemporary theatrical criticism—at odds with the best contemporary theatre—continues to value above all else drama's ability to produce an "attitude of belief" in its fictions. We have, in the aftermath of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century realism, claimed a single part our pleasure—empathic engagement—for the whole: and we find ourselves now stumbling awkwardly sometimes to keep pace with a modern theatre requiring a criticism able to account for a more complex range of pleasures. Although Righter and Mack would value the self-revealing artifice of Shakespearean theatre in both its own and our time, each critic retains a bias towards realistic, empathic, theatre; and finally sees a basically naturalistic theatre whose conventions can at best provide subsidiary pleasures to an audience's empathic experience. Bethell, on the other hand, had seen a fundamental theatre of conventions which contracted its audiences to an active creative and judgmental participation—where the movement of audiences to empathy, while unique in degree in the theatre of the time, was but a part of a multifaceted engagement. History has been on Bethell's side, for each generation of Shakespearean theatre has recontracted almost solely through conventions the social force apparently
inherent in the original theatre: from which society consciously asserts through playing out fictions the creational or transformative function of its action in the world.

Only Styan has, over a period of time, been able to devise a successful accounting of Shakespearean theatrical practice based upon the recognition of multiconscious activity. He sees the play-texts he works with repeatedly signalling a theatre of conventions that directs audiences--in spite of the variability of individual performances--to attend to the fiction's making as well as the fiction. As with other "non-illusionist" theatres, the Shakespearean theatre at the least has us see that "the agent of the drama . . . is both the actor and the character"--just as a film-maker's use of deliberately artificial back projection will make us aware that camera and director, together with actor and character, are the agents of film. At its fullest achievement, the Shakespearean theatre Styan describes in Shakespeare's Stagecraft; Drama, Stage, and Audience; and The Shakespeare Revolution inspires unprecedented ranges of multiconscious activity from scene to scene, or--in Beckerman's terminology--from one dramatic segment to the next. Again, filmic artifice works analogously. Hitchcock's obvious back projection in Spellbound's climactic skiing sequence almost comically
pulls us away from the fiction we are creating to frame the movie's stars: the lovers, Gregory Peck the amnesiac and Ingrid Bergman the analyst; and of course Hitchcock the creator as well. But the device also redirects our empathic involvement with the characters forcing us to re-create the fiction precisely at the time the Peck character struggles to remember, or re-create, his past. We are invited to feel ourselves to be both patient of, and analyst to, the film itself--passive receiver and active creator. So with Shakespeare, the simple convention of soliloquy, which always conspicuously frames the actor playing the character, can pass us back and forth, and hold us between, imaginings and perceiving in immeasurably rich ways. The Prince Hal soliloquy of Henry IV, Part I ("I know you all, and will a while uphold/The unyok'd humor of your idleness . . ." [I.ii.195ff.]) reveals an actor performing a choric function along with a character declaring his mind; and audiences, while seeing the two faces, cannot emotionally separate them. (How the actor plays the lines tells us about the character; what we are told about the character grants us knowledge of the professional life of the actor.) The attention the soliloquy draws to our inability to separate fact from fiction--attested to by every audience troubled by the lines in performance--isolates our con-
tinual theatrical participation throughout Shakespeare's histories in the many-faceted social activity of understanding historical process which transforms the historic (Prince Hal, the Battle of Agincourt) into the mythic and the mythic (Bacchanalian Falstaff) into the verifiably historic.

Responding to a framework of Shakespearean conventions ("dramatic signals" or "stagecraft"), Styan introduces what seems to me a genuinely workable understanding of both the scripts and their theatrical realizations—if one sees that underneath Styan's assertions of objectivity, he points to a framework inviting probable, rather than inevitable, patterns of performance and response: much as the lines of a sketch influence probable patterns of eye movements among observers. Styan begins the search in the scripts for that system of theatrical stimuli for performance and response—an intentionality like the sketch's—that survives and absorbs history's changing intentions; and what he outlines, most completely in Shakespeare's Stagecraft, is a unique Shakespearean stylistics of "non-illusion" (which I would rather call presentational, as opposed to representational, conventions) that continually encourages transformative experiences in the theatre.

The Shakespeare experience rests not upon themes,
meanings, or archetypes; but upon the transformative relationship of the Shakespearean theatre with its audiences. And this relationship is struck through a series of presentational actions encouraged by the scripts: a series at once spare enough to allow transformation according to the fashions of behavior and beliefs of different eras, and complex enough to compensate for elements repressed by different societies either through privileged theatrical styles or cutting of the scripts. To put it another way, Shakespearean transformations do not ultimately depend upon whether or not the stage Iago acts out of latent homosexual longing for the stage Othello or the actor/Hamlet is driven by an Oedipal obsession; nor do they depend upon every presentational element allowed by an Elizabethan model (when the illusionist movement banished non-illusory setting, the frequency of direct audience address, and references to the auditorium, the artificiality of speaking moments increased in importance and continued to hold audiences in consciousness's field of indeterminate commitment). History unfolds a presentational intentionality inherent in the Shakespearean theatre by which even consciously representational playing is dominated. Shakespearean image-making ostentatiously presents its illusions to its audiences, forcing upon us the world from which we, together with the players, create
our fictions. This presentational intentionality is the basis of the one world theatre Fergusson describes, passed from one generation to the next, which belies the critical fiction of "the world of the play." It is an intentionality born of the network of presentational "stagecraft" of the early religious theatre, and continues to project into the secular world the conversionary social function of that theatre: what M. C. Bradbrook called in her Clark lectures "the principle of Transformation."\(^{17}\) History itself, as I have insisted throughout these pages, has come to serve as both the ground and the raw material of the transformations the Shakespeare experience has introduced into the world.

But there is no avoiding the fact that identifying the lines, and the intentionality, of this Shakespearean presentational sketch poses the same insoluble puzzle facing the interpreter of meaning or the recorder of archetypes. If, as Gombrich judges in *Art and Illusion*, "every observation . . . is a result of a question we ask nature, and every question implies a tentative hypothesis,"\(^{18}\) then even as we try to describe Shakespearean presentational stylistics we cannot help, as Stanley Fish would insist, projecting subjective personal
and social experiences. We can only see what each of our "searchlight" perceptions enables us to see. Styan, for instance, surely mistakes traditional, and individual, interpretation for unvarying truth in claiming that in the plays "a recurrent function of tonal qualities in the verse is the creation of the mood which must [my italics] pervade a scene." For him, the opening lines of Henry IV, Part I are "bloodless, the consonants breathy, the rhythm sluggish. . . . the voice of a sick man:"  

So shaken as we are, so wan with care  
Find we a time for frightened peace to pant  
And breathe short-winded accents of new broils  
To be commenc'd in stronds afar remote . . .  
(I.i.lff.)

Yet directing the play teaches that these lines can communicate a careful, politic, Henry, or even an intensely vigorous man barely able to suppress the physical energy which can surface in a staccato delivery of the play's second line. The critic has declared the merely possible to be the absolute.

Subjectivity forces us all to argue probability rather than certainty, and performance-directed approaches to Shakespeare's scripts are thus no more ideally "objective" than literary readings. But attending to the performative
nature of scripts can lead to a kind of approximation of objectivity of description only partly, and then accidentally, available to readers concerned with literary value alone. Performance criticism presupposes the centuries-long history of what has survived and what has perished in Shakespearean performances: the not entirely perfect, but tested, record of what we could call practically demonstrable probability in the design and apprehension of Shakespeare's scripts. Styan's urging of consistently present verse-tones "which must pervade a scene" is simply contradicted by the practical objection suggesting in this instance neither inevitability nor compelling probability. While a historical approximation of a transcendent Shakespearean presentational sketch cannot exclude the impressionism in the critic's every word, nor guarantee permanence when centuries of truth can be reinterpreted at any moment, it does provide the largest possible intersubjective community of witnesses to the truths a performance critic would describe objectively. Where in the following pages I myself drift from describing historically probable Shakespeare experiences to merely possible ones, I only hope to have blurred impressionism and the appearance of objective description with enough skill to encourage future transformative performances and experiences--which
is as much the writer's business (as Johnson and Kott have demonstrated) as the attempt to describe what outlives historical transformation.22

History's Shakespearean theatres have each projected that presentational intentionality which enjoins audiences knowingly to produce present lived experiences rather than to witness passively representational illusions. The immediate attraction of this intentionality is, as Styan writes, "the pleasure of both seeing and performing a tightrope dance--and the world seems richer when the experience is over."23 Through time, enactments of Shakespearean presentationalism have had a double nature: they have, first, always apparently reproduced some part of the playwright's own presentational scheme that was enacted upon Shakespeare's available stages; and they have, second, produced mutations of the Shakespearean scheme--shaped by history's various social/theatrical conditions. Shakespearean presentationalism appears in succeeding theatres like the varying dialects of a single language: its dialects reflect some, and share some, of the features of a relatively "purer" earlier linguistic form, but take shape according to the accidents of history and environment. When Terry Hands had his production of Henry V transform during the performance from a haphazardly costumed and set play into a fully costumed and mounted
one, he conspicuously revised the presumed playing strategy of Shakespeare's Chamberlain's Men who, we think, began and ended the play lavishly costumed upon a bare Elizabethan stage; yet both productions, responding to the signals of the script, undoubtedly provoked presentational performance and response. They, in essence, spoke the same Shakespearean presentational language. The survival of this language is dictated by the continuing persistence of the intentionality each theatre is drawn to answer: the intentionality invoked by a few of the earliest projected utterances—or actions of the first presentational schemes—that have been repeated continually through time, and which together suggest the bare presentational sketch.

That the Shakespearean presentational sketch is bare—only a fragment of any dreamed of Renaissance model—is history's clearest, and probably most important, identification for our time. The practical performance record rejects the growing contemporary wish to turn to the idealized Renaissance performance as the optimum vehicle for Shakespeare experience. In truth, the record will not even authorize any single reconstruction, or clear "originating" performance model for each of the scripts: since their own author, bending to the different playing conditions of tours, the court, Blackfriars, and the Globe—
as well as to changing times and his own changing tastes—almost certainly staged many versions of his plays. Steven Urkowitz's speculation that the Folio King Lear is Shakespeare's rewriting of the Quarto text, and Gary Taylor's suggestion that the Quarto Henry V is, it seems, one of the playwright's own acting versions of the play, argues that all through his professional life Shakespeare conspired with the theatrical/social dialectic to shape an emerging, rather than emergent, presentational sketch; and so the habit of compiling "authentic" texts by adding all the words time has left us is apt to provide neither sound literary nor theatrical texts. Shakespeare performances reflect a generative presentationalism that, again like the language of many dialects, is a relatively, not absolutely stable system. Every theatre articulates this sketch which invites and permeates transformative Shakespeare experiences; but every different performance reproduces—as all of Shakespeare's own did—the sketch slightly differently: in each one's own idiosyncratic performative voice.

History's is the single voice that, in its constancy, insists upon the relative stability of the presentational sketch—through the many voices of witnesses to transformation who speak as one. Some of these witnesses are among every era's Shakespeare commentators who, with exceptions
like Granville-Barker, Bethell, and Styan, point mostly by chance to presentational actions and reactions far more familiar than the writers' abstracted lessons, meanings, or readings of the playwright's mind.

C. L. Barber's "readings" of the comedies are, for example, less persuasive than his implicit revelations of the nature of the presentational festivity invoked in the theatre by performances of the plays he surveys. But the essential features of Shakespeare's presentationalism are reflected, or stated, most certainly by the Shakespearean theatre's store of commonplaces, which--I urge--are history's repositories of earned truth: expressions of the intersubjective Shakespeare experiences of the human community. The projection of a sketch in the next pages, then, is more or less a rehearsal of past identifications of presentational experiences in Shakespearean theatre that seem to have outlived historical change: it is an outright borrowing, on the one hand, from some performance criticism; and a recasting, on the other, of Shakespearean commonplaces and familiar observations about the plays in terms of the dynamics of performance and response. History has seized upon the following presentational model as the dominant provocation of transformation in the theatre. This is both because the Shakespearean model's differences, even where seemingly
minor, with the presentational foundations of other theatres (such as Marlowe's, Wycherley's, Brecht's, Pirandello's, or Genet's) have till now proven more seductive invitations to change, and also because the many presentational scripts of Shakespearean theatre support an unprecedented abundance and variety of playing textures which seem to open innumerable fictive passages to "real world" transformation for us all.

II. The Shakespearean Presentational Sketch

Verbal Eloquence

English language cultures have for centuries commonly understood Shakespeare's plays to be their most eloquent verbal creations. The plays seem the original models of Kenneth Burke's prescription for fictive eloquence "minimizing . . . interest in fact, per se,"--moving us away from fiction's simplest stimulus/response cycle of suspense and surprise--"so that the 'more or less adequate sequence' of . . . presentation must be relied on to a much greater extent;"27 and we have come to value the
"'more or less adequate sequence'" of Shakespearean speech—its design—above all other literature's and drama's. If only with Shakespeare, shimmering verbal eloquence makes natural, and clearly understandable, the endemic critical confusion of literature with drama. Readers of the scripts are transfixed by the words, and many readers subsequently have addressed literary response as the plays' sufficient end. This century's almost singleminded critical concern with, and misapprehension of, the plays as literary artifacts is a kind of overindulgence of the perennial desire that the scripts engender to dream upon Shakespeare's words. Spurgesonesque imagery studies and "new critical" sightings of moral patterns interwoven in the verse are but rigorous elaborations of centuries of paeans to "beautiful passages" and "visionary truths" scattered throughout the scripts. Keats had in the early nineteenth century applied as careful an attention to the fascinations of Shakespearean literary virtuosity as any modern; Melville's marginal notes to his edition of the plays anticipate the focus and even the temper of later readers in considerations of such pieces of the plays as Miranda's and Prospero's counterpointed lines—"O brave new world . . ."/"'Tis new to thee" (V.i.183-4)—in The Tempest:
Consider the character of the persons concerning whom Miranda says this—then Prospero's quiet words in comment—how terrible! In Timon itself there is nothing like it. 28

All conspicuous literary eloquence exerts a presentational gravity upon a reader's fiction-making: pulling against the creation of mental images and towards consideration of style "in itself" from outside the fictive boundaries. Brilliant design can sometimes as easily as clumsiness make readers feel the craft divorced from its intended effects—at the same time that consciousness works to wrest imaginary life from the artifice it surveys. Treating the plays as dramatic poems, close-reading Shakespearean "new critics"—through a process of detachment and reattachment to the fictive contexts—continually bear witness to the presentational force of Shakespearean "literary" eloquence. But Shakespearean eloquence and its presentational weight is not specifically literary; it is supra-literary, the effect of words which readers cannot entirely forget are fashioned to be articulated before, and to, an audience. Both Coleridge's and Lamb's protests against the enactment of Shakespeare's "fine visions" are also pained acknowledgments that, in spite of the dissenting reader's will, the scripts invariably point to the stage. L. C. Knights's profession that "we start with
so many lines of verse on a printed page which we should read as we should any other poem," speaks but for the confusion, and the imperfect self-deception, of the last two generations of academic Shakespearean commentators who have figuratively grown drunk on printed words. Shakespeare's supra-literary eloquence is really an oratorical, or when read a prefigured oratorical, eloquence which has a significantly greater presentational impact than literary eloquence. Milton's Satan, Dickens' Micawber, or Joyce's Bloom each draws existence solely from our apprehension of words on a page; and consciousness moves rapidly to heal felt disjunctions between our engagement and the language from which the characters originate. But dramatic literature awaits the intended presence of mediating human agents—who will have a separate claim from the author's, the characters', or our own upon the printed language—to give life to the words. Scripts consequently deliver us words not yet spoken and also spoken untold numbers of times—a language asserting an existence beyond print, beyond the immediate reading experience; and Shakespearean eloquence, which makes us in the reading fix upon the artistry of the verbal model, magnifies all presentational qualifications of our imaginings by counterbalancing in consciousness—instead of ultimately conjoining—an alienating prefiguring
word-structure with its powerful immediate effects.

The presentationalism of supra-literary eloquence that pulls us away from fiction-making in reading Shakespeare anticipates, and thus reflects, the irresistible presentational effect of the oratorical eloquence of the stage event. On stage, the superior poetry of Shakespearean scripts acquires the direct appeal of superior oratory which demands an immediate emotional/intellectual response from us in addition to our attention to a play's fictive content. Throughout Shakespeare's plays, verbal passages tend to "float free" in performance from the fictions: enticing us from the inclination to construct imaginatively a relatively pure "other world" upon the stage, and encouraging us to judge what is said by our "this world" perceptions that continue to preoccupy us outside of the arousal of images in the theatre. The independent stage life of Shakespeare's speech is manifested in the traditional responses to the plays in the theatre: audiences are apt to be more readily transported by the lovers' "duologues" in Romeo and Juliet than they are to be either appalled or affected by the lovers' actions; verbal wit so dominates Much Ado About Nothing for some that the plot seems superfluous, other emotional tenors nonsensical; the pastoral grace of the Florizel and Perdita exchanges in The Winter's Tale is too often a
lotus charm that makes many forget that these stage lovers' attraction to each other includes sexual desire; and audiences habitually either find Shakespeare's plays to be rather disjointed strings of disquisitions on the nature of existence (above all in Hamlet and Lear) or take single moments of heightened oratorical eloquence to communicate the play's and playwright's vision (as the actor/Macbeth's musings "Life's . . . a tale/Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury/Signifying nothing" (Mac. V.v.24-8); the actor/Coriolanus's "you common cry of curs" (Cor. III.iii.120); or the stage Prospero's "we are such stuff/As dreams are made on; and our little life/Is rounded with a sleep" (Tmp. IV.i.156-8) have often enough been taken to tell in brief the whole experience of each play). The performance record shows a historical audience whose idea of what is normally thought of as dramatic unity—properly, fictive unity—erodes, sometimes altogether, through attention to a dissassociating oratory.

