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**THE
SHAKESPEAREAN PERFORMANCES
OF
SIR JOHN GIELGUD**

**by
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CHAPTER FOUR

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Much Ado About Nothing is to be distinguished from the other comedies of Shakespeare that are its nearest contemporaries because of its concern with one circumscribed social unit. Unlike As You Like It, Twelfth Night, The Merchant of Venice and A Midsummer Night's Dream, which play off different kinds of worlds against each other, the problems arising in one being resolved by a retreat to the next or alternatively by a foreign visitor, the action of Much Ado About Nothing is focussed on a single, indigenous group. (That Don Pedro, strictly speaking, is an outsider from Aragon seems less important than the fact that he and the other guests freely interact with Leonato's household, making themselves at home there.) If the intervention of Dogberry and the Watch is required to restore harmony, then Dogberry, although of a different class, is quite clearly part of the civic life of Messina. All this tends to reinforce the play's preoccupation with mistaken identities, indicating, not so much a failure of perception of the individual, but an inordinate willingness to trust gossip, scandal and hearsay evidence above personal intuition. As private persons, they depend heavily on social appraisals to modify their view of reality. Suitably enough, Beatrice and Benedick, the eccentric rebels who defy social convention, are brought to heel by means of a collective conspiracy whose very operation asserts their communal integration.

The wolves have prey'd, and look, the gentle day,
 Before the wheels of Phoebus, round about
 Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey. (V.3.25)

says Don Pedro just before the bonds of the loving couples are publicly ratified in marriage and the temporary rift in relationships caused by Claudio's mistrust of Hero is repaired. The closed figure of the circle described by the wheels of the sun's chariot writes large the direction of the ebb and flow of human intercourse within this small, self-contained society and is recapitulated in the patterned steps of the players when they are called upon to dance.

In the theatre, frequent revivals of the play dating from the restoration have testified to an engagement with its themes - especially in the unusual opportunities that the sexual antagonism of Beatrice and Benedick have offered for partnered actors and actresses. During the Victorian period Much Ado About Nothing vied with A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Merchant of Venice as Shakespeare's most popular comedy owing to the performances of Irving and Ellen Terry. If theatrical presentations have often failed to preserve the overall shape and balance of Shakespeare's design, tending to isolate certain features and neglect others, then they have repeatedly demonstrated the centrality of the festive spirit and a convivial mood distilled in the activities of masquing, singing, courtship and dancing and the power these have to generate theatrical intimacy.¹ Gielgud's own productions have consistently developed this vein.²

After playing Benedick at the Old Vic in 1931, directed by Harcourt Williams, Gielgud went on to direct the play himself in 1949 at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre with Anthony Quayle and Diana Wynyard taking the parts of Benedick and Beatrice. The success of this production led to its revival in the following year, Gielgud himself and Peggy Ashcroft stepping into the two leading roles. In 1952 the production was revived in London

at the Phoenix Theatre where Gielgud continued to play Bendick, this time alongside Diana Wynyard, who returned to take on her original part. In 1955 the production toured England and then Europe with George Devine's controversial King Lear designed by Isamu Noguchi, Peggy Ashcroft being called upon once more to play Beatrice. The production had its final revival in 1959 in America at the Lunt Fontanne Theatre, New York, with Margaret Leighton partnering Gielgud. Thus, in all, the production was revived on four occasions over a period of ten years after its initial evolution at Stratford, employing, on the whole, the same lavish sets and costumes. However, examination of the three promptbooks (1949, 1950, 1955) shows that in that time the staging was altered, the text was rearranged, speeches were interpreted differently and new business was introduced to suit the new actors and actresses who were assembled to make up successively different casts. On every occasion the play was revived Gielgud redirected it, often introducing novel ideas into his own performance, so that the playing was kept fresh by constant innovation. This, in turn, led to changing emphases of character and theme. In the light of these developments, to treat this series of presentations exclusively either as one production, subject to revival, or a number of independent productions is unsatisfactory. Against a background of continuity supplied by the décor and Gielgud's association with the play, features of change may be examined to represent the altering shape of Much Ado About Nothing in the context of performance.

The setting for Harcourt Williams's production at the Old Vic consisted of two pillars backed by a vine-covered trellis with an arch in the centre. In the eavesdropping scenes Beatrice and Benedick hid behind these scanty pillars instead of arbors (Pictures in Everyman, 26.3.1931, The Daily Telegraph, 8.11.1932). The modest simplicity of design

threw into relief the brilliant costumes of the players, some of whom flaunted richly embroidered handkerchiefs, and ensured brisk continuity of action. The director was especially concerned to bring out the atmosphere of vivacity and courtly elegance, at the same time treating the broader comic elements with restraint. Characteristically, business was pared down and attention was focussed on the fluency of the dialogue with some stylization in the acting being used to complement the highly finished, ingenious contrivance in the puns, conceits and double entendres. Ivor Brown thought that more could have been done to accentuate the artificiality of the comedy. The setting seemed to him rather 'dowdy' against the glittering, verbal mosaic (Observer, 22.3.1931). But The Morning Post (17.3.1931) appreciated the unpretentiousness of an 'entirely adequate pillared setting, which served with slight alteration for garden, church or courthouse', a 'rich mosaic of peculiarly beautiful costumes' and the swift scene changes 'which helped to clip the comedy in with the drama and so give variety and lightness'. Even though, according to Brown, insufficient notice was taken of 'the frankly fantastic air of the text, Harcourt Williams simply allowing his story to run naturally', The Morning Post reviewer observed that the audience were not allowed to feel too much the poignancy of Hero's plight. The Times (17.3.1931) concurred with this view, implying that a certain distance was maintained in the delineation of the narrative generally that qualified the audience's identification with the characters. This was maintained partly through the formalized speech and attitudes of the actors:

Mr. Harcourt Williams knew that we should come, not to be stirred by the villainies of Don John and the sombre melodrama that so suddenly envelops Hero, but to hear bouts of exquisite talking. Accordingly he saw to it that the acting should concern itself less with miming than with declamation and deportment; that it should reproduce the easy flowing pattern of spontaneous and finished talk before it sought to elucidate character or imitate life. And the intentions of the producer have been fairly carried out by an admirable cast.

Going on to Gielgud's Benedick and Dorothy Green's Beatrice, the critic noted that if these characters were more fully rounded than the others and filled with the peculiar life of the Renaissance, then it was still impossible to get on fully intimate terms with them. Their speaking appeared to suggest a life style, but in reality relied upon hints and nuances working on the imagination to supply this further dimension to their theatrical existence. These hints were the essence of the play and both Gielgud and Dorothy Green captured this in their interpretations, in particular in the way they incorporated occasional hesitations in their speech to convey the impression of spontaneity as their minds seemed suddenly to hit upon the perfect expression for the moment. The Curtain (April, 1931) described them as declaiming 'their way through Shakespeare's comedy which is an artificial affair. The plot is operatic, a heavy setting for the gems of wit'. The Yorkshire Post (18.3.1931) would have liked a more subtle appreciation of the romance of the pair when they are openly lovers, adding that they were in full command of the humour of the parts. Indicating that the balance of the production may have been slightly unequal, the reviewer mentioned that the audience watched solemnly the trials and tribulations of Claudio and Hero, which were rather 'fatuous', although they brightened up perceptibly in the Benedick situations as they did with Dogberry and the Watch. The large proportion of prose in the play, which roughly reflects the importance of Benedick and Beatrice and the potential for comedy in their relationship, adds to the significance of the comment that the production stressed humour instead of poetry.

Balance was more in evidence perhaps in the 'merry war' between the two leading figures themselves. The Evening News (17.3.1931), appreciating the special traits of whimsicality and charm that Gielgud brought to his

role, declared that the couple were 'admirably matched in their spirited duel'. Everyman's (26.3.1931) reviewer expressed similar sentiments in asserting that Beatrice and Benedick, upon whose success the comedy depends, were played with confidence and balance. The so called 'marriage scene' (IV.1) which had had its importance underlined by the sumptuous mise-en-scène inside a church in Irving's famous productions, was singled out as the higher achievement of Gielgud and Dorothy Green. If the critic's assertion that they reached the heights of comedy here makes one wonder whether the misplaced laugh on Beatrice's command for her lover to kill Claudio occurred, then his overall approval for an episode as well done as ever he had seen it indicates that nothing untoward happened. Appreciation was also shown for Ralph Richardson's bewiskered Don Pedro, displaying gay irresponsibility and extravagance.

After several reviews of previous productions where he objected to the miscasting of the principals, James Agate found Beatrice to be Dorothy Green's best part, in which she demonstrated her grace, glamour, wit, verve and polish. As for Benedick, he decided that Gielgud's performance was most assured in the later sections of the play when he is induced to love Beatrice. Agate praised his delivery of the garden soliloquy that led up to the eavesdropping (II.36) for its beauty, point and audibility, although he had one prophetic reservation that looked forward to Gielgud's later interpretative attempts. 'Mr. Gielgud's Benedick is a little wanting in swagger in the early scenes, in which he should be more of a Terry' (Sunday Times, 22.3.1931). Physically and temperamentally ill equipped to play Benedick as a coarse and dissolute soldier, Gielgud seems to have devised early on a way of approaching the role that lent prominence to the courtly, gallant side of the character. He was elegant, sophisticated and ironic rather than surly and licentious, exhibiting what Ivor Brown

called 'nice petulance' when he was crossed by Beatrice and then 'sweet repentance' when his affection for her grew (Observer 22.3.1931). As a dashing and youthful soldier he had a 'deliciously natural' appeal for The Morning Post (17.3.1931) next to his charming, sympathetic, gentle and intelligent Beatrice. It may be that the result of pairing Dorothy Green and Gielgud was to remove some of the edge from the conflicts of wit whose sharpness, after all, Benedick testifies to. 'She speaks poniards, and every word stabs' (II.1.223). Generally the play was well received.

Gielgud's production of Much Ado About Nothing, at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in 1949, was conceived at a time when there was a revival of interest in spectacular, pictorial settings for Shakespearean plays. Henry VIII directed by Tyrone Guthrie and The Tempest by Michael Benthall, were also part of the season's programme and both were richly mounted. Some of Gielgud's own earlier productions had demonstrated this tendency, such as the 1937 Richard II at the Queen's (See Chapter Two) and his 1942 Macbeth (Tour), designed by Michael Ayrton and John Minton, with ashen hues and imposing architecture. In particular, his first production of The Merchant of Venice in 1932 (Old Vic) illustrated the flamboyant, decorative approach that united visual appeal with a heightened sense of the fantastic elements in Shakespearean comedy. The programme contained this anticipatory comment:

The costumes are inspired by many periods but are actually of no known historical fashion. They are conceived in relation to the characters they are to clothe, and to the general scheme of colour and design. The entire pictorial and musical side of the production is frankly decorative and unrealistic.

Although Much Ado About Nothing was set vaguely in 'the Boccaccio period', the style of production that Gielgud developed in collaboration with his

designer, a Spanish painter named Mariano Andreu, was similarly fabulous (Stage Directions, p.39).

Working on the basis of Gielgud's suggestions, Andreu constructed a unit set that could be arranged in two positions to represent either a garden or a hall. The action began outdoors, in the garden, with two benches placed downstage, opposite each other. Behind, to the right, was a table with a wine pitcher and goblets. Upstage, on either side of an inset playing area that led down to the main platform via steps, were two red-brick niches containing statues: one a nude, male figure with a lyre, the other a female nude holding a cup. Shrubbery grew up around these niches and they were linked above by a vine trellis that framed a vista of blue sky and rural countryside beyond. There were arched grottoes adjoining each niche and the cut-out shapes of cypresses and poplars were spread out above and behind them. The trees remained visible when the set was adapted for the interior hall of Leonato's house, as did the vine trellis and the statues, supplying a further dimension of unreality. The inset playing area was enclosed by walls of white marble which extended beyond and to the left and right of the steps so as to include the statues, now ensconced in apertures, and two side entrances. There were arches in adjacent walls that stood obliquely to the audience, permitting entrances up centre as well.

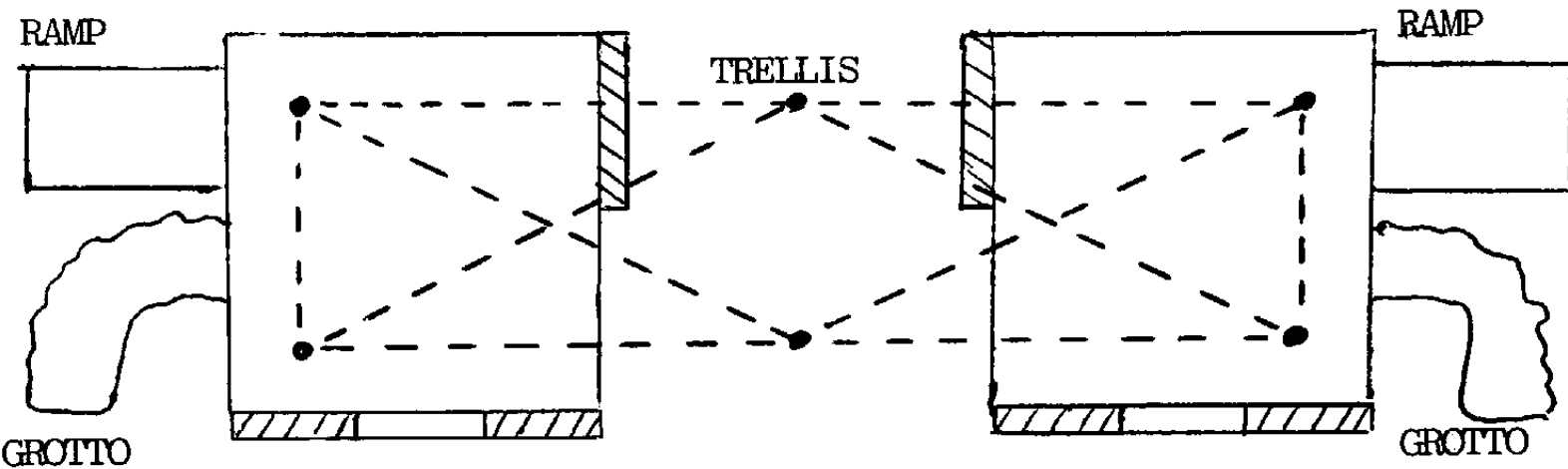
The two settings were manually interchangeable and this led to the actual process of scenic adaptation being assimilated as part of the action: actors, in the livery of house-hold retainers, performed the operation of unfolding the hinged screens that fitted over the statues by swinging back the central pieces (each attached to the side of a niche) to shut in the middle alcove and the transition from garden (Closed Position) to hall (Open Position) was effected (Plate 10). This added

10. Ground Plans of Mariano Andreu's Set

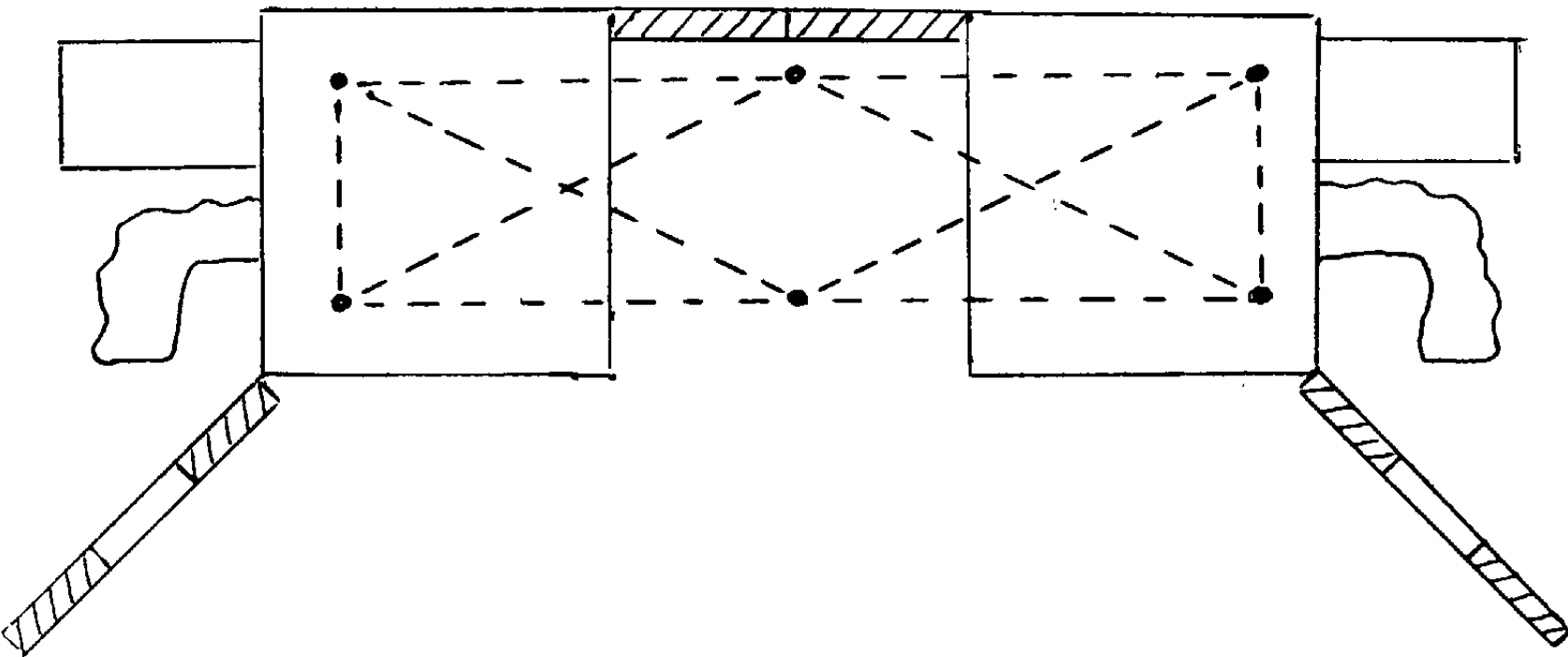
for

Much Ado About Nothing

CLOSED POSITION



OPEN POSITION



to the sense of fantasy and became a prominent visual feature of the revival, affording a bravura display of mechanical ingenuity and playful contrivance. The change from II.2 to II.3 may be taken to demonstrate this (I.4 to I.5, promptbook, 1949). Don John, having hatched his second more serious plan to foil Claudio's betrothal, has just departed from the hall, where a banqueting table and two candelabra remain from the masque. The next scene starts with Benedick's entry into the garden to eavesdrop on Don Pedro, Leonato and Claudio.

Servants 1, 2, 3 and 4 came through the inside arches and onto the inner playing area, in pairs. 1 and 4 continued down the steps and onto the main stage where each went to the end of one of the marble walls. Meanwhile 2 and 3 had picked up the candelabra, one apiece, and were taking them off. A negro boy, Benedick's page, stood up centre. 1 and 4 folded the walls inwards to form the niches for the statues. 2 and 3 re-entered, split the banquet table into two halves, and removed the separate sections. The front walls of the niches were secured and 1 and 4 went off to the left and right. The negro boy released the pieces that closed in the inner stage, tucking them against the sides of the niches and started to come downstage, tossing a ball into the air and catching it in a cup. Benedick appeared up centre, came through the gap recently made by the removal of the inner stage enclosure and to the front, where he picked up his dialogue with the boy. While the scene was changing, bright, orchestral music with a studiedly archaic manner was playing. The servants' entrances and exits were made symmetrically. A significant aspect of the operation was that the action of the following episode overlapped with the adaptation of the scenery, for the boy was already setting off to meet Benedick as it was being fixed in place and himself behaved as a scene shifter. This not only helped to speed up the trans-

formation achieved in 'a matter of seconds' (Evesham Journal 30.4.1949), but blurred the distinction between actors and technical staff. The audience had a dual perception of the players, who were at once technicians and characters in a play. As the scenery was reversed and lighting adjustments were made, the red and white faces of the walls would have blinked like traffic lights. The Manchester Guardian (G.P., 21.4.1949) testified to the startling effect as well as the pantomimic atmosphere that was produced:

We are swept at once into a garden scene of almost gem-like brilliance of un-English detail; it seems to have caught the passionate highlighted precision of a painting by an Italian or a Flemish master. When the garden has served its turn, richly dressed lackeys fold back part of the sets - and behold! what were garden gods are now statuary in an equally ornate banquet hall. Never has this 'kink in space' method of scene-changing been used more adroitly, and it vastly pleased the audience. It is kept up throughout and, so full of shapes is Senor Andreu's fancy, one feels that he could probably keep it up for ever in the high fantastical.

This particular transformation occurred at three points in the play: after I.3 from the garden where Don John has been plotting to the house for the masque, after II.2 from the house to the garden where Benedick is to be tricked and, at the end, (with no editorial justification) where the house suddenly changes to a garden around the whirling couples. This was an unexpected reprise that concluded the play with a bold flourish and brought out the cyclic pattern of events implied by Benedick's summary that also neatly catches up the stage picture of the dancers celebrating: 'man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion' (V.4.103).

The climax of the production from the scenic point of view was the marriage scene, which involved the opening of an ornate church set.

The change was carried out by the familiar lackeys, who pushed off the two balconies from the previous scene into the wings to reveal a pillared porch. From out of the orchestra, on two sets of stairs left and right, emerged the two parties of guests for the wedding, consisting of the bride's family in one group and Claudio, Don John and his comrades in the other (1949). These parties filed onto the stage and across it, disappearing up left and up right to the sound of trumpet fanfares, so as to give the impression that they were entering the church. When they had gone, the servants opened the church arches and the interior immediately came into view. Organ music was playing. There was a large crucifix above, to one side, and a massy, central pillar branching out to support the roof, partly visible below the leafy boughs. Cornices seemed to recede into the distance along the edge of the ceiling, providing an illusion of perspective. The parties then re-entered from up right, anointing themselves with holy-water from the stoup and genuflecting before the altar. All this must have greatly enhanced the public and ceremonial aspects of the scene as did the twenty-two additional observers that were introduced to swell the ranks of the processional groups. Yet it is to be stressed that the realistic elements of this scene were subordinated to the playful sleight of hand entailed in the staging of a spectacular theatrical coup. The audience had seen the church being turned out. They could see where the walls were cut off and a painted vista opened beyond.

The distinction is a fairly important one that illuminates the general tenor of the director's approach to the play at large. He was aiming at a stylish, picturesque fantasy that was both conventional and formalized in the image of life that it presented. The human predicament of Beatrice and Benedick was not to be ignored, but it was to be set in relief against

an artificial context. The flamboyance of the décor and its undisguised, mechanical contrivance was in itself a celebration of theatrical artifice though it mirrored, too, the artificiality of the society of Messina and its overriding concern with appearances and bourgeois display. By heightening the unreality of the environment in which the characters moved, Gielgud was able to make a statement about the structure of comedy and the way it operated on the stage. The director's policy implied that the conventionalized comic form was best conveyed through a conventionalized medium.