If sometimes the verbal eloquence of a play from beginning to end seems dissassociated from the fiction, more commonly the sense of the eloquence of an illusory character, or characters, becomes the object of fascination; and actors, who as members of the greater historical audience themselves answer the presentational invitation of verbal eloquence through their performances, almost
invariably promote this fascination. They cannot help but do so when their parts are shaped as much by breath-taking rhetorical communications as by plain speaking, visible actions, and silences. Only bad playing, not underplaying, will mask Shakespearean verbal eloquence. I have worked with actors to "de-poeticize" deliberately the balcony sequence of *Romeo and Juliet* by finding prose rhythms with which to speak the lines, yet in the eventual performances the moment and the fictive characters unfailingly broke free from the rest of the play--now with the audience remarking upon the naturalness instead of the lyricism of Shakespeare's beautiful language. Shakespeare's stage figures approach us in performance as orators as well as personages: ever tempting us to judge their oratorical presence independently from their stake in the action of the play. While passionately living out an allotted stage life, the Shakespearean character-image is also in Bethell's words "telling his own story, with appropriate gesture and movement, from a standpoint well outside himself."30 The actor/Othello struggling through a brief crazed epilogue to describe the simultaneous habitation and observation of himself is at once a grotesque caricature and the most perfect instance of the Shakespearean characterizational technique of locating consciousness as far outside as it is deeply within the stage
personality:

And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduc'd the state,
I took by th' throat the circumcised dog,
And smote him--thus.

(Oth. V.ii.352-5)

Verbal eloquence charms onto the stage the impression of a doubly present character. Shakespearean audiences are approached by phantasmic inhabiting both fictive and real worlds, functioning both as agents and narrators of the action. The stage figures' projection of speaking in two voices tends, moreover, to erase the artificial distinctions we make habitually between actor and character, and between the character's fiction and our fiction-making. The Shakespearean "character's" oratorical presence--that projection of a consciousness seemingly beyond character--is virtually inseparable from the actor's. (Antony reached for us across the fiction in the funeral oration at the same time as, and through the same mannerisms of, Brando.) And the outer appearance of convergence continually points to the infolded emotional convergences of actor and character brought to life in the theatre. (The actor who plays Macbeth and pursues the emotional path which communicates a credible image of the king-killer understands the truth in Artaud's claim that "an actor requires
infinitely more power to keep from committing a crime than a murderer needs courage to complete his act."31) The Shakespearean actor's voice demonstratively frees a character to live both inside and outside of a fiction as a persona and a narrator, while the character's self-dramatizing language reveals the actor's parallel posture of speaking from inside and outside his part as participant and artificer. Although we are predisposed to think and talk about actor and character as separate beings, the Shakespearean theatre recalls the truth that the two are actually one, containing and realizing one another. Like an Othello inextricably bound to and irreparably distant from a self, Shakespeare's actor/character repeatedly embodies contradictory forces: displaying together an actor creating, or seeming to become, a character, and a character transcending an imaginary realm of action and passing into our own. Olivier's flamboyant creation truly did "lead the public towards an appreciation of acting"--as all great Shakespearean performances unerringly do--by holding an audience, through a power drawn first from verbal eloquence, fast within that circle of seemingly conflicting activities shared by the feeling actor and the performing character.

As simple verbal eloquence encourages awareness of the doubly present actor in the doubly present character,
it as surely promotes an audience's vision of its own double role in the theatre--its play of image and perceptual consciousneses. The actor/character whose oratory "floats free" from the stage fiction instantly awakens us to the framework of "real world" perceptions from which our imaginings are drawn. The actor/Ulysses' homily on degree, the actor/Richard II's verbal accompaniment to his descent from Flint Castle, the actor/Hamlet's soliloquies, and also the balcony exchanges in *Romeo and Juliet* all alert us to a structural eloquence that speaks past the straightforward stage communications between and among actor/characters to address us directly, offering itself to perspectives we have earned from non-fictive judgments and experiences. Audiences are asked to indulge in a theatrical creation enriched by an aroused understanding of theatrical artifice. The Shakespearean theatre brings us by verbal eloquence the image alongside of, and emerging from, perceptual consciousness; and asks us to see ourselves, as we see the actors, to be the makers of as well as the participants in Shakespeare experiences. We actively manufacture the character's apparent passage into our perceptual lives, and we self-consciously draw the circle of conflicting experiences into which we partially surrender.

These various doublings--the illusion of character in
and out of the fiction, the sight of the actor inside
and outside of the part, and the audience knowingly
shaping and passionately living its fictional experiences—
are all invoked first in the Shakespearean theatre by
Shakespeare's words. This multidimensional perspective
is both the effect and the strictest of all manifestations
of that verbal eloquence relying visibly upon "the 'more
or less adequate sequence' of . . . presentation" for its
impact.\textsuperscript{32} It is also the characteristic mind-set of
Shakespeare experience: this indulgence in the playfulness,
the shaping, of plays, and the willingness to be moved
in the playing. Shakespearean speech, whose eloquence
appeals directly past imaginary stage communications while
at the same time fascinating us with its fictive images,
becomes an intersubjective communication of the actor and
the spectator in consciousness's field of indeterminate
commitment. For audiences, actor and character appear to
ride back and forth between perceptual and imaged worlds,
blurring the distinctions we normally make between imag-
ination and perception. There follows from Shakespearean
verbal eloquence, and experience, a seriousness about and
attentiveness to the theatrical playing which is beyond
the reach of nearly all presentational verse and prose
drama. Speech—whether it is the actor/Lear's or the
actor/Dogberry's—acquires the force of a voice from
outside us only as it is felt to be the shared creation of the community we join in the Shakespearean theatre.

Our conventional sense of character as an independent presence, and even a multidimensional perspective of the actor/character's presence, is in turn stretched by Shakespearean speaking to encourage at least the glimpse—which the imagination would avoid—of character as action, a sustained creative accomplishment in performance by actors and audiences. The self-announcing eloquence with which the Shakespearean stage figure's speech moves and delights us projects character as simply a vehicle for presentational, or multidimensional, creation; and a "Lear," or "Dogberry," idea begins to identify nakedly what in truth it is—a direction the perceptual and imaginative interchanges between actors and audiences take in shaping Shakespeare experience. The notion of the Shakespearean actor/character's external presence is qualified by the awareness of, or feeling for, the shaping presence of actor and audience manufacturing the character. Coleridge's famous contention that "I have a smack of Hamlet"\textsuperscript{33} can be read not simply as a testament to empathy, but also as a testament to the tacit recognition of empathy, the acceptance of the witness's share in breathing life into character. In effect, Shakespeare's actor/characters gain their particular illusion of presence—a type of inde-
pendence nearly unique to Shakespeare--from the force of the multidimensional activity which neither effaces the action of their creation nor entirely collapses an audience's image-making to rob the character of the power to move us. Players are unfailingly invited by the speeches to take audiences through imagination to perception and back again; and it is each achievement of this psychic movement that wins from the mere stage chimera of character the force of a true presence in the "real" world.

While transformative experience is the final end of the multiconsciousness inspired by Shakespearean speech, Shakespearean character--that strange illusion of externality which can embrace our clear recognition of the creating actors and spectators--is its focus. The stage figure that we conjure from the language of the scripts names, circumscribes, a particular range of multidimensional activity into which actors and audiences are invited; and individual performances of a part--however widely they might vary in interpretation from production to production--fall within that range of multiconscious activity common to all creations of the character. Shakespearean performances do after all have more in common than a few of the same words.

The Leontes character in the transformative production--whether he is played as fool, madman or irre-
deemable mean-spirit--always signifies the playing and
the imaging of a fictional jealous king of a fictional
Sicilia whose jealousies, and subsequently whose savagery
and misery, literally speak their way from "that world"
Sicilia into "this world" in the theatre. The cruel
detail of the actor/Leontes' description of the stage
figures Polixenes and Hermione "paddling palms and pinching
fingers" (WT I.ii.115) might not represent an audience's
interpretation of the mimed discourse it sees, but it
instantly evokes--even when perceived as comic--a latent
passion that lies in the house. The quality of the speech
infringes upon our imaging, throws us back upon reflection
and experience of "real world" phenomena only tangential
to our fiction-making. And within a very few lines the
actor/Leontes meets, or greets, the audience in this
psychic field which bridges imagining and perceiving:
directly addressing those outside his fiction--alerting
every husband, wife, and lover in the audience to the
danger of sexual betrayal, and the threat of sexual larceny
posed by anyone in the theatre:

There have been
(Or I am much deceive'd) cuckold's ere now,
And many a man there is (even at this present,
Now, while I speak this) holds his wife by
th' arm,
That little thinks she has been sluic'd in
's absence,
And his pond fish'd by his next neighbor--by
Sir Smile, his neighbor. Nay, there's comfort in't,
While other men have gates, and those gates open'd,
As mine, against their will.
(I.ii.190-8)

An audience is coaxed by the stage figure from the attitude of the witness to the attitude of the participant, and so the spectator appropriates the Leontes story for his own as he sees through it his own emotional/intellectual share in the story's making. The stage figure's speech brings to our fiction-making an acute perceptual awareness that transforms the pretense of the character's "once upon a time" existence to the more immediate belief in his "here and now" existence before us, and through us, in the theatre.

In the Shakespearean theatre, speech reminds us of what imagination and theatrical illusions usually obscure—that the character portrayed in performance is never more than the stage figure: the composite actor/character who occupies the same place and time as the spectator. This stage figure's acts seem to reach at once inside the fiction and out to the house; and the outward reaches of Shakespearean actor/characters--their speaking past their fictions--vary in breadth and intensity as surely as do their apparent impacts within their stories. Where the actor/Leontes urgently addresses private and familial
perceptions in the audience, the figure of the Bastard in *King John*, for instance, casually, comically, addresses social and political perspectives. The Bastard's comparison of himself with his stage brother (I.i) engagingly and irrefutably establishes—for on-stage and off-stage audiences—the preferability of the bastard over the legitimate son (every bit as cleverly as Lear's actor/Edmund is allowed to do), and hence opens all fictive and non-fictive socio-political assertions of legitimacy to questioning in the theatre. The actor/Bastard actually becomes our self-appointed inquisitor:

For he is but a bastard to the time
That doth not [smack] of observation—
And so am I, whether I smack or no... .
(I.i.207-9)

What he eventually observes is a "mad world, mad kings, mad composition!" (II.i.561), and a socio-political legitimacy which is the product of, and is resolved by, that ineradicable selfishness, "commodity," which, by the Bastard's deduction, should be every man's guide:

Well, whiles I am a beggar, I will rail,
And say there is no sin but to be rich;
And being rich, my virtue then shall be
To say there is no vice but beggary.
Since kings break faith upon commodity,
Gain, be my lord, for I will worship thee.
(II.i.593-8)
Offering no distinctions in this second soliloquy between on-stage and off-stage worlds, the stage Bastard implies there are none; and while it is impossible to judge how accurately he will come to speak for any member of his audience, he does invite us all to share outside the fiction the topsy-turvy, revolutionary, vision of the workings of "commodity"--that is, the politico-economics (commodities) of self and property--through which the truly resourceful man seizes the "bare-pick'd bone of majesty" (IV.iii.148) and dictates legitimacy.

Each Shakespearean creation whose speaking, like Leontes' or the Bastard's, directly touches fictive and real worlds points to that collective voice which sketches the entire range of a fiction's presentational playing. Not only the greater historical audience, but also the in-theatre audience is initially awakened to presentational verbal eloquence by a general awareness of what we hear as this voice of the play. Hamlet, that is, as well as--and before--the actor/Hamlet, orients audiences to "this world" perception of fictive experience through a dissassociating oratory. Although this voice of the play is obviously a collection of voices, its effects are genuinely collective: multiconscious responses prove to be no more haphazard than the play's images. The numbers of perceptions aroused by the eloquence of various
characters join precisely in performance as fictive images do, hierarchically and harmonically, in the theatre. In practice, the more conspicuously eloquent the speaking, the more easily it seems to escape the bounds of a restricting fiction; and perceptual activity spurred by a play's most conspicuous moments of verbal eloquence at once directs the course, and fits into the wider pattern, of the engagement provoked by all eloquent speaking. (So with images, the vivid will both dominate and complement the less vivid--Ford's, for one, will appear to stand above and with the images of the other gulls in The Merry Wives of Windsor.)

Our apprehensions of this network of eloquent moments of speech--or voice of the play--is neither entirely a part of, nor entirely divorced from, our understanding of the imaginary lives of the fictional characters. It is, more accurately, conditioned by our sense of the actor/character's imaginary poses. Any moment of conspicuous verbal eloquence leaps into our perceptual field, no matter who delivers it on stage: so for a time eloquence can allow the voice of the lesser character more impact than the voice of the greater upon our fiction-making. The actor/Le Beau has few lines in As You Like It, but his parting message to Orlando, and as it turns out to the audience, is the clearest enticement to perceptual
engagement in the play's first two scenes:

Sir, fare you well.
Hereafter, in a better world than this,
I shall desire more love and knowledge of you.
(I.ii.283-5)

A wish for "a better world than this" begs—possibly with
the immediacy generated by the unexpected dignity the stage
figure may suddenly assume—a place and motive for
playing-out in this imperfect real world a corrective
comedy of hope: of just social restitutions and happier,
if not in every case the absolutely happiest of, romantic
couplings. Multiconscious response to Shakespearean
verbal eloquence is ultimately shaped by variously weighted
speaking moments, only partially controlled by the fiction
of "character," knitted together by playwright, actor,
and director. Our experience of the whole structure of a
play's presentational verbal eloquence may end up to be
that: we refuse with head and heart the resolution of the
dialectically competing voices in Henry IV, Part I
(Hal/Hotspur; Hal/Falstaff; Hotspur/Falstaff;
Hal-Hotspur/Falstaff) imposed merely by plot; or the
actor/Enobarbus's famous echoing of the North translation's
tribute to a Cleopatra who "did make defect perfection"
(Ant. II.ii.231) overrides the voices of the stage lovers
in leading us to find the logic of the senses in the stage
Roman's weakness and the stage Egyptian's capriciousness; or the dazzling mosaic of serious, comic, and serio-comic voices of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (and many of the comedies) delights us more with the inducement to play with the actors at, than with the invitation to enjoy from without, the stage figures' fictive journey through the illusions inside the illusion of the play.

Even the most eloquent of Shakespeare's imaginary creations, or re-creations, do not finally dictate the collective voice and effect of presentational eloquence. They do, however, repeatedly draw us towards an elaborate interweaving of responses to speech which approaches the play's own patterning. Through the same verbal facility that fascinates us with both the imaginary and perceptual presence of the stage figure, and especially in those extraordinary speech acts which seem to transport "character" well outside fiction, an actor/Richard III, Henry V, Hamlet, or Lear can open to us the wealth of a play's conjunction of multiconscious responses.

The actor/Henry V's solitary discourse on "ceremony" is able to turn the illusion of the night before Agincourt into a recovery of the inescapable theatricality of not only Shakespeare's history (and histories), but also of history itself. In the theatre we are led to the soliloquy by the actor/Michael Williams's challenges to royal
adventurism, and--emotively--by the carefully contrived
illusion of the lonely and quiet moments before battle.
But the lines we are apt to expect do not come. Instead,
the actor/King only obliquely addresses the stage
soldier's accusations by pleading the burdens of
decision-making, and meets the stage hush with a rhetoric
so formal, and so elegant, that the words begin to free
themselves from their tremendously compelling fictive
context and address the world outside in which plays, and
historical records, are made:

What infinite heart's ease
Must kings neglect, that private men enjoy!
And what have kings, that privates have not
too,
Save ceremony, save general ceremony?
And what art thou, thou idol Ceremony?
What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more
Of mortal griefs than do thy worshippers?
What are thy rents? what are thy comings-in?
O Ceremony, show me but thy worth!
What is thy soul of [adoration]?
Art thou aught else but place, degree, and
form,
Creating awe and fear in other men?
Wherein thou art less happy, being fear'd,
Than they in fearing.
What drink'st thou oft, in stead of homage
sweet,
But poison'd flattery? O, be sick, great
greatness,
And bid thy ceremony give thee cure!
Thinks thou the fiery fever will go out
With titles blown from adulation?
Will it give place to flexure and low bending?
Canst thou, when thou command'st the beggar's
knee,
Command the health of it? No, thou proud
dream,
That play'st so subtilly with a king's repose.  
I am a king that find thee, and I know  
'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,  
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,  
The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,  
The farced title running 'fore the king,  
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp  
That beats upon the high shore of this world--  
No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,  
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,  
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave;  
Who, with a body fill'd and vacant mind,  
Gets him to rest, cram'd with distressful  
bread,  
Never sees horrid night, the child of hell;  
But like a lackey, from the rise to set,  
Sweats in the eye of Phoebus, and all night  
Sleeps in Elysium; next day after dawn,  
Doth rise and help Hyperion to his horse,  
And follows so the ever-running year  
With profitable labor to his grave:  
And, but for ceremony, such a wretch,  
Winding up days with toil, and nights with  

sleep,  
Had the beforehand and vantage of a king.  
The slave, a member of the country's peace,  
Enjoys it; but in gross brain little wots  
What watch the King keeps to maintain the  
peace,  
Whose hours the peasant best advantages.  

(H5 IV.i.236-84)

Here the act of speaking turns the apparent message  
of the speech inside out. If kingship is indeed in  
"ceremony" alone above the common lot, and kings but  
off-stage actors burdened with the props and costumes of  
royalty, "ceremony" and "acting" themselves prove through  
the transporting effects of the eloquence of a ceremonial  
soliloquy to be, or become, real substance. In performance,  
as the compelling actor cries against the emptiness of all
theatricality, his eloquence experientially asserts
the true substantiability of his make-believe. "Ceremony"
and substance, king—or actor—and role, are as intricately
entangled, and as impossible to disentangle, as the
hybrid figure of the actor/character upon the stage. At
the same time we hear an actor/character who truly
anguishes over the hollow pageantry to which both kings
and actors are tied, we hear an actor/character who in
his speaking seems wilfully to communicate the genuine
action which emerges from ceremonial gestures. At the
same time we understand that majesty or an actor's role
describes hollow trappings and gestures, we trust our
experience of the play and soliloquy that "ceremony"--
"The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,/The inter-
tissed robe of gold and pearl"--can help create the actual
substance as well as the appearance of king and actor/king
alike. The speaking can tease an audience into a
multidimensional perspective yielding a series of per-
ceptions ever widening the parameters of theatrical
experience. Lodged within the actor/king's present theat-
ricality is the fictional Henry's pervasive role-playing
in the histories by which he willingly obliterates for
himself the distinction between playing and being God's
annointed king—even the reality of the wretch who "never
sees horrid night" is after all a patently romantic
fictionalization. So too the actor/king's playing represents the player's and the audience's willingness, or inability, to distinguish fact from fiction: as audiences end up moved by the theatrical shadow of the historical king, in addition to being moved by history itself (as legend, story, fiction) to collaborate in theatrical creation. In a passing instant of stage time, Shakespeare's soliloquy can point us, as the entire play does, past the immediate playing to the movement of history as it infects, and is infected by, imagination; and in doing so, the soliloquy finally surrenders the best answer this particular actor/character and this play can give to the actor/Williams's moral challenge: that the right and wrong of a moment are imagined into existence through and in the course of a history imagined, or willed, into existence.

From play to play, one speech to the next, Shakespearean verbal eloquence demands an attention, beyond our expectations, to its inherent presentationalism. It is as if speech in Shakespeare becomes the ascendant presentational act: urging through eloquence the simultaneous reflection upon and forging ahead of theatrical creation; bringing an audience, in essence, into the presence of its own creating consciousness. Shakespearean speech is--as Shaw, Granville-Barker, and Styan have found--
a "word music" achieving partial independence from a play's fiction-making by dazzling us with its composition and effects. Because we habitually understand the language we read or hear—to slightly adjust Kenneth Burke's description—to be "the 'critical moment' at which human motives take form,"34 we privilege this "word music" with our responses above every other recurrent presentational action in Shakespearean theatre.

But practical theatrical experience insists that verbal and non-verbal actions in Shakespeare are indisissolubly wedded to one another: the actor/Richard III's shuffling walk across the stage can be as eloquently communicative as the opening soliloquy he speaks. The National Theatre of the Deaf should, moreover, always remind us in performance that, also beyond the stage, speech is indisputably action, action a way of speaking, and the two gestures are at last inseparable and in part indistinguishable. The seductive verbal eloquence we perceive in Shakespeare's plays, which seems to generate all other presentational actions (or gestic writings) and to color them with its own eloquence, in fact primarily fastens our engagement onto the interlocking series of actions of which it is just one, and alerts us to the general eloquence that all presentational Shakespearean actions share. The sense of a verbal eloquence which
dominates the plays makes audiences look to, and for, presentationalism: the actions that strip away part of the fictive facade to reveal both player and role, craft and experience. What I take to be the remaining elements of the presentational sketch—whether principally verbal, wholly gestic, or joining sound and action—are thus not specifically determined by a dominant eloquence of speech; but neither are they entirely independent of it: as they characteristically lead audiences cyclically back to that common, and traditional, feeling for a verbal eloquence which distinguishes the Shakespeare experience among all other dramatic and literary experiences.

Presentational Speech Conventions

At the same time that linguistic eloquence may be felt as a general presentational pressure in the plays, formal conventions of Shakespearean stage speaking are specific invitations to multiconscious response in the theatre. Various forms of audience address, as well as actions represented as formal public addresses to on-stage audiences, immediately suspend unself-conscious fiction-making. They demand that a theatre audience marks its share in theatrical experience. When the actor/Stephano
happens upon the Trinculo-Caliban "beast" in The Tempest, he, in addition to playing out his part in the fiction, at once enjoins an audience through aside in the obvious game of play-making:

This is some monster of the isle with four legs, who hath got (as I take it) an ague. Where the devil should he learn our language? I will give him some relief, if it be but for that. If I can recover him, and keep him tame, and get to Naples with him, he's a present for any emperor that ever trod on neat's-leather. (II.ii.65-70)

Few speech conventions on the page, however, are as easy either to locate or name as the actor/Stephano's aside. First, productions, rather than the words of a script, finally dictate most of a play's formal speech conventions; and though we can assume that actors are most apt to indulge in convention where the temptation in the verse is strongest, they are rarely bound to do so. When playing Berowne, I did not refuse the implicit invitation in the lines to address both off-stage and on-stage audiences with the metadramatic commentary:

Our wooing doth not end like an old play: Jack hath not Gill. These ladies' courtesy Might well have made our sport a comedy. (LLL V.ii.874-6)

But helping direct Romeo and Juliet, I chose to have an
actor/Romeo deliver the apparent indirect audience address, "O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!" (I.v.44), to the actor/servant at hand in order to impress upon the audience the subordinate figure's amusement at the young man's excess. Second, speech conventions are never strictly distinguishable from one another either in or out of the theatre. Usual critical standards which separate asides from soliloquies—who is or is not on the stage, who does or does not overhear the lines—are actually less faithful to the differences in response we feel than the common-sense distinction that soliloquies are simply longer than asides. (The actor/Leontes' interjections from the bustling stage of the first act of The Winter's Tale are certainly more like the actor/Hamlet's or the actor/Macbeth's "soliloquies" than they are like the stage Stephano's "asides.") I think we most accurately distinguish at least these two Shakespearean speech conventions by our instinctive sense of the relative differences in breadth of experience each offers: not at last by a sure qualitative difference. My pointing at all presentational speech conventions admittedly becomes, therefore, slightly akin to pointing at lions in the dark. One knows they are there by the noises that they make, and hopes to be en-lightenedly pointing in the right direction.

Speech conventions on the Shakespearean stage, even
when they obviously help serve the naturalism of a fiction, will nevertheless automatically awaken a presentational mind-set in an audience. Asides among actor/characters, for example, ask audiences to believe in the illusion of people sharing secrets in another world--though they also remind audiences of the contrivances which bring that world into existence: the artificial separations imposed by stage space; the stage whisper all the spectators must, and some of the actors must pretend not to, hear. The asides which punctuate the actor/Malvolio's reading of the forged letter in Twelfth Night's second act might help create the fragile image of life in Illyria; but they simultaneously betray the theatrical game in which actors and audiences indulge: they indeed partially condemn the playing as "an improbable fiction."

    Mal. What employment have we here?
    [Taking up the letter.]
    Fab. Now is the woodcock near the gin.
    Sir To. O, peace, and the spirit of humors intimate reading aloud to him!
    Mal. By my life, this is my lady's hand.
    These be her very c's, her u's, and her t's, and thus makes she her great P's. It is, in contempt of question, her hand.
    Sir And. Her c's, her u's, and her t's: why that?
    Mal. [Reads.] "To the unknown belov'd, this, and my good wishes"--her very phrases! By your leave, wax. Soft! And the impressure her Lucrece, with which she uses to seal. 'Tis my lady. To whom should this be?
    Fab. This wins him, liver and all.
    (II.v.82-95)
In the relatively more naturalistic histories and tragedies, confidences among actor/characters similarly pull us away from, as they move us towards belief in, a controlling fiction. During the third act sequence in Henry VI, Part III in which the fictive Lady Grey pleads for her lands, the asides of the actors/Clarence and Gloucester: first, enhance the realism of the vision of the lecherous king, the coy and cunning Lady, and the two "whispering" younger brothers entertained by--and entertaining each other with--their understanding of the older brother's sexual appetite; and second, unfailingly impress us as well with the planting of a plot line to be exploited, the artifice of the stage tableau, and, clearly, the choric function of the two actors who through convention caustically interpret on-stage action for the off-stage audience:

L. Grey. Right gracious lord, I cannot brook delay. May it please your Highness to resolve me now, And what your pleasure is shall satisfy me. Glou. [Aside to Clarence.] Ay widow? Then I'll warrant you all your lands, And if what pleasures him shall pleasure you. Fight closer or, good faith, you'll catch a blow. Clar. [Aside to Gloucester.] I fear her not, unless she chance to fall. Glou. [Aside to Clarence.] God forbid that, for he'll take vantages. K. Edw. How many children hast thou, widow? tell me. Clar. [Aside to Gloucester.] I think he means to beg a child of her.
Glou. [Aside to Clarence.] Nay then whip me; he'll rather give her two.
L. Grey. Three, my most gracious lord.
Glou. [Aside to Clarence.] You shall have four [and] you'll be ru'd by him.
(III.i.18-30)

A sudden attention, provoked by confidences among Shakespearean actor/characters, both to the story life of the images and to the process of image-making characterizes response to Shakespearean aside. And the abrupt double awareness of the stage moment, hardly extending multiconscious participation past that immediate moment, is the common bond we sense between one character's asides to another and those other lines we call asides which are delivered either indirectly—through the pretense of introspection—or directly to an audience. Direct audience asides, as the actor/Stephano's can be, or indirect asides, such as the stage Parolles' blindfolded lament in All's Well, "Only to . . . beguile the supposition of that lascivious young boy the Count, have I run into this danger" (IV.iii.299-301), will almost certainly intensify our interest in the fiction-making more, and I think more startlingly, than inter-actor/character confidences; but every Shakespearean aside, and every shuffling of various types of the convention, evokes the same immediate empathic attention to the fictive action and our conscious complicity in its development. The reach of engagement
prompted by what we think of as Shakespearean aside is
roughly suggested by the possible responses to the com-
bination of audience and inter-actor/character asides at
the end of the third scene of Macbeth:

Rosse. And for an earnest of a greater
honor,
He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor;
In which addition, hail, most worthy thane,
For it is thine.

Ban. What, can the devil speak true?

Macb. The Thane of Cawdor lives; why do
you dress me
In borrowed robes?

Ang. Who was the thane lives yet,
But under heavy judgment bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was
combin'd
With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both
He labor'd in his country's wrack, I know not;
But treasons capital, confess'd and prov'd,
Have overthrown him.

Macb. [Aside.] Glamis and Thane of Cawdor!
The greatest is behind. [To Rosse and Angus.]
Thanks for your pains.

[Aside to Banquo.] Do you not hope your children
shall be kings,
When those that gave the Thane of Cawdor to me
Promis'd no less to them?
Ban. [Aside to Macbeth.] That, trusted
home,
Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
Besides the Thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange;
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence.—Cousins, a word, I pray you.

Macb. [Aside.] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you gentlemen.

[Aside.] This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success, 
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor. 
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion 
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair 
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs, 
Against the use of nature? Present fears 
Are less than horrible imaginings:

My thought, whose murther yet is but fantastical, 
Shakes so my single state of man that function 
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is 
But what is not.  

Ban. Look how our partner's rapt. 
Macb. [Aside.] If chance will have me 
king, why, chance may crown me 
Without my stir. 

(I.iii.104-44)

The series of asides faithfully performs complex and contradictory functions in production. It compels a renewed attention to the play's image life—literally offering a resting place in the plot in which an audience is invited to look through semi-transparent analogic conventions to a vision of the "characters'" genuine psychic upheaval. It also offers itself up to the audience as rough craft: as a means for schematically dividing the stage according to the relative knowledge of the two groups of stage figures and the contrasting reactions of the two principals; and—especially through audience-directed asides—as a method for confronting spectators with their involvement in the progress of the fiction and consequent dabbling (along with the actors) in the attraction of the idea, and image, of evil. When, in the course of a performance, the actor/Banquo's first line in the series
("What, can the devil speak true?") is actually indirectly or directly addressed to the audience instead of to the actor/Macbeth, the spectator is instantly awakened to the knowledge that an audience has an integral part in the debate over the meaning of, and an appropriate response to, the prophecies of the three "weird sisters." However the stage Banquo's line is delivered, this knowledge will eventually permeate response to the aside sequence and be bluntly invoked by the actor/Macbeth whose reflective questions are, at the very least by indirection, asked to, and need to be answered by, the theatre audience:

This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good. If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature?
(130-7)

The image of an infecting evil is likely to be revealed at last as an imaging we ourselves nurse into life by our attentive presence in the theatre; our nominally innocent witnessing of the "witches'" two appearances which prepare us for this sequence is gradually displayed to be creative participation.

It is in the act of passing us from the sudden awareness of complicity in the theatrical moment to a conception
of a far wider circumference of perceptual experience that asides begin to appear to us as soliloquies. Within, and informed by, the series of asides of the third scene, the actor/Macbeth's self(and audience)-questioning opens considerations of extra-theatrical reality extending well past the overt concerns of the fiction. And where direct or indirect audience address opens an extended "real world" consideration of the fiction-making, the address fulfills a prolonged "choric," or commentary, function which we intuitively ask for in Shakespearean soliloquy. The explicit self-questioning by the actor/Macbeth in this scene, in the very process of extending choric action, symbolizes the implicit audience self-questioning prodded by all of Shakespeare's soliloquies. Soliloquy always barely conceals through the pretense of fiction a universal questioning in the theatre of human behavior—which each spectator necessarily internalizes as personal quest. The famous address which follows a few scenes later in Macbeth—whose first line and a half mimicks the soliloquy's sustained evasiveness: "If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well/It were done quickly" (I.vii.1-2)—opens through artifice an expansive general, and hence for each of us an individual, investigation of innocence and guilt, motive and act, and worldly and other-world retribution by means of the stage figure's fictive search for the motives
and consequences of the envisioned assassination:

\[\text{If th' assassination}\\ \text{Could trammel up the consequence, and catch}\\ \text{With his surcease, success; that but this blow}\\ \text{Might be the be-all and the end-all--here,}\\ \text{But here, upon this bank and [shoal] of time,}\\ \text{We'ld jump the life to come. . . .}\\ \text{(2ff.)}\]

If only for a breath, the actor/Macbeth's pronouncing "we'ld" closes the last measure of space between his pre-tense of introspective self-address and the "we" of the audience for whom his speaking subtextually reaches.

The common-sense notion that soliloquies must be longer than asides is the natural product of this kind of elaborate employment of consciousness provoked by some of the plays' audience addresses. To the possibility of more various engagement through audience address we often rightly ascribe length. But we experience what we call soliloquy as a function in which we presentationally and empathically participate, not simply a speaking we hear; and the style of the stimulus of this action changes from one play to another, and, within each play, from context to context. Recalled outside of the entire aside sequence of Macbeth's third scene, the actor/Macbeth's questioning can seem a "pseudosoliloquy"--too brief and too elliptical to prod engagement past the range of an aside; but in performance, or in a reading, the quickly developing sequence is able to
weight the lines so that they solicit a new breadth of multiconscious involvement from an audience. The experiential distinctions we feel between asides and soliloquies are not merely impressed upon us by the structures of individual speeches (thus, while contributing to the effect of soliloquy, length alone cannot determine the nature of that effect); they are instead communicated by structural differences inscribed in the speaking moment by the words and delivery of the address as well as by all of the speaking's enveloping and projecting performance situations—dramatic segment, scene, act, or play itself.