In this fabulous and splendid world Benedick tended, like a chameleon, to take on the colour of his surroundings. Anthony Quayle set the trend that Gielgud was to follow, with several complete changes of costume. He had a green velvet tunic, with padded sleeves, that was worn beneath a suede tabard with bronze bosses sewn on to it, and a velvet cloak of the same material thrown over his shoulders. Upon his head he wore a wide brimmed hat trimmed with a multi-coloured felt fringe and a red cloth crown. This was the prototype for the technicolour catherine wheel that Norman Holbrook reported Gielgud to be wearing in the 1950 production. Holbrook demonstrated the reaction of many in the attention he paid to obtrusive pieces of headgear that Benedick adopted. They were a milliner's dream (Evening Despatch, 7.6.1950). Another of the original costumes was a white velvet tunic with dagged sleeves, lined in brown sateen. This had padded under sleeves of pink and caramel velvet and matching white tights. The wide-brimmed, felt hat was white also and trimmed with gold around the edge. Still another costume had a brick-red woolen tunic that was pleated at the back and front and slit up the sides. Green velvet insets were sewn into these slits which matched the green tights that were worn. The hat that went with this was a tall, red, pleated one with a roll brim. Armour

with spiked, plumed helmets and moulded breastplates protected the returning soldiers, adding a touch of incongruity to their initial appearance in the domestic, pastoral environment. The difference of build between Quayle and Gielgud and their differing conceptions of Benedick were suggested by the abandonment of the armour, later on in 1950, in favour of gauntlets, riding boots and studded leather jerkins that softened the incongruity.

Beatrice too possessed an extensive wardrobe that vied with Benedick's in colour and style. She had one dress that was made of gold satin. It had velvet, corded sleeves. Over the top of this she wore a smock of white wool and gold boots upon her feet. A tiara of white lace completed her opulent appearance. Another dress was of lilac corded silk. It had net sleeves of purple velvet that were lined with primrose satin. Underneath it there was a lime green underskirt. Her boots were of lilac and her tiara was made of a beige coloured lace. A third dress was a blue woollen one that had pink net sleeves and was worn above a skirt of pink moss crepe. A tabard of pink velvet was attached to the actress's neck. Her boots were blue and her tiara was of cyclamen net. Again the modifications that were introduced into Diana Wynyard's original costumes by Peggy Ashcroft, the second Beatrice (1950, 1955), point to a less magnificent more homely, interpretation. For one thing Beatrice's headgear became smaller, neater and less profuse. Diana Wynyard's elaborate, plumed tiara was replaced by a prickly wreath and a dainty, diaphanous bonnet with scalloped edging. In distinguishing the two actresses, Gielgud describes Diana Wynyard as 'the great lady sweeping about in beautiful clothes' (An Actor and His Time, pp. 166, 167).

Benedick and Beatrice stood out in their costumes while the whole cast were strikingly attired. The Brighton-Hove Herald (11.6.1955) observed that

many of the company have at least one change of costume. Gielgud as Benedick and Anthony Ireland as Don Pedro have a magnificent variation for almost every appearance, in silks, satins, brocades, velvets, ermine, cloth of gold, in all the hues of the rose and wine, besides russet, emerald and midnight blue.

Yet beautiful as these costumes were in their own right, they were not there simply to provide spectacle. The clothing helped to supply visual definition for the fashionable, courtly, appearance-orientated society of Messina where fashions are a major topic of conversation and are used to prefigure important developments in the plot (III.2.28, III.1.28, III.4.5). 'Nay that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage as to show a child his new coat, and forbid him to wear it,' (III.2.5) says Don Pedro turning down Claudio's offer to escort him back to Arragon after the marriage has taken place. A few moments later Don John enters and initiates his plan to discredit Hero, speaking about her in terms that take up the ideas both of soilure as an image of lost reputation and clothing in the puns on the word 'fit';

The word is too good to paint out her wickedness;
I could say she were worse; think you of a worse
title, and I will fit her to it ... If you love
her then, to-morrow wed her; but it would better
fit your honour to change your mind. (III.2.97)

Significantly enough when the Friar describes his plan to undo the mischief and reinstate Hero he refers to 'every lovely organ of her life' coming 'apparrell'd' into Claudio's 'study of imagination' (IV.1.225). Then again the plumes, feathered fans and flowing capes which were worn by the actors served to set off the chain of bird imagery exemplified in the description of Claudio as a 'poor hurt fowl' (II.1.179). One instance of the way décor was combined with business to promote significance occurred when Beatrice spied upon Hero and Ursula. In 1955, as the two women concluded the baiting

of their trap for the eavesdropper, Ursula plucked a feather from a fan that she was carrying. The action only achieves its full resonance when it is related to the bird images that are centred, at this point, upon their victim (III.1.24, III.1.36). Beatrice is a bird and Ursula symbolically chastens her pride by plucking a feather from her wing.

The arrangements of the three playing texts are generally similar in pattern. Gielgud, evidently, was guided by the same broad principles each time he came to cut the play for performance. Thus I.2 which contains the colloquy of Leonato and Antonio concerning their mistaken assumption that Don Pedro loves Hero and intends to woo her for himself is consistently removed. This scene broaches the subject of misprision and forms a diptych with the next in which Don John is shown wilfully resolving to distort the correct information he is given that Don Pedro is going to court Hero on Claudio's behalf. Leonato and Antonio have confounded the truth in all honesty - their mistake demonstrating in advance that appearances are intrinsically confoundable. Don John is not the source of deception in his society; he only exploits potentialities that are already there. The removal of the scene sacrificed this point to the impetus of the plot which is then got more speedily underway through the bringing together of the soldiers' arrival and the villain's conspiracy. The mistake of Leonato and Antonio, apart from adding a further dimension of illusion to the masque episode where Hero as well is presented as labouring under a misapprehension about Don Pedro's advances, does not further the plot, since Hero, if rather coy, is perfectly amenable to the Prince's suggestions. How many of the audience would be attentive enough to register Antonio's half truth, 'the Prince discovered to Claudio that he loved my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance;' (1.2.11) as evidence of an error? The removal went by unmentioned

in reviews. Narrative redundancy, then, along with a lack of intrinsic dramatic excitement in what was felt to be a minor, low-key incident accounted for its omission. Gielgud explained, agnostically, later on: 'I thought the scene was dull - perhaps wrongly, as I have since seen it played effectively' (Letter to the writer, 7.6.1980).

Repeated smaller cuts were Don Pedro's and Hero's brief exchange during the masque with its references to Ovid (II.1.82-83), Leonato's sententious allusion to the conflict of reason and passion (II.3.150-152) and the profanity of duelling in the Benedick eavesdropping scene (II.3.176), Don Pedro's topical satire on Benedick's irregular habits of dress (III.2.28-35), Borachio's obscure account of the worm eaten tapestry (III.3.121-128), Margaret's jest about the archaic ballad 'light o' love' (III.4.38-43), and some of the Friar's moralizing and exposition in the marriage scene (IV.1.217-222, IV.1.237-243). (He becomes a less garrulous character as a consequence.) Most of these cuts seem designed to clarify, remove stumbling blocks and eliminate digression though, along with these ends, the ones that cluster around V. 1 perhaps reduce the actors' interpretative difficulties as well. This scene arguably represents Don Pedro and Claudio at their most callous, still attempting to break jests with Benedick, now determined to challenge his friend to a duel, after they have snubbed the impassioned Antonio and Leonato. The deliberate violation of decorum with the persistent frenzied witticisms and the underlying seriousness of the situation - Leonato in his vehement indignation may even forget momentarily that his daughter is really alive - can be very effective in performance. The glib shallowness and the myopic inappropriateness of the banter that has hitherto characterized the social intercourse of the household and its guests is scathingly exposed. However, the ironic reversal of the roles of Leonato and Antonio, with Antonio,

after counselling patience to his brother, suddenly losing his temper and issuing his own challenge, and the later entrance of Dogberry, mingles farce with satire and complicates the audience's reaction. Gielgud did not shirk these problems, but he introduced cuts to smooth the scene's progress and reduce its length. Leonato did not discourse so extensively on his grief (V.1.11-14, 20-27), the last few lines of the Prince's and Claudio's dialogue after Benedick's departure and Dogberry's first speech were taken out to speed up the constable's entry (V.1.193-199), Dogberry did not mention the imaginary criminal, deformed (II.1.290-298) and there were other light cuts at lines 171 to 172 and lines 213 to 216. Hero was not described as the heir to the fortunes of her uncle and father - possibly to remove any suggestion of selfish motive from Claudio's agreement to take a second unknown bride. In 1955 this cut was balanced with the removal of Claudio's question to Don Pedro at the beginning of the play about Hero's inheritance 'Hath Leonato any son, my lord?' (I.1.256). This sets the love story of Claudio and Hero in the context of a conventional, upper class marriage in which the allocation of property is a prime consideration though, of course, not necessarily the only one. In 1950 and 1955 Don Pedro was not allowed to go on awkwardly jesting after Claudio has accepted Benedick's challenge (V.1.155-166).

Beatrice and Benedick consistently lost some of their more dated witticisms. Benedick did not facetiously confuse the attributes of Vulcan and Cupid to inquire whether Claudio is in earnest (1.1.157) nor did he indulge in bawdy innuendo with Margaret over the phallic significance of pikes and bucklers (V.2.16-19). (Difficulties of comprehension rather than propriety were most probably the chief consideration here!) Gone also is part of his first aside in the betrothal scene (IV.1.20). Beatrice

did not disparagingly compare Benedick's wit to that of his horse (1.1.57-59) nor did she tell of his shooting competition with her uncle's fool (1.1.32-36) or how he cheats with false dice (II.1.50-51). The latter is sometimes taken to imply that the couple have had a previous affair, one in which Benedick had won Beatrice's love and then betrayed her trust, and its excision therefore may be a way of removing an unwanted ambiguity. In 1950 and 1955 Don Pedro made no comment on Benedick having cut Cupid's bow-string on several occasions - with a possible glance at his companion's dissolute life style. Claudio's complacency at the end is played down by the cutting of his last remark in which he jokingly threatens to cudgel Benedick (V.4.109-112).

Other repeated alterations are Borachio's dancing with Margaret in the masque instead of Balthasar - which bore out his subsequent boast that he enjoyed her favour, his announcement that she will call him Claudio when she leans out of Hero's chamber window (this is struck out) and Don Pedro's mocking address 'How dost thou, Benedick, the married man?' (V.4.98), with the last three words being given to the general assembly.

The recurrence of these alterations argues for the persistence of a broad strategy that brought each revival to conform to an overall pattern. However, the appearance of some variant readings show Gielgud willing to adapt and experiment with the production in order to increase its coherence and precision. A line count collation of the three promptbooks (which can only be an approximate indicator) gives an idea of the extent of the variation. In 1949 one hundred and forty-five lines were removed. In 1950 this number went up to one hundred and ninety-eight. In 1955 it increased again to two hundred and fifteen. Often, later cuts that were made represent a logical extension of earlier omissions. Thus, having removed Dogberry's

report on the spurious character called 'Deformed' in 1949, Gielgud goes on in 1955 to reduce further the references to him. The two watchmen did not tell Conrade and Borachio that they will be made to bring 'Deformed' forth (III.3.155-158). After being allowed in 1949 to reply to Dogberry in his own idiom when he appears conducting Conrade and Borachio, Don Pedro was made to behave more soberly and address himself directly to the prisoners in 1950. The original cutting of lines 213 to 216 was extended to include 209 to 213. When Dogberry had spoken his garbled introduction, Don Pedro said simply, 'This learned constable is too cunning to be understood', and turned immediately to Conrade and Borachio. Some times the new cuts seem to have had little relation to former practice, when, for instance, the messenger's account of Claudio's uncle shedding tears of joy (1.1.15-24) after being spoken in 1949, was removed from the two subsequent promptbooks. Similarly, the cutting in 1955 of Hero's ornate simile applied to the honey-suckle bower in which Beatrice hides, was unprecedented (III.1.9-11). Here the comparison of the leaves blocking out the sun to 'favourites, / Made proud by princes, that advance their pride / Against the power that bred it' prepares for Beatrice's abasement. Passages were restored also and it is in this same scene in 1955 that a section of dialogue, after being cut in 1949 and 1950 was given back to Hero and Ursula (III.1.94-101).

When the curtain rose on Mariano Andreu's sunlit, garden setting in 1949 a mood of recreation and tranquility was established at once by the opening tableau. Beatrice sat on an angled bench to the left, reading a book. Hero stood behind her, reading over her shoulder. The Messenger and Leonato were moving towards the centre as they began to speak. The two statues, with cup and lyre, stood in their niches behind, imparting a suggestion of sexual festivity to the picture. The preoccupation of the women with the book prevented them at first from taking much notice of the men. Hero merely

shifted her position and sat down on the floor beside the bench, perhaps registering the Messenger's description of Claudio's exploits. On the arrival of Don Pedro and the others from the back of the stage, the scene suddenly came to life. The soldiers stood between the niches above the steps, on the threshold, as it were, of the garden. Anthony Quayle's Benedick was in the centre, flanked by Balthasar and Claudio to his right, and Don John, attired formally in black, was on his left, attended by Borachio and Conrade. Don Pedro stood forward from the others to the left of the centre and the negro boy, who acted as a servant to Benedick, was parallel with the Prince on the right. Additional decorum was given to their entry by the emergence of two pages from each of the grottoes, who waited at the sides, flanking the principals. The tone of courtesy and elegance which throws into relief the elaborate impoliteness of Beatrice and Benedick was hit off by the general exchange of greetings. Beatrice and Hero curtsied. The Messenger saluted and bows were made. Then a general move occurred towards the table, to the right, where wine was ready for the guests to partake of Leonato's hospitality. Beatrice and Benedick were left in the centre to confront each other, Beatrice's opening sally 'I wonder that you would still be talking, Signior Benedick; nobody marks you.' (1.1.96) being pointed by the carousing going on to the right. On Benedick's boast that he was loved of all ladies, accompanied by a laugh at his own wit, Hero and Claudio took silent notice of one another. The wrangling of the one couple then became contrasted with the speaking glances of the other pair. When Hero and everybody else departed leaving Claudio and Benedick alone together, Claudio kissed Hero's hand in farewell. Don John departed in a different direction from the main group, sinisterly beckoning Borachio and Conrade after him.

In his main piece of critical writing on the play (which is not always to be trusted in reconstructing his production), Gielgud stresses the importance of the youth of Claudio and Hero, describing them as 'two attractive

children, with all the impetuosity and inexperience that may excuse the highly improbable development of their love story on which the rather awkward plot depends' (Stage Directions, p.37). This at least suggests a definite line to be taken with the problematic lovers in performance. One might argue that the device of wooing by proxy is not well calculated to convey impetuous behaviour or that even Claudio's outburst in the church has a premeditated and socially ordained element that is marked by the sober gravity of Don Pedro's presence at the young man's elbow. However, Claudio's youthfulness, along with his place in a conventionalised narrative, is textually authorised. The Messenger, talking of his heroic exploits in battle, says that he has 'borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion' (1.1.11), and therefore thus offers a legitimate foundation for the director and actors to build upon. Gielgud's production reflected this strategy both in its casting of the part of Claudio, which was played by a succession of romantically attractive and young-looking actors (Philip Guard, Eric Lander, Robert Hardy, Richard Easton, Barrie Ingham), and through significant actions. It was conveyed when Benedick informed Don Pedro, on his return, of Claudio's affections. Claudio showed consternation and turned away in embarrassment. Then his anxiety and uncertainty was implied by his attempt to interrupt Don Pedro when the Prince resolved to take Hero's hearing prisoner 'with the force / And strong encounter' of his 'amorous tale' (1.2.286). This would have prepared the audience for his jealous susceptibility that provides Don John with his opportunity to sow dissension. Benedick groaned when Don Pedro declared his approval of his friend's affection, expressing his dissent by abandoning the centre to the two of them while he crossed over to the table to pour a drink. On announcing his intention to remain a bachelor, he toasted himself. With the departure of the three of them, the action moved on directly to the colloquy of Don John and his two henchmen

having come from the banquet. Conrade was lazily picking his teeth.

When Gielgud acted in his own production a year later the opening tableau was altered somewhat. Beatrice still sat on the bench to the left, but instead of a book she had a lute on her lap. Hero was drawn more completely into the action by being given a book of musical tablature to hold while Beatrice attempted to tune the lute. Leonato and the Messenger came up from the steps connecting the stage with the orchestra pit, used repeatedly to add a further plane to the entrances and exits. There was the sound of a trumpet and the two women looked up at once. The lute preserved the sense of recreation and the easy familiarity of the relationship that existed between Beatrice and Hero, as it also perhaps had a softening influence upon Beatrice's character.

The attitudes of the persons in the play towards music and dancing are used to reveal their basic dispositions so that these recreational activities serve the purpose of touchstones. Don John's admission that there is no 'measure' in his melancholy, employing a metaphor from dancing, reveals his basic, irredeemable badness, whereas Benedick's sceptical refusal to be taken in by Balthasar's song, like his criticism of Beatrice, points to a deeper susceptibility. The lyric of the song concerning the betrayal of men by women flatters his masculine complacency, lulling him into a false sense of security that makes him all the more vulnerable when the news of Beatrice's love for him is delivered. He does not, of course, resolve to take advantage of Beatrice's affection like the male deceiver of the song. That Beatrice should be shown to be a student of music indicated that she too possessed, or at least was willing to acquire, a responsive and cultivated sensibility. Drawing up a list of the virtues of his ideal mate, one of Benedick's requirements is that she should be 'an excellent musician'

(II.3.30). The lute assumes a function in the dialogue when Leonato crosses to the centre to address the women about the honour Claudio has won for himself in battle. In the pause after Claudio's name has been mentioned, the promptbook has Beatrice 'ping' one of the strings of her lute. Whether this indicates that she has some foreknowledge of Claudio's latent infatuation or is merely unimpressed by heroic, masculine exploits is uncertain.

A fanfare announced Don Pedro's arrival and again the formal business of welcome was conducted with military salutes, bows and curtseys. The warmer greeting of a handshake was reserved for Leonato and Don Pedro. When the pages and the two captains, to swell the numbers of the army, had gone off, the remaining party moved to the table on the right to toast one another, leaving the centre for Beatrice and Benedick. Benedick's first words to Beatrice are a kind of inverted compliment, parodying the formal ostentation of a courteous greeting and Gielgud established this tone by pausing after the pseudonym 'my dear Lady Disdain' to take off his hat and bow. One imagines that Beatrice replied in kind, though the promptbook does not say that she did. In this way attention was drawn to the initial hat in his increasingly outrageous series. Beatrice, no doubt, viewed this action ironically since she had only moments ago observed to the Messenger that 'he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.' (1.1.61). Her observation was faithfully borne out by the production. Drawing himself upright, Benedick then looked over towards the company gathered around the table, to mark the broad inclusiveness of his statement that, with the exception of Beatrice, all ladies loved him.

The treatment of the ensuing dialogue demonstrated how closely the incivilities of Beatrice and Benedick mirrored the decorum of their society.

A particularly emphatic juxtaposition occurred when Leonato and Don Pedro came down from the table and sat on the right hand bench just as Beatrice had completed a rather blunt retort (1.1.115). She saw them hovering above the bench, curtsied, giving them leave to sit down, and neatly returned to the fray. When Don Pedro called for the attention of Benedick and Claudio so that he could make the announcement of the permission that had been granted to them to stay at Leonato's house, each bowed to him. The announcement was underscored by the comic business of Benedick covering his face with his hands and Beatrice crossing herself, both appalled at the prospect of having to endure each others company for so long. Leonato made a further abasement to Don Pedro on inviting him to enter the house and the company went off leaving Claudio and Benedick alone together. Gielgud crossed to the table to pour himself a drink as Anthony Quayle had done, but, instead of toasting himself with his glass, he used it to mark the finality of his judgement upon Hero. Telling Claudio he did not like her, he set it down upon the table once more. The intransigence of his professed dedication to bachelorhood was signified by his sitting down upon the right hand bench. Throughout the scene the actors had employed a wide vocabulary of gestures to sustain an atmosphere of conscientious manners and etiquette - to the point perhaps where the courtly artificiality of the poses became slightly suspect. This received a culminating statement when Claudio, accepting Don Pedro's intercession to win Hero, kissed the Prince's hand and so brought the episode to a close.

The arrangement of the first scene in 1955 duplicated the main particulars of the 1950 performance. Leonato and the Messenger came on from up centre rather than from the pit, perhaps because the orchestra steps that were a feature of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre could not always be

counted upon elsewhere. (The production was now touring.) Beatrice and Hero still retained their business with the lute and music book and the entry of Don Pedro and his followers from between the statued niches, breaking in grandly on the peace of the garden, roughly repeated what had happened before. Small refinements were introduced such as Leonato's kissing of Don Pedro's hand as opposed to the former hand shaking. The business marks more clearly the visitor's social rank. Claudio echoed the action at the end as before, kneeling to kiss the Prince's hand when he agreed to help him in his love suit. Beatrice's crossing of herself at the prospect of having to put up with Benedick for so long when Don Pedro's intention of staying is announced is now more delicately co-ordinated with the interplay of compliments and civilities. As she traced the sign of the crucifix on her breast, Peggy Ashcroft changed the action into a curtsy, catching the eye of Don Pedro who smiled at her. Leonato also kissed Don John's hand on welcoming him and this time one caught a stronger feeling of foreboding in the look that Beatrice and Hero share when the Bastard responds. When the main group were led off to the house by Leonato via the left assembly, Don John skulked off with Borachio and Conrade up to the right. Benedick and Don John looked at each other as he left in a manner that anticipated Benedick's later inspired guess in the church:

Two of them have the very bent of honour;
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lies in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies. (IV.1.186)

The exit of Benedick was accompanied by the business of Claudio miming the actions of writing a letter of commendation to Leonato. He handed the imaginary letter to Don Pedro, who supplied the postscript, and then pretended to tear it to pieces (in 1950 he had thrown it away over his shoulder) and

this prompted the mock gravity of Gielgud's parting lines: 'ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience, and so I leave you' (1.1.250).

The structural importance of the masque scene (II.1) lies in the ritualised and emblematic picture that it offers of the world of the play at large. The confusion of identities and the various attempts to manipulate illusions, some playful and unsuccessful, others malicious and earnestly believed in, leads to a duplication of the events of the main plot. Claudio's deception, resentment and the subsequent exposure of the error he has made, roughly correspond to the pattern of his behaviour outside the masque in the ensuing action and this is clarified by the presentation of the final scene in the symbolic language of the masque also. The chief difference is that his second, more fundamental mistake has serious repercussions in the real world and therefore requires penance before it can be resolved in the context of further playacting. In addition, Benedick and Beatrice use their masque disguises to restate the normal relationship of antagonism that exists between them by insulting each other. The disguises worn by the dancers here, and the way in which they are used to perpetrate confusion and playful wrangling, contrast with the concluding dance, performed in silence without the aid of masks. In the earlier scene the witty exchanges of the dancers and their teasing and independent attitudes are constantly threatening decorum for, whilst the women, unlike the Princess and her retinue in Love's Labours Lost, comply with the men's invitations to dance, each in her different way reserves the right to opt out of the partnership: Ursula, by insisting dogmatically that Antonio is not the man he is pretending to be; Margaret, by praying that Borachio (Balthasar) will leave her when the dance is over;

Hero through Ovidian equivocations; and Beatrice by agreeing to follow the lead of the other dancers only when her conscience will let her. This may look forward to her behaviour in the church, where she refuses to adopt the censorious attitude of the others towards Hero.