The whole of The Comedy of Errors repeats on a wider scale this "weighting" of audience address in the Macbeth sequence. Through much of Shakespeare's early play, audience address—along with inter-actor/character asides—serves primarily as the playful winking of comic aside at the fiction and fiction-making alike. Actors/master and servant of Syracusa consistently promote and bracket our play-making for a moment in exclamations of confusion, joy, amazement, and resignation:

_S. Ant._ To me she speaks, she moves me for her theme:
What, was I married to her in my dream?
Or sleep I now and think I hear all this?
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?
Until I know this sure uncertainty,
I'll entertain the [offer'd] fallacy.
(II.ii.181-6)

S. Dro. To Adriana! That is where we din'd, Where Dowsabel did claim me for her husband: She is too big, I hope, for me to compass. Thither I must, although against my will, For servants must their masters' minds fulfill. (IV.i.109-13)

Yet in performance, the repeated addresses—which measure the action like the beats of a metronome—often eventually acquire a cumulative, and non-mechanistic, force buttressed by the vision of disorientation upon the stage: urging us past our interest in the twists of plot to that general sense of wonder at the curious mixture of chance, fate, and free will shaping human destinies—the sense planted in what is traditionally the first audience address of the play:

S. Ant. He that commends me to mine own content,
Commends me to the thing I cannot get:
I to the world am like a drop of water,
That in the ocean seeks another drop,
Who, falling there to find his fellow forth (Unseen, inquisitive), confounds himself. So I, to find a mother and a brother,
In quest of them (unhappy), ah, lose myself. (I.ii.33-40)

In the course of the play, the various actor/characters increasingly seem to speak as one to us of both the lives we have tried, and the possible lives we have left untried;
and, in time, any address suddenly can mean more to us than its predecessors. The Syracusan actor/Antipholus often speaks by the fourth act (while metadramatically acknowledging the momentary intimacy of players and audience fashioned by stage sorcery) as clearly for an audience's wonder at a newly estranged "real world" as he does for his own wonder at a newly estranged "stage world:"

There's not a man I meet but doth salute me
As if I were their well-acquainted friend,
And every one doth call me by my name:
Some tender money to me, some invite me;
Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;
Some offer me commodities to buy.
Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,
And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,
And therewithal took measure of my body.
Sure these are but imaginary wiles,
And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here.
(IV.iii.1-11)

At times the theatrical product of multiple structures within structures, our experience of Shakespearean soliloquy is itself but an expansion of multiconscious engagement through a speaking impressing us as audience address. Soliloquy is not, though, simply a stage figure's speaking "solus"--alone upon, or outside the attention of other figures who occupy, the stage. For that matter, neither direct nor indirect audience address in Shakespearean theatre is essentially communicated by the actual or pretended physical separation of a stage figure from other
actor/characters. We recognize Shakespearean audience
address, rather, by the sense of our own obviously
increased importance in the speech act. Transparently
gratuitous as fictive communication, the speech of the
moment—whether clothed in the attitude of introspection
or obliquely addressed to whomever cares to overhear—
will appear to be delivered above all else for our sakes.
The meaning of the performative communication through
the larger fictive design recedes for a time before the
more intimate performative communication of the single
speech.

And the address to which we respond is always per-
formance, not just an actor/character's straightforward
explication of fictive action. Assuming a role, the actor
performs. The direct audience addresses of the
actors/Richard III or Iago in the theatre are represen-
tative of the performative quality of all Shakespeare's
soliloquies and asides (along with choruses, prologues,
and epilogues): only the spectator bewildered past judgment
by language, only the most rigid of scholars will forget
the fact of performance and wholly accept the information
of the stage speakers' arguments. Shakespeare's performa-
tive soliloquies and asides can plant uncertainty as
easily as, and from time to time more interestingly than,
they might plant certainty in an audience. The most
sympathetic portrayals of Helena in All's Well That Ends Well never do guarantee that audiences will be convinced that the farewell address from Rossillion in the third act speaks the whole truth of the stage figure's fictional action:

I will be gone,  
That pitiful rumor may report my flight  
To console thine [Bertram's] ear. Come night, end day!  
For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away.  

(III.ii.126-9)

In any production, it is hard to accept this resolute stage figure's characterization of herself as a "poor thief," or to believe that she does not conceal more than she reveals in declaring a flight to "consolate" her imagined husband.

With Shakespeare's audience address, with the soliloquy function, audiences answer to the shift in the communicative, not the performative, component of the speaking. In audience address, words and delivery radically decrease the roles of the peripheral stage figures in the fictional action, and impress us with the gratuitousness to plot of a fit of speech. And this sense of gratuitousness encourages audiences to feel that the circle of performative communication has been narrowed to exclude all others save themselves. This is as true, moreover, of the ambiguously directed speaking performance of a stage figure--his
indirect audience address—as it is of direct audience address; for we reflexively assume that we are the most immediate object of a speech in the theatre in the absence of any clearly specified auditor, just as we are ready to believe, outside the theatre, that the person we come upon speaking to no one in particular intends to speak to us. "In our perceptions," Gombrich estimates, "we are completely self-centered, and for good reason: we constantly scan the world for things which may concern us directly; we will assume that an eye looks at us, or a gun points at us, unless we have good evidence to the contrary." 36

Although Shakespeare's performative audience addresses briefly supersede in an audience's attention the communication of the greater performance of a play, they in essence carry the wider performance with them. That is to say that the asides and soliloquies appear to us, and we respond to them, as performances conspicuously within the framing performance from which they derive and whose nature they clearly reflect. Shakespearean audience address, and so Shakespearean soliloquy, requires for its effects neither physical distance upon the stage nor great perceptual distance in the audience from the performance surrounding the address. Indeed, the most striking of all the plays' addresses act as soliloquies while holding with remarkable
tenacity to their immediate physical and psychic contexts. Awareness of the surrounding fictive action during the opening audience address in *The Winter's Tale* is demanded by the actor/Leontes who fixes our attention, as his is, upon the figures of Hermione and Polixenes:

Too hot, too hot! 
To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods. 
I have tremor cordis on me; my heart dances, 
But not for joy; not joy. This entertainment 
May a free face put on, derive a liberty 
From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom 
And well become the agent; 't may--I grant. 
But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers, 
As now they are, and making practic'd smiles, 
As in a looking-glass; and then to sigh, as 'twere 
The mort o' th' deer--0, that is entertainment 
My bosom likes not, nor my brows! 
(I.ii.108-19)

The actor/Macbeth's assessment of life in *Macbeth*'s last act ("To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,/Creeps in this petty pace from day to day . . ." [V.v.19ff.]) can serve as soliloquy with the stage full of attentive figures, and with the address beginning as a direct response to the announcement of the fictive Lady Macbeth's death:

Sey. The Queen, my lord, is dead. 
Macb. She should have died hereafter . . . 
(16-17)

The stage Hamlet's famous consideration of the jump from life to death which evolves into a contemplation of contemplation ("To be, or not to be, that is the question . . .")
[Ham. III.i.55ff.] works upon audiences as soliloquy whether or not in performance the stage figures of Ophelia, Polonius, and Claudius overhear every word, and whether or not the actor/Hamlet registers upon his entrance his awareness of the eavesdroppers.

The plays rarely serve simply as backdrops, their performative messages are rarely altogether muted, during the performative soliloquies of Shakespearean theatre. Repeatedly, performances of soliloquies incorporate into their own mise en scène their framing performances, and inform their own communications with the permeative messages of entire plays. The stage Antony prophesying to the figure we imagine to be the murdered Caesar symbolizes, perhaps, the relationship of soliloquy to context in all the plays:

O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy
(Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue)
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy...
(JC III.i.254ff.)

The body on the stage is the visible sign of the action and the emotional/intellectual communication of the play
to this moment; but the body is also the central prop of the actor/Antony's performative address which transforms the play's action--recalled through an overt delivery to the fictive corpse--into the material of a covert multidimensional address to the audience. The fiction made is invoked to rush audiences to a new analogic and reflective participation in, a real world bracketing of, the fiction-making. From this vantage, the stage figure's prophesy is our history: the "dogs of war" have already been unleashed--not just upon Julian Rome, but upon all epochs and nations many times over through political violence. We are surely to weigh the goals and the consequences of nominally idealistic violence, played out in the stage event, against our perceptions of the costs and benefits both to social and individual history. Response to the stage Antony's covert performative address is the common form of engagement induced by most Shakespearean soliloquies: as an expansive multi-conscious response to indirect or direct audience address transcends for the moment, as it transmutes, the remainder of an audience's play-making.

The analogic and reflective nature of this response, and on a lesser scale the response to aside, answers that persistent choric impulse which identifies Shakespearean presentational speech conventions. Stage figures like the
actors/Richard III and Hamlet who continually meet their audiences in address are in practice Choruses to their own fictions; while Shakespeare's formal Choruses, in turn, always act through performative soliloquies as actor/characters speaking within, as they extend, the frame of their fictions. But the choric impulse of Shakespearean speech is generated outside audience address as well--by what I believe amounts to the convention of public address within the fiction. The Shakespearean actor/character, assuming the attitude and role of the public speaker to on-stage audiences, inevitably reminds off-stage audiences anew of the stage figure's general oratorical appeal; and his speech acts which appear to demand an evaluative, reflective response from an audience inside the fiction inspire a parallel response throughout the house. Our "self-centered" search in the theatre "for things which may concern us directly" urges us to see the speaking convoking a fictive public audience simultaneously as an address to our own non-fictive public audience convoked by the performance of the play. As with indirect audience address, the convention offers a far more direct communication from the play than the fiction seems to hold out: chorically awaking us to the extent of our involvement in the fiction's making, while challenging through the speaking the perceptual world from which our fictions are made.
Shakespeare's fictive public addresses may display as transparently as audience address both the art and the craft of the fictive creation; and when doing so, moreover, they engage audiences as expansively in joining imaginative and perceptual activities as Shakespeare's soliloquies. They, like indirect soliloquies, suspend the course of the fictional action so that it might be evaluated from both the stage and the auditorium; and, from the auditorium, according to fictive and real-world perspectives. Thus, because audiences respond nearly as if they are directly appealed to by on-stage public speaking, when the actor playing Macbeth chooses to speak the reflection ("To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow . . .") to the other figures on stage, our involvement will almost mirror response to the lines when they are delivered away from the stage figures as indirect soliloquy. We are led in each instance in the two apparently divergent directions of presentational Shakespeare: drawn to a deeper interest in, or empathic attachment to, the moment as stage fiction; and encouraged simultaneously to bracket the fiction-making by testing a performative message—in this instance, the message that life is but "a tale/Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,/Signifying nothing" (Mac. V.v.26-8)—against our perceptions of the fictional representation, and our extra-theatrical knowledge, of reality.
The general presentational pattern, though, embraces literally countless responses. The written record of the many reactions to these lines from Macbeth in itself attests to the overriding truth that a performative message of Shakespearean public address or soliloquy reflects but a shaping of the conjunction of one performance's, or readings, projection of the world from the stage with one spectator's impressions of the world beyond the stage. In addition, public address and soliloquy each inspires a different focus of attention within presentational response. The actor playing Macbeth at least intuitively understands the significance of the choice he makes—more usually determined in the plays by the script than the actor—between the two like choric paths. Interposing an on-stage audience between a speaker and the theatre audience restrains that ready empathy with the speaker evoked by soliloquy—which even such apparent villains as the actors/Richard III and Iago may exploit in production. Shakespeare's public addresses ask spectators to perceive an actor/character's choric speaking in relation to the imaged perceptions of other stage figures, and in light of the speaker's knowledge, and manipulation, of their perceptions. The actor/Ulysses' third scene discourse on degree in Troilus and Cressida (I.iii.75-137) will therefore seem to us a perniciously empty piety for both fictive
and non-fictional worlds in those performances which enable audiences to sense the predatory greed of the figures of the Greek soldiers to whom it is addressed, and the self-serving vindictiveness of the stage Greek rulers for whom the actor/character speaks. Against portrayals of the intellectually malleable and emotionally volatile Roman crowd in Julius Caesar, the actor/Brutus's funeral oration will appear to reason away far too coldly a brutal assassination, while we can see the actor/Antony palpably manipulate the obliteration of reason through his exploitation of the crowd's emotion. In the plays, our awareness of a responsive or silent on-stage public audience helps us separate sympathy for the speech from sympathy for the speaker. And though our understanding of speech can never purely be dislodged in or out of the theatre from our understanding, or feeling for, the persona of the speaker, the experience of Shakespearean public address at the least alerts us to the presence of empathic pressure in choric address upon a moment's performative meaning.

While on-stage audiences do not usually claim our attention in public address as demonstratively as actor/characters do outside of the stage convention, audiences to public speaking still divide the empathic attachment which the performative message and presen-
tational response embraces. Gathered by the playwright to perform the same function on-stage as the audience performs in the auditorium, stage witnesses to public address often nurture our willingness to see ourselves in them. We are led in performances of *Timon of Athens*, for example, to recognize ourselves among the guests assembled and addressed at the play's banquets: we are, together with the stage figures, first entertained and toasted as friends for whom the actor/Timon claims "we are born to do benefits" (I.ii.101-2) and later rebuked for the greed, insincerity, and callousness of human natures that earn the actor/character's prayer: "for these my present friends, as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them, and to nothing are they welcome" (III.vi.82-4). Yet all empathic engagement in a moment of public address is qualified by a heightened sense of our place as participants in a fiction-making: a sense impressed by the speaker who seems to confront us outside the bounds of his fiction. So the public speech act which is, in a way, intruded upon by the on-stage audience in turn always tempers our engagement with that "other" audience before us. Not only do we accept our differences with the stage figures, but we also understand that we are asked by the play to see differences.

This understanding reflects the great self-consciousness
with which we always judge the communications of Shakespeare's public addresses. Only direct soliloquies can, in fact, confront us as obtrusively with a situation that requires an immediate self-conscious evaluation from our non-fictive vantage; for Shakespeare's soliloquists, when they speak directly to theatre audiences, themselves become public speakers often commanding a sudden call to judgment. (This can be true of the actor/Bottom asking us to make (non)sense of his "dream" along with him [MND IV.i.200-19] as well as the actor/Iago offering his grievances against "the lusty Moor" for our consideration [Oth. II.i.286-312].) But the silent empathic appeal of soliloquy time and again colors the performative message of the speaking, whereas public address's deflection of empathy through the presence of the on-stage audience serves to sharpen our sight of the issues of the theatrical communication. The audience before us, moreover, momentarily objectifies our impressions of the particular fictive context in which the public speaker appeals for judgment. Communicating perspectives contrasting with, in addition to perspectives reflecting, the speaker's own, stage audiences to public address literally embody the emotional and intellectual background against which a speaker delivers an oration. The relation of speaker and audience, consequently, straightforwardly establishes the
grounds from which the play would have the house consider public address, just as it establishes the essential argument of speech that impels a "real world" consideration. Ultimately, Shakespearean public address more precisely determines than does either aside or soliloquy the shape—if not the result—of an off-stage audience's evaluative engagement to speech in Shakespearean theatre.

That habitual movement of Shakespearean theatrical response to evaluative perception is nowhere else so schematically determined for audiences. From production to production, audiences receive from public addresses clear performative messages, in specifically articulated contexts, which call for moral or socio-political concern from outside the fiction. Without dictating the ends of this concern, the convention diagrammatically presents its audiences the exact dialectical terms—in the relationships of off-stage to on-stage audiences; off-stage audiences to public speakers; and speakers to on-stage audiences—that invariably lead to judgment. At performances of The Merchant of Venice, it is always by way of understanding these relationships that theatre audiences decide whether the actress/Portia's plea that authentic justice is "mitigated" by mercy which "droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven/Upon the place beneath" (IV.i.185-6) is enduring truth or a truism inapplicable to human
possibilities. This public address determines, in nearly every production of the play, the most critical moment of an audience's multiconscious engagement with the performance. If we believe the speaker's message, we must accept that it transcends the legal rights which guard the on-stage Jew and his projected brethren against a racist world; and that it transcends the self-interests of the racist stage Christians, and of the stage wife who would win the actor/Antonio's freedom for the sake of her "husband" in the fiction. To pursue belief in the actress/Portia's "truth" is at last to separate altogether the speaking from the speaker--to hold eventually the actress/character, who can seem entirely admirable at all other times in the play, accountable to her own words when she urges the enforcement of a "Christian" justice which will strip the actor/Shylock of property, religion, identity. The play finally offers an audience one of two visions through the address on mercy: that of a sentiment demonstrably nobler than its speaker, or that of a world in and out of the theatre helplessly impoverished in intentions as well as actions.

Like the actress/Portia's appeal for mercy, all of Shakespeare's public addresses claim their importance to our experience by provoking a clear set of perceptions about which empathic engagement and evaluative perception
inevitably turn. While this importance of public address is at times emphasized and augmented by circumstances (Henry IV, Part I opens with the stage king's address to his court; Antony and Cleopatra closes with the stage Caesar's public eulogy to the play's lovers), the importance is announced to theatre audiences simply by the attitude of the speaker who, sometimes redirecting informal discourse, formally convokes a public audience of his, or her, auditors. So the actor/Jaques can respond to the stage Duke Senior's passing, if resonantly meta-dramatic, reflection, "this wide and universal theatre/Pre-sents more woeful pageants than the scene/Wherein we play in" (AYL II.vii.137-9), with a public oration fashioned from the commonplace of the "ages of man" (139-66). And as choric public address, the oration—in part a remarkably brazen cover of an exit and an immediate re-entrance—asks on-stage and off-stage audiences to judge all that is idyllic in the imaged Arden against the speaker's own version of the human "pageant:"

Last scene of all,  
That ends this strange eventful history,  
Is second childishness, and mere oblivion,  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans  
every thing.  

(163-6)

Only a theatre audience's, and presumably an actor's,
sense of what is appropriate or possible in a production finally excludes the attitude of public address from the delivery of dialogue. *As You Like It* can be effectively opened with a public address to an audience of one—if the actor/Orlando angrily and formally rehearses his grievances in order to solicit, from both the actor/Adam on the stage and the audience in the house, unqualified approbation for his subsequent action. If the activity of a play does not absolutely dictate public address, an actor will take his cue from the situations and the words which he intuitively perceives allow and encourage public expression within the fiction. With the language in Shakespeare, that cue is most often the perception of an increased eloquence in the lines: as eloquence is often the linguistic cue to the possibility of soliloquy. Where, however, the actor distinguishes choric speech convention from his perception of the general eloquence of Shakespearean speech is many times a wholly arbitrary choice. In truth, general verbal eloquence and presentational speech conventions in Shakespeare's plays are mutually reliant patterns of Shakespearean presentationalism. In the course of Shakespeare experience, presentational verbal eloquence throughout a play alerts audiences to the potential reach of Shakespeare's speech conventions; while the conventions themselves reawaken an audience's attention
to the choric nature of a Shakespearean play's entire speech network.

Gestic Language and Gestic Eloquence

Perhaps we no longer forget as easily as previous generations that "a Shakespearean play's entire speech network"—what we think of as a play's linguistic design—is a series of theatrical actions. In performance, Shakespearean words project meaning from the stage only as they are informed by the specific attitudes and activities of speakers: gesture and meaning cannot, finally, be dissociated. Shakespearean speech conventions, which demonstratively insist upon the meaning-making function of their gestures, always clearly remind us of the gestic quality of Shakespearean speech. The prophecy of the stage John of Gaunt in Richard II serves as public address whose action alone—the deathbed oration from which we do expect "the tongues of dying men" to "enforce . . . deep harmony" (II.i.5-6)—encourages multidimensional engagement as potently as the speaker's memorable evocation of "this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England" (50). In part, the communicative gestures of the speech conventions are but specific versions of all Shakespearean
speech's broader gestic communication; and this communication colors all responses to, all criticisms of, Shakespeare's verbal language in the theatre.

When a critic writes of any stage-speaking, he writes (as I have) a kind of shadow criticism of the gestic communication which pervades stage speaking in particular, and plays in general. If only tacitly, he simultaneously addresses the gesture in verbal stage language and the language in stage gesture. But it is normally only through this shadow criticism that writers, against their own inclinations, point to the communicative equivalence of speech symbols and symbolic gestures in the theatre. Critics have characteristically perceived the language in stage gesture as secondary to, and deriving from, the language of a play-text: so that gesture in the theatre has been considered at best a demi-language of symbolic action neither as precisely controlled by productions, nor as clearly understood by audiences, as is that language specifically tied to the words of a script. Such is the overt perspective of almost all commentaries attending to the symbolic action beyond word-play in Shakespearean drama. We are taught that the actor/Lear's attempt to tear off his clothes before the stage hovel (Lr. III.iv.c109) serves, or illustrates, the clothing imagery developed in the verse; or that the acting out
of the actor/Eros' suicide (Ant. IV.iv.c94) and the
deaths by broken heart of the players/Enobarbus (IV.ix.c23)
and Iras (V.ii.c292) illuminate the ongoing verse "debate"
of passion and rationality in Antony and Cleopatra. 38
Traditionally, symbolic gestic activity in the theatre,
and in Shakespearean theatre where gesture has attracted
volumes of analysis, has been related to the symbolic
activity of a play's words much as writing, Derrida
claims, has been related by classical metaphysics and
linguistics to "'living' speech:"39 theatrical gesture,
like "fallen" writing, has been thought to be subordinate
to an originary and essential manifestation of language.

Time and usage have, moreover, deeply etched the
assumption of the "secondariness" of gestic stage language
into the collective critical unconscious. As Alan Dessen
opens a work designed to awaken recognition of the
linguistic force of gesture in Elizabethan drama, he
unconsciously resurrects through a habit of mind the habitual
assumption of the subordination of gesture to word his
work seems pointed to lay to rest:

The critic looking for new and exciting
interpretations of Elizabethan plays may be
disappointed because often I reaffirm in
different terms what have become standard
readings of major plays. . . . my
purpose is not to challenge the findings
of the critical literature, but rather
to demonstrate how the insights of many
astute critics could have been realized in performance before an audience lacking the facilities of the reader in his study.

But a performance-directed approach does not sustain for long a comfortable acceptance of a controlling "reading" of a superior pre-gestic language; and Dessen's work consistently, if at times only implicitly, claims for stage gesture a symbolic function as vital as, and of a piece with, the function of a play's word-structure. What after all can "reading" mean in the theatre other than the assimilation of interdependent and mutually propulsive sign systems of words and gestures in performance? At odds with an almost universal critical perspective, and at odds with the inclinations of at least one of its best advocates, the idea of mutually generative words and gestures expresses the fundamental fact that an audience's experience of a play is simply different from that of a critic who arrives at a projection of a play, or who rethinks a production he has seen, through the vehicle of a text. In the theatre, all communications are gestic; and all forms of gesture are potentially communicative.

In place of words on a page, a "text" of activities confronts a play's spectators. Sights and sounds assume a new dimension of significance under the collaborative creative pressure of playwright, director, and actors.
And while those of us who hear may wish to continue to privilege, in and out of the theatre, the communications of speech above those of other symbolic actions, performances expressly call us to find meaning in the execution (as well as the "content") of speech, and, further, in the wealth of symbolic acts independent of speech. Performances have us intensely search both verbal and non-verbal gestures for meaning in the theatre; and some performances will in fact alert us to patterns of essentially non-verbal action that are as symbolically coherent as speech itself. Shakespeare's plays in performance, for all their apparently self-conscious indulgences of verbosity, consistently present such patterns of non-verbal language. These plays that fascinate us with words, also intimately engage us with systems of activity, both accompanying and separate from speech, which project, I believe, a kind of gestic eloquence.

That the Shakespearean theatre has continued to communicate through time by systems of non-verbal, in addition to verbal, language is the precise argument which doggedly shadows criticisms of the plays as literary texts or essentially verbal constructs. Interpreting speech, Shakespeare's commentators actually describe their perceptions of speech acts, and then invariably turn to
descriptions of the enactment of non-verbal language to verify their perceptions. (So Wolfgang Clemen, in an archetypal instance, finds Leontes' "diseased" obsession in The Winter's Tale manifested through "a series of disease-images and related imagery" which is itself a manifestation of the stage figure's "diseased" actions.41) Thus Shakespearean literary criticism deconstructs itself. As the literary critic would effectually shelter Shakespearean ideational structures from consideration of their vulgar enactments, he is always pointing to the theatre in which verbal and non-verbal gestures speak to him: and this is not an unsullied "theatre of the mind," but that worldly theatre which has engendered all ideas of what theatre is and what we are able to imagine it to be.42 If a writer deliberately reorients the conventional perception of the script as text to address the play's performance as text, he suddenly exposes, as does Maurice Charney in his quietly subversive Hamlet without Words:43 first, that all interpretations of Shakespeare's plays must posit an actual theatre subject to varying historical styles, and to boundless possibilities of staging within those styles; second, that non-verbal communicative systems in Shakespearean drama survive these exigencies of theatrical practice as substantially intact as Shakespearean speech;
and third, that gestic language, attached to and apart from speech, is as responsible for, as it is responsive to, the words of Shakespeare's plays.

The piecing together in print of a "Hamlet without Words" records the transcendent coherence of Shakespearean gestic action: applicable, in this case, to productions of Hamlet as disparate as Barry Jackson's and Olivier's; the exercise should also, in isolating the sights and sounds of theatrical experience, remind us of the special meaningfulness theatrical gestures, and especially Shakespearean gestures, assume for an audience during the course of a performance. It is through inducing symbolic action quickly "read" by audiences searching for meaning that Shakespeare's scripts manifestly determine a presentationalism, and an answering multiconscious response, ranging far beyond the delivery of and response to Shakespearean speech. Because we are attuned for the most part in daily life to messages conveyed by printed or spoken words, we readily recognize the contrivance of communication through non-verbal symbols in Shakespearean theatre—even at the same time we yield to their power to engage us emotionally and intellectually. Audiences, in the midst of their decoding-recoding experience of Shakespeare's gestic language, do not, for instance, usually fail to understand how their experience is manu-
factured when the actor/Hamlet enters dressed in black; the actor/Macbeth grasps for, or shrinks from, the imaginary dagger; or the stage Antony is hauled up to the actress/Cleopatra for their parting exchange. The ostentatious presentationalism which pervades Shakespearean speech acts fills all Shakespearean action; and the characteristic multiconscious participation of Shakespearean audiences is a response to the wholly intertwined verbal and non-verbal symbolic action of the plays.

This is the vision of Shakespeare's drama which Bethell's account of multiconsciousness, restrained by the "literary" vocabularies and perspectives of T. S. Eliot and L. C. Knights, cannot articulate. "Strip the poetry from a play of Shakespeare," writes Bethell, "and what is left but a rather haphazard story about a set of vaguely outlined and incredibly 'stagey' characters?" For Bethell, trust in a poetry of words determines that "the approach to poetic drama must, then, be fundamentally that of literary criticism." But of all literary criticisms of Shakespearean plays, Bethell's argues between the lines most volubly against itself. His turning to the performance-response relationship of play to audience is the turning inside out of so-called "literary" interpretations of Shakespeare: for the "literary" imaginative
engagement he describes is clearly not to an original and transcendent word-structure, but to a series of verbal actions (and their non-verbal counterparts) positing, requiring, an arena for performance. Criticism of the word is displayed as criticism of the act; "literary" awareness of the plays as a form of "theatrical" awareness (G. Wilson Knight of the camp of Granville-Barker). What Bethell quite clearly attempts in directing his readers to the "approach . . . of literary criticism" is to induce the recovery of the natural response of a Shakespearean audience for whom "in a Shakespearean play, criticism is an integral part of apprehension, and apprehension thereby becomes an activity of the whole mind." 46

Such an "activity of the whole mind"--the multi-consciousness--which Bethell describes is bound neither to a text nor solely to the stimulus of verbal communication. Shakespearean songs, as Bethell writes of them, have a "counterattraction" of music to their verbal messages. And those Shakespearean words Bethell would have us understand as served by their surrounding gestic contexts often in his description prove to serve equally the equally communicative gestic language of the context: so as Bethell invokes the multiple "planes of reality" of the Masque of Ceres to help explain the actor/Prospero's reflection upon "this insubstantial pageant" of life
(Tmp. IV.i.146-63), he unavoidably appropriates the stage figure's commentary to consider the gestic discourse of the possibilities and limitations of human imagination transmitted through the Masque, the many enactments of stage magic in The Tempest, and, finally, the performance of the play itself. In anticipation of the "theatrical" critical descendants of Granville-Barker, Bethell sets about writing--in the name of "literary" criticism--a criticism of the poetry of Shakespearean action: of verbal and non-verbal language-making.

Gestic, and particularly non-verbal, presentational sign systems in Shakespearean drama are of necessity more arresting in performance, in a sense more "readable," than most of Shakespeare's words--the projections we commonly think of as the plays' linguistic symbols. Since, I believe, even in the theatre where our perception is heightened, we do not usually attend to gestic messages as readily as we do to the meanings we wrench from words, those Shakespearean actions which strike us as coherent patterns of communication are clearly set apart by performances; they appear to us within the frame of their contrivance, and so invoke simply by their nature our multiconscious participation in artifice and art. To an audience that is, at the least, awake to possible gestic significance--that truly goes to see as well as hear a
play—Shakespeare's gestic communication is, above all, an obvious communication.

It is as a whole finally as obvious as Dessen perceives it to have been, and harder than he represents it to be:

I am not arguing that the less obvious symbolic meanings found by the critic in Elizabethan actions or properties or tableaux are suspect or inferior. Rather, I am suggesting that our twentieth-century desire for subtlety and realism can at times screen out basic, obvious effects that would have been (and could still be) highly visible to the viewer's eye.

More of Shakespearean gestic language remains "highly visible to the viewer's eye" in performance than we are in our time ordinarily able to obscure. Like Shakespeare's poetry of words, the distinctive Elizabethan gestic poetry to which Dessen directs our attention fundamentally outlives in the Shakespearean theatre the cuttings and apparent mutilations of history to communicate through the various styles of history's Shakespeare productions. Yet, Dessen reminds us, the writer who through his taste for realism and his addiction to the printed word neglects gestic communication blindly ignores an essential element of Shakespeare experience; and, more importantly, the director who sacrifices obvious symbolic action to fashionable realism will cut Shakespearean action without fully
realizing, as he does when he cuts the words or verbal gestures, that he erases a significant part of the Shakespearean communicative link with an audience.

If much of Shakespearean gesture is "obviously" communicative, its communicative design is neither artless nor simplistic. Symbolic activity in Shakespearean theatre is unfathomably various, and such basic symbolic acts as music and dance are richly emotionally and intellectually engaging. The music with which *Twelfth Night* opens, for instance, signals through its own emotional appeal in production--except when it is used to parody by contrast an interpretation of an ever-simpering Orsino--the appeal of emotional and sensual indulgence dominant within, and issuing from, the stage Illyria. The dance serving as a prelude to the meeting of the stage lovers in *Romeo and Juliet* (I.v) offers us, by its movements and the emotional overlay of the accompanying music, an analogy in action to the courting ritual which we are to see performed in earnest in the scene by the stage Juliet and Romeo in a "dance" of eyes, lips, and hands to the accompaniment of their song-like dialogue.

Styan's *Shakespeare's Stagecraft* urges that Shakespeare designed for his own audience a gestic communicative process in the plays as elaborate as that of the plays' words; and insofar as the evocation of the nakedly functional
Renaissance public stage enables us to see much of the underpinning of history's various Shakespearean stagings, Styan's invaluable commentary--together with subsequent critical reconstructions of Shakespeare's original stage work--exposes much of the complex machinery of symbolic activity which continues to serve our theatre as a compelling gestic language. This machinery unmistakably fascinates, through the power and subtlety of its effects, with the "'more or less adequate sequence' of . . . presentation:" with, that is, the eloquence of its design. In performance, our perception of such a Shakespearean gestic eloquence is a further passage through gesture to multidimensional participation in Shakespeare experience--succeeding and reaching far past mere recognition of symbolic activity; for Shakespeare's gestic language--which generates presentational conventions of music and dance, and shares presentational conventions of song, the play within the play, and Shakespearean speech conventions with Shakespeare's words--mirrors the eloquence of the words to draw us in concert with what we understand as linguistic eloquence (properly, eloquent word-play) to multiple levels of awareness and participation.

The models for Shakespearean gestic language, and the first terms of Shakespearean gestic eloquence, are the staging habits of the late Tudor popular Moralities.
These stagings are, as Dessen urges, the patterns for stage action throughout much Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. Yet their distortion is as significant as their reflection in Shakespeare's own gestic designs. From both the appropriation and the transmutation of the gestic vocabulary of the homiletic dramas, the playwright fashions a gestic language as supportive as his words of far more complicated performative messages than those transmitted by either his predecessors or his contemporaries.

The staging of the actor/Jack Cade's abandonment by his rag-tag stage army in Henry VI, Part II virtually symbolizes the new uses Shakespeare makes, almost from the beginning of his work, of old forms of expressive action. Here the identifying action of the Psychomachia of the Tudor Moralities--what David Bevington describes as the "struggle for the soul of man by the personified forces of good and evil"--is compressed into one scene on the Shakespearean stage. Like a collective representation of Mankind pulled back and forth across the stage by the arguments of figures of virtue and vice, Shakespeare's "multitude" is drawn from one end of the space to the other by the appeals of the actor/Cade on the one hand (and end), and of the actors/Buckingham and Clifford on the other(s). But the nature of the pleas
cannot deliver the characteristically definitive, homiletic, resolution of a Morality. The stage crowd is permitted only morally ambiguous action: the stage Clifford's fear-mongering ("Better ten thousand base-born Cades miscarry/Than you should stoop unto a Frenchman's mercy" [IV.viii.47-8]) and jingoistic call to foreign adventurism ("To France, to France, and get what you have lost!"[49]) are actually more certain misrepresentations of political reality than the actor/Cade's suspect portrayal of the relationship of all rulers and ruled in his society:

But you are all recreants and dastards, and delight to live in slavery to the nobility. Let them break your backs with burthens, take your houses over your heads, ravish your wives and daughters before your faces. (27-32)

Because the play at other times grafts onto historical narrative such purely homiletic staging devices as the actor/Gloucester's comic unravelling of the Simpcox imposture (II.i), and the slaying of the stage Cade by the figure of the ideal Kentishman, Alexander Iden (IV.x), audiences search Shakespeare's history for the ordering coherence of the moral imperatives of the older drama. But this one enactment of mock-Psychomachia announces in Shakespearean drama both the emergence from a vision of
moral absolutes in human action the vision of moral and philosophical uncertainty, and the emergence from the homiletic pointing of gestic stage language the transmission of the many motives and meanings infolded in historical activity.

From a new sensibility of extra-theatrical reality, followed a new creativity of dramaturgy. The brief Shakespearean "Psychomachia" in 2 Henry VI redefines in performance the relations of words to speech acts, and speech acts to non-verbal gestures: as it overtly defines the relation of Shakespearean dramatic form to its theatrical heritage. Speakers are no longer predominantly abstractions of, or transparencies before, the word. The figures of Cade and the English lords, the virtue and vice surrogates of the scene, are driven by, and speak in behalf of, individual interests under the pressure of socio-historical forces; and the meaning of their speech acts, rather than their speeches, commands the greatest part of an audience's attention. Simultaneously, non-verbal gestic communications now address the particulars of the immediate stage action, and especially of the speech actions, as emphatically as they represent an historically transcendent meaning. Thus the marionette-like jerking of the crowd across the stage in the scene visually explicates manipulation by these figures of power of this
figure of a peasant army while merely suggesting from the concrete instance, instead of allegorizing through an entirely transparent situation, a perenially recurring relation of political leaders to popular movements. Word, speech act, and non-verbal gesture are manipulated by the script, as they are throughout Shakespeare's plays, so that they both preserve in performance the older symbolic functions of verbal gesture and gestic language, and infuse these functions with new, more various and more particular, symbolic messages.