The significance that was attached to this scene in Gielgud's production was established first of all by a spectacular transformation. Four servants converted the garden scenery to that of the hall, adding four candelabra on stands and a banquet table that was set up in the centre, in the inset playing area. The benches remained on stage from the previous scene. Two of the candelabra were placed downstage, in front of the benches to left and right and two were placed behind, near to the statues, to define a dance floor. Each servant stood next to a candlestick. As they were being set in their places, Hero and Leonato, Beatrice and Antonio and Margaret and Ursula carrying a bowl of hors d'oeuvres, emerged in pairs from the archway in the side of the left niche. They came forward and arranged themselves on and around the benches, Beatrice taking a sweet from Ursula's bowl to counteract the tart taste that she complained she derived from looking at Don John. The hors d'oeuvres were passed round and Beatrice sat beside her cousin on the left bench to expound the parallel between courtship, marriage and repentance and three types of dance.

The revellers were given a grand entry from the pit in a joyous, torchlit procession that would be repeated in a different key later on in the march to Hero's tomb. Whereas the four torches were here borne by masquers, sober-habited monks were amongst the persons who accompanied Claudio's penitential visit and helped to snuff the lights as the day-broke (1949). Feathered poles were used instead of torches for the masque in 1955. In all, there

were fifteen revellers who filed on led by the negro page, who was beating a drum. The four torch bearers came next and then Benedick, wearing a grotesque domino with a huge, ugly proboscis, followed by Claudio, Balthasar, Borachio, Don John, Conrade, two more anonymous retainers and Don Pedro and the messenger bringing up the rear. The masked faces of the men were often mocking and distorted. The women's dominoes, on the other hand, held on sticks and adorned with feathers, were quaintly stylized. This heightened the weird incongruity of the disguised encounters and underlined thematic continuity when, at the end, the women put on masks that made them look like crones. Alan S. Downer noted this point as well as the symbolic comprehensiveness of the masque scene as it was enhanced by the staging:

The director has used the physical resources of his production to develop the central idea of the action. The dancers of the second act, bearing their false faces on wands, perform a ballet of misprision and resolution which draws the dark deceit of Don John, the malapropisms of Dogberry, the fortunate gulling in the arbour, and even 'Kill Claudio' into a pattern, a thematic and artistic unit. The reprise of the ballet in V.iv with the ladies masks deliberately distorted writes Q.E.D. to a basic truth of human experience. 'Howsoever 'tis strange, or that the negligence may well be laugh'd at, Yet it is true, sir'³

The entrance of the revellers in 1955 was altered somewhat, though one assumes the significance of the masque was preserved in spite of modifications. This time the revellers came on in two groups from up left and up right, coming down to mingle with the others on the main platform. The negro boy remained up centre, next to the table, playing his drum.

As soon as they had arrived, the servants relieved the torch bearers of their torches and additional ladies came on from both sides to ensure an equal number of dance partners for the men. The dance was conceived fairly elaborately, consisting of three distinct movements with orchestral accompaniment. The servants came into the centre while the negro boy

positioned himself upstage and the dancers paired off with each other. They formed a circle around the servants and began to move anti-clockwise as Don Pedro led Hero down left to the front of the stage to make his invitation. In the first production Claudio partnered Beatrice initially and Anthony Quayle's Benedick remained aloof, partnered with another lady, only coming gradually to her as the festivities progressed. Gielgud's Benedick was less shy and immediately joined Beatrice as part of the circle (1950). When Don Pedro and Hero had completed their brief exchange they fell back into the dance, passing through an arch made by one of the other couples. The second movement of the dance sequence, which the promptbook refers to as a 'Pavanne' (1949), took up the idea of courtly manners that the first scene had established in the formal bowing and curtsying of the partners. Against this background of decorous actions Borachio behaved rather wildly, chasing Margaret to the left and cornering her beneath the proscenium (1955). Margaret threw a posy to him which he caught in his hand and then picked her up and swung her round. (Later, when he boasted that he enjoyed Margaret's favour he produced this posy out of his belt and sniffed its fragrance.) Then they too fell back in with the dancers, who had meanwhile split into two groups in double lines up the stage. Ursula and Antonio's dialogue constituted a variation on the pursuer and the pursued theme and was executed in a broadly comic style. Having followed Antonio, who ran to the right of the forestage, Ursula took the old man by the wrist to indicate his dry hand. She then chased him to the centre, patting his stomach as she asked 'do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit?' (II.1.106). For the first part of Beatrice and Benedick's encounter the men were in a circle on the main stage and the women rotated around them. The couple continued to dance as they spoke to each other downstage, in the centre. Gielgud kept altering the angle of his mask as Beatrice moved around him suspiciously, keeping it always between their two faces (Plate 11). But



11. The Masque, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1950

he dropped the mask suddenly when her face was turned, after she had referred to him as the Prince's jester (II.1.20), and then brought it up quickly as she turned back. Peggy Ashcroft accompanied the line with a laugh (1955) and an ironic curtsy (1950). This business was still being used in 1959 with Margaret Leighton playing Beatrice. Henry Hewes described it in The Saturday Review (3.10.1959), where he maintained that it made Beatrice's line twice as telling:

In the masked-ball scene, when she pretends she doesn't know she is dancing with Benedick and insults him in the third person, he allows one of her thrusts to jolt him into momentarily dropping his mask.

Anthony Quayle pretended to be deaf, holding the mask up sideways to listen through it like an ear trumpet.

The music stopped and there was some applause from the dancers as Beatrice jibed at the feebleness of Benedick's jests (II.1.127). As they went up stage to form two lines for the final dance movement, a jig, she used her own mask to tap her partner on the back, trying to get him to turn round so that she could discover his identity. The signal for the jig to start was given by the negro boy beating his drum. In 1950 the two lines of dancers with the men on the right and the women on the left, came forward and danced off each of the assemblies. They reappeared in the side entrances corresponding to the position of the garden grottoes and paired off again, dancing downstage. Two of the servants, still holding the torches, leapt up onto the benches to make room for them. The other two came forward to the left of the stage, allowing the dancers to make their exits unimpeded, some down the steps into the pit and others over the forestage to the right. Applause was heard offstage to demonstrate that the dance had finished. Thus Gielgud avoided a laboured group exit after the music had ended.

Shakespeare has left no indication of what Don John should do after he has come on as part of the masque with the other revellers. His presence on the stage creates a problem since it is uncertain whether he should mingle unobtrusively with the dancers at the risk of some discrepancy to his misanthropic nature or remove himself somewhere until it is time for him to go to work on Claudio. A director might be tempted to evade the difficulty by postponing Don John's entry until after the dance, bringing him on only when the text specifically gives him something to do. Yet it is important that his evil influence should be represented as working through the agency of the masque and this can only be fully stated if he is seen alongside his brother, at the centre of the spectacle. Gielgud, at first, had him cross the stage and depart no sooner than he had arrived as a member of Don Pedro's entourage. He then came on again, unexpectedly, with Borachio from up left after the dancers had passed off the stage and before their immediate re-entry. When they came back again, he and Borachio ducked into the arches and re-emerged after everybody had left Claudio in the centre. The effect of seeing him again furtively while the dancing was still in progress blended him into the picture. His jet black costume would have made him immediately recognizable amongst the other gaily dressed revellers whilst it paid little consideration to the credibility of Claudio mistaking him for someone else. In 1950 a modification was introduced. After Don John and Conrade had entered from the pit as revellers and immediately crossed up centre to depart through the arch on the left, only Borachio had re-emerged again from that direction when the dance was over. Don John had popped out from behind the left statue, creating the impression that he had been hiding there. He joined Borachio and together they descended on Claudio, who stood on the middle of the forestage, looking off to the right after the departing dancers. The 1955 production departed most radically from its predecessors in that the revellers did not enter from the pit at all. They were split into two

groups: Benedick, Borachio and Conrade in one and Don Pedro, Claudio, the Messenger Balthasar and Don John in the other and they each came from one of the arches down onto the main platform. Instead of departing as he had done before, Don John went to the right and took up a position in the opening of the wall where he remained visible throughout the dances. Conrade later drew attention to his presence by crossing over to join him. The development suggests that Gielgud had gradually come to realize through experiment the positive advantage of the black suited villain's continued presence on the stage after originally regarding it as a distraction. This effect was perhaps the most authentically Shakespearean.

In standard editions of Much Ado About Nothing the Beatrice and Benedick eavesdropping scenes are separated by an act division. Beatrice's scene begins Act III. Gielgud, however, chose to ignore this division, placing his first interval after III.1, presenting the two scenes as a complementary pair. The basic similarity of the situations, with the two eavesdroppers both becoming the victims of deliberately contrived revelations that induce in them identical changes of heart, hardly requires exposition. What is more significant in terms of performance is the way these analogous situations are distinguished stylistically in order to produce a diversified impression. Beatrice's scene cannot hope to equal Benedick's in its comic scope. As well as being placed at a disadvantage by its allocation of a secondary position, it is altogether smaller in conception, being some one hundred and twenty-five lines shorter than its predecessor, employing four characters to the other's six, in addition to lacking the incidental features of a song and a preparatory soliloquy at the beginning. Should it therefore be pitched on the same level as the Benedick scene it runs a serious risk of anticlimax. In a recent production that fell headlong into this trap Beatrice hid behind some plants in a greenhouse

and Ursula and Hero turned on the sprinkler system. She became saturated as she listened to them (Joseph Papp, Broadway, 1972). Beatrice's scene, on the other hand, is written in verse and is more refined and poignant in tone - one is tempted to say more feminine. The unity of subject and disparity of expression are summarized in the treatment of the same angling image used in both scenes to refer to the trap that is being set for the eavesdroppers. Claudio's statement is plain and business like: 'Bait the hook well, this fish will bite.' (II.3.100). Ursula's comment mirrors his and provides a guide for the director in its ornate and picturesque strain:

The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with his golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait. (III.1.26)

Gielgud made use of the same set for the two scenes. The hall was converted back into the garden, which had a trellis covered with leaves attached to the right edge of the proscenium that could be entered through a small wicket gate. Did Shakespeare envisage Beatrice and Benedick making use of the same hiding place? Benedick's cursory reference to an 'arbour' (II.1.32) and Hero's reference to a 'pleached bower' (III.1.7) later designated as a 'woodbine coverture' (III.1.30) suggest a similar arboreal location. Gielgud's production underscored the formal symmetry of the scenes by making it the same place in 1949 and 1955. In 1950 he tried a change of emphasis, hiding Beatrice behind the trellis work on the left. In each case, the reactions of the eavesdroppers to what they hear was accentuated over and above the actions of the plotters by bringing Beatrice and Benedick closest to the audience. So close were they in 1952 that, when the production was rearranged for the Phoenix Theatre, the director said: 'we had to take care that people in the first few rows of the stalls would not be upset by the proximity of the players, and the extended use of a stage normally used for the ordinary picture-frame production' (Stage, 24.1.1952). He attaches

importance to this point, contrasting it with the eavesdropping scene in Twelfth Night where Malvolio, with Maria's forged letter, should be further away and Sir Toby and the others closest to the spectators (Stage Directions p.41).⁴ The stage arrangement seems to have lent special prominence to Benedick's facial play, giving an edge to the comedy. The New York Herald Tribune (18.8.1959) described some sharp and clear-cut details:

His eyes wrinkle up in modest pleasure. His lips purse patronizingly, half of a mind to dismiss the thought that anyone could be so crazy about him, half already wreathed in a vast contented smile.

He tosses his head back. After all, why not? The barbed little ironies and the sly pomposities are Shakespeare's, but Gielgud brings them out with a self congratulatory smirk. He is exceedingly funny and likeable.

Incidental business also promoted the broadness of the humour, helping to highlight the more reserved quality of the companion scene.

Benedick is presented initially with a boy he orders to fetch a book from his chamber. This short prelude signifies that he is idle and bent on solitary relaxations, far from a romantic mood, and it operates with the following soliloquy to fix the height from which he will fall. But it leaves a loose end in as much as the boy never returns from his errand and Benedick, after his conversion, becomes so infatuated with Beatrice that his mind fixes on a new object more appropriate to his new situation. 'I will go get her picture' (III.3.242), he says as the scene

closes, having completely forgotten about the book and the boy. Gielgud caught up this loose end and underlined the change from a slightly bored and indifferent Benedick, casually requesting a book, to the infatuated lover, wanting his mistress's picture, by bringing the boy back on again at the end of the scene.⁵ Boy and book are knocked to the ground as Benedick hurtles past and this had the accompanying convenience of the boy being available to clear away the discarded props.

On the negro boy's entry Benedick relieved him of the cup and ball with which he was playing when he despatched him on his errand. Then he began to play with it himself, tossing the ball up into the air and catching it in the cup. In 1950 Gielgud sat down in the centre on the steps as he fell to musing: 'I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laugh'd at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love;' (III.3.8). Coming to the break, occasioned by the transfer of his thoughts from Claudio to himself, 'May I be so converted and see with these eyes?' (II.3.25), he got up and went over to the bench on the right. Then he sat down again and took his hat off, dropping it over one of the ornamental knobs that protruded from the bench, prior to visualising his ideal mate. The catalogue of female virtues drawn up by Benedick is a fine-spun parody of romantic idealism that keeps undermining the spiritual worth of the woman through evoking pecuniary considerations. This was illustrated by the emphatic pause that Gielgud introduced before Benedick's first significant requirement, 'Rich she shall be, that's certain', and was continued through the pun on 'angel', to the stress on the word 'God' in the line 'and her hair shall be of what colour it please God'. Florence Warner Brown thought this doubly appropriate because it recalled not only the practice of wearing wigs, but also 'the fashion at the moment of girls bleaching streaks in their

hair at the temples, or dyeing them different colours'.⁶ The sound of Balthasar's lute (1950) or guitar (1955) being tuned alerted Benedick to the approach of the musician and his accomplices and sent him hurrying to the downstage trellis for shelter, through the wicket gate.

Don Pedro, Leonato and Claudio came down with Balthasar, through the left grotto to the benches, Claudio leading the way. As the other three drew level with the seats, Claudio commented on the quietness of the evening and then they all noticed the hat that Benedick had left on the bench. Don Pedro and Claudio sat down, to the right, and Leonato, to the left, to lay their trap while Balthasar stood (1949). Once the Prince broached the subject of Beatrice's love for Benedick, which Gielgud greeted with a startled exclamation, the focus was systematically maintained on the eavesdropper. The silences of Benedick were filled in by mime and interpolated noises while the plotters' remarks and actions became more and more audaciously directed towards the front, right corner of the stage. Gielgud crouched low to listen and then jerked upright with a moan as Don Pedro inquired about the effects of passion Beatrice had shown.. A small crisis occurred when Leonato's invention failed him and he hesitated after, 'She will sit you', before transferring the onus to someone else with, 'you heard my daughter tell you how.' (II.3.101). At this, Benedick sighed with frustration and all three plotters turned to look his way. His aside, 'I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it' (II.3.109), projected straight out towards the audience, gave Claudio the opportunity to rise and cross to the wicket to look through at Benedick. Then, as the eavesdropper's head turned back again, Claudio returned to the middle to report the effect their ruse was having. He could scarcely contain himself in imitating the impassioned cries of Beatrice and had to sit down on the bench, bursting with laughter. Leonato

took over the story, at the same time trying to get Claudio to be serious. The jest of Beatrice tearing the letter when she found her name with her lover's in the folded sheet set Benedick muffling his laughter also. Don Pedro signalled back to his two companions that he had responded to it. Claudio, still in fits of laughter, went on to re-enact Beatrice's hysterical outburst, falling onto his own knees as he related how Beatrice had fallen onto hers. At the cry of 'God give me patience' (II.3.136), supposedly uttered by Beatrice, Gielgud covered his face with his hands in concern, rose suddenly and sunk down again. Don Pedro and Leonato took their chance to seize Claudio and pull him onto the bench to try and stop him giving their plot away through exaggeration.

Throughout the scene Claudio behaved with the least control and this helped to preserve the idea of his immaturity and deepened the sense of his impetuous temperament, together with the stabilizing influence provided by Don Pedro. In the 1949 promptbook, 'Don Pedro spans Claudio's behind' to get him to calm down. Benedick's behaviour was nevertheless not entirely credulous and just as the strained efforts of the plotters to stretch their imaginations and suppress their hilarity seem ever about to jeopardize their scheme, so Gielgud reacted sceptically to Leonato's fear that Beatrice would do a desperate outrage to herself, by gasping and bobbing upwards. This made Leonato's insistence on the truth of his statement seem to come as a direct rejoinder (II.3.1940). Henry Hewes thought that a fine equilibrium was maintained between the absurdity of the propositions and their persuasive power both in this particular incident and later on:

At the statement that the lady is so desperate she may do an outrage to herself, Gielgud inserts a loud exclamation of disbelief so that the final words of the speech ('It is very true') appear to be in direct response to the supposedly concealed Benedick. The balance between his logical caution and his illogical passion teeters hilariously as he says, "Against my will I am sent to invite you into dinner." There's

a double meaning in that'. (Saturday Review, 3.10.1959)

The barrier of the trellis that sustained, for Benedick, the illusion of his concealment, was made to seem even less substantial when Claudio rose, ludicrously improvising on the theme of Beatrice's death, to walk past it and tread on the hand that Gielgud was using to support his weight. Benedick appeared to be about to break his cover when Don Pedro's accusation that he had a contemptible spirit stung him upright. Claudio's reply appeased him and he sank down once more (II.3.167). The Prince's follow-up to this, concerning his reluctance to undertake quarrels, was the last straw and as the speaker turned his back to the trellis, the 1955 promptbook describes Benedick as really stepping from his hiding place to challenge the remark. But, instantaneously, he thought better of it and stepped back within the screening leaves. The sequence was concluded with Don Pedro's capping remark, simultaneously conciliatory and disparaging:

I love Benedick well; and I could wish he
would modestly examine himself, to see how
much he is unworthy so good a lady. (II.3.88)

It was attended by a long pause in which the three men hummed in unison.

On their vacation of the stage, Benedick came from the arbour and crossed to the centre to deliver his second soliloquy. Phrase marks show that Gielgud began tentatively (1950). The lines were broken up with pauses to indicate bewilderment and 'Love me!' (II.3.205) was spoken with a questioning intonation rather than as an interrogation. The resolution to requite Beatrice's love was attended by a distracted movement forward to the left, and then a return to the centre. Benedick was pacing out his thoughts. He laughed to himself in qualifying his assertion that Beatrice

was wise 'but for loving me.' (II.3.16). 'By my troth, it is no addition to her wit;' and then balked at the imputation of his inferiority 'nor no great argument of her folly,' (II.3.218). The recording which he made for the Marlowe Society with Peggy Ashcroft gives this line a steadily rising and challenging quality as if Benedick dared any one to contradict him (Much Ado About Nothing, ZPR 183-5). Also on the recording is the climatic treatment of 'for I will be horribly in love with her.' (V.3.219) with forcible stressing of the unfortunate adverb. Anthony Quayle shook his damaged right hand, which Claudio had trodden on, when he said this (1949). Benedick was already going off down left as he made his apology, 'I did not think I should live till I were married' (II.3.221), when Beatrice entered from above and stopped where she was, framed in between the two niches (1950). Peggy Ashcroft looked back over her shoulder and sighed (with boredom?) - an action that would automatically be misconstrued by her amorous observer. She came forward to below the benches and there was a swift movement behind and some faint laughter as Claudio, Don Pedro and Leonato appeared for an instant above.

In contrast to their previous swift exchanges, the tempo of Benedick and Beatrice's conversation was now slowed right down. Gielgud hesitated before thanking Beatrice for the pains she had taken to fetch him to dinner and grinned sheepishly. Beatrice took two steps backwards. Her reply mirrored his in its hesitancy and when Benedick, on hearing it, made a small, sudden movement she ducked behind the bench, to the right. Gielgud delivered Benedick's rejoinder with a mid line break. 'You take pleasure then / in the message?' (II.3.230). Beatrice waited for him to turn to the house where dinner was waiting, but instead of doing this Benedick sat down on the bench, to the right, and patted it with his hand, inviting her to join him. The offer was declined and Beatrice went out upstage through the niches, with Benedick's

head turned over his shoulder to look at her. In 1955 the business of Benedick playing with the cup and ball and the boy returning with the book was dropped and replaced by Benedick catching sight of Borachio and Margaret running from up left to up centre as he left the scene, on the far right. Margaret accepted her favour back from Borachio and ran downstage to take up her place for the trick that is to be played on Beatrice.

The entry of Hero, Margaret and Ursula at once established the atmosphere of decorum and playful formality that sets the gulling of Beatrice apart from that of Benedick. The stylized movements of the actresses to music gave a balletic feel to the opening.⁷ In 1949, Hero entered with Ursula from far left. Margaret entered from the left and the women met up centre. They joined hands and came down between the niches, pausing above the benches for a moment and split up again. Hero continued on down the middle while Margaret and Ursula, each went outside the benches and then came back in. The three women met up once more, this time down centre, and, on the last chord of the music, the two maidservants curtsied to each other. At this juncture Hero started to speak, despatching Margaret to fetch Beatrice. Peggy Ashcroft appeared up stage, to the left, and crept down to the grotto on that side while Hero and Ursula sat on the benches (1955). Then she slipped behind the nearest statue. Aware of this, Hero and Ursula went over to the alcove in which the statue was housed and stood on opposite sides of it to begin planting their suggestions. Ursula's crucial revelation of Benedick's love found Beatrice popping out from behind the statue and over to the grotto to the right. Hero and Ursula moved obligingly in that direction. They continued moving down and to the left, stopping for one line to give Beatrice a chance to catch up by coming down to the right trellis and crouching in a similar attitude to Benedick. Once she was in this position they returned

to the right bench so that Hero's critical picture of her cousin, in whose eyes disdain and scorn rode sparkling, was spoken from the seat (III.1.51). Beatrice stood up anxiously when Hero dedicated Benedick to a wasting death 'like cover'd fire,' (III.1.77) and she gasped angrily when the tactic of slandering her reputation to discourage her lover was proposed. As Ursula and Margaret ran off through the left grotto, she came to the centre for her soliloquy matching Benedick's. Peggy Ashcroft departed along the left assembly (1955) whereas, in 1949, Diana Wynyard had gone out between the niches, throwing her arms into the air in a gesture of jubilation as she reached the top of the steps. On the whole, the scene had been played with the minimum of comic business and the maximum of self control on the part of the plotters. Ursula had giggled and Hero had to silence her with a 'shush' (1950), but generally speaking the women had executed their intrigue with more self-possession and efficiency than the men. The other feature that came over strongly was the mobility of Beatrice as she spied on her friends. Whereas Benedick's movements had been confined to the trellis, she was allowed to range freely over the stage, drawing attention to her lapwing grace. Critical comments that were made on this reflected the importance of Hero's lines in stage tradition:

For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference. (III.1.24)

Thus J. C. Trewin remarked on Peggy Ashcroft's effortless gaiety and the way she caught the movement of the lapwing (Birmingham Post, 22.7.1955) and Derek Granger was impressed by her 'fluttery' lapwing actions (Financial Times, 22.7.1955). Ellen Terry's performance had made this description especially evocative.