While the Renaissance theatre broadly traces a sense of the new communications accessible through adaptations of earlier symbolic models, Shakespeare's own sensitivity to the new expressive wealth of juxtapositions of words and acts is, in degree, unique. His seemingly uninhibited indulgence in the scripts of the combination and recombination of "obvious" verbal and non-verbal communications literally inspires that general eloquence we perceive in Shakespearean performance. The playwright appears at play through his theatre: juggling formal and naturalistic speaking, non-verbal action, song, dance, mime, the silent volubility of props, and the very significance of the architecture of theatres in innumerable ways to create virtually innumerable forms of stage language. And it is as this "juggling" of theatrically linguistic elements
reveals an implicit dialogue of verbal and non-verbal communicative activities, that the plays begin to strike us with, and move us by, a sense of Shakespearean gestic eloquence. The Shakespearean theatre consistently dazzles us not only, and in absolute truth not specifically, with words, but also with its internal gestic commentary issuing from the evidently self-conscious playing of speaking as a mode of action against non-verbal activity as a figurative speaking. As if they would display at least the impulse for and the few integral parts of the complex mechanisms of their own gestic eloquence, the plays themselves periodically isolate in performance this communicative gestic interplay from which eloquence follows. Shakespeare writes scenes throughout his career which, through the economy of their construction, metadramatically recognize the essential structure of that gestic eloquence by which they engage us. The communicative gestures of Shakespeare's first "tragedy" revolve about such a scene. When productions of Titus Andronicus transcend the play's verbal and physical excesses to engross audiences with a vision of the grotesque in human life (as the 1973 Royal Shakespeare Company's and the 1975 Oregon Shakespearean Festival's did), the actor/Marcus describing the mutilated stage Lavinia as she displays her wounds represents in II.iv. the generative
action of a latent gestic eloquence in the play.

Titus's demand for the stage representation of almost unbelievable carnage insistently forces audiences to experience the struggle James Calderwood identifies in the play between spoken words and physical acts. How can human speech adequately address this play's imaged atrocities? Shakespeare's literary critics have decided it cannot. Yet successful productions clearly do, in their way, accommodate the play's speech to its action. They do so by adapting that conflict between speech and act in Titus to the entire experience offered by performance. Performances of the play are able, through their enactments of the scripted savagery, to breech literary pseudo-decorum in order to numb us to our familiar responses in the theatre, and to substitute for these responses fascination with the impression of human life so unfathomable--so mad--that the life act ridicules all linguistic formulations. And this message of the inevitable comic-horrific incoherence of all communications from the perspective of "de-humanized" human activity is the precise gestic meaning of the meeting of the verbose stage Marcus and the silent, bleeding, stage Lavinia. The one's speech act will neither approximate in words nor appropriately respond in gesture to the other's act of suffering; and the actor/Marcus's translation of the appearance of Lavinia's butchered body
into overelaborate poetry pulls the play in the direction of the very grimmest comedy:

Alas, a crimson river of warm blood,  
Like to a bubbling fountain stirr'd with wind,  
Both rise and fall between thy rosed lips,  
Coming and going with thy honey breath.  
But sure some Tereus hath deflow'red thee,  
And lest thou shouldst detect [him], cut thy tongue.  
Ah, now thou turn'st away thy face for shame!  
And notwithstanding all this loss of blood,  
As from a conduit with [three] issuing spouts,  
Yet do thy cheeks look red as Titan's face  
Blushing to be encount'red with a cloud.  
(22-32)

Since, in the theatre, the sight of physical excess usually overwhels attention to verbal excess, the gruesome representation of the stage Lavinia perhaps precludes comedy. But the stage Marcus's florid Ovidian poetry nevertheless determines in the scene a grotesque, rather than fundamentally tragic, perspective of life; and the moment of unbridgeable distance between verbal and non-verbal gesture expresses the entire play's projection of the pathetic futility of attempts to fit comprehensible linguistic form to incomprehensibly cruel human experience.

Far more complex gestic patterns in following plays all issue from the dialectical interplay of verbal and non-verbal gesture bracketed by the contrasting actions of the actor/Marcus and the actress/Lavinia in Titus's second act. Such later plays as Measure for Measure and
The Winter's Tale, moreover, also turn conspicuously inwards for a time to announce the primarily gestic dialogue of speaking and non-speaking acts that initiates the plays' own, as well as all of Shakespearean drama's, many forms of gestic eloquence. The first confrontation of the figures of Isabella and Angelo in Measure for Measure manufactures, out of the conjunction of speaking and acting, gestic meaning transcending and usurping each of the stage figures' apparent intentions. Stage Isabellas, while initially set on by actors/Lucios to track actors/Angelos about the stage, tend finally to appear in the theatre to urge their suit with the ardor, and in the style, of a sexual pursuer; and the rebuffs of actors/Angelos will at last seem to be—as they become—the denials of a man fighting to resist sexual temptation. Indeed, a stage Isabella generally appears in performance induced by the momentum of her own unfolding gesture of supplication to indulge intuitively in the volatility of the confrontation. We are likely to see, and sense as the stage Angelo senses, the characteristic shape of seduction that the actor/Lucio—a bawdy chorus to the theatre audience as well as a prompter of action upon the stage—punningly represents: "O, to him, to him, wench! he will relent./He's coming; I perceive't" (II.ii.124-5).

Nominally innocent, the stage Isabella's verbal and
non-verbal gestures are, in effect, corrupt beyond her control: just as all gestures in the play are never wholly pure; never, that is, able either to represent faithfully or to influence predictably the conflux of emotion, appetite, will, and act in the stage Vienna. In the scene's simultaneous revelation and creation of a context outside of the stage figures' conscious designs, the play of speaking and moving in the actions of the Shakespearean theatre's Angelos and Isabellas mirrors the revelatory and transformative effect of gestic language pervading this play in which: the gestures of enforcement of justice invite the corruption of justice; acts of piety provoke impiety; and, above all, the manipulations of a playwright-like stage Duke continually push beyond his grasp the experiences he would shape—up to the play's last moments when both the actor/Angelo and the actress/Isabella offer only silence in response to the determinations the actor/Duke attempts to enforce upon their lives.

With The Winter's Tale, as performances of the last scene strip away all apparent digressions of speech and act to identify the creative force of the simple relationship of verbal and non-verbal gestures, the play not only turns our attention to the grounds of its gestic eloquence, but it also celebrates the emergence of this eloquence from
a gestic eloquence beyond the stage. The concluding actions of *The Winter's Tale* essentially demonstrate how theatre, unlike other art, claims by physical animation a unique power drawn from the animation of life: how theatre is literally, like the statue of Hermione, living art. Such is the communication offered by the collective speaking of the stage figures responding to the "statue" before them. As words which would capture through description an image of life ("... See, my lord,/Would you not deem it breath'd? and that those veins/Did verily bear blood?" [V.iii.63-5]), the stage speeches mimic what is static in the art of the theatre, that form the theatre shares with literature. But displayed against the absolute stillness of a statue to which we wish animation, the speeches strike us first as enactments; and as signifying *gestures* born of, and helping to create, a larger network of meaningful gestures, the scene's various speakings present theatre as a physical extension of life's physicality. So, on the stage as off the stage, the announcement of a kiss is but a special type of signifying act introducing the possibility of the further signifying act of the kiss: "What fine chisel/Could ever yet cut breath? Let no man mock me,/For I will kiss her" (78-80). Our speaking is, as the actor/Leontes indicates, an integral part of human "movement:"
What you can make
her do,
I am content to look on; what to speak,
I am content to hear; for 'tis as easy
To make her speak as move.
(91-4)

In the instant that the actress/Herminone is awakened into motion, an audience experiences human movement in itself as the theatre's magic link with the magic of life. This is the play's most eloquent—and maybe drama's most audacious—gesture, enriching in our memory every previous moment of the play through an evocation of wonder at human activity. The fact that this wonder is triggered by non-verbal gesture, moreover, specifically reorients our participation in the play; for if we have been inclined to be particularly attuned to the play's verbal messages as we have participated in the unfolding performance, the statue's awakening asks us to recall our experience through gestic messages outside of speech. Attention is returned to the actions which first deceive the stage Leontes; the acts of tenderness between the stage mother and son; enactments of a public trial, a type of murder by mistrust, a tragi-comic bear chase, and the songs and dances of the Bohemia sequence which are themselves ostentatious celebrations of life. And beyond this one play, the statue's recovery into life gestically recalls an eloquence pervading every Shakespearean play's gestic activity: all of
Shakespearean drama recovers art into life through enactments of gestic eloquence. We are in a sense directed to attend to the whole superstructure of Shakespearean gestic eloquence: the very act of presenting exotic worlds and other-worldly marvels upon the homely Elizabethan and Jacobean stages; such elementary elements of plotting as the underplotting and overplotting William Empson analyzes; the use of music and dance, and the partial appropriation of speech conventions and plays within plays, as gestic conventions; and, above all, the manifold gestic languages forged from the various juxtapositions of verbal and non-verbal acts in performances of all of Shakespeare's plays.

What, however, is most eloquent in The Winter's Tale also happens to be most perceptibly artificial. No stage trick is more transparent than Shakespeare's bringing to life the stage Hermione; and recognition of this in the theatre entirely evades all efforts at suspension of disbelief. In a reading, or for that matter in rehearsal, the sequence seems remarkably brittle—too fragile to bear the weight of actual performance. But on-stage the gesture, though it instantly engenders awareness of artificiality, repeatedly proves transporting: persistently firing in performances which misfire in every other respect.

At once most eloquent and most artificial, wondrous and
hokey, Shakespeare's stage trick seems to me a paradigm of the presentationalism peculiar to both Shakespearean word and act. Although the non-verbal act of awakening the figure of Hermione in part encourages multiconscious response simply through an obvious symbolic function, it more certainly initiates audiences into specifically Shakespearean multiconsciousness through an eloquence which provokes together extreme fascination and extreme self-consciousness. It is this eloquence that finally dictates the character of the Shakespearean presentational sketch: establishing the possibility of transformative experience through its invocation of the conjunction of a singularly passionate engagement in theatrical activity and a "this world" perspective of that engagement; and binding together an interdependent system of words and deeds which survives history's disruptions to assert transformative experience anew in each new Shakespearean theatre--an eloquence weaving, in essence, a whole presentational fabric that unravels into discontinuous elements only in our partial impressions, and unavoidably imperfect descriptions.

Playfulness

Common sense of course proclaims eloquence to be the
source of Shakespearean theatre's cultural vitality. However, engagement in and by eloquence in a Shakespearean performance significantly differs from common experiences of eloquence in literature and drama. Usually, the insistent alienating strain of artistic eloquence is but a minor restraint upon our overriding yielding to imagination; Shakespearean linguistic/gestic eloquence, which interlaces and promotes an unequivocally alienating--or presentational--forum, claims with equal vigor both presentational and transportational facilities. Shakespeare's plays move us empathically through the images shaped by eloquence, but also obviously exploit our perception of the "more or less adequate sequence" of this eloquence to reflect back to us, like experiential mirrors, the sight of our empathic engagement.

This demonstratively twofold activity has historically generated a curiously double-natured response to, and regard of, Shakespearean theatre. From culture to culture, audiences have been induced by an eloquence of word and deed to embrace Shakespearean drama's sublime imaginative worlds with a fervor and reverence reserved for the most sacred cultural experiences; yet audiences have as well been induced by this self-announcing eloquence to participate in an ostentatiously robust theatricality by which both characters and fictions are visibly performed into
their larger, or more exotic, than life dimensions. However transporting it may prove in practice and however we may treasure it in reflection, Shakespearean eloquence always can serve the Shakespearean theatre's internal presentational insistence upon the immediacy of the play experience, upon the interdependence of "play world" and "real world;" and it has persistently invited the bravura performances and effects, together with the outlandish rewritings, abbreviations, and adaptations of the scripts, that have marked the historical course of Shakespearean theatre. There is festal experience in the contemporary Shakespearean festival because of, not in spite of, Shakespearean productions. If pervasive eloquence distinguishes the Shakespearean presentational sketch from among those of other presentational theatres, it is the clearly presentational dimension of this eloquence—ensuring a determined playfulness in the theatre—which allows unprecedented transformative experiences.

And theatrical playfulness, a desire on both sides of the stage apron to actively determine the shape of imaginative experience, is the ascendant attitude aroused by, and a central element of, Shakespearean presentationalism. Tragic and comic effects of the Shakespearean stage, sublime and ridiculous flights of our imaginations in the Shakespearean theatre, all partake
of a controlling playfulness exerted together by performers and audiences. For performers at least, Shakespeare's rhetorical eloquence in itself invites such playing: directly encouraging actors and actresses to display themselves as artisans through their constructions. Thus Shakespeare's players have through history "playfully" highlighted the actor side of the actor/character equation; and Shakespearean audiences consequently have privileged, more than most audiences, the actor as much as the character in performance: specifically responding to and remembering Mrs. Siddons's Lady Macbeth, John Barrymore's Hamlet, Ralph Richardson's Falstaff, Laurence Olivier's Richard III, or Alan Howard's Theseus/Oberon. And behind the performer's is obviously the playwright's own playfulness. The one's answering activity reflects the other's instincts and, perhaps, motives; for insofar as the actor who draws attention to the perceptual world in which he plays, and from which he creates, celebrates the power of imaginative creation, he experientially communicates Shakespeare's own celebration, or "sense" as J. Dennis Huston puts it, "of the way play, in its almost infinite variety, can affect and transform the world."51

Shakespeare's "playing" enfolds all of his drama. While his playfulness may appear most nakedly in the very
early and very late plays, it no less certainly springs upon us in Hamlet when the actor/Hamlet convokes the other stage figures in a game of hide-and-seek with the actor/Polonius's supposed corpse, or in King Lear when the actor/Edgar gulls the stage Gloucester into theatre's most famous pratfall; and while the playwright quickly entices actors to playfulness by rhetorical brilliance, he offers—as the Hamlet and Lear sequences indicate—a wealth of opportunities in the scripts for his actors to trumpet the theatricality of their performances. The very nature of most principal Shakespearean roles, in fact, nearly begs a self-dramatizing playfulness of performance. Huston notes:

Players of one type or another are everywhere in Shakespeare, not only among his clowns and fools (Feste, Touchstone, and Bottom) and comic heroes and heroines (Petruchio, Berowne, and Rosalind) but also among his villains (Richard III, Iago, and Edmund) and tragic heroes (Richard II and Hamlet).52

Ironists such as Cade, the Bastard, Thersites, and Edgar are equally conspicuous players; and "women's" roles continue to hint at the added dimension of playing written for boy actors into such sequences as the disguisings of Two Gentlemen of Verona, Merchant, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, and Cymbeline, or into a stage Cleopatra's
enlightened fearing that "I shall see/Some squeaking
Cleopatra boy my greatness/I' th' posture of a whore"
(Ant. V.ii.219-21).

But whether or not Shakespearean actors and actresses are assigned especially histrionic roles, the presentational gestic activities of Shakespearean theatre draw most performers, at one time or another, into the attitude--the spirit--of play. Clearly, the songs, dances, interludes, and pageants of the works insistently urge actors to claim their places as performers within the larger entertainments. (The playfulness of the "Pyramus and Thisby" interlude--to offer a pure instance of infectious playing--virtually compels all the performers on the stage to display themselves to us as figures performing Shakespeare's surrounding play.) Just as insistently, the far greater number of informal, rough, playlets into which Shakespearean action regularly divides--quasi-plays within the plays like the stage Falstaff's imagined transformation of a tavern into a throne room; or the stage Hamlet's game of hide-and-seek and the Edgar-Gloucester burlesque--invite an attendant playfulness from Shakespearean actors. These are the histrionic showcases, isolated or strung together in a performance, through which the actor plays the character who plays: like Falstaff or Hal, the king; like Brutus, the patriot;
like Lear or Edgar, the beggar; or like Prospero, the
god. How demanding the shortest informal set piece's
call to play can be is attested to by one Shakespearean
festival Director who tells of playing Antigonus in
The Winter's Tale when, in the midst of nominally
terrifying circumstances, his Stanislavskian inner
correctness of portrayal was always disrupted in performance
by the sheer silliness—and an audience's audible enjoy-
ment of the silliness—of the sight of a stage bear. In
this moment of this production, the ascendant playfulness
of the action could only be futilely resisted, or play-
fully accepted.

Audiences at this particular Winter's Tale responded
to the perception of playfulness upon the stage, as
audiences generally respond to theatrical play, with an
answering playfulness. Prompted to creative playing by
the gamesmanship of their writer, Shakespearean actors
and actresses induce in their audiences a complicitous
spirited shaping of theatrical experience. Audiences com-
plete the circuit of play that endows Shakespeare
experiences with unusually heightened imaginative/per-
ceptual activity: as actors and audiences in concert
surrender to the exhilaration of, in Styan's words, "both
seeing and performing a tightrope dance."53 We are, for
example, easily lured into playing along at guessing
whether the stage Orlando recognizes the "boy" he pretends to court in the IV.i. "mock-wooing" scene of As You Like It to be his stage Rosalind; primarily because, as I learned from acting the role, the actor/Orlando who in the spirit of play continually suggests, though never affirms, that he knows the identity of "Ganymed" in the scene simply offers audiences more fun and interest than an actor who in the scene is surely, and seriously, either "in the know" or "in the dark."
With every firing Shakespeare performance, some form of this mutual fun and interest prepares audiences for emotional/intellectual transformation: by moving audiences to an exultant indulgence in their "real world" participation in a fiction's making; and enhancing an audience's fascination with the psychic objects of its own creation.

A playfulness invoking at once self-consciousness and fascination is the controlling imaginative stance of Shakespearean theatre. It simultaneously allows us to psychically conjoin violently disparate processes of apprehension in the theatre, and to embrace in a single play the widely various dramatic schemes which induce these processes. Through playfulness, Shakespeare experience becomes a kind of imaginative/perceptual ocean-crossing (promising risks as well as adventures): an ocean-crossing pitching us in a Shakespearean performance back and forth, or up
and down, upon waves of imaginings and perceivings, as it transports us through serious, comic, and serio-comic experiences. Only an indefatigable resistance to play itself will limit the range, and restrain the effects, of this experiential journey; yet even when playfulness nominally has been repressed in Shakespearean theatre—by neo-classicists, demi-puritans, or petty-realists, diversity seems (judging by the continuing vitality of history's audiences) to have been scarcely qualified. In every period of Shakespearean theatre, the underlying presentational sketch projected in performances sparks at a minimum that bare impulse of play which supports and nourishes multifaceted creations upon the stage and multiple experiences in the auditorium. We are ever inclined to join playfully, when invited, in multidimensional and multiple experiences: and history's Shakespeare experiences have, through their presentational sketches, repeatedly invited our complex engagement.

It is an engagement that, in the grip of play, accommodates myriad responses. The multiconsciousness which balances in Shakespearean theatre our sense of the real with our experience of the unreal holds within it both the sequential passage and the simultaneous arousal of varying dramatic experiences. That is, the Shakespearean stage can help us to experience tragedy and comedy, pathos
and absurdity, as readily in a single sequence—for that matter, in a single moment—as it can from one dramatic segment to the next. *Cymbeline* is truly tragi-comic not because it unwaveringly integrates independently serious and comic elements throughout its plot, but because it time and again entirely integrates, at a minimum, these two elements in solitary episodes. A highly charged fragment like the stage Imogen's discovery of the beheaded stage Cloten is able to prompt numbers of wildly conflicting reactions at once in an audience. We can recoil in horror at the image of the beheaded man; yet horror is countered by our estimation of the stage Cloten as both villain and fairly tale caricature. We can feel for the figure of the young girl grieving at the apparent discovery of her dismembered husband; yet empathy is partly checked by our ambiguous regard for that stage husband, our knowledge of the sure mistake the "character" makes, and our faith in the arrival of the romance ending.

All reactions to the fragment are, more importantly, qualified by the comic texture of the concept, and almost inevitably the stage business, of the action of the mistaken identity. What actress, and which of Shakespeare's own boy actors, would not be, or has not been, led by the script's demand for an inventory of the parts of the headless body to take stock—more likely physically than merely
visually—of that important "piece of flesh" not mourned in words?

A headless man? The garments of Posthumus?
I know the shape of's leg; this is his hand,
His foot Mercurial, his Martial thigh,
The brawns of Hercules... .
(IV.ii.308-11)

That the imaginative spell need not be broken by the probable comic business, that our engagement can compass at once the divergent responses encouraged by the action, reflects a playfulness which leads always to that kind of multidimensional participation which honors equally the real and the unreal. The awakening of Imogen underscores as strongly as the awakening of Hermione—if not quite as straightforwardly—the two poles of our engagement in Shakespearean theatre. The playing of Shakespeare's actors and audiences fosters a tolerance—to the simultaneous existence of bare boards and Welsh woods, a joking actress and a grieving character—that is the path to Shakespeare experience.

The psychic resiliency that the Cymbeline fragment asks for and inculcates can be called upon in performances of even the most lyrical or intense moments in Shakespearean theatre. The stage Lear's death may strike us simultaneously in performance as monstrously cruel and—as the stage Kent perceives—a blessed release: all the
while the enactment of the "character's" passage to death by way of the careful search for life in the stage Cordelia may impress us with the artistry of the production, the actor, and the playwright. What playfulness means in Shakespeare experience is solely a hyperattentiveness to theatrical creation—to its many images and artifices, and to their collective significances inside and outside of stage fictions. Such attentiveness is, as Brecht would have it, tenaciously evaluatory: of both the arguments and the whole experience of stage fictions. It is as well, and more essentially, unwaveringly creative: synthesizing our evaluations of, and our unself-conscious responses to, stage illusions into an experience that asserts a reality other than the one habitually represented to us by our conceptions and perceptions. Alive to the process of theatrical fiction-making, and especially to our willing perceptual contribution to fiction-making, we can in effect play our way in Shakespearean theatre to an imaginative/perceptual "making" we value by the standards of extra-theatrical experience.

In Shakespearean theatre, our playfulness, like the actors' and the playwright's own, is the means by which we assert through the plays new relationships to the world in which we live. Created though, on and off the stage, out of the ever-changing physical and psychic elements of
a "real world," these relationships are neither entirely predictable in production, nor altogether stable from performance to performance. What we make of the old scripts is forged from the actual historical moment, and milieu, of their presentation; and how—or if—they will transform us, while partly in our hands, is ultimately beyond the absolute control of performers and playgoers. At play in the Shakespearean theatre, we are much like Disney's famous mouse in "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" sequence of Fantasia (a sequence whose form might be a visual reminder of the whimsicality of our playing, and whose fable should remind us of the psycho-social volatility of theatrical play): eager to try the magic for ourselves upon ourselves and the world about us, yet unable to foresee clearly the very real effects of the magic we will work. How the magic does work, how experiences in the Shakespearean theatre become transformative, I describe in the concluding chapter.
Chapter Three: The Nature of Transformative Experience

The theatre is a house of experiences. We enter it with the expectation that something will happen to us which does not, which cannot, happen outside of the theatre. And if only for a time, theatrical experiences do radically reorient consciousness in, and of, the world: converting the ordinary objects, or ends, of perception—such as actors and scenery—into the signs, or means, of an image life to which we commit part of consciousness. All theatre (indeed, all art) can be transformative in this way; and, for awhile, far more severely so than the common lot of extra-theatrical (and extra-artistic) experiences. We are, in the midst of theatrical activity, psychically made over; and the perceptual world itself can, at least temporarily, seem new to us. This revolution in consciousness comes primarily by way of our emotions. As our emotions are transformed in the theatre, so we are transformed. Sartre claims:

... in emotion, consciousness is degraded and abruptly transforms the determined world in which we live into a magical world. But there is a reciprocal action: this world itself sometimes reveals itself to consciousness as magical. . . .
The theatre reveals to us a magical world, another world whose emotions invoke in us, and sustain, imaginative consciousness. Playing upon emotional apprehension, appealing by its nature to the affective component of all consciousness, the "magical world" of the theatre liberates us from the ordinary feelings and perceptions of everyday life.

Our liberation comes, though, always with the recognition that the emotional/intellectual transformations of the theatre are the products of mere images. Such awareness is simply the price for theatrical experience: a knowledge that is the very condition which allows us our transformations, since images only "appear" as absent, as other-than-perceived phenomena. While we come to the theatre in expectation of a world of experiences beyond the reach of daily life, we clearly expect and intend theatrical experiences to be of a different order than those of extra-theatrical activity. Moreover, we intend the emotions which usher in theatrical experiences to be of a different order than the emotions of perceptual experience—a theatrical event by nature encourages us to distinguish between "real" (extra-theatrical) and "unreal" (theatrical) emotions. And as long as the event continues to nourish our altered emotional intentionality in the theatre, we are apt to experience the distinction
between emotions which Sartre articulates: that "there is a natural difference between the feelings before the real and the feelings before the imaginary;"² that "our attitude in the face of the image is radically different from our attitude in the face of objects. Love, hate, desire, will, are quasi-love, quasi-hate, etc., since the observation of the unreal object is a quasi-observation."³ In the theatre, the same conceptual "as if" which bridges emotional apprehension of images and perceptions (we will feel "as if" this stage Othello has murdered the stage Desdemona) can set feelings spurred by imagination apart from feelings introduced by perceptions.⁴ The horror which fills us when the stage Hedda shoots herself in the theatre is, I suspect, ordinarily a clearly different sort of horror than that which grips witnesses to actual suicides. The Hedda Gabler horror is a "quasi-horror;" and our emotional apprehensions of theatrical events are most often "quasi-emotional apprehensions;" our emotional transformations normally "quasi-emotional transformations." Emotion, which encourages theatrical experiences into the world, can work also, through its altered intentionality in the theatre, to hold these experiences and transformations out of the world: to present them to consciousness as absences, real only as unrealities.
Emotion in theatrical illusion-making, in effect, may claim and deny simultaneously the truth of theatrical experience. But consciousness cannot always accommodate at once the two functions; and Sartre's description of our emotional experience of images therefore represents only one form that experience can take. Like "wave[s] among waves," perception impresses itself upon our images and imagination impresses itself upon our perceptions; so, in the theatre, emotional apprehension of images time and again penetrates, and works upon, emotional apprehension directed by perception. Theatre history overflows with, on the one hand, real-life cases of images temporarily usurping perceptions as thoroughly as do the images of the legendary spectator who leaps to the defense of "Desdemona," and with, on the other, a far greater number of instances of subtler reshapings of perception that are carried out of the theatre and translated into actions in the world. Theatrical practice, I believe, always shapes our emotional activity in the theatre into one of two forms: one which rigidly maintains the psychic distance between imaginative and perceptual emotional apprehensions of the world; and another which persistently encourages the influence of perception by the emotional apprehension of theatrical images (a tendency towards conversion, both in and after the performance moment, of "quasi-emotion" to real emotion,
of insights into fiction to insights into life). While both patterns may be invoked at various times in a single performance, where the second predominates, theatre is what I understand to be transformative: apt to reshape the theatrical/social dialectic. Here is the emotional pattern warned against by Saint Augustine and Jeremy Collier; intentionally pursued by Aristophanes, the composers of the Mystery Cycles, Shaw, and Artaud; and most consistently invoked in Shakespearean theatre.

The most perceptive critic of this activity is, clearly, Bertolt Brecht, whose practical quest for theatrical forms that might turn the theatre "from a home of illusions to a home of experiences" was expressly an effort to guarantee in production the "conversionary" shape of emotional activity. Patterns of emotional activity in the theatre correspond for Brecht to the "weaker (simple) and stronger (complex) pleasures which the theatre can create;" and, he explains, "the last-named, which are what we are dealing with in great drama, . . . are more intricate, richer in communication, more contradictory and more productive of results." Brecht envisions a theatre in which an audience's emotions, won from "weaker (simple)" to "stronger (complex)" pleasures, are freed from the shadow life of imagination and are as productive of genuine as they are of "quasi" transformations of consciousness.
Brecht's audiences:

... must be entertained with the wisdom that comes from the solution of problems, with the anger that is a practical expression of sympathy with the underdog, with the respect due to those who respect humanity, or rather whatever is kind to humanity; in short, with whatever delights those who are producing something.

Emotional apprehension serves the theatre Brecht looks forward to, no less than it serves other theatres, as a way to transformation: though now not as "spiritual dope traffic"\textsuperscript{10} offering fundamentally illusory and temporary new life; but instead as a spiritual tonic genuinely revitalizing perception in and of extra-theatrical reality.

As Brecht looks forward, he is also looking back. The theatre he projects in "A Short Organum for the Theatre" is his alternative to a modern theatre which he believes has driven transformative experiences from its auditoriums. The birth of Brecht's theatre in the modern age is meant to be a rebirth; and his program for the theatre of the future—which he bases on his understanding of the transformative theatres of the past—functions, if only in part, as an aesthetic of transformative theatre in general. Certainly his understanding of the transformative function of emotion is applicable to each of history's transformative
theatres. And what Brecht understands is that in transformative theatre the emotional apprehension which helps transform audiences is itself transformed. The intention of emotion "before the image" is literally overturned: so that audiences exchange their eagerness for gratification through "quasi-feeling" for a reawakening in theatrical performances to feeling "before the real"—feeling that, from Brecht's perspective, is submitted "to the spectator's criticism." Transformative theatres are simply those which create forms that do successfully submit emotion to criticism, to the test of the perceptions of the real world into which the emotions of theatre are called. Only when emotion in the theatre is at some point felt in the frame of the concrete details of our own lives—and this may come through representational and presentational vehicles alike, through either a fascination or an alienation which brings reflection—does it, with its attendant insight, affect the emotional/intellectual structure of perception.

In his own theatre, Brecht adopts radically alienating presentational devices to force consideration of theatre-nurtured emotions in light of the physical world. Although Brecht's critical attacks upon "Aristotelian" theatre and his lionization of the Verfremdungseffekt seem to some to urge the draining of emotion from the theatre
(and certainly have led to too many spiritless productions of his plays), his practical objective is actually to re-emotionalize theatre: to release the host of "emotions which need not correspond to those of the character portrayed." ¹² Mother Courage, Galileo, The Good Woman of Setzuan, The Caucasian Chalk Circle all blatantly demand highly emotional response--but of a kind "re-emotionalized" through the insistent multiconsciousness of presentational theatre. Conspicuously displayed against the devices of theatrical production, emotions in Brecht's theatre contribute to engagement in which empathy is but part of emotional apprehension; and it is this emotionalism at once demanded by the shape of theatrical fictions and "criticized" by the visible artifices of fictive creation that is to lead audiences to the transformation of perception in the world. Such is, in essence, the simple scheme of transformation in Shakespearean theatre: where great emotion transmuted in the multiconscious participation of presentational theatre has persistently engendered the most seductive invitation to transformation in Western theatre.

What distinguishes the invitation of Shakespearean theatre is precisely that unique concert of extreme emotional activity and extreme self-conscious involvement which the Shakespearean presentational sketch supports in the theatre. Through the eloquence binding together its
words and actions, the presentational sketch is able to project in equipoise the one response with the other: wonder at the awakening of the stage Hermione with clear awareness of the stage trickery; rapture at the stage Berowne's encomium on Love ("... Love's feeling is more soft and sensible/Than are the tender horns of cockled snails..." [LLL IV.iii.334-5]) along with the recognition of the transparent device to redirect the play's plot. And the twofold experience both enriches and heightens—rather than dampens—emotional engagement in the theatrical event; for while Shakespearean eloquence partly serves the presentational impulse of its theatre, it also, and far more obviously, charges Shakespeare experiences with an emotionalism which cannot help but substantially carry us away. We apprehend Shakespearean eloquence, as we apprehend all eloquence, first by its power to move thought and feeling; and especially by its power to move thought through feeling. If, as Kenneth Burke reasons, "beauty is the term we apply to the poet's success in evoking our emotions,"¹³ then, even under the rough hand of theatrical production, Shakespearean drama continues to be our most beautiful art form. But the emotion at the heart of Shakespearean beauty is that which attends the "stronger (complex) pleasures" rather than the "weaker (simple)" pleasures of theatrical performance.
The highly visible artifice of Shakespearean creation draws emotions evoked by images into a psychic discourse with an awareness extending beyond the image; and, by awaking our self-consciousness of the creative process, "re-emotionalizes"--transforms--those emotional apprehensions aroused by "quasi-observation" of fictions into those delivered by our simultaneous participation in a world of fictions and the world of perceptions.

Within the "real world" frame of the presentational sketch, emotional apprehension in Shakespearean theatre is itself apt to become real. Of course I do not mean that we are prone to mistake emotional apprehension of images for emotions attending perceptions--that we are likely to grieve in earnest for the image of the murdered Desdemona; but rather, that our emotional apprehension in theatrical creation is brought to our awareness as a phenomenon we at all times do create and witness as well as experience. The Shakespearean theatre encourages us to indulge in emotional apprehension as a part of, instead of apart from, our "real world" experiences; and directs us more surely than all other theatres both to comprehend and shape our feelings in terms of the concrete world in which we live. And so we are in Shakespearean productions continually ready to allow the feeling of the moment--whether provoked in or outside of some sort of empathic activity--
to influence the affective component of our perceptions. In the storm sequence of King Lear, the actor/Lear's lament for the suffering poor and admonition to all who enjoy an abundance of the world's goods seems designed, through the artifice of audience address, to speak past the fictive world in order to move us directly to perceive differently our relations and obligations to others in extra-theatrical life:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are, That bide the pelting of the pitiless storm, How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides, Your [loop'd] and window'd raggedness, defend you From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp, Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel, That thou mayst shake the superflux to them, And show the heavens more just. (III.iv.28-36)

To be "carried away" by emotion in Shakespearean theatre is to be carried away figuratively from an habitual self: to be transported to new perceptions through the "real" emotions commanded by our Shakespeare experiences.

New ways of perceiving, moreover, invariably point us to new ways of acting, or simply being, in the world. As Shakespearean theatre encourages us to exchange for "quasi-emotions" passions we appropriate for our own lives, we begin--either consciously or unconsciously; in, Brecht
announces, "some way or other"¹⁴—to translate passions into actions. (History's successive transformations of the form of Shakespearean theatre itself offer at least a partial record of this extension of immediately transformative Shakespeare experiences into the world of actions.) Through the transmutation of feeling and thought inside the theatre, the plays in production prod us to action outside of the theatre as insistently, if not always as bluntly, as the actor/Antony's funeral oration does in Julius Caesar. There, the stage figure leaps his fiction through the convention of public address to confront an off-stage audience with the pattern of political violence that Caesar's murder represents; and his speaking demands from us both a stance before and a response to those who in our lifetimes sacrifice individual lives for politically conceived common goods. How we are to respond, however, is a problem left unsolved. Not only does the chilling image of the mob tearing apart the poet Cinna in answer to the speaker's eloquence warn us against the consequences of responsive actions; but the revelation of the speaker's own peculiar admixture of loyalty, idealism, political design, and personal ambition that informs his impassioned speech warns us against the subjective motives in ourselves which lead to action. Although the address projects a demand for action
transcending the moment in the theatre, Shakespeare's script, it seems, almost scrupulously turns away from advocating any program for extra-theatrical action.