The curtain opened after the interval to reveal Benedick, aloft, on a balcony, between two small houses with windows in them that were supported by pillars. The ridiculing of Benedick's clothes and grooming that Don Pedro and Claudio indulge in was set off by changes that Gielgud had introduced into his appearance (Plates 12 and 13). Deriving warrant from Claudio's comment that 'a brushes his hat o' mornings;' and that 'the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuff'd tennis-balls' (III.2.37-40), Gielgud showed Benedick, on the balcony, actually shaving himself. His negro page was in attendance with a bowl of shaving cream and a mirror. When his companions came onto the main stage below, Benedick cut himself with the razor and made a noise alerting them to his presence (1950). He kept his face hidden in a towel, excusing his melancholy as being due to the toothache, while the boy took a colourful, new coat from a hook. Don Pedro's comparison of him to a Spaniard without a doublet was occasioned by Gielgud not yet having put on the jacket (III.2.33). As this line was spoken, the Prince leapt up and slapped Benedick's foot and he retaliated, using the napkin as a whip at the same time inadvertently uncovering his shaved chin. (Previously Gielgud had worn a black beard and a moustache.) Going into one of the houses and pulling the curtains across the window he overheard Claudio's remark about him being seen with the barber's man and hurled the now superfluous towel down at the speaker. This then provided his companions with the evidence, on sniffing the towel, that he rubbed himself with civet. (Anthony Quayle had got rid of the towel immediately when he attacked Don Pedro with it - leaving Gielgud to introduce the small refinement of holding onto it until Claudio had spoken.) While the ridicule continued, Benedick descended from the balcony, down some steps on the left, and appeared beneath, in the centre, underneath the balcony attired in a new doublet, gloves, a walking stick and an outrageous hat. Understandably enough, the external elements of the



12. Benedick, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1950

caricature attracted a great deal of attention, but they were complemented by the comic technique of the actor. Gielgud seems to have adopted a solemn air that heightened the absurdity of his clothes. Benedick says to Leonato as he departs:

Old signior, walk aside with me; I have studied
eight or nine wise words to speak to you that
these hobby horses must not hear. (III.2.64)

According to Henry Hewes they were spoken from beneath 'a foppish sunflower hat' in a 'humourously snobbish delivery no other actor could do as well' (Saturday Review, 3.10.1959). Probably this was effected by placing exaggerated emphasis on the aspirates of 'hobby horses' and 'hear' as Gielgud does on the Marlowe Society recording.

When the balcony on which Benedick had sat split into two halves and each half was pushed into the wings the set opened on a street with houses on either side and an angled building in the centre that had a covered walkway around it. The sky was dark. Dogberry came down the left alleyway defined by the side of the central building and the facade of one of the houses. He was wearing a bulging doublet with an eagle insignia on the front and a huge conical hat that was widest at the top. Beneath the hat a pair of narrow, myopic eyes and an enormous complacent smile were set in a fat, red face. In his hand he carried a staff. In four of the five revivals the part was played by George Rose, who assumed a broad, bucolic accent. (George Devine took over the role in 1955.) His appearance was based on a figure from a Dore engraving, 'Les Contes Drolatiques', but the actor's grotesque outlandishness was well adapted to the style of the production. To the reviewer of The Birmingham Gazette (N.H., 20.4.1949) he appeared,

looking like a cardinal or the Duchess in Alice, he surveys the world through half-closed eyes with magisterial oblivion, and carries his pounds of flesh with a mighty dignity. Every word is a gem, unpolished it is true, but sonorous and exquisitely funny.

But Philip Hope-Wallace objected to 'a silly, overdone costume' that was 'a great handicap for a clown'. The actor sounded better than he looked (Manchester Guardian, 14.1.1952). The ponderous monumental playing of Dogberry was set off by a tiny, wispy-bearded Verges, brisk, fussy and deaf.

The elaborate conception of the church scene automatically lent a certain grandeur and ceremonial elevation to this most decisive phase of the action where the two plots of Benedick's and Beatrice's love and that of Claudio and Hero are brought together in a mutual crisis. After the balconies had been pushed away from the previous scene, the bride and groom were shown arriving in processions outside the pillared entranceway of the building. They marched off the sides of the stage and the facade (operated by the ubiquitous servants) split down the middle and opened outwards as one would open a book. As soon as the screens comprising the facade became fixed in their new positions with the reverse sides now showing, a cut off portion of the church interior presented itself with altar and crucifix to the left and a stoup to the right. The wedding parties came in from up left anointing themselves and bowing to the altar where they were joined by other guests. On the change from exterior to interior, trumpet fanfares were replaced by organ music. Gielgud arranged his twenty-two (1950) members of the congregation in a rough semi-circle behind his principals and the tightening of this circle served to establish the intensity of mood as the sensational disclosures and lamentations occurred. Whilst the emphasis on ceremony prepared for the seriousness of the disclosure that was about about to take place, it should be seen in the light of the rest of the

production. This transformation stood out for its expansiveness and spectacular pomp, but it was still rather tongue-in-cheek and set out to assimilate the serious content of the scene with the formalized, fabulous ethos of the rest of the play. T. C. Kemp found the settings 'suggestively cool and easy on the eye. If the turning inside out of the church in full view rather suggests the Christmas pantomime transformation scene, the colour and opulence of this production are acceptable at any time of year' (Birmingham Post, 7.6.1950). The Times (12.1.1952) said explicitly that the scenic contrivances were primarily there to sustain the mood. The church scene was not exempt from the prevailing joviality:

Mr. Gielgud's stagecraft and the scenery of Mariano Andreu are alike brilliantly ingenious, but the ingenuities strictly serve a single purpose. They help to induce and sustain the mood in which we turn with ease from the merry war between Beatrice and Benedick to the romantic pathos of a Hero wronged ... and back again to romantic and mirthful reconciliations ... Scene merges into scene with the neatness of a cleverly contrived, brightly painted mechanical toy, but the general effect is not in the least mechanical. It is buoyant - either buoyantly light-hearted or buoyantly romantic.

The patently unreal and decorative church gave definition to the trials of the lovers. Shakespeare has divided this scene into two parts, each concerned with the stress that is placed upon the relationship between one of his couples, Claudio and Hero and Beatrice and Benedick. The first part of the scene which deals with Claudio and Hero is sensational, public and rhetorical in tone. The bride's family and the groom's friends witness the accusations that are made against Hero and their attention is appealed to directly at several strategic points. It is significant that before Claudio formally addresses his fiancée, he has already addressed himself to Leonato and then to the other members of the congregation. In a ceremonial action that parodies the

marriage service he hands Hero back to her father saying, 'There, Leonato, take her back again.' (IV.1.30). Then he turns to the congregation and appeals to them 'Would you not swear, / All you that see her, that she were a maid / By these exterior shows?' (IV.1.37). Finally turning to Hero, he adopts an impersonal, ritualised form of interrogation which is compared to 'catechising' (IV.1.77) - another profane inversion of a sacred rite. On being confronted by her alleged crimes, after a few brief and simple denials, Hero faints, leaving her father to sustain the passionate climax in language which, like Claudio's, is hysterically inflated and strained with awkward puns and conceits.

But mine, and mine I lov'd, and mine I prais'd,
And mine that I was proud on; mine so much
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her - why, she, O, she is fall'n
Into a pit of ink that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again
And salt too little which may season give
To her foul tainted flesh! (IV.1.136)

Deprived of an onstage audience, much of the declamatory style loses its orotundity as Claudio's behaviour lacks a *raison d'être*. He is there not to expose Hero personally to painful recriminations, but to shame her 'in the congregation' (III.2.111) or, in other words, to expose her for what she is to the general view. The penitence that Leonato prescribes for him is likewise publically demonstrative. Before devising an epitaph Claudio is to 'Possess the people in Messina here / How innocent she died;' (V.1.266). Reparation has to be seen to be done. Moreover, this treatment helps to displace and control the darker themes of betrayal and sexual jealousy by regarding them in a formal, social context that limits their power. Claudio and Hero are not profound enough characters to be able to support this kind of passionate confrontation. Gielgud exploited this bias through the use of the crowd as a chorus to guide the audience's responses, as will be demonstrated shortly.

In contrast the Beatrice and Benedick love disclosures which are introduced to serve as an intimate parenthesis after the main business of sensational intrigue is over are quietly informal, private and full of personal emotion. The notorious difficulty here is for the players to capture the deadly seriousness of the challenge that Beatrice poses as a test for Benedick's love. Commentators in the past have probably exaggerated the significance of the unwanted laugh that betrays the audience's unwillingness to accept Beatrice and Benedick as earnest characters, but the balance of comic artificiality and urgent realism, overall, is a crucial issue in the scene and one over which Gielgud adopted a definite policy.

The Friar's entry built up his importance in preparation for his decisive intervention. He came on alone, from the right assembly to the centre, bowing to the altar, and drew Hero, Leonato and Claudio to him. Claudio stood in a daze and had to be pushed forward by Don Pedro. Balthasar, Benedick, Don John and the Prince all stood to the right, watching the Friar's conduct of the service. Beatrice, Antonio and Ursula adopted similar attentive attitudes on the left. The other spectators also concentrated on the centre. Benedick was the first to notice that something was wrong, delivering his aside with an uneasy move above Claudio (1949). But it soon became apparent to everyone that the groom was behaving strangely when Claudio in a broad, violent gesture, threw Hero to her father (1955). At this moment there was an outcry from the women and the congregation closed in slightly. Someone tried to break forward and was prevented by three of Leonato's household servants. When Claudio rejects Hero like a rotten orange, he is still, ostensibly, talking to Leonato (IV.1.30). The text does not require him to turn to the other beholders until seven lines later to appeal for their support. However, in performance, this was interpreted

loosely to allow Claudio to be taking in the crowd already. His shifting to the right and then to the left, while the Friar tried unsuccessfully to silence him, made his words a proclamation directed at the two halves of the congregation. This continued until he appealed explicitly for the judgement of others, whereupon the Friar caught hold of his arms and wrestled with him. Taking even Hero's blushing looks as evidence of her guilt, Claudio hid his own face on the Friar's shoulder. Hero responded by running to the left into Beatrice's arms (1950). The byplay was of course in key with the conception of Claudio and Hero as youthful and inexperienced characters who would naturally tend to rely on those about them. Yet it was also useful in bringing the Friar into the centre of the action before he attempted to manage the reconciliation and allowing Beatrice to demonstrate whose side she was on. Both these actions strongly repudiated the accusations in the instant they were made and counterpoised the crowd's amazement and Leonato's garrulous credulity. They ensured that the isolation of Hero was never allowed to become complete. As Claudio referred to 'the heat of a luxurious bed.' (IV.1.40), someone on the left of the congregation came forward and fainted. Two servants caught the individual in their arms and tried to revive him (1949). A sudden crescendo greeted Claudio's explanation that he came not to be married. After his next line there was a deathly silence interrupted only by the Friar's seizing of Claudio's arm and drawing him towards Leonato to listen to his conciliations (1950). Claudio's reply demonstrated him to be well-rehearsed in the requirements of honour and as he dismissed Leonato's suggestion that he had already compromised himself by sleeping with Hero, the 1950 promptbook makes the telling point, 'Claudio back two paces. Look over shoulder at Don Pedro'. Was he perhaps looking for some sign of approval to reassure himself that he was playing his part well? In an interview with The Stage (24.1.1952), Gielgud had stressed the questions of honour which 'were of the utmost importance to the Elizabethan'. The proposition that

Claudio had slept with Hero before their wedding had been officially proclaimed might have meant that the marriage contract was still binding. But it was impossible for Claudio to preserve this appearance of cool scrupulousness and, as he denounced Hero's skill in 'seeming' to be what she was not, his own difficulty in dissembling was evinced by the covering of his face and his hysterical weeping.

Don John's voice broke in dryly on these impassioned utterances. Prior to speaking, he made a movement with his hat that attracted Benedick's suspicious gaze (1949). Benedick remained to the fore as he said, 'This looks not like a nuptial' (IV.1.67) - a comment that Gielgud delivered more as a reproach to his comrades than as an audience-directed aside. In saying it, he shook Claudio, trying to jar some sense into him (1950). The interrogation of Hero caused a general move inwards around her. To maintain the idea of the strain Claudio was under in performing an onerous duty, after the inquisition had seemed to confirm Hero's guilt, he was given an early exit. As soon as his speech of farewell was made, he ran off the stage to the far right closely followed by Balthasar to keep a watchful eye over him. Don John and Don Pedro were left behind. Hero seemed to have fainted on the instant so that there was no appearance of Claudio remaining impassively aloof after her collapse. The two brothers went out together slowly, in the same direction, with the prince gazing momentarily at Leonato. This was the signal for the congregation to begin a muted murmuring. Then they too filed out in double parties, talking amongst themselves as they went.

Having concentrated on the large-scale, social impact and general sensation created by the charges that are brought against Hero, Gielgud now began to focus on the pathos of her individual plight. The adjustment was made by having the Friar, Leonato, Benedick and Beatrice all come nearer to

Hero. Beatrice placed a cushion (a type of prayer mat possibly) under her unconscious cousin's head, removing, at the same time presumably, the bridal crown that she was wearing (1955). Ursula went out last with the crown (1949). Benedick, kneeling beside Beatrice, offered his handkerchief which he had saturated in water from the stoup for her to mop the invalid's brow - a cleansing and baptismal action that belied Leonato's outranged assertions of her irredeemable tainture: 'the wide sea / Hath drops too few to wash her clean again' (IV.1.141). At the height of his outrage, when he threatened to tear his daughter with his bare hands, he cast her to the ground and the violence of his repudiation was again countered by Beatrice helping Hero to rise (1950). In 1955 Benedick balked on offering Leonato the assurance of his secrecy as he professed, what his continued presence in the church laid open to question, his loyalty towards Don Pedro and Claudio. There was a reaction from Beatrice which Benedick noted before he continued, after a moment's deliberation, 'Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this / As secretly and justly as your soul / Should with your body' (IV.1.246). It was already dawning on him that the dictates of his honour and the alignment of his affections were at odds with the code upheld by his comrades-in-arms.

The process of Hero's resurrection is evolved through several phases before it is realized ultimately in masquerade. Described in phenomenological terms at first that ground it in medicine and psychology, it soon assumes the character of magical exorcism in the midnight scene of contrition before the tomb. Claudio's song is an incantation to Diana, 'the goddess of the night' (V.3.12), that expresses his remorse by evoking the supernatural gloom of the charnel house. As the Friar concluded his speech of exposition, the Christian overtones were rendered paramount in the gesture of the cross that he made on inviting Hero to 'die to live' (IV.1.53). He took her away with him over the right assembly. Leonato had already left in a different direction upstage, to the right.

The colloquy of Beatrice and Benedick occurred on the quiet and empty platform in a lull after the bustle of the crowd and the main intrigues were over. The promptbooks of the 1950 and 1955 revivals reveal that Gielgud and Peggy Ashcroft played it differently on these two occasions. In 1950 when the others had departed, Benedick lingered to the left watching Beatrice, level with him, on the other side of the stage. This meant that he could approach her, tentatively, delivering his terse, single lines expressing his concern for her. The proliferation of pause marks indicates that the dialogue began very slowly. The reduction of space between them, on each step, distilled their growing intimacy. For the confession of his love, Benedick finally crossed right in to Beatrice and hesitated at the end of the sentence before adding in a voice that on record is hushed and gentle: 'Is not that strange?' (IV.1.267) (Much Ado About Nothing, ZPR, 183-5). This effectively undercuts the previous statement and contained a suggestion of sad, embarrassed laughter that evoked pathos. It was accompanied by a step backwards as though Benedick, surprised by his own audacity, anticipated a rebuff. Beatrice waited before replying and then, in words that mirrored his, proceeded to utter her own affection, making an identical retreat as he stepped in to her again. Feminine equivocation gives way to the remembrance of Hero's plight. The shift in Beatrice's feelings was coloured by Peggy Ashcroft weeping as she said, 'I am sorry for my cousin' (IV.1.271). The move she had made added to the space that was between them and this gave Benedick the opportunity, on countering with his soldier's oath, to get closer to her.

The banter over Benedick swearing on his sword that leads on to the swearing in earnest, occurred in a stillness which was broken by Benedick silently taking Beatrice's hand and then inviting her to protest her love for him. When Beatrice complied, Gielgud took both of Beatrice's hands and kissed them while she looked off modestly, over the right assembly. This

was a sensitive refinement of the original kiss on the mouth Anthony Quayle had given Beatrice that kept alive the idea of the lovers' self-consciousness (1949). Beatrice must retain some of her self-possession to justify the test she proposes. Benedick's offer to do anything for Beatrice was jubilant and expansive, with Gielgud taking two steps backward. The moment was held and enthused with silent intensity. Then Beatrice said swiftly and quietly, 'Kill Claudio' (IV.1.287). Benedick jumped back as if he had been burnt, making a quick and incredulous refusal. The pace was suddenly tightened. The tableau became abruptly animated.

Beatrice started to move up right to the exit. Benedick extended his right arm and caught her by the hand, pulling her round to that side of him. The catch occurred on 'I am gone though I am here ' (IV.1.291). When she accused him of putting his friendship for Claudio above his love for her Gielgud dropped her hand and made a small retreat. Peggy Ashcroft demonstrated Beatrice's tantrum with broad movements across the width of the stage, from right to left. Her anger subsided on 'I cannot be a man with grieving' (IV.1.319) which was quieter and tearful. Crossing upstage of Beatrice to prevent her from leaving, Benedick came in to insist that she search her soul to determine Claudio's guilt. Assuming responsibility for the challenge, he kissed Beatrice's hand twice and started to go. As he reached the top of the stage he turned and said, 'As you hear of me, so think of me.' (IV.1.230). Anthony Quayle had given a military salute and Diana Wynyard had finished by waving after him - business which sounds, in description at least, rather precious. Gielgud's and Peggy Ashcroft's own way of finishing the scene, with Benedick striding out and Beatrice simply going to the centre and looking after him, sounds as if it was better suited to the purposeful mood of the ending, as it was more removed from John Kemble's notorious pantomime.⁸ Commenting

on the delivery of the 'Kill Claudio' passage, The Birmingham Mail (17.6.1950) pronounced it, 'convincing'. The appraisal of The Times (8.6.1950) supplied the information that the unwanted laugh did occur, at least on one night, though the reviewer is inclined to play down its significance;

As for 'Kill Claudio', it is what follows immediately that perhaps counts more than the mere delivery of the line, however, admirable. Not even this admirable production can avoid the laugh with which Benedick's recoil from Beatrice's command is notoriously received.

Perhaps it was the occasional occurrence of this laugh that led to Gielgud making certain tactical alterations when playing the part in 1955. The tempo seems to have remained largely the same, with the slow opening and then the quick, staccato after the demand that Claudio be killed. The pause before Benedick contemplates the strangeness of his infatuation (IV.1.267) and Peggy Ashcroft's hesitation prior to commanding the murder, recur in exactly the same places. But Benedick's approach to Beatrice is different. Instead of taking her hand to invite her to make an open disclosure of her love, he now behaves more warmly, putting his arms around her. On bidding her to command anything of him, the direction is 'holds her close' and from this one is tempted to infer a correspondingly different delivery. Could Gielgud still have spoken the line expansively without the double step backwards to enhance the bravura? The action suggests a softer, more sentimental treatment. Then, when Benedick retreated in refusing to grant Beatrice's request, his recoil was not anticipated by any previous movement away from Beatrice. Possibly this was designed to make it more striking. As soon as it is Beatrice's turn to retreat she is stopped, this time more forcibly, by a Benedick who caught her around the waist and not by the arm. Beatrice similarly stormed from one side of the stage to the other stamping her foot with anger as she railed against Princes and Counties.

At the end of the scene Benedick goes off up right around the side of the church columns, and Beatrice departed over the right assembly. The prompt-book leaves no record of any farewell business.

If these changes represented an attempt to remove all risk of laughter, then they did not entirely achieve their object. The Times (22.7.1955) drew an unfavourable comparison with the performance of 1952:

Something went wrong with the church scene. The production showed in 1952 that 'Kill Claudio' could be treated successfully. Sir John Gielgud circumvented this difficulty by subduing the humour of the love declaration so that Beatrice's sudden murderous entreaty can be received not as a climax threatening anti-climax but as a deepening of the lovers newfound seriousness. Clearly the actors were trying last night to repeat this effect, but its difficulty defeated them as on her 'Kill Claudio' the disconcerting laugh came and was renewed on his reply 'Not for all the world!'

In spite of this the scene was brought to 'a beautiful close'. The rapport that Gielgud established with Diana Wynyard at this crucial juncture was, according to Anthony Cookman, on one 'single, sustained note of glowing romantic tenderness' (Tatler and Bystander, 23.1.1952). Should this raise doubts about the players' ability to comprehend the savage and acrimonious side of the incident then the provocative analogy Philip Hope Wallace made with another play offers a corrective:

The end of the church scene seemed the most natural development, not a difficult somersault. Miss Wynyard and Mr. Gielgud bring to it the hushed amazement of those younger lovers in Verona or indeed something of the conspiratorial quality of Macbeth's courtyard and for once we are really caught up in the turn of events. (Manchester Guardian, 14.1.1952)

Nevertheless, I think Gielgud's playing did take on a higher, romantic vein when he was acting alongside Diana Wynyard's grander Beatrice. Something of this feeling is conveyed by a picture taken at the moment when Beatrice and Benedick achieve concord through Benedick's assumption of responsibility for the challenge (Plate 13). J. C. Trewin's report agrees with The Times reviewer about the occurrence of the laugh, but did not attribute this to any anomaly that emerged in the 1955 revival. His description also contains valuable, technical details:

Gielgud's treatment of this scene is masterly - its gradual lifting to the lovers' avowal, Beatrice's charged and held pause, the sudden impulsive 'Kill Claudio' and the rapid, low, incredulous, 'Not for the wide world' of Benedick. I am sorry to say that the laugh did come tonight. This was not because of mistiming rather because of the audience's readiness to be amused. (Birmingham Post, 22.7.1955).

Trewin's sole reservation was that Peggy Ashcroft may have been a little too emphatic. The Brighton Hove Herald (F.T.G., 11.6.1955) described her intonation for the two key words as a 'hiss'. They were accompanied by an unbending movement that made Beatrice seem to rear up 'white and spiteful as a snake'. Certainly this was emphatic, although it was arguably not inappropriate. In the light of reviewers' comments one wonders how far tradition has had a pejorative influence, building up the self-consciousness of audiences and creating a stumbling block for players where once it did not exist.⁹ Margaret Leighton had her own distinctive way of handling this episode which seems to have relied heavily on small, physical details. The New York Herald Tribune (18.8.1954) spoke of her 'stunning soul struggle' which she illustrated with 'her fingers, her eye lashes and the arch of her shoulders as she tried to confess her love and demand an immediate murder in the same short breath'. But still the laugh could not be avoided altogether. In fact, Henry Hewes's description rather suggests that Gielgud, having tried



13. Benedick and Beatrice, Phoenix, 1952

various strategies to eliminate it entirely, now sought to delay it.

Hewes referred to Margaret Leighton's talent for speaking through tears in the church scene:

'Kill Claudio' has the utmost seriousness. Gielgud allows this bitter line to have its effect for just an instant before he gets a laugh by drawing back and making a gesture with his hand. (Saturday Review, 3.10.1939)

The gesture is a new characteristic that escapes mention in the promptbooks. One imagines it was a warding off movement.

For Claudio's reception of the challenge the scene returned to the garden. A clue to the treatment of this difficult transitional phase of tragicomedy is offered by Rosemary Anne Sisson who observed that Claudio's jesting was 'more a desperate attempt to keep up the spirits than forgetfulness of Hero's tragedy' (Stratford-on-Avon Herald, 9.12.1955). The production tried to relate the tonal ambiguity to the awkwardness of the characters' situations. The incongruity of Leonato's quarrel with Don Pedro and his protégé was underlined by business with a walking stick. Leonato came on using it as a crutch to signify the sickly condition caused through concern for the disparagement of his daughter's reputation. The old men met with their guests and started to quarrel. Claudio did not, as sometimes happens in performance, touch his sword hilt by accident, but grasped it deliberately as he asked who it was who wronged his host. Seeing this, Leonato gave the stick to his brother in a symbolic gesture to demonstrate his laying aside of the privilege of age. But as soon as it became clear that Claudio was not going to undertake a duel with Hero's father, Antonio raised the stick and started to use it as a rapier, trying to provoke a counterattack. Benedick arrived carrying a gauntlet which he used to strike Claudio in a ritual challenge (1955). Acceptance was made without repeating the action.

Shakespeare devotes one scene to the comic courtship of Benedick and Beatrice before the alliances of the couples are consolidated in the final scene of the play. The atmosphere is light because, although Beatrice and Benedick are brought together through the prospect of the duel with Claudio, it is already clear to the audience that the discovery of Don John's plot has removed the necessity for bloodshed. The two lovers still retain their independence of mind beneath their concessions to orthodox romantic behaviour (Benedick's poem, Beatrice's professions of obedience) and much of the humour is derived from the incongruity of their individual attitudes and the conventional poses that they continue to parody, but the sexual animosity and competitiveness no longer remains. As Benedick says -

'A most manly wit, Margaret; it will not hurt a woman;' (V.2.14). Benedick came into the garden in 1950 from the right assembly composing the sonnet with pen and paper as he walked. Margaret came on running from the front, on the other side, and they met at one corner of the fountain that was set in the middle of the stage. When she was despatched to fetch Beatrice, Benedick went over to the edge of the fountain and sat down to read over his work. Beatrice's entry had him hiding the paper and rising to welcome her. After showing some reluctance, Beatrice, on hearing that the challenge had been made, allowed herself to be kissed. Benedick led her down stage to the fountain and they sat on the right corner of it for their wooing. He sealed his advice, 'Serve God, love me, and mend' (V.2.80), with a further kiss, getting up suddenly as he heard Ursula's approach. As she blurted out the news of the discovery of Don John's plot, Benedick grunted to show that he had expected so much all along. Ursula's invitation for the two to 'come presently' (V.2.86) was turned into a joke by her pausing to laugh before she said the last word and looking at each of them in turn. The indication was that she had caught them in a compromising situation and would expect them at the house as soon as they were ready, but the line would have had

a different meaning to an Elizabethan audience. 'Presently' would have been a synonym for 'instantly'. Ursula was inviting Beatrice and Benedick to come back with her at once. Her retreat gave Benedick the opportunity to give Beatrice one more kiss to mark his faithful protestations, 'I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes.' (III.2.88), and then he ran off with Beatrice through the right grotto.

The description suggests that it was the new sense of concord between Beatrice and Benedick imaged in their physical familiarities, that was used to underpin their verbal fencing. However, in 1955, the scene had been reworked and it was the teasing and flirtatious quality that was made to stand out most clearly. Despite the cutting of the pikes and bucklers passage, the coquettish bawdry of the dialogue with Margaret was expressed in the raising of her skirt to show off her ankle as she said, 'Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who, I think, hath legs.' (V.2.20). Benedick again sat on the edge of the fountain to muse over his poem and Beatrice curtsied to him on arriving, but he only kissed her hand in response. The promptbook's wording 'pulls her down and they sit on rostrum {fountain}' perhaps indicates some eagerness on Benedick's part. Certainly the 1950 promptbook's 'Kiss. They cross to DL corner of block and sit' sounds more decorous. With Beatrice sitting near to him on his left, Benedick attempted to kiss her as he bore witness to his own praiseworthiness. But he lost his nerve and 'now tell me how doth your cousin.' (V.2.76) was spoken as a cover up. Peggy Ashcroft set off the mock formality of the title Beatrice applies to her companion, 'Will you go hear this news, signior?', with an ironic curtsy (V.2.87). The scene was ended with Benedick seemingly about to take his long postponed kiss. The romantic extravagance of his promises to live in Beatrice's heart, die in her lap and be buried in her eyes caused her

to run into his arms, whereupon Benedick added 'and, moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle's' (V.2.90). The bathetic note was captured in the slap Beatrice gave his face and the kiss was postponed altogether until the conclusion.

Claudio's penitence at Hero's tomb was arranged as a front scene which enabled the hall of the house to be set up behind. The monument was represented by a classical column between partially drawn curtains. A ceremonial and martial atmosphere was created by saluting it with drawn swords whose blades were kissed before they were returned to their sheathes. The epitaph was read by Claudio, but it was Balthasar who sang the song. Don Pedro's evocation of the dawn brought the episode to a lyrical close.

Gielgud originally simplified the opening of the final scene by having the women enter only once in disguise after the action had begun (1949). Shakespeare calls for the entrance of Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula and Hero at the beginning of the scene with Antonio whereupon they withdraw to disguise themselves. Later, he saw the value of presenting Leonato's family as united once more prior to the marriage celebrations and in 1955 they do make an initial appearance, Beatrice, Margaret and Ursula coming down from the left centre arch and Hero coming on from the right, conducted by the Friar. A short reunion took place with Hero crossing to the three remaining women and kissing them (1955). They stole off, up centre, with Antonio, to don veils and grotesque dominoes that were the antithesis of the decorative ones they had worn at the masqued ball, recalling those that had belonged to the men. The women were now caricatures of male prejudice, embodying Claudio's sense of sacrifice as he agreed to marry someone who he imagined was a monstrously inappropriate mate. Music struck up as the disguised women came to the edge of the steps, in front of the inner playing

area and curtsied together to the downstage group. Hero 'hobbled' as if she were a crippled hag (1949). Claudio swore allegiance to his bride-to-be just in front of the right corner of the fountain, glancing once at Don Pedro as the crucial words were uttered: 'I am your husband if you like of me' (V.4.59). The impression of a playful charade was maintained in the ripple of laughter that the women gave. When Hero removed her mask, handing it to Antonio, Claudio behaved humbly, dropping to his knees and kissing Hero's hand prior to their mutual embrace of reconciliation (1955). They sat down together on the side of the fountain while Beatrice limped forward to make herself known to Benedick, though she was still in disguise. Gielgud removed her mask as he asked, 'Do not you love me?' (V.4.73) (1955). Then they joined Claudio and Hero, sitting on either side of the fountain, the other couple between them. On the production of the sonnets, one was given to Beatrice while Benedick snatched the other. Gielgud kept his eyes on the poem and extended his hand diffidently in Beatrice's direction, saying with affected stoicism, 'Come, I will have thee;' (V.4.92) (Henry Hewes, Saturday Review, 3.10.1959). But his true respect for Beatrice's feelings was marked by the gallant touch of his surrendering his own sonnet to her after he had retrieved it. Beatrice kept both papers (1955). Then each took the kiss that had been delayed throughout the last scene. Owing to the cutting of the text, Claudio said nothing as Benedick shook his hand to make up their quarrel.

The play closed with a final bravura transformation and a celebratory dance that drew together the principal motifs of sexual opposition and human giddiness and interdependence. As the trumpet blew to announce the arrival of the messenger, four servants entered and operated the convertible set so that the tidying up of the last loose end with the news of Don John's

capture, coincided with the reassertion of the comedy's formal and essentially fabulous structure. Don Pedro, Claudio and Benedick jumped onto the corners of the fountain for the dance, joining the Messenger, who already occupied a corner for the delivery of his message. Antonio, Leonato, the Friar and the four servants slipped off through the doors of the inner playing area as the dance began below them with the paired off couples circling in unison. Two chains were formed and a current of opposition was introduced when the chain of women circled clockwise and the chain of men revolved anticlockwise. But this tension was resolved with the couples pairing off again: Don Pedro with Ursula, Balthasar with Margaret, and Claudio and Benedick with their respective mates. In 1949 the ultimate tableau was narrowed from this image of social harmony to the primacy of Benedick and Beatrice. Don Pedro and Ursula and Claudio and Hero danced off via the two assemblies, waving to each other, leaving Anthony Quayle and Diana Wynyard in the centre. When they had looked round to make sure they were alone they kissed each other. In 1955 a more integrated ensemble effect was achieved simply by having Beatrice and Benedick exit in the manner of the other dancers. A triangular figure was described by the positions of the dancers prior to their disappearance with the Claudio and Hero and Benedick and Beatrice couples related to each other as they danced off the right and left assemblies, respectively. Don Pedro and Ursula separated and went off through the arches of the inner playing space, up centre.

This chapter began by making two points about the world of Much Ado About Nothing and the tradition of its stage representation: 1) that the play derived its distinctive unity from its festive representation of a close-knit society confined to a single locale; 2) that, although productions had often emphasized the spirit of festivity, this unity had proved elusive in the theatre. Gielgud's main achievement as a director

was that he did discover a style of production that preserved the play's unity in performance. The originality of his production did not lie in the visual spectacle it provided or in the elaborate décor, nor in the formalised music, dancing and ceremony that were strongly focused in the masque scene (II.I), the church scene (IV.I) and the concluding scene of revels (V.4). For Bridges-Adams's productions in the 1930's at Stratford had already demonstrated the importance of mannered courtesy and ritual decorum in establishing the social milieu of Messina and Iden Payne, in 1936, had experimented with a garden setting that was built up in full view of the audience. Pages sat on either side of the proscenium in Payne's production and visibly operated the curtains. Indeed, Irving at the Lyceum, had long ago raised the tradition of processions, spectacle and scenic ingenuity to a zenith. The unique virtue of Gielgud's direction was in the way it caught the mood of the comedy, restoring an even balance between the double plots through a sensitive recognition of features in the text, without cutting or distortion.

His approach was essentially based upon an understanding of the comic conventions governing the play's composition. He did not take as his starting point the richness and humanity of the Beatrice and Benedick characterizations, but rather tried to come to terms first with the broadly stylized qualities of the story. The formalised villainies of Don John, the manipulated intrigues of Claudio and Hero, and the rigid decorum governing the development of Beatrice and Benedick's unconventional wooing, with the paired eavesdropping scenes and the masque resolution, would have been misplaced in a realistic context, whereas Gielgud's production gave them definition and allowed the audience to appreciate the playful artificiality inherent in the design.

At the same time he exaggerated the elegance and the pictorial beauty of the play to a point where décor teetered on the brink of distraction and the never-never land of romantic comedy was in danger of losing touch with reality. This is partly a reflection of the nature of Shakespearean comedy, which is further removed from reality, and closer to dreams than the worlds of the histories and the tragedies. However, the comedies too attempt to strike a balance between realism and romance and in Much Ado About Nothing we have a character, Dogberry, who is at once grotesquely larger than life and also a solidly real, rustic figure, vain, officious and incompetent. Gielgud's productions, particularly the one in 1952, made Dogberry's absurdity more obtrusive than his humanity and, in his clownish costume and heavy padding, he was in danger of becoming 'a too self-conscious grotesque' (J.C. Trewin, Illustrated London News, 2.2.1952). Then again the homely domestic atmosphere of Leonato's household, where servants and family members chatter freely and scandal is rife, was understated against the sartorial splendour and gay formalism of style, though Gielgud counteracted this in the cheeky touches of comic business he introduced between Benedick and his page and Margaret and Ursula's irreverent teasing.

The obvious objection that the heightened visual appeal of the production conflicted with the poetry raises several points about the nature of the relationship between what is heard and what is seen. When the production opened in 1949, T.C.Kemp remarked:

Some of Shakespeare's plays will stand fantastification better than others. Much Ado About Nothing is one such, and tonight, at the Memorial Theatre, Mr. John Gielgud's production carried a glittering load of scenic devices which, if they added nothing to the verbal comedy, augmented the play's visible comeliness to a degree surprising even at Stratford, where we are gradually being educated to sartorial and scenic opulence unequalled elsewhere. (Birmingham Post, 20.4.1949)

Yet by 1959 The New York Herald Tribune was saying of the same basic production:

A placid, rather soft-spoken atmosphere hovers over ballroom and balcony, blurring identities and somewhat dousing the fire when our principal contenders are not on the spot ... the production itself is this side of stylish. Adopting the postcard manner that still reigns at The Old Vic, director Gielgud has arranged his tableaux before paper-thin and heavily painted cut-outs, complete with visible netting, that suggests an early illustration in someone's history of the theatre rather than the livelier, cleaner Shakespeare we have lately come to expect. (18.8.1959)

Ray Diffen rebuilt the sets from Mariano Andreu's designs when Gielgud took his production to America and, by all accounts, he did not make a very good job of it. 'The cardboard cut-out sets are built too far forward, forcing the actors into a constricted playing area, while the costumes are of such outlandishly bright and clashing colours that they make the stage as runny as an Action painting', wrote Robert Brustein (New Republic, 5.10.1959). Moreover, the stage of the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, where Much Ado appeared, was very wide, with a cavernous proscenium opening to suit the large scale auditorium; the play as a result was difficult to project. But, undoubtedly, the vogue for rich, scenic productions of Shakespeare, that had begun just after the end of the war, was waning and a severer, less flamboyant style was coming into fashion. Peter Hall would found the Royal Shakespeare Company in the following year and, with the help of his designer, John Bury, would completely alter the emphasis of Shakespearean stage design from painting to that of sculpture and structural modelling. The sets and costumes of Gielgud's production, then, aged faster than the acting, but this was because, as our commentary has shown, Gielgud was constantly redirecting his actors and adding refinements to the spoken and gestural language of the play whilst the changes to the

décor were minimal, although not without significance.

A more fundamental point is that the text of the play contains very little verbal scene painting, less than As You Like It and A Midsummer Night's Dream for instance, and the reason for this is that the locale does not change and is of less significance to the personal experience of the characters than the place they occupy in their society and the forms of social pass-time, the spying, revelling and dancing, in which they indulge. The fantastic, mannered background Gielgud had devised with Mariano Andreu took advantage of the greater freedom to simulate the pretence and artifice of a world founded on shifting appearances, most readily expressed through masquerade.

On the other hand, the language of Much Ado About Nothing is conversational, extravert and wittily prosaic, in the sense of being composed predominantly in a bright and exuberant prose idiom. There are few soliloquies and, although Beatrice and Benedick express their thoughts in accordance with the soliloquy convention, they are natural prose speakers, professedly anti-love and therefore anti-poetry. Gielgud's production very skilfully distilled the tone of brisk, tongue-in-cheek banter and lyrical pathos, as we saw in the hushed and muted love confessions of Beatrice and Benedick, after Hero has been jilted, full of hovering silences, and in the quick cross-fire of the opening garden scene, where elaborate formality was delicately played off against elaborate incivility. Yet the fantastic setting and the almost-balletic actions and groupings of his players occasionally seemed to be at odds with a straight-forward exposition. The settings caused a slight under-current of restlessness in 1952: Philip Hope Wallace thought that 'an elaborately garish Messina with its touches of art ballet ... does not appeal much a second time' (Manchester Guardian, 14.1.1952). The New

Statesman commented:

M. Mariano Andreu's bizarre décor was only good in parts; one remembered Agate's dictum that 'getting itself immediately forgotten is the first function of scenery in plays that speak to the mind.' In the slighter comedies, fantastification is permissible, and the only criterion is whether it comes off. M. Andreu's chapel and garden are delightful, but we could do without his coloured columns. (J.N.B.R., 19.1.1952)

But Much Ado About Nothing does speak to the mind and, if the décor tilts the play towards inconsequentiality and is not anchored in its relevant themes then it is failing to do its job. Gielgud's style of production, it has been argued, offered a coherent statement on the play and was not simply 'decorative' or 'ornamental'. Still, its assertive intricacy could distract audiences.

His performance as Benedick developed in a very interesting way against the tendency of the production to rarify and formalize the text. The reason for this, on the one hand, relates to the larger principle of this study that acting, as a technical discipline, is the opposite of exhibitionism. The serious actor, as opposed to the person who just wishes to play parts that are vehicles for his personality, must subdue his own identity to an objective appraisal of the requirements of the role. The character he creates must then necessarily be a composite of himself and his recognition of what is there in the text, but the more his technique grows, the deeper he enters into the role, the wider the separation between his real and assumed identities.

The other reason is that, in the play, Benedick is represented as a soldier who has seen action. At first it may seem that Shakespeare was concerned to play down the significance of the background of warfare,

using it basically to heighten through contrast the gaiety of the comedy, but the 'war' theme is caught up not only in the fact that the contentions of Beatrice and Benedick are described as 'a merry war', it also creates a credible ambience for Benedick's personality linking him to other Shakespearean characters like Enobarbus and Henry the Fifth. Love and war themes were closely related in Shakespeare's mind, generating a whole series of detailed correspondences. The figure of the bluff, plain-speaking soldier, who cannot bear flowery sentiment and pompous etiquette, of course, no more sums up Benedick's character than it does the complex, paradoxical mentalities of Enobarbus and Henry the Fifth, yet it qualifies the refinement of romantic comedy, giving the humour a certain realistic edge. Benedick's humour is sophisticated and verbally elaborate and it is sharp and bawdy:

Don Pedro: I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Benedick: With Anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord; not with love. Prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind Cupid. (I.I.214)

All this farcical brutality may be more or less true to character, but in Gielgud's earlier performances these details were left largely to the imagination of the spectator and, as a consequence, Benedick was too facile. As a young actor at the Old Vic Gielgud had found a way into the part by accentuating the elegant, courtly side of Benedick's nature. Benedick is, after all, on familiar terms with the Prince. He is eloquent, witty, used to masques and banquets and conscious of his honour and the conventions of duelling. He flouts conventions from a privileged position as a member of the class which upholds them. In 1950 and 1952 we saw how Gielgud built upon this foundation and assimilated himself to his production

by developing Benedick's whimsical sophistication to the point where he became something of a fop and poseur, wearing fantastic hats and behaving in a slightly affected manner. It was, indeed, a very mannered approach with an element of self-parody in it. The Times described him as,

a companion for princes. No trace here of the swaggering boon companion who so often surprises us in the company of the Prince of Aragon. Benedick is a licensed entertainer, no doubt, but he entertains among equals, and all Mr. Gielgud's performance is directed to persuading us of this. It is suave, urbane, full of fun and invention and most modest; there is no attempt to force the character into undue prominence.
(8.6.1950)

This conception had the effect of softening the relationship between Benedick and Beatrice from the start and thus of easing their transition to love:

The dear enemies are a comparatively quiet, reserved couple; their banter is not machine-gun fire so much as squibs let off to pass the time. They are quickly and perhaps too obviously in love with each other, and one result is that the melodramatic middle of the play has never seemed so easy to accept.
(Philip Hope Wallace, Manchester Guardian, 14.1.1952)

Are Beatrice and Benedick in love at the start of the play? They are certainly engrossed in one another, but the dramatic effectiveness of their dialogue depends upon their being contestants. The more playful, the less argumentative they are, the less interest the audience will take in the battle of words. Gielgud and his two Beatrices were antagonistic, but, at first, in a very fanciful and romantic production, their performances were inclined to be too highly polished, too poised and elegant in their delivery. They lacked edge.

Gielgud's first appearance as Benedick at Stratford was part of a

season of plays. He was also playing Cassius in Julius Caesar, Angelo in Measure for Measure, and King Lear. Benedick was a contrast to these grave, austere characters and Gielgud may have felt encouraged to lighten him as much as possible in order to differentiate him. It was, in fact, during this season that his power as a tragedian was said to have increased. There was a new energy in his performances, a sterner quality, a greater inventiveness.

Nevertheless, it was not until 1955, with the loss of his hats and the acquisition of plainer costumes and a soldier's leather tunic, that the rougher texture of the role was definitely established. 'Sir John Gielgud makes a true soldier of his Benedick, even a little gruff in the exercise of his wit and therefore the more excellently ludicrous in his softening', wrote The Glasgow Herald (18.11.1955). Beatrice also had 'taken to heart Benedick's description "She speaks poniards, and every word stabs;" not only in her words, but also in her gestures and looks' (Robert Wright, The Star, 22.7.1955). The promptbooks show that the stage business had been adapted to reduce Benedick's foppish playfulness and to increase Beatrice's spite. In 1955 the business with the cup and ball in the eavesdropping scene was eliminated and, in the penultimate love scene (V.2), Beatrice introduced a note of dissonance by slapping Benedick's face. This trend continued in the 1959 production and it was then that the changes in Gielgud's style of interpretation were most apparent in reviews. Robert Brustein's description suggests a performance which had undergone considerable revision since 1950:

For Benedick he has adopted a husky singing tone, which he projects

with great assurance and warmth. He detonates wit and lets it crackle in the colloquies with Beatrice. His soliloquies are lush plums bobbed into the laps of the audience. Gielgud envisions Benedick, quite

accurately, as Hotspur stripped of his spleen - a plain-dealing Elizabethan soldier good-humouredly contemptuous of the holiday terms of love and the soft amusements of peace. Gielgud takes great care to emphasize the character's flint-like qualities. When he plants himself in a corner of the stage, places one leg solidly before the other, and rocks slightly from limb to limb for purchase, he is the very portrait of martial stability: one can almost feel the armour weighing on his back. (New Republic, 5.10.1959)

As a director, Gielgud had set out to distance the play's sense of realism and create a gay, escapist mood that would complement the romantic intrigues of the plot. As an actor, he was led towards a conception of his role that relied increasingly on a sense of the down-to-earth soldier in Benedick, though he started off playing differently, more in harmony with his style of direction. I think the reason for this refers us back to the play's structure and allows a distinction to be made between the contrality of themes. Stage history has shown that the characters of Beatrice and Benedick provide the chief focal point of dramatic interest and yet, in terms of the play as a whole, their story is subordinated to the conventional narrative of Claudio and Hero, which is the one Shakespeare found in his sources.¹⁰ This provides the thrust of the action and it is to Claudio's observation of Borachio at Hero's chamber window and the subsequent catastrophe in the church on the day of the wedding that the title refers and not to Beatrice and Benedick's beguiling. (There is no 'Ado' caused here except between themselves when they discover they are in love.) Gielgud's production became gradually more sensitive to the dialectics of the play over the years it ran, qualifying the romance context with his more realistic playing of Benedick and the individualism of Beatrice and Benedick against the play's conventions. The director, therefore, can only do the play a dis-service when he tries to approach Beatrice and Benedick head on and builds his production around them. The conclusion to be drawn from the Gielgud productions points

rather in the opposite direction: the maximum effectiveness of the two leading roles is best attained when they are approached indirectly through the establishment of a context for the play at large. Beatrice and Benedick will always exist loosely in relation to this centre.

1. See J. F. Cox's 'Much Ado About Nothing in the English Theatre: 1660-1955', Ph.D.. Cox shows that productions have generally tended to concentrate on the Beatrice and Benedick relationship to the neglect of Claudio and Hero. In the twentieth century the emphasis has changed somewhat and attention is more evenly distributed, though Beatrice and Benedick remain the best parts.

2. Except where otherwise indicated, information on the productions discussed in this chapter is principally based on the following sources:

OLD VIC, 1931

Harcourt Williams, Four Years at the Old Vic
 Illustration, Everyman (26.3.1931)
 Illustration, Daily Telegraph (8.11.1932)

SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE, 1949, 1950, PHOENIX, 1952, THEATRE ROYAL, 1955, LUNT-FONTANNE, 1959

John Gielgud, a letter to the writer (7.6.1980)
 John Gielgud, An Actor and His Time
 John Gielgud interview, The Stage (24.1.1952)
 Illustrations, Theatre World (11.1.1952)
 Much Ado About Nothing with John Gielgud and Peggy Ashcroft, recording
 Wardrobe List (1949)
 Programmes 1949, 1950, 1952, 1955
 Promptbooks 1949, 1950, 1955

3. Alan S. Downer, 'A Comparison of Two Stagings; Stratford-Upon-Avon and London', Shakespeare Quarterly, 6 (1955), 428-43.
4. Gielgud's production of Twelfth Night (Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1955) approximated to this in the placement of the four curved, box hedges around a central seat. Although Fabian, Andrew, and Sir Toby did not remain consistently nearest to the audience - as Olivier's Malvolio ranged about the seat they worked their way round the box tree hedges with him - they were allowed to come right across the front of the stage establishing a close connection with the audience.
5. Another solution to this crux, used in a recent production by Howard Davies for the Royal Shakespeare Company (Warehouse, 3.1.1980), is simply to have the boy come back with the book at once. For an equivalent editorial solution see William Shakespeare: the Complete Works, edited by Peter Alexander.

6. Florence Warner Brown, 'Shakespeare and Gielgud Co-Authors of Men', Shakespeare Quarterly, 12 (1961), 133-138, (p.136). It is not clear which production is being referred to. Hair dyeing, of course, remains fashionable today.

7. Mariano Andreu had designed the décor for the ballet Don Juan at the Alhambra in 1936. It was here that Gielgud had first seen his work.

8. See Kemble's manuscript partbook for Benedick (Folger Shakespeare Library, 30.4.1788). The interpolation ran as follows:

Benedick: Enough I am engag'd; I will challenge him.
 Beatrice: Will you?
 Benedick: Upon my soul I will. I'll kiss your hand, and so leave you.
 By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account.
 Beatrice: You'll be sure to challenge him.
 Benedick: By those bright eyes, I will.
 Beatrice: My dear friend, kiss my hand again.
 Benedick: As you hear of me so think of me. Go, comfort your
 cousin - I must say she is dead and so farewell. (Both
 going)
 Beatrice: Benedick, kill him, kill him if you can -
 Benedick: As sure as he is alive, I will. (Exeunt)

Ellen Terry recounts how Irving ended the church scene with a shortened version of Kemble's conclusion (The Story of My Life, p.127)

9. The point is discussed by J. F. Cox who shows that a considerable variety of serious and comic treatments of this passage have been tried. Garrick, apparently, allowed 'the comic spirit a good deal of licence throughout his performance of this sequence' and was praised for it (The London Chronicle, 19-22 March 1757). (J. F. Cox, 'The Stage Representation of the "Kill Claudio" sequence in Much Ado About Nothing', Shakespeare Survey, (1979), 27-36)
10. Shakespeare's two main sources for the Claudio and Hero story are Ariosto's Orlando Furioso (1516) and Matteo Bandello's Novelle (1554) translated into French by Francois de Belleforest and included in Histoires Tragiques (1574). But the story was widely known and had a popular place in the romantic folklore of the age (R.A. Foakes, Introduction, The New Penguin Shakespeare: Much Ado About Nothing).

CHAPTER FIVE

KING LEAR

The roles of Gielgud that have been examined so far are, for the most part, roles that have fallen within his physical compass. Lear is a different matter. In many ways it may be regarded as outside the actor's normal range.¹

The ferocity and power of the language to be spoken in the storm scenes requires a voice of equal ruggedness to do justice to it and Gielgud's has always been noted for its subtle variety rather than its strength. The quieter passages have a plain and unadorned quality and their simplicity and directness brings them close to the rhythms of ordinary speech.

Pray do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less; (IV.7.59)

This comes closer to Gielgud's natural capabilities, but still the starkness of it is something that is not quite suited to his style. He excels with poetry that declares itself more frankly as such. The baroque ornamentation of Richard II and the flamboyant fire work displays of Christopher Fry's modern verse plays are more easily accommodated to his talent.² The appearance of Lear also presents problems; for Lear is a rugged old man 'fourscore and upward'; he refers to his former soldierly prowess and, as Granville-Barker points out, retains enough of his strength to overcome the soldier who had hanged Cordelia. Donald Wolfit, Michael Redgrave and Paul Scofield have all offered notable performances of the part in our own time

and in each case they have founded their interpretations upon the King's powerful physique. Lear is in decline of course, but he is a giant, nevertheless. Gielgud has never been able to suggest physical strength without considerable camouflage, and his age (the last time he played the part was in 1955) was always very obviously far less than Lear's eighty-odd years. So coupled to his difficulty of finding the right voice for the character is the difficulty of having to transform his appearance. This is something that he does less well than other actors. None of these problems are insurmountable. Yet they all place heavy emphasis upon technique. If Gielgud is to become Lear he must rely not on his natural endowments. He has to rely instead upon his technical skill: which is why Lear may be described as one of his biggest technical challenges.

Still, before we go on to examine in detail the way he approached the part it is worth saying something about the other side of the problem too to balance the argument. It is unlikely that any actor, however protean he is, should be able to fill Lear's shoes exactly nor is it desirable that he should. To take Paul Scofield's brilliant impersonation for example (Royal Shakespeare Theatre, 1962). Here is an actor who, with meticulous care, has built up a complete physical identity. Scofield's Lear remains an unmistakable piece of work in spite of the old man's voice - guttural and wavering by turns - the granite block of the head, with short, closely-cropped hair; the lined and weather beaten face, with its sullen, overhanging brow; and the huge, bear-like body. He is much closer to a realistic embodiment of Lear than Gielgud is. For all this it remains questionable whether he is any closer to the essential Lear of Shakespeare's text. If Gielgud is in danger of failing because of his lack of resemblance, then Scofield is in danger of failing, paradoxically, because his resemblance is too close.

The poetic conception is just as easily lost sight of when the actor exhibits the realistic traits of the old man. What does the essential Lear consist of then?

Granville-Barker formulated the actor's task in his Preface to King Lear. He is answering the contention of romantic criticism as it is expressed by Lamb and Bradley that, although it is a literary masterpiece, King Lear is not a successful stage play:³

In this hardest of tasks - the showing of Lear's agony, his spiritual death and resurrection - we find Shakespeare relying very naturally upon his strongest weapon which by experiment and practice he has now, indeed forged to an extraordinary strength, and to a suppleness besides: the weapon of dramatic poetry. He has, truly, few others of any account. In the storm scenes the shaking of a thunder sheet will not greatly stir us. A modern playwright might seek help in music - but the music of Shakespeare's day is not of that sort; in impressive scenery - he has none. He has, in compensation, the fluidity of movement which the negative background of his stage allows him. For the rest, he has his actors, their acting and the power of their speech. It is not a mere rhetorical power, nor are the characters lifted from the commonplace simply by being given verse to speak instead of conversational prose. All method of expression apart, they are poetically conceived; they exist in these dimensions, in that freedom, and are endowed with that peculiar power. They are dramatic poetry incarnate. (Prefaces, 1, p.266).

'Dramatic poetry incarnate', is the key phrase here, the core of Granville-Barker's refutation of Bradley and the reason why Gielgud is justified in attempting a part that he is otherwise unsuited for. Because the character of Lear is poetically conceived, the actor's unlikeness to the part is much less important than it would be in a realistic play written in prose. What matters is his ability to handle the poetry. By turning himself into an instrument of Shakespeare's language and effacing his own personality, as far as possible, the actor hopes that the audience's imagination will be so fired that any physical deficiencies he may have will be swallowed up in the tide of the verse. This is how the greatest of Shakespearean acting can

be defined and it is through these means that Gielgud stands a better chance of succeeding.

It is appropriate that Granville-Barker should be the critic to express theoretically the direction of Gielgud's approach to the play. For it is the shade of Granville-Barker that stands over the four productions that will be discussed in this chapter. The first, in 1931 at the Old Vic, directed by Harcourt Williams, serves as a prelude to the three later attempts. With the following productions the existence of more extensive records makes possible a closer scene by scene examination. The second production in 1940, again at the Old Vic, directed by Lewis Casson, is described by Hallam Fordham in an unpublished typescript commentary 'The Player in Action: John Gielgud as King Lear'. The typescript contains accounts of consecutive scene groups followed by sections of analysis as well as remarks by Gielgud himself on his interpretation of the role. Fordham was allowed to attend rehearsals and supplemented his independent observations with the collaboration of the leading actor. In the absence of a promptbook, his work supplies the basis of the present investigation.⁴ Promptbooks have been of help in reconstructing the third and fourth productions at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, in 1950, under the direction of Gielgud and Anthony Quayle, and at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, in 1955, directed by George Devine. This production subsequently toured England and Europe. To aid detailed comparison the method of examining significant episodes from each production alongside one another has been adopted.

* * *

Gielgud was only twenty-six years old when he attempted the part for the first time. A clearly defined strategy was applied to the problematic

opening scene of the play. He and Harcourt Williams together made a firm decision upon the much-debated issue of whether the division of the kingdom had been settled before the action had begun. In an interview printed in The Observer ('John Gielgud interviewed by G.W.B.', 12.4.1931), Gielgud brought up the subject:

Some of the commentators have said that the opening of 'Lear' is like a fairy-tale, but it does not play like one. Lear has already decided to divide the kingdom, and his first speech is a public declaration of an arrangement already made with his daughters. It is partly to satisfy his vanity ... What has impressed me in studying the part is that Lear is physically a very strong man. He gives up his kingdom in order that he should be free to enjoy his leisure, and even after his brain has gone he retains his bodily strength. I shall attempt to bring this out in my performance, and for that reason I am basing my make-up on a seventeenth century print of Anger, which is as virile as a Michel Angelo drawing. It is a mistake to present Lear as a doddering old man with a long beard. Although he was over eighty he was not a dotard, but a big, healthy fellow, who was very keen on his meals.

Clearly, in saying this Gielgud was not making any concessions to his own deficiencies of build. But his playing down of the ageing process relieved him of the necessity of having to mime senility and allowed him to harness his youthful energy. Everyman, (23.4.1931) contains a picture of him in his make-up as Lear (Plate 14). The picture shows the protagonist dressed for the initial court scene, wearing a beard and wig of grizzled hair. Around his temples there is a simple, unadorned crown. He wears a long cloak which is white and decorated with scarlet, runic devices. The instrument in his hands is a sword.

In his Preface (1, p. 284), Granville-Barker makes the point that the actor playing Lear must strive to create the impression of Olympian grandeur at once. Barker recognizes that this is a drain on the actor's funds of energy,



14. King Lear, Old Vic, 1931

energy that will be required later for the storm scenes, but he draws attention to the way Shakespeare has tried to allow for this by casting the scene in a ritualistic mould. The ritual will bear up the actor's assumption of grandeur and thereby minimize his expenditure of effort if he will rely upon it. We can see Harcourt Williams adapting this advice in the provisions that he made for staging the scene.

The director of the Old Vic tapped the magnifying effect of the ritual by giving the King a splendid, formal entrance to music down an elevated platform that led to his throne. Gielgud marched along this platform, with scarlet spears on either side of him raised in an avenue, trailing his long, white cloak behind. His first words to Gloucester were intoned in a ceremonious fashion that was perfectly in key with the manner of his entry. A striking pictorial effect was attained (J.G.B., Evening News, 14.4.1931).⁵ Apart from the distinctive mannerism of twisting the neck as if the weight of the head was too much to bear, 'which gave at once a sense of mental danger', said Harcourt Williams, he did not try at this stage to characterize the part.

It was not until the next scene that he began to reveal the man behind the official mask of kingship. The difference was apparent at once in Lear's call for dinner, bellowed out at the top of his voice. This disconcerted the reviewer for The Star (14.4.1931) who remarked that the shout was 'very youthful and vigorous indeed'. The healthy appetite of Lear seems to have been heavily underscored. Initially, the King looked upon the advances of the disguised Kent with suspicion. Peter Fleming (Spectator, 25.4.1931) thought that it was only when the would-be-servant resorted to flattery that Lear appeared to give way. According to Fleming, throughout these earlier scenes of the play, a fatal ingredient of the character's pride was skilfully

suggested through his 'preoccupation with externals'. The short scene between Lear and the Fool on the road to Regan's house had Lear moving distractedly whilst the Fool dodged around him, trying to gain his attention (1.5). He showed compassion for his master's predicament and sought to take his mind off his troubles. Lear responded sympathetically by trying to appreciate the Fool's jests - only to have his mind drawn inexorably back to his suffering. Fordham (Analysis, 1.5) described this as 'one of the most moving episodes in the play', but he adds that it tended to sentimentalize the relationship between Lear and the Fool. Any anticipation of the consideration for the Fool that Lear shows on the heath, in the eye of the storm, risks jeopardizing that later development. The confrontation with Goneril and Regan where they systematically reduce Lear's train was convincingly acted. At the moment when Lear swallows his pride and resolves to return to Goneril with fifty knights dismissed, Gielgud veiled his face, presumably to indicate humiliation. James Agate called it a 'superb gesture' (Sunday Times 19.4.1931). He complimented the actor also on the fine climax which he built up to on the curse, which is the culmination of this episode. But, in spite of this praise, the actor's most successful effect was achieved on the line directed towards the Fool that anticipates Lear's approaching insanity. 'O fool, I shall go mad' (II.4.285) was spoken with weird, quiet conviction. 'He says the words in a voice become suddenly flat and toneless, quickened only with a chilling objective interest in their no longer contestable truth', wrote Peter Fleming. It was to remain one of Gielgud's most memorable lines. Here, the first act ended. So far the general reaction of the reviewers had been favourable. The critic for The Times (14.4.1931) thought that Gielgud had struck the right note of maturity. C. B. Purdon regarded him as having 'held his own' (Everyman, 23.4.1931) and Alan Parsons writing for The Daily Mail (14.4.1931) said that he had never let the action slacken.

After the interval problems began to develop. Harcourt Williams had set the storm scenes up stage under dim lighting, with realistic sounds of thunder and lightning. The actors were required to clamber over an arrangement of rostrums as they were buffeted by the winds. Opinions varied as to the precise nature of the failure. C. B. Purdom suggested that the action was set too far back and that it was badly illuminated (Everyman, 23.4.1931). The Manchester Guardian (14.4.1931) decided that the thunder and lightning were not coordinated properly. W. A. Darlington agreed with this, finding the trouble to be that it was the storm that dominated Lear and not Lear the storm (Daily Telegraph, 14.4.1931). The reviewer for The Yorkshire Post (14.4.1931) maintained, on the contrary, that the storm sound effects were too neatly cued with the actor's voice. James Agate argued that Gielgud failed purely through his lack of physical means (Sunday Times, 19.4.1931). Edith Shackleton's view was that this section of the play was inherently unactable (Evening Standard, 14.4.1931). Probably both the acting and the staging of these scenes was at fault. But whatever the reason, the broad drift of opinion was that the storm scenes had failed to come off.

Opinion was divided too about the treatment of Lear's madness. W. A. Darlington said that the tempo was allowed to slip (Daily Telegraph, 14.4.1931), Peter Fleming (Spectator, 25.4.1931) that Gielgud was too obviously in control of his diction. Fleming went on to note that the hysterical ravings of Mad Tom contrasted unfavourably with the mad King's 'beautiful coherence'. The Daily Dispatch (G.M., 14.4.1931) stated that Lear was stronger in his madness than in his sane and righteous rage. The Times (14.4.1931) blamed the smallness of the actor's voice. James Agate singled out Lear's conscience stricken speech about the poor and naked wretches and the vindication of adultery 'Let copulation thrive' (IV.6.114) as excellently done, but he

also said that Lear before the hovel was 'merely one of a quartet'. For him, after beginning well, the play trailed off from the storm scenes onwards so that when the blinded Gloucester lamented the maddened Lear's ruin no more compassion was felt than at the end of Act One. Agate toyed with the reasons for this lapse of development.

Meanwhile a curious thing was happening, which was that Lear seemed to be growing younger. For this two reasons are possible - one that the overburdened player preferred concentration on philosophical content to the lesser business of miming senility, the other that our capacity for going half-way in the antique presence was exhausted. (Sunday Times, 19.4.1931)

Simple tiredness may have been the cause of this. Lear was the last role that Gielgud attempted at the Old Vic after a long and strenuous season and the great emotional burden, together with the task of having to sustain an impression of age, might have proved too much for him. Even so Gielgud had said earlier:

Vocally I do not find it { the part of Lear } as trying as 'Macbeth', in which the last act is a terrific strain ... It is extraordinary how the character of Lear tires as the actor himself becomes physically tired; and think of the breathing-spaces that Shakespeare provided in all the big parts! ('John Gielgud interviewed by G.W.B.', Observer, 12.4.1931).

Again, the stylized décor may have had a hand in diminishing the impact of the later scenes. The reviewer for The Evening News objected to it:

the scene near Dover consisted of large, improbable cubes and slopes as though it represented the Admiralty Pier in an early stage of construction. (J.G.B., 14.4.1931).

In any case, the upshot of these various criticisms was that this section of the play, in spite of isolated moments, failed to devastate as it should. The second interval came after the blinding of Gloucester.

Gielgud did manage to win back some ground in the scene of reconciliation with Cordelia and the final scene in which he enters with her dead in his arms. The Sunday Pictorial (19.1.1931), The Observer (H.H., 19.4.1931), The Daily Dispatch (G.M., 14.4.1931) and The Morning Post (14.4.1931) offer a corrective to Agate's contention that the performance simply dwindled away after the storm scenes, for they all speak highly of these moments. In particular, C. B. Purdom refers to Gielgud's nearly perfect delivery of the five times repeated 'never' (V.3.308). This too has always remained one of the highlights of the actor's performance. Nevertheless, the fact remains that he had failed to sustain the line of the character's development as it exists in the play and after a promising beginning had revealed only fragments of the real Lear. The spine of the production had been broken by his failure to encompass the elemental ferocity of the storm. He had succeeded with the pathos and the foreboding intimations of insanity, but not with the force of Lear's great frenzy and the horror of madness itself. Effectively disguising his youthfulness at first, he had been unable to continue to do so, and towards the end of the play the disguise had begun to slip. Still, it was a hopeful start for a young actor and the critics did not adopt a condemnatory tone, but were sympathetic in their pointing out of faults.

* * *

The next time Gielgud essayed the part certain basic premises of his performance had been altered. For one thing, he no longer believed so strongly in the relevance of Coleridge's idea that the plan to divide the kingdom had already been settled upon before the play opened. Whereas in the interview he had given in 1931 he had stressed this interpretation, we now find him regarding it as a matter of less urgency:

Curiously enough, important as this point may seem, as the fundamental crisis from which the whole tragedy springs, and much as it may affect the imagination of the individual actors as they enter the stage, the effect



15. King Lear, Old Vic, 1940

upon the audience will be very little heightened or dissipated whichever way the scene is taken. As a matter of fact the lines were rehearsed both ways and the final decision never actually dictated by the producer, who rather took the view that the whole scene was a straightforward ceremonial, setting forth on the broadest possible lines of the argument and the fable on which the rest of the play depends. Events taking place off-stage or apart from the actual action of the play did not seem greatly to concern him (Fordham, Gielgud's Notes, 1.1.)

Another circumstance that had altered was the nature of Granville-Barker's influence. He was there personally to supervise rehearsals for twelve days. Although Lewis Casson was officially the play's director (and appears as such in the programme), when Granville-Barker arrived he changed everything that Casson had done and thus provided the essential formative influence that was to dictate the actor's development for the next fifteen years.

Roger Furse had designed an opulent palace setting that evoked the Renaissance period. The throne was in the middle of the stage. Lear came on from the side, an isolated figure, following the members of a procession. His beard was fastidiously curled (Plate 15) and he carried a staff with which he struck the floor on his first line. 'Attend the Lords of France and Burgundy Gloucester' (1.1.34) was spoken as an admonishment. Gloucester himself was carrying a staff to signify the office he held at court. Gielgud's gesture therefore established Lear's place at the apex of a hierarchical society where authority was rigidly stratified. Like Garrick, he used the staff to walk with, but it was primarily a symbol of power. It was given to an attendant as Lear mounted the throne. Throughout this first section of the scene, up until Cordelia's reply, the King was in a good humour - a point that was persistently emphasized in the production. The note that the actor had penned into his rehearsal copy of the play as a guide to the character's initial mood was 'Pleased. Happy' (Stage Directions, p.120), 'A darkly mischevious' look came into his eye as he posed the fatal question

playfully;

Which of you shall we say doth love us most? (1.1.50)

Another attendant handed Lear the map which Gielgud accepted without looking. The boundary lines of the two kingdoms were indicated by a movement of his finger and the map was then shown to Goneril and Regan, who sat one on each side of the throne. Afterwards it was restored to Lear.

Cordelia's rebuff did not immediately make him angry. The first few short sentences that he spoke to her, sunk back on the throne, were ominous only. His rage when it did come was sudden and violent, marked by the crumpling of the map in his fist on,

Let it be so! Thy truth, then, be thy dower! (1.1.107)

The ending of the oath was clearly marked by a change of voice. When he referred to the barbarous Scythian his speech dropped and he became moody. The map was hurled to the floor in a gesture of finality to accompany the hurried decision to confer Cordelia's dowry portion upon Cornwall and Albany. As Kent tried to interfere, Gielgud gave a cry of astonishment. Granville-Barker had written, 'That Kent should call him an "old man" is in itself a blasphemous outrage' (Prefaces, p.284), and the point is brought out in Gielgud's interpretation by inserting the cry beneath the significant expression. When Lear's words failed to subdue Kent, the stage direction, originally added by Rowe, calls for the King to lay his hand upon his sword. The sword that Gielgud half drew from its sheath was a huge, ceremonial one that had to be carried by an attendant. The suggestion that Lear was prepared to use it as an offensive weapon inaugurated the idea of his

Olympian stature. A commanding gesture was used to bring Kent to kneel before the throne while the sentence of banishment was recorded by a secretary.

The suavity and politeness of Lear's diplomatic address to France and Burgundy was accentuated and Gielgud showed a discrimination in his attitude towards them that paralleled his paternal partiality. With Burgundy he was diplomatic but distant. With France, on the other hand, he was more sincere and respectful (Stage Directions, p.121). Refusing to look at Cordelia while he conversed with France, he referred to her indirectly with spite and irony. The decision of France to accept her was received as a further rebuff. Extending his hand to Burgundy, who had suddenly become the new royal favourite, he moved offstage with him.

The next entry of Lear was designed to be a complete contrast to his first. The voices of the King and his knights were heard raised in laughter. A moment later he appeared in a central archway. He was wrapped in an outdoor cloak. There was a scarf around his neck. His hands and feet were protected by gauntlets and boots with spurs. A riding crop was grasped in his fist and he used this to beat a table covered with a white cloth, set to one side of the arch. It was the signal that his dinner should be brought to him. While he was conversing with Kent, Lear's various outdoor garments were cast off. They were taken up by the knights that tended upon him and Lear sat down in a chair, on the opposite side of the stage to the table, for a servant to help him off with his boots. A bowl and a napkin were brought for him to wash himself before dining and it was this napkin that was used to strike Oswald for his insolence. Because Gielgud sat at a table

to dine, the Fool had to perform most of his antics in front of it. The King fed him with scraps, causing him to beg like a dog, but did not eat himself. This was of importance to the actor because he was concerned to stress in detail the physical privations suffered by Lear along with his mental suffering. He did drink from a goblet, watching the Fool over the rim as he did so.

When Lear came in Goneril pointedly ignored him, sitting down on the far side of the stage to sew. After such provocation, Lear's loss of temper on 'Darkness and Devils' (1.4.252) was illustrated by Gielgud throwing down the napkin and rising from the table. Granville-Barker wished to attain the general effect of the deadly quiet of Lear's curse between two passages of violent rage. Moreover, he wanted specifically to show how the evil that Lear calls into being through his imagination has wide-ranging spiritual repercussions. For Granville-Barker it was a milestone in the play's development and it is from this perspective that he writes about it:

suddenly, the servants are dismissed and she {Goneril} is alone with husband and father. And her father, rigid, transformed, and with slow, calm, dreadful strength, is calling down the god's worst curse upon her ... Not indifferently did Shakespeare make this a pagan play, and deprive its argument of comfortable faith in virtue rewarded, here or hereafter. And it is upon this deliberate invocation of ill that we pass into spiritual darkness. (Prefaces, pp.287-288)

The actor has, of course, no direct way of informing the audience that the evil he is wishing upon Goneril anticipates his own decline, yet by interpreting the speech in a certain manner he may convey the impression implicitly. The curse is ostensibly an assault of words directed at Lear's daughter, but it also reflects back upon the speaker because the image of her giving birth to a monstrous incarnation of ingratitude mirrors the present predicament in which Lear finds himself. It is a type of illustration

of the fixed idea that is a prominent symptom of Lear's later madness whereby a personal preoccupation is projected onto someone else. Instead of directing the curse solely at Goneril, the actor, therefore, has the option of demonstrating the effect it has upon the character who is speaking it. This will not only heighten the dramatic irony of the passage, it will establish the kind of resonance that Granville-Barker is talking about; Lear will become the victim of his own curse. Unfortunately there are no sound recordings of Gielgud's delivery of the curse in 1940 at the Old Vic. However, a recording from the B.B.C. Archives does capture a suggestion of the technique that was used and this information will help to supplement the details that are drawn from Fordham's account.⁷

Lear had turned to leave and he was in the central archway, with one foot on the step and a hand against a buttress, when a contemptuous laugh from Goneril froze him in his tracks. Slowly he revolved until he was again facing her. Then, standing rigidly with his arms and his eyes raised to heaven, he spoke in a voice that was 'solemn' and 'controlled' (Fordham, *Commentary*, 1.4.).

Hear, Nature, hear; dear Goddess hear! (1.4.275)

The invocation to the nature deity was separated from the rest of the speech as a prelude. The thrice repeated 'hear' was chanted antiphonally and there was an emphatic pause after the second 'hear' as if Lear were listening for an answer. With this line spoken, Gielgud allowed his arms to fall whilst still keeping the palms upwards. It was a deliberately pagan attitude of supplication that was intended to contrast with the bowed and humble attitude of Christian prayer that is adopted on the heath. Even Goneril was moved by it, for she allowed her needlework to slip from her hands.

Surprise and then supernatural intensity were the peculiar qualities of the reading. The next seven lines were treated quietly. Lear was thinking carefully about what he was saying. His words were meticulously enunciated to suggest an air of deliberation. There was a faint quickening of rhythm as his flow of ideas began to mount. Significantly, the actor chose to build towards his climax on 'torment to her', the last phrase of the sentence that coins the image of the thankless child. The pitch changed in a wrenching, agonized climb upwards with Lear seemingly experiencing the pain that he projects onto Goneril. The actual crescendo was spread over

that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is (1.4.287)

'Feel' was accented because it was ironically the curser who suffers and not the cursed. Nowhere was the voice raised to a shout and this increased the sense of agony since the straining, constrictive utterance that was employed during the moments of highest passion found no real outlet.

'Strange, not loud. Deadly. Ride it.', read Gielgud's rehearsal notes (Stage Directions, p.122) and this last term especially conveys the distinctive restraint that he exhibited. In his muted approach to the whole speech one can see how he combined a shrewd awareness of physical limitations with a recognition of the imaginative requirements of the language.⁸ Reviewing the original performance, Desmond MacCarthy indicated that Gielgud was able to realize this in a theatrical context:

his curse delivered from the door was a fine piece of elocution and gesticulation - quiet, merciless, with a superb yet moderated crescendo. (New Statesman and Nation, 20.4.1940)

The domestic treatment of the scene must have been of considerable aid in springing the surprise of the sudden, unearthly evocation.

The 1950 production at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, acknowledged a debt to the late Harley Granville-Barker on the programme without being any more specific. (Granville-Barker had died in 1946). There were, in fact, three main ways in which he influenced the production. First of all the Preface to the play was consulted in a detailed and consistent fashion at rehearsals and points of interpretation were discussed at length in relation to it. Harry Andrews told me that much time was spent in debating exactly how Granville-Barker's written work could be applied in practice, with the implication that the Preface to King Lear was used as a jumping off point and as a spur to independent interpretation rather than as a definitive and rigid framework. Then the notes that Gielgud had made during these rehearsals with Granville-Barker containing guidelines to the general tone of scenes and the specific phrasing of lines and speeches were referred to. They helped primarily to shape the central performance. Thirdly, there were direct borrowings of business and stage arrangement derived from the previous production. In many instances these were incorporated wholesale, for example, Lear's undressing from the hunt and the identical arrangement of furniture for that scene. The reduction of the burden of work may have been responsible for the co-directors', Gielgud's and Anthony Quayle's, decision, but the suitability of the business for Gielgud's Lear was probably also a prime consideration. Nevertheless, there were still many differences that showed this to be a unique production in its own right.

Not the least of them was Leslie Hurry's permanent set. Displaying the same eclecticism as Roger Furse had done in his mixture of Renaissance and barbaric elements, Hurry arrived at a unique combination of Gothic

architecture and timeless symbolism. Lear's throne was set upon a central dais, with three steps leading up to it. The back of the throne consisted of three Gothic arches with spires at their pinnacles. On either side of the throne, branching out, were two great pillars that seemed to support the roof of the chamber. These were craggy and unadorned and served as a permanent structure. Together they resembled the split trunk of an oak with a branch protruding from each side. There was no definite indication of the tree's species, but most of the reviewers agreed in referring to the trunk as that of an oak, a testament to the strength of the enduring association between King Lear and the tree that more than any other is linked with Britain's prehistoric past. Thus the architecture emphasized Lear's importance by suggesting figuratively that he was the keystone in the arch of order bolstering up the very building itself, and it also served later to signify the fragmentation of his mind and the collapse of authority when the centre-piece was removed. The split trunk divided the stage into three playing areas, like a picture with two side panels, accentuating the symmetry of groupings and centre staging. The deliberate mixing of styles to create a sense of historical estrangement and mythical amplitude went further towards stylization than Furse's designs and was equally evident in the costume of Lear's court. Regan, for example, wore a green, satin gown with a low neckline, a ruff, and a small coronet with a jewel hanging at her forehead. Her sumptuous and decadent attire contained several studied anachronisms.

The court entered from the far right to the sound of a trumpet fanfare. A review in The Leamington Spa Courier, (P.D.H., 21.7.1950) referred to 'the discordant and slightly hesitant note of a bugle', but whether this was a calculated device to create an ominous atmosphere or merely a technical aberration is uncertain. Albany and Goneril were the first to appear. They were followed by three servants, one of whom was

carrying the big, ceremonial sword, another a coronet and the third the map. This group moved across the stage and came forward on the left, down an avenue defined by ranks of men at arms. Cornwall and Regan appeared on the right and did likewise. Lear now came from the same direction with Cordelia and followed Albany and Goneril to the front. He was wearing a long, yellow-brown robe with heavy decoration attached to the front openings of the skirt and wide-open sleeves that were lined with dark rust silk. The robe trailed behind him as he moved. There was again a staff in his hand. Cordelia went over to her stool, which was placed on the extreme right, leaving Lear to mount the throne. As soon as the King was seated, a servant arranged the train of the robe beside the throne and relieved him of his staff. Lear had become the apex of a triangle whose other two angles were defined by the two couples, Goneril and Albany and Regan and Cornwall, whose positions were exactly opposite each other. Cordelia was already slightly isolated with her stool planted further to the right, beyond Regan's, where her incongruity within the predominantly symmetrical pattern must have created a feeling of discomfort, just as it made it easier for the actress to project her asides. The two older daughters each moved in in turn and mounted the steps of the dais to make their protestations of love. Upon each of them Lear bestowed a patronizing kiss. After Regan had spoken, Gielgud gave a 'childish nod of gratification' (T.C. Worsley, New Statesman, 29.6.1950). Another review mentioned Lear's 'chuckles of contentment' (Solihull and Warwick County News, 22.6.1950). Regan and Goneril both had to kneel to receive their shares of the kingdom. Cordelia did not ascend the dais nor did she abase herself. Standing at the foot of the throne, to Lear's right, she made her excuses and when she came to,

That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.

Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all. (1.1.100)

Goneril laughed. Lear threw the map down straightaway, this time on the first line of his speech disclaiming Cordelia, an action that suggests his rage came to an immediate climax. The King's 'Hence, and avoid my sight' (1.1.123) sent Cordelia to the farthest corner where she stood behind her stool, in a peripheral position that enabled Lear to make a point of ignoring her. The words were interpreted literally as they had been in 1940 for, when France accepted Cordelia, Lear kept his eyes averted (T.C.Worsley, New Statesman, 29.7.1950).

The scene of the return from the hunt was arranged in a similar manner to that of the 1940 production. Lear entered through a central archway, wearing his outdoor clothes. A hunting song and the sound of a horn heralded his arrival instead of laughter. He was attended by six knights who remained on stage only while words were exchanged with Kent. Again the Fool entertained his master at table. Alan Badel, who played the part, was equipped with a flute and tambourine. He was youthful and white faced and wore a spiked dog collar and lead around his neck. They were the distinctive features that defined his relationship with Lear, to whom he was half a child and half a pet. The actors underlined the intimacy of the two characters through physical contact, but there was also an element of danger in their closeness which manifested itself in Lear's sudden angry dashing of the tambourine to the floor after the Fool had placed it on the table beside him, saying,

Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou
gavs't thy golden one away. (1.4.160)

But it was Goneril's taunts that finally goaded Lear to fury. Throwing down the napkin again on 'Darkness and Devils' (1.4.252), he crossed to the bottom

of the steps in front of the arch and put one foot upon them. A knight appeared on the threshold to receive the order to saddle the horses and departed at once. A commotion began offstage. It was this same knight, on his return, who was indicated to support Lear's argument about the good behaviour of his retinue. Gielgud was at the top of the steps, about to leave, when, as in 1940, Goneril's laugh rang out. The noise of the knights ceased immediately and, in the hush, Lear turned slowly upon her to pronounce the curse.

In many ways the treatment of these scenes in 1950 represented a consolidation of the ideas for staging that Granville-Barker had laid down ten years earlier. With the help of a promptbook it is possible to gain an impression of how the central placing of the throne and the balanced, symmetrical groupings around it, which were all features of the 1940 production as well, can help the actor playing Lear to build up a sense of the King's authority. The occasional asymmetrical effect such as the isolation of Cordelia is then made all the more striking. The novel set design of Leslie Hurry was well adapted to this general approach. So too, in the second scene, effects that were gained earlier can be sharpened and perfected. Lear had the advantage of greater height for his curse and the sudden cessation of sound and movement after the noisy exit of the knights. The war-time conditions of the earlier revival had reduced the number of male extras available for this kind of group action. The laugh of Goneril that stimulated Lear's curse was recalled by her laugh at Cordelia's disgrace (1.1.100). It then acted as a portentous recapitulation of his original mistake creating a sense of Nemesis. But the production did not just go over the ground Granville-Barker had already covered, it contained innovative ideas as well that help to show that Gielgud's performance had developed.

One singular instance of this was his initial entry with Cordelia which anticipated the partiality he presently displays in the text. This, together with the patronizing kisses he bestowed upon his two elder daughters and his complacent reactions to their flattery, suggested that Lear's human foibles were being brought out more clearly.⁹ It was the dotage of the father, not the isolation of the monarch, that impressed the audience at once.

The next presentation of King Lear, in 1955, constituted a departure from tradition. George Devine directed the play, but at the time Devine's influence was less discussed than that of the American/Japanese designer, Isamu Noguchi, whose décor reflected his chief work as an abstract sculptor. A programme note signed by Devine, Noguchi and Gielgud himself offered to explain the purpose behind the unusual costumes and sets:

Our object in this production has been to find a setting and costumes which would be free of historical or decorative associations so that the timeless, universal and mythical quality of the story may be clear. We have tried to present the places and the characters in a very simple and basic manner, for the play to come to life through the words and the acting

In the event, the programme note actually contributed to the controversy that surrounded the production, owing to its ambiguous wording which gave rise to a fundamental misconception. By dealing with it now digressions may be avoided later. The ambiguity arose out of the claim that the style of presentation was 'simple and basic'. Some reviewers took it to refer to the way in which the designs had been executed. It then seemed perverse at the least or even deliberately provoking since Noguchi's methods were highly contrived. He had designed a series of mobile set elements that were slid on from the wings, seemingly under their own power, (they were

operated by technical staff who were hidden behind them) or lowered from above often while the action was in progress. There were twenty-six continuous changes of environment and mood. Costumes and sets were assigned specific symbolic functions, if these were not always really communicable in a theatrical milieu. Spectators may have been able to appreciate the connection of the giant, floating blue kites with France yet it was not so easy for them to understand that the great floating wall behind the King's throne, in the first scene, stood for the march of history opposed to elements of human will, (represented by the two adjoining side screens), each associated with one of Lear's evil daughters. Noguchi's symbolic conception of décor, evolved through his work on settings for Martha Graham's ballets was clarified by his 'Designer's Note' attached as a preface to The Folio Press Shakespeare: King Lear. In this sense the provisions he had made were elaborate to an unusual degree. Yet there was another point of view from which the statement made in the programme was justified. The designs were simple and basic in the way that abstract art is. They displayed, in other words, a reductive tendency that sacrificed realistic detail to essential form. The kite shapes, the triangles, rectangles and lozenges that comprised Noguchi's vocabulary of imagery were less complex than the naturalistic designer's, who includes much more in order to achieve an appearance of verisimilitude. The many different methods and conceptions comprising the abstract movement in the visual arts are not to be disposed of in a few sentences, but, in as much as the décor of the play was minimal and non-literal, its claim to a basic, abstract simplicity was valid. If the distinction is preserved between the means that the designer employed and the end, or his expressive purpose, then the opportunities for misunderstanding are considerably narrowed.¹⁰

There were three screens in the throne room, one on each side and one in the middle, at the back. To the right, between two of the screens, was a blue kite approximately fifteen feet high. In the centre was an angular dais on which the throne, an upright projection with a horizontal beam resembling a pair of crossed bones, had been erected. An ominous bulge in the ceiling created an impression of weight bearing down from above. Five of Lear's knights were already present on the stage before his entrance. They bowed as the court came on from the far right. Goneril and Albany led the way to the front, followed by Regan and Cornwall. The two women wore dresses with high collars and long skirts. Their hair was tied up and they adopted a stylized rigidity of stance that made them appear stiff and formal. Richard Buckle saw them as 'priestesses in a ritual of patricide' who 'stood in their rather Minoan dresses with palms laid to the front of their thighs, immovable as pillars of salt' (Observer, 31.7.1955). Then came Cordelia. Lear was the last to enter alone. He was wearing a tonsured mane of straight, white hair that hung to his waist and a robe with stiff, trumpet sleeves and a hem spangled with gold coins, beneath a doublet. Regan's first speech takes up the imagery of coining, revealing Lear's pre-occupation with material values. She begins, 'I am made of that self metal as my sister,/ And prize me at her worth' (1.1.68). The crown upon Lear's head was an orb with four prongs protruding from it. Each of these prongs had a knob on the end so that they looked like the stalked eyes of a snail or an insect's antennae. He was carrying a staff which, in Gielgud's habitual manner, he used to beat upon the floor when ordering Gloucester to attend to France and Burgundy. After Lear had assumed the throne, the grouping duplicated that of the 1950 production with the two elder sisters and their husbands on either side of the King and Cordelia positioned further over to the right, the most distant from the centre. A pair of horns with a trailing fringe like a primitive hunting trophy was suspended above Lear's head.

First Goneril and then Regan abased themselves before the throne. Once they had received their gifts, Goneril kissed Lear's hand and Regan embraced him. While Regan was still kneeling, Kent handed the ceremonial sword to Lear who used it to divide the kingdom. Cordelia crossed in to make her denial and was dismissed to the right, where she stood cut off from the ensuing action. When Kent tried to intervene, setting his foot on the rostrum and then stepping right up on to it to challenge Lear's supremacy, Gielgud threatened him with the sword and then repeated the gesture moments later. Kent's submission was shown by having him kneel to kiss the weapon. Lear retained his grasp upon the sword as he addressed France and Burgundy, only finally returning it to Gloucester on the entreaty :

therefore beseech you
T'avert your liking a more worthier way,
Than on a wretch whom nature is asham'd
Almost t'acknowledge hers. (1.1.210)

whereupon the first knight returned the staff to Lear and relieved Gloucester of his burden.

For Lear's next appearance Gielgud wore a red, perforated cloak and a pair of mittens in place of the riding cloak and gauntlets he had worn previously. Attended by five knights, he stood in a central aperture delineated by two screens. The angular dais on which Lear's throne had been set still occupied the area of the main stage, providing a visual link with the earlier scene. The cloak, which was pierced by circular holes, and the mittens, were thrown to one of the knights. A servant brought Lear a washing bowl and a towel, but failed to abase himself before the King and, as a consequence, was pushed to the ground by the first knight. This was noted by Kent and Lear. The first knight then took the bowl from the servant, knelt and held it out to his master. Two more servants brought on a golden,

triangular shape with a hole in the middle and fixed it to the angular dais. In the promptbook this is referred to as a table although the bizarre angle at which it was tilted denied it a practical function. The servants ignored Lear as he tried to speak to them and no food or drink ever arrived.

Attention was distracted from the entrance of the Fool by Kent's treatment of Oswald, which was particularly violent. After Lear had struck him with the towel, Kent tripped him from behind and, encouraged by the boisterous laughter of Lear and his knights (who remained present throughout the scene), grabbed hold of him by his neck and knee, swung him round in a circle and let go of him. As Lear tossed a bag of money to Kent, the Fool stepped in and intercepted it. This movement precipitated him into the middle of the stage.

No longer confined behind a table with a napkin and drinking vessel to manipulate, Gielgud was free to participate actively in the Fool's antics. The warmth and familiarity of their relationship was established immediately by his welcoming the jester with open arms. He shot a warning glance in his direction that caused the Fool to crouch when the dangerous gibe, 'Why, this fellow has banish'd two on's daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will;' (1.4.100), sank in. Then Lear sat down upon the dais and the Fool sat down beside him. He put his cap on Lear's knee and Lear threw it back to him. The threat of a whipping sent him scurrying under the angled table to use it as a kennel in which to hide - 'Truth's a dog must to kennel;' (1.4.10). Lear allowed himself to be manoeuvred like a mannikin during the Fool's song:

That lord that counsell'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me -
Do thou for him stand. (1.4.140)

Both the characters performed the actions implied by the words in pantomime. Finally, the Fool thrust his head through the hole in the table in a movement that related the aperture to the holes in Lear's costume and the empty egg shell that was the subject of the joke he was telling (1.4.154). Gielgud put his arm protectively around him as Goneril entered.

The knights were given a strong group reaction to Goneril's accusations against them. They closed in menacingly around her. On the second advance they made they were checked by Lear. Interestingly, Gielgud chose to indicate Kent as a member of his train when Lear came to rebuff Goneril's charges and not one of his own knights, which is what he had done in 1950. No trace of Goneril's laugh that had provided the stimulus for the curse remains in the promptbook. To call down vengeance upon her, Lear stood on the level stage, framed by the two screens with his eldest daughter seated nearer to the front, on the right.

Gielgud's insistent use of such pieces of stage business as striking the floor with his staff and washing himself prior to eating, hearken back to the 1940 production and thus highlight the continuities of his performance. The recurrence of certain actions is made all the more striking by their being featured in productions whose overall styles have less in common. It is a fact that suggests his way of playing Lear developed through gradual growth and assimilation rather than through wholesale reorganization. On the other hand, what does stand out in contrast to the earlier revivals is the way in which other factors combine with the old business to produce an unbalanced effect that was perhaps not wholly predictable beforehand. The prominence of Lear's knights, the more extended use of the sword during the ceremony, the demonic horns above the throne and the abject abasement of Goneril and Regan (Lear accepted their attentions, but no longer bestowed

even a patronizing kiss in return) all helped to magnify his harsh, tryannical side. Again, in the scene of his return from hunting, his knights behaved threateningly towards Goneril and her servants and it was significantly, Kent to whom Lear pointed when he wanted to contradict Goneril's accusations of misbehaviour on the part of his men. The choice of Kent as a paragon was ironic because it was Kent who had just been indulging in rowdy behaviour. In 1950 Lear chose a more neutral figure to defend his reputation. Then there was Lear's grotesque appearance and the unfamiliarity of the setting, divorced from a historical context, that divested the actor's performance of the glamorous trappings of royalty that would otherwise have redeemed his exercise of power. Lear still assumed all the authority of a King, but he no longer looked like one. This created estrangement in the spectators and even prompted speculations about his sanity. A review in The Nursing Times (5.8.1955), appropriately enough, went so far as to diagnose Lear's symptoms as those of senile dementia.

The shock effect created by Gielgud's first outlandish entry caused a violent reaction which certain spectators never recovered from. Reviewers were often amused, or alternately outraged, and were from then on unable to settle down to concentrate upon interpretative playing so preoccupied were they with unusual features of design. An extreme instance of this was afforded by Anthony Hartley's review in The Spectator (5.8.1955):

Looking back on what I have written, it occurs to me that this notice may seem bad tempered. But productions like this make me feel bad tempered. Is it not monstrous that a playwright like Shakespeare should be made the raw material for the discreditable manoeuvres of a producer intent on squeezing the last ounces of preciousness out of his plays? That a play like Lear, so shattering in its impact, should be damped down to a mere scented squib? Critics used to complain of the Beerbohm Tree school of realistic Shakespeare (real blasted heaths and real

forests of Arden), but I am not sure that modern impressionism has not spawned something very much worse. It was left to this production to give us the interior decorator's Shakespeare par excellence.

Noguchi had actually intended to heighten the grotesque quality of King Lear which is indeed a prominent and significant motif in the text. In his 'Designer's Note' he declared

Throughout the play there is this terrific contrast between the pretensions of man, and his actuality. This is the comic element in Lear which I have somewhat sharpened, since from it, I believe, springs the play's most moving quality. (Folio Press Shakespeare: King Lear, p.11)

However, he had clearly not intended to produce such a widespread or vehement disturbance. The contrast between Lear's first entry and his second must then have been considerably diminished because the domestic environment of Goneril's household was deprived of the homely touches such as the white table cloth, the laying out of food upon it and Goneril's embroidery that transmitted familiar and recognizable signals to the audience. Still there were compensations here for the absence of a realistic table off which Lear could dine enabled him to build up a closer, physical rapport with the Fool and enlivened the dialogues between King and jester. Because it did not have an obviously functional shape it became more adaptable and could be used by the Fool as a dog kennel and a starting hole. The lack of specificity partially complemented the fluid and freely associative character of the language.

The brief interlude with the Fool on the way to Gloucester's castle (1.5) helps the transition from Goneril's palace to Regan's reception of her father at the Earl's, its quiet intimacy of tone separating two scenes of passionate declamation. In 1940 Gielgud communicated Lear's restlessness

and the more generalised feeling of a transitory halt on a journey by pacing backwards and forwards across the stage holding his hat, gloves and riding whip, the spurs jingling on his boots as he moved. This enabled him to highlight significant moments in Lear's discourse by introducing sudden stops, the Fool who sat crosslegged in the foreground serving as a static focal point. On coming to the plea for sanity, he stopped abruptly and delivered it in ominous stillness: 'O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!' (V.42). The positions of the two players inverted the way they had been related by Harcourt Williams, who had had the Fool range freely around while Lear was the static element in the tableau.

For Lear's arrival at Gloucester's home the stage was set with an arched entranceway to the left and the castle doorway to the right. In the centre was a stone bench and in front of that the stocks, where Kent lay asleep. Lear entered and stood in the archway, leaning on his stick to get his breath back after the strenuous journey, before he saw Kent. (Gielgud was anxious to indicate the physical strain that the King was under to complement his mental stress.) Regan appeared with Cornwall and Gloucester at the door, and she was subsequently joined by Oswald as a trumpet blew to announce Goneril's arrival. With Goneril's appearance in the archway, Lear, in the middle of the stage, was surrounded by enemies. The sense of his ensnarement was filled in with direct action when, catching sight of Oswald in the doorway, Lear wheeled away in disgust only to be confronted by a more formidable adversary. He did not look straight at Goneril initially, but as the awareness of her presence slowly dawned upon him, he staggered backwards with arms outspread and then covered his face with his hands in a gesture that had originally been performed by Macready (Fordham, Gielgud's Notes, II.2). Then turning away from both daughters, he stretched his arms upwards, repeating the supplicatory attitude

he had used for his first curse on Goneril, to solicit the aid of the gods;

O heavens
If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if you yourselves are old,
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part. (II.4.188)

Goneril's and Regan's bargaining with their father over the number of his train echoes ironically Lear's bargaining with them for their love at the beginning of the play. This was brought out by their standing on either side of him as Lear once more became the apex of a broad triangle. At the height of his disillusionment, when he resolves to humble himself and return with Goneril, Gielgud turned his back on Regan and, dropping his head low, hid his face in the folds of his grey, riding cloak. Goneril's refusal to allow him even one servant caused him to drop onto the stone bench in complete dejection and self pity, breaking out into tears, his humbled attitude corresponding to his description of himself as 'a poor old man / As full of grief as age;' (II.4). When the tenor of his speech turned back to defiance, Lear sprang from the seat, fists clenched, to threaten retribution once more. But the emptiness of his threats was made manifest by his retreat towards the arch, all the while keeping his eyes fixed on his enemies grouped around the castle threshold. Thus the anti-climax of a protracted departure was avoided and a swift and startling effect was attained when, with a sudden change of tone, Lear called for the Fool, who ran across the stage into his master's arms. 'O fool, I shall go mad!' (II. 4.285) was spoken with the Fool clutched to Lear's breast. Then the two of them stepped through the archway and were swallowed immediately by the darkness.

The basic contrast of Lear's agitated movements and the Fool's stillness was still being used in 1950 for their short exchange prior to the arrival at Gloucester's castle. However, a saddle was introduced into the scene to

provide a more varied pattern of actions. The removal of the Fool's parting, audience-directed couplet, led to business being introduced in which the jester, coming in front of Lear, now holding his scarf and riding whip, coaxed the King off gently with clucking noises made by his tongue as if he were an ostler leading a timid steed. The business was noted by T. C. Worsley (New Statesman, 29.7.1950) who commented that this scene carried 'its echoes throughout the play'.

A different stage arrangement, in the 1950 production, altered the emphasis of the following scene at Gloucester's castle. Instead of the opposition of archway and castle entrance, one on either side of the stage, huge, iron double-doors were fixed in the centre between the oak supports, led up to by steps, and the main entrances and exits were made either through these doors or from both sides, underneath the horizontal branches of the pillars. The stocks were placed to the right and slightly downstage of the steps. This meant that Lear's encirclement by adversaries on two fronts was not so clearly conveyed, but, on the other hand, his isolation stood out more strongly as he was driven down to the left, cut off from the small band of followers grouped to the right, around the stocks. At the crucial moment of Goneril's entry, Oswald was given a deep cross from the right to the edge of the left assembly, passing audaciously under the King's nose. Goneril entered very slowly from the same direction - J.C. Trewin remembered her moving from the shadows like 'a malevolent ghost' - and came down to Regan, on the steps (John O'London's Weekly, 4.8.1950). Maxine Audley put in an ironic curtsy towards Lear as she passed. The promptbook makes no reference to any significant response made by Gielgud to her arrival. Coming off the steps, Goneril and Regan hemmed their father in to reduce his following of servants. Lear now wavered between them, coming close to Goneril to underline the fatal intimacy of their connection in the image of the 'embossed carbuncle' (II.4.223). The formation was eventually broken by Goneril

moving round alongside her sister to demonstrate their solidarity in the ultimate denial to Lear of any servants at all. Gielgud this time did not sit to play up the protagonist's despair and weakness. He shifted his ground instead, coming forward to the proscenium to direct his plea for heavenly aid upwards. The joint positions of Goneril and Regan in the centre were forcing him left, away from the Gentleman, Kent and the Fool. Rallying himself once more, Lear stepped upstage to face his persecutors with threats. When these failed, his call to the Fool had the jester, who had been pushed progressively further away, crossing over the width of the forestage in front of Goneril and Regan to his master's side. The two of them slipped off to the left, leaving the giant double-doors to swing shut when everyone else had gone inside. The sealing of this imposing barrier must have added a note of awesome irrevocability to the final tableau which was sustained by the weird, disembodied scream that was heard before the storm music struck up, anticipating Lear's approaching insanity.

Shut up your doors, my lord; ...
Come out o'th storm. (II.4.307)

are Cornwall's final words to Gloucester as the scene closes and one of the persistent scenic motifs in European productions, bridging the gap between Lear's exit and his next appearance as an outcast on the heath, is the sight of huge doors closing. It was not unknown for Lears to re-enter here or even remain on the stage like the German actor, Ernst Possart, who was surprised by the loud clicking of a bolt being shot as the gates were sealed against him. Solomon Mikhoels, a Russian Lear, played in a production where the main design concept was that of successive doors shutting (Marvin Rosenberg, The Masks of King Lear, pp. 136, 182). Thus Gielgud's scream asserted Lear's presence without wrenching the text so far as to have him re-enter.

The centre-piece for Lear's dialogue with the Fool (1.5) in 1955 was the angular dais. The Fool waited on it while Lear despatched Kent with letters for Regan and then went over to join him. When the Fool crept up to him, still in a crouching position, to offer to have his master beaten for being old before his time, the element of underlying danger in their relationship was implied in Lear's sudden closing in on him to deliver the snappish 'How's that?' (1.5.40). A pause followed the Fool's pregnant reply denoting a change of emphasis for Lear's 'O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven' (1.5.42). At this point the simple but eloquent direction in the promptbook occurs 'Touch Fool' and Gielgud followed this up by taking the jester's hand and leaning back against one of the screens as he prayed for the heavens to keep him in temper. Thus the nearness of his physical bond with the Fool was accentuated most directly in this revival. The scene ended with Lear taking his hat and scarf from the Fool and leading the way up left, over the dais and off.

Screens and the central dais defined the entrance to Gloucester's castle. Lear clambered over the dais helped by the Gentleman, identified by the promptbook as the first of Lear's knights, the Fool trailing behind, to discover Kent imprisoned in a lozenge-shaped palette with three apertures, on the right of the stage. This was the stocks yet it resembled more nearly an artist's palette with a support at the back to make it stand upright. Kent fitted his arm through the smallest hole and his head and one leg through the two larger ones. Regan's command to her servants, 'put in his legs' (II.2.145), was carefully changed from plural to singular although Lionel Hale objected that the unusual shape of the stocks falsified the Fool's reference to 'cruel garters' (II.4.6) (Everybody's London, 30.7.1955). The Times (27.7.1955) complained that 'the Oriental stocks make it impossible for Kent to read Cordelia's letter'. On the other hand, the Fool found a use for them when, reaching over Kent's

shoulders, he took hold of the rim of the palette and rocked it like a wheel to illustrate his saying: 'Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following' (II.4.71).

The left hand screen moved downwards to usher in Cornwall and Regan, who took up positions to centre right as Lear put the Fool and the first knight protectively behind him, crossing to down left of the centre to meet them. He greeted his daughter in the middle of the stage and endured her condescending patting of his right arm while she reminded him of the frailty of his condition (II.4.145). Goneril's entry was made from upstage, to the right. A slow implacability was imparted to her arrival by the actress's deep cross from one side of the stage to the other - a movement that caused her to vanish temporarily behind one of the imposing background screens and then into the wings, on the right. She re-emerged on that side and passed between two of Albany's servants, arriving at left centre as Lear spoke below. The dominance of the two evil daughters over their father was underwritten by the central upstage positions that they held while Lear tended to be driven back to the right of the forestage where his three loyal followers were huddled. A pause weighted Lear's distracted exit line, 'O fool, I shall go mad' (II.4.285), coming as a confirmatory echo of the fears of insanity he had confessed to his companion in the earlier short scene. The lines were drawn together by the Fool's movement in from the left and Lear's meeting of him half way - not perhaps as striking as the jester's dash across the full width of the platform in the other two productions - but more directly evocative of Lear's need for physical support. The Fool staggered out, up left, with Lear leaning heavily on him and a stiff legged Kent, still weak from his confinement in the stocks, bringing up the rear on the arm of the first knight.

At the heart of the debate about the limitations of the stage to represent Lear's tragedy are the storm scenes (II.2, II.4). These scenes seem to call for a total synthesis of archetypal grandeur, imaginative dilation and the concrete, literal sensuous world of common human experience. As such they are one of the culminating instances of Shakespeare's dramatic method, making huge demands on the scope and versatility of the Elizabethan theatre: one of the great statements of poetic drama, in fact. Yet throughout their history on the stage there has been an undercurrent of scepticism concerning their presentation that suggests that Shakespeare may have gone too far by making demands upon the theatre which were, and are, fundamentally impractical. No actor playing Lear, it has been maintained, could at once embody the Olympian hurling thunderbolts and the 'poor, infirm weak and despis'd old man' (III.2.21). Granville-Barker argued to the contrary, exposing the main fallacy of the Lamb-Bradley tradition that it was inclined to take for granted that the theatre and the imagination were irreconcilable opposites, whereas Shakespeare's imagination was theatrical through and through. However, Barker's arguments were still, to some extent, those of an armchair critic, and when we turn to his direction of the storm scenes in 1940, we find his instincts as a stage director here, as elsewhere, slightly deviating from his written exposition.

Both Granville-Barker and Gielgud concurred that the evocation of the storm was primarily a matter of the spoken delivery of the verse. Gielgud's treatment of the storm scenes never went back on this one firm principle. Still, it is one thing to maintain the primacy of the verse and quite another to do without the technical support, the lighting, sound and visual elements, that are usually combined in a full performance. And here we find complexities creeping in that Gielgud and Barker, through their practical and eclectic approach, had to deal with head on.

Lear's first speech represents the dilemma for the theatre:

Blow, winds and crack your cheeks; rage, blow
 You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
 Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks.
 You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
 Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
 Singe my white head. And thou, all-shaking thunder,
 Strike flat the thick rotundity o'th'world;
 Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
 That make ingrateful man. (III.2.1)

Wind, rain, thunder, lightning, sheets of fire, a suggestion of earthquake provide cues for the stage director. There are the visual details of the church steeple and its weathercock, the cleft oak tree, Lear's white hair seemingly singed by the darting thunderbolt – or are these really sights to be taken in or symbols for the imagination? Does Lear see what he describes? Is he inventing imagery that will express the chaos within his own reeling mind? As soon as we ask ourselves these questions we see that there are no direct answers. The storm is at once a naturalistic disturbance of the elements and a vision of anarchy. It is a subjective projection of human outrage against ingratitude that questions the right of life to go on and an objective experience of nature's mindless transcendent power.

Barker's technique of directing these scenes was an implicit rejection of the extreme purist's approach to the text, sometimes spuriously described as the Elizabethan method, which denies that the actor speaking Shakespeare's verse requires any support at all. The attempt to conjure up the storm solely through the language, which was tried by Charles Laughton and Michael Redgrave, seems to disregard Shakespeare's stage direction which calls for 'Storm still' (III.1) and ignores the strong representational element in the Elizabethan theatre. The concrete and specific particulars of the storm poetry, the phrasing of the speeches,

the hints of pauses where Lear listens to the thunder, indeed the very form of direct address with which he starts, point to a dialogue with rough weather. Moreover, audiences expect to feel at least a modicum of the sensuous force of the elements as they impinge on Lear's awareness. They need to identify with his suffering on a visceral level. The big speeches lose much of their exciting theatricality if they are spoken purely as arias.

Barker, therefore, placed Gielgud on a raised level, in the centre, towards the back of the stage against stone columns. The stage was darkened and a beam of light directed from above picked him out on the rostrum. As the scene developed, scattered beams distinguished Kent and the Fool intermittently. The roar of the wind-machine rose and fell and thunder boomed, but Gielgud's hair, although it was disarranged, and the filmy cloak he was wearing, hanging off one shoulder, remained motionless. Gielgud struck an attitude of statuesque composure, with his arms spread wide and his head uplifted, the Fool crouching at his side. He did not even have to move when he took the stage for the colloquy between Kent and the Gentlemen that leads up to Lear's appearance was acted on the forestage in front of curtains and the curtains simply opened to reveal him. This contrasts with the treatment of Scofield and Olivier who moved around freely during the first storm scene. The sight of Lear striding or stumbling forward with the words of invocation on his lips is perhaps the most compelling heroic image. Movement, however, can easily become distracting and Barker and Gielgud wanted to waste no time on projecting the poetry. But, in either case, the brevity of Shakespeare's opening, with Lear launching straight into his mighty oration, is shocking and exhilarating, for all its preparation.

Gielgud did not want to assert too strongly the corporeal reality of Lear, partly because, as was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, he did not have the natural build or facility for disguise that other actors possessed, but more so because of the poetic level of his interpretation. He was actually concerned to bring out the epic, impersonal element in Lear's speeches. His rehearsal notes read:

Tune in. Pitch voice. Low Key. Oratorio.
Every word impersonal. (Stage Directions, p.124)

Lear was identified with the storm. Herein was the crucial point of Gielgud's interpretation, the reason for his emphasis on the crumbling titan. Lear had to be gigantic in strength and spirit to stand up to the tempest. This meant that when he came to

Here I stand your slave,
A poor infirm, weak and despis'd old man; (III.2.19)

his voice had to drop and the tone relax in order to touch the vein of humble pathos. Only at

Tremble, thou wretch
That hast within thee undivulged crimes (III.2.51)

was Lear's massive composure broken as he raised a hand and pointed an accusing finger straight out towards the audience. Then he clasped his hands to his head in an action recalling the gesture he used to signify mental stress (1.4.300) and said,

I am a man
More sinn'd against than sinning. (III.2.59)

This was simple and earnest, without a trace of dissimulation. Gielgud's Lear was the great-hearted sufferer wronged whereas Paul Scofield's hoarse shout of indignation suggested hidden guilt. Turning to the Fool, Gielgud, like Salvini, sheltered him in his cloak. The last words were Lear's and he left the stage, sheltering the Fool, with Kent near at hand.

One of the principal objections to this treatment of the first storm scene was the very basic one, that the stage effects overpowered the words. 'The storm scene fell short of expectation', said The Observer (21.4.1940), 'there was, perhaps, a fault of lighting or too much of the stage-managerial wind machine.' 'The mad storm scenes ... need much subtler orchestration than they have received', said Desmond MacCarthy (New Statesman, 20.4.1940). But The Times (16.4.1940) saw that the storm effects, though exaggerated in places, had not been unduly relied on. Gielgud's approach was coherent and firmly based on the text.

Mr. Gielgud concerns himself little with the corporeal infirmities of the Old King. Such details he sketches in lightly and adequately, but they are not suffered to become a load fettering him to the realistic plane. He trusts the verse and his power to speak it, as a solitary silver figure in the dark loneliness, he speaks the storm, and his trust is never at any vital point betrayed.

The second objection was, more radically, that the production was not fully unified; there were distracting contradictions such as 'while the most audible wind is howling across the stage, no fold of a garment stirs; the King, the Fool and the Madman seem to be folded in a stillness that destroys the illusion of wild weather' (Lettice Cooper, Time and Tide, 20.6.1940). Fordham suggested that the confusion arose out of the production trying to be both formal and naturalistic:

No realism is attempted by showing the play of wind on the hair and garments of the characters, but the conventional realistic sound of thunder and wind is super-imposed with unfortunate effect, since it results in a confusion of styles and tends to detract from audibility. (Analysis, III.3,4,6)

The difficulty is that neither does Shakespeare's art make a ready distinction between formalism and naturalism in the manner of an Ibsen play or a Greek tragedy, for example. His dramatic method is eclectic and hybrid, which is what makes it so accessible to many different kinds of audience. By the same token, he is very hard on directors who are aiming to preserve the integrity of his text.

In 1950, Lear stood on a shapeless hillock, part boulders and part dilapidated rags, resting just in front of the permanent pillars. Behind was an impressionistic cyclorama of whirling vortices, jagged lines and scudding mists. The Fool crouched at his leg and moved occasionally from side to side. There were steps at the back of the hillock so that Lear and the Fool could climb up onto it under dimmed lights as Kent and the Gentleman staggered off below. Stillness and powerful, surging oratory, distancing the sense of personal vulnerability, were again the main characteristics of Gielgud's interpretation. He spoke with visionary intensity, using the huge pillars to aggrandize his tall, erect form. Sounds of rain, thunder, a musical motif and brilliant flashes of lightning were intermingled with his speeches. When he came to the end of Lear's second speech he turned his back momentarily and circled anti-clockwise as the Fool sang. Then leaned against the pillar on the left, steadying himself. As Lear said 'I am a man / More sinn'd against than sinning' (III.2.59), Kent climbed up onto the hillock beside him and conducted both the Fool and the King to safety so that it was the note of Lear's compassion for the Fool on which the scene ended.

This treatment was visually awe-inspiring - the set playing an important part in emphasizing the pictorial element. 'Amidst the thunder and the lightning, Mr. Gielgud against the flashing skies appears tall and gaunt and incredibly elongated like an El Greco Christ amidst the wreckage of a ruined universe', wrote Harold Hobson (Sunday Times, 23.7.1950). But once more there was scepticism about the degree of naturalistic representation. T. C. Worsley suggested 'the drenching rain coming over the speakers is not a good touch considering the dry appearance of the stage and everyone on it' (New Statesman, 29.7.1950). One recalls Shakespeare's stage direction in the first scene of The Tempest: 'Enter Mariners, wet'. Moreover, the music for the storm composed by Cedric Thorpe-Davies attracted mixed comment. This was an orchestral score accompanied by a continuous, hollow droning - electronic, menacing. H.G. Matthews thought that it complemented the poetic language of the storm and the sonority of Gielgud's voice far better than realistic sound effects:

the majestic and melodious king, with a seemingly small and terrified Fool crouching low against his robe, is an impressive figure... No noise of tin thunder or wind machinery dispels the illusion; Cedric Thorpe-Davies's storm music does duty to better artistic satisfaction. The storm is the crucial test for producer and actor and¹¹ John Gielgud may be described as riding it majestically.

T. C. Kemp, however, said that Gielgud's voice was in competition with all the noise:

The production was unkind to Mr. Gielgud in the storm scene, where the actor might have achieved a magnificent rhetorical moment had he not been forced to speak against discordant incidental music. (Birmingham