This, I believe, restates the tendency of all the scripts, when considered outside of specific productions, to urge but the need, and the very broadest patterns, of active responses to transformation in the theatre. Calls to action take their particular shapes in particular performances, primarily because the Shakespearean theatre is uncommonly malleable to the pressure of societies and their productions. It is a theatre radically sensitive to, and remarkably transparent before, the widely varying intentions of history; and its plays' transformations and exhortations to action are determined largely by the course of the theatrical/social dialectic. Johnson's society dictated a Falstaff experience which announced that "neither wit nor honesty ought to think themselves safe with such a companion;"¹⁵ modern society determined my production of a Falstaff experience that suggested there is no safer, or wiser, companion than a Falstaff when only the worst thieves and cutthroats hold social and political power. Each society nurses into the world new transformative Shakespeare experiences. In this respect, society (and in particular mid-twentieth-century society) is one of the creators of the transformative experiences
of the Tyrone Guthrie *All's Well That Ends Well* and the Peter Brook *Love's Labor's Lost* which helped reintroduce the two plays into active production. But these experiences were obviously more entirely the creations of the two men and their productions, as all Shakespeare experiences are the products of individual enactments; and the Guthrie and Brook experiences have since yielded many times to the vastly different transformative experiences of following productions of the plays. Individual productions decide at last where transformative experience lies: if in *Richard II*, for instance, it is in the vision of the just deposition of a capriciously cruel ruler; in the revelation of the ruthless usurpation of a weak man's right to power by a cunning pretender; or, as Kott supposes, in the sense of an endless cycle of the replacement of one embodiment of viciousness with another. Productions, under the direction of their times, forge the exact forms and subsequent manifestations in the world of Shakespearean transformations.

If Shakespearean scripts do not dictate the precise details of our Shakespeare experiences, they clearly do prescribe the general courses those experiences follow. Each of the scripts traces the parameters of the countless possible transformations it allows productions; each, in essence, circumscribes from scene to scene a broad area
of consciousness, of self, which it exposes to transformation in the theatre. For example: *Love's Labor's Lost* 's remarkable eavesdropping sequence (IV.iii), designed to arouse and augment through outlandish artificiality our natural will to play in the theatre, continually makes of that playfulness—or, more accurately, of our wilfulness—the grounds for the transformation of audiences through production. As, in the scene, the stage lords express their love in prose or sonnet, retreat to spy upon their friends, and are then in sequence exposed as perjurers, we are induced to enjoy and promote through our laughter increasingly preposterous stage actions. (In production, the more outrageous the hidings and discoveries appear, usually the more effective the scene.) The script directs productions to lure us away from considering the restraints of probability, and into enjoying that mind-set of the "characters" which allows one to ignore such checks to will and appetite as one's oaths. Although each of us seems to have a better claim than the stage Berowne to boast "like a demigod here sit I in the sky,/And wretched fools' secrets heedfully o'er'eye" (77-8), we are no less involved than the stage figures in a secret wilfull pursuit of pleasure. We too are to be tempted to heed the beauty rather than the reasoning of the actor/Berowne's simultaneous encomium to
Love and apologia for oath-breaking: while we are prompted by the script to honor the delight above the believability of Shakespeare's plot, and the assertion of our own powers of creation above the determinisms of the real world in which we must live. In the last scene of the play, the actor/Marcade's startling entrance, the songs to Spring and Winter, and the epilogue of the actor/Armado all are to address, and perhaps to qualify, the potentially transformative exercise of the will audiences, along with "characters," have been asked throughout the play to experience.

Every script determines by form, as the Love's Labor's script does, the circumstances in production in which our methods of apprehending stage fictions coincide with our methods of understanding, and living, non-fictive lives. These are the circumstances under which transformative productions, through Shakespearean presentationalism, can turn us away from watching, as "demigods," a play's fiction and towards participating in that kind of self-conscious theatrical creation which subsequently turns us away from old and towards new selves. The third act assignation of the lovers in Troilus and Cressida expresses in just a few lines the complexity with which a Shakespearean script is able to infuse possible reversals of perspective and perception in the theatre. The scene, like the play itself,
is in fact designed to invite a reversal of perspective which is itself a reversal; since both scene and play first reintroduce us to the Greek myth-history by overturning through parody and satire our eagerness to associate heroism and grandeur with the legend. The lovers' meeting begins precisely as a parody of the identification of grand passions with the stories of the fall of Troy: as we are offered a transparent, and so comic, masquerading of ardent lust in the guise of ardent love. Here seems to be the beginning of a portrait in action of two puppets of lust overtly pulled together by the unsavory stage puppet-master Pandarus, who does not let us forget that poses and words of love are more likely than not enacted and spoken merely to construct a gaudy facade about the practice of our "ruder powers:"

Pan. Come your ways, come your ways; and you draw backward, we'll put you i' th' fields. Why do you not speak to her? Come, draw this curtain, and let's see your picture. Alas the day, how loath you are to offend daylight! And 'twere dark you'd close sooner. So, so, rub on and kiss the mistress. How now, a kiss in fee-farm? Build there, carpenter, the air is sweet. Nay, you shall fight your hearts out ere I part you . . . Go to, go to.

Tro. You have bereft me of all words, lady.
Pan. Words pay no debts, give her deeds . . .

(III.ii.44-54)

But the script extends productions the opportunity to
reform abruptly our apprehension of and participation in the fiction-making. The unpretentious eloquence of the stage Cressida's confession of love in the scene may resonate with an emotionalism apt to shift the stage action away from mechanical parody:

I love you now, but till now not so much
But I might master it. In faith I lie,
My thoughts were like unbridled children grown
Too headstrong for their mother. See, we fools!
Why have I blabb'd? Who shall be true to us,
When we are so unsecret to ourselves?
But though I lov'd you well, I woo'd you not,
And yet, good faith, I wish'd myself a man,
Or that we women had men's privilege
Of speaking first. Sweet, bid me hold my tongue,
For in this rapture I shall surely speak
The thing I shall repent.
(120-31)

If the script does not confer upon the stage lovers that illusion of psychic wholeness we identify in stage fictions as truly human, its language at this point does invite productions to introduce a current of humanity, of psychological reality, into its stage figures. The stage lovers can become in production (as we cannot in life) completely human and completely mechanical: able to swing back and forth between the modes of being, and able to communicate both simultaneously. The stage Cressida can be both entirely an innocent and entirely a comic stage coquette when she ends her admission of love with
the exclamation "stop my mouth" (133); the stage Troilus can be both completely an idealist and a completely clownish stage sensualist in proclaiming:

Or that persuasion could but thus convince me
That my integrity and truth to you
Might be affronted with the match and weight
Of such a winnowed purity in love!
How were I then uplifted!
(164-8)

It is, primarily, our presentational vision of both actor and character which enables us to psychically accommodate these peculiar stage figures in performance. The actor at times in the sequence is invited to "lend" his humanity to the "character:" infusing an image of the real in the parody and granting the sight of the possibility of puppetry in the real. And in those moments in production when we recognize the real actor and actress juxtaposed with the deflated epic figures, when we experience the movement from authentically human to dehumanized behavior and back again, we become susceptible to an awareness of our own contact with the stage actions. We are urged to leave behind our mocking of the parodied "quasi-life" of the fiction in order to perceive the ways in which we ourselves strut our way into living at arms length from reality: degrading life in the name of
empty idealizations: misplaced notions of the romantic, the heroic, and the grand.

The impulse in the scene to restructure perception by urging us to implicate ourselves in the stage figures' self-delusion is scripted into all of Troilus and Cressida. How or if this impulse becomes transformative is left to production (and until twentieth century productions, post-Renaissance societies never imagined the play could be transformative); but the impulse to re-emotionalize, and so reform, perception (the impulse projected through the actress/Cressida's brief speech which can, in moving us, connect fictive and non-fictive worlds) is the inducement and the first step to transformative productions. Sartre reminds us that "every perception is accompanied by an affective reaction;" the transcendent impulse of all Shakespearean scripts is to invite the transformation of perception through a "real world" transformation of affectivity: to urge productions to change an audience's perceptual relationship to the world by arousing an emotional apprehension that acquires, through the frame of the presentational sketch, the influence of real feeling. Perhaps the design of Coriolanus, after the fashion of its central figure, states the impulse most directly; for when the play induces us to feel the stage Coriolanus to be a man unjustly banished, the course of our experience of the
play drastically changes. The world--our world that is repeatedly invoked through the play's constant use of public address--is transformed by the transformations of our emotions; we begin to experience through the stage figure's trials "real" sympathy for the individual, and outrage at the repression of life by society's various dictatorships of collective wills. And while we may not, and probably should not, allow the absolute reversal of our judgment of the actor/Coriolanus, we recognize that judgment to be altered; and, moreover, we understand and accept the tremendous power of the "criticized" emotions of Shakespearean theatre over perception. In production, the Coriolanus experience explains, while it proclaims, the revolutions of consciousness worked by Shakespeare's plays--revolutions by which the Shakespearean theatre helps transform the world.
Notes

Chapter One: Introducing the "Introduction"


3 I have appropriated the identification "Shakespeare experience" from J. L. Styan, who writes in the opening of The Shakespeare Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977), p. 5:

The new Shakespeare, often bitterly derided by the traditionalists, did not, however, make his appearance on any make-shift Elizabethan stage. The real sense of change came when such apparent eccentricities as Nigel Playfair, Barry Jackson, and Tyrone Guthrie sought repeatedly to give their audiences what they took to be the stuff of the Shakespeare experience.

The "stuff of the Shakespeare experience" is found, by my understanding, in the complicity of every historical period with Shakespeare's original scripts; and issues from every age's Shakespearean theatre (if not from every Shakespeare play produced in those theatres) since Shakespeare's own. Having lived through its culture the experiences of the past, each society finds Shakespeare experiences that answer its peculiar historical theatrical/social requirements.


See Marvin Rosenberg's The Masks of Othello (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961); The Masks of King Lear (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972); and The Masks of Macbeth (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1978).

In The Shakespeare Revolution.

Styan, The Shakespeare Revolution, p. 25.


I agree that there is such a thing as "authentic" Shakespeare experience; but I believe its authenticity depends upon neither "objective" meaning nor the reproduction of an "original" experience. Authentic Shakespeare experience depends solely upon a performance's ability to offer emotional/intellectual transformation to an audience; hence I suppose it is remotely possible that not one of Beerbohm-Tree's productions supported Shakespeare experiences--although (to judge even by Shaw's harsh criticism of the actor-manager) it is hardly probable.


Orson Welles's brilliant condensation of the "Henry" plays in his 1966 Chimes at Midnight records on film our time's approbation of "Falstaff's" call for social anarchy.

The great Falstaffs from Shakespeare's time to Johnson's: Will Kemp (Shakespeare's original Falstaff); Thomas Betterton, c. 1635-1710; William Bullock, Sr.,
c. 1667-1742; John Mills, d. 1736; James Quin, 1693-1766; and Edward Shuter, c. 1728-1776.

17Brecht, p. 151.


19Brecht traces the exhortative force of theatre to the privileged exhortation of human action in the development of children:

One easily forgets that human education proceeds along highly theatrical lines. In a quite theatrical manner the child is taught how to behave; logical arguments only come later. When such-and-such occurs, it is told (or seen), one must laugh. It joins in when there is laughter, without knowing why; if asked why it is laughing it is wholly confused. In the same way it joins in shedding tears, not only weeping because the grown-ups do so but also feeling genuine sorrow. . . . The human being copies gestures, miming, tones of voice. And weeping arises from sorrow, but sorrow also arises from weeping.

(Brecht on Theatre, p. 152)

Merleau-Ponty echoes Brecht's observations in "The Child's Relations with Others:"

If I am a consciousness turned toward things, I can meet in things the actions of another and find in them a meaning, because they are themes of possible activity for my own body. Guillaume, in his book L'Imitation chez l'enfant, says that we do not at first imitate others but rather the actions of others, and that we find others at the point of origin of these actions. At first the child imitates not persons but conduct. And the problem of knowing how conduct can be transferred from another to me is infinitely less difficult to solve than the problem of knowing how I can represent to myself a psyche that
is radically foreign to me. 
(The Primacy of Perception, p. 117)

20 Jean-Paul Sartre, Sartre on Theater, ed. and annot. 
Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, trans. Frank Jellinek 

21 Sartre, Sartre on Theater, p. 136.

22 Robert Speaight, Shakespeare on the Stage (London: 

23 Speaight, Shakespeare on the Stage, p. 64.

24 Accounting for the creative spirit that engendered 
film, André Bazin writes:

The guiding myth, then, inspiring the 
invention of cinema, is the accomplishment 
of that which dominated in a more or less 
vague fashion all the techniques of the 
mechanical reproduction of reality in the 
nineteenth century, from photography to 
the phonograph [I would add stage tech-
nology], namely an integral realism, a 
recreation of the world in its own image, 
an image unburdened by the freedom of 
interpretation of the artist or the 
irreversibility of time.

("The Myth of Total Cinema," in What is Cinema?, vol. 1, 
trans. Hugh Gray [Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of Cal-
ifornia Press, 1967], p. 21.)

For another important discussion of the relationship 
between the development of film and the realization of 
the visual image of the world see Siegfried Kracauer, 

25 Eugene Ionesco, Notes and Counternotes, trans. 


27 Francis Fergusson, The Idea of a Theater (Princeton:


29 "The analysis of the art of drama leads to the idea of a theater which gives it its sanction, and its actual life in its time and place. And when the idea of a theater is inadequate or lacking, we are reduced to speculating about the plight of the whole culture." (Fergusson, p. 226)


31 Gombrich, p. 85.


38 It can be argued that Brook also brought the modern Shakespearean theatre into contact with the communist world in adapting Kott.

39 I find it very unlikely the play lost transformative force simply by its adaptation to film. Brook has been an exceptionally fine film director (Lord of the Flies, 1963); and a talented adapter of stage works (The Beggar's Opera, 1952; The Marat/Sade, 1966).

41. Sartre, *Sartre on Theater*, p. 68.


44. Brook, p. 10.


46. Robert Speaight, in a 1971 review of a production of *Much Ado*, speaks for academia in chastizing Shaw's blindness to the "Shavianism" of Shakespeare's Benedick and Beatrice; but it is Speaight, whose reviews of Shakespeare productions in Britain for *Shakespeare Quarterly* have stood at the center of Shakespearean scholarship's contact with the stage, who cannot see past the "truisms" of an imaginary fixed aesthetic that as often as possible isolates productions from social history. Shakespeare's scholars need to look at Shakespeare again by looking at the world in which his plays are produced.


Chapter Two: The Call to Transformative Experience

I. Presentational Intentionality


5 Ibid., p. 18.


21. Ibid., p. 146.

22. I think it is the simple fact that we do occasionally help shape the experience we describe which makes us something more than conspicuously learned charlatans passing impressions off as truth. Our assertions, however far removed they appear from "objectivity," might eventually function as probable truth for some historical community, as we both identify and construct that new social relationship to Shakespeare's scripts experienced by new historical audiences. Prescription, or exhortation, becomes then the critic's virtue as well as his, or her, vice.


25. See Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Modernizing Shakespeare's Spelling: Three Studies in the Text of


II. The Shakespearean Presentational Sketch


30 Bethell, p. 82.


32 Kenneth Burke, Counterstatement, p. 37.


35 Citations of Shakespeare include The Riverside Shakespeare's stage directions which, for the most part, reflect common sense as well as stage tradition. But editorial stage directions do not, of course, dictate or validate the dramaturgic choices of Shakespearean productions.

36 Gombrich, p. 276.

37 J. L. Styan evaluates the relationship of the actor/Antony's speaking to the context of the play in Shakespeare's Stagecraft.
. . . it has the weight of the situation upon it, and yet remains personal to Antony and his actor.

(p. 169)

38 Kenneth Muir, reviewing criticism's consideration of clothing imagery in the verse of King Lear, writes in Shakespeare's Tragic Sequence (1972; rpt. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1979): "so in King Lear, from the first scene to the last, we have a continual repetition of the contrast between man and his clothes" (p. 121). The verse "debate" of passion and reason in Antony and Cleopatra is examined at length in Derek Traversi's Shakespeare: The Roman Plays (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 29-203.


42 The myth of the literary priority of the plays is, I believe, most clearly debunked by the life of G. Wilson Knight, in spite of Knight's insistence that "my experience as actor, producer and play-goer leaves me uncompromising in my assertion that the literary analysis of great drama in terms of theatrical technique accomplishes singularly little" (The Wheel of Fire [1949; rpt. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966], p. vi.); it is precisely Knight's "experience as actor, producer, and play-goer" that informs the breadth of vision he attempts to articulate in his metaphysical "readings" of Shakespearean drama.


44 Bethell, p. 7.

Chapter Three: The Nature of Transformative Experience


4To arouse image consciousness, an audience invokes the same "magical if" an actor or actress must employ to create a character. See Konstantin Stanislavskii, An Actor Prepares, trans. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood, intro. John Gielgud (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1948).


6Saint Augustine in The City of God and Jeremy Collier in his 1698 treatise, A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage, both warn

46Ibid., p. 31.

47Dessen, p. 75.


50See William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1950), pp. 27-86.


52Huston, p. 6.

53Styan, Shakespeare's Stagecraft, p. 227.


8 Brecht, p. 181.
9 Ibid., p. 186.
10 Ibid., p. 135.
11 Ibid., p. 125.
12 Ibid., p. 94.


14 Brecht, p. 151.


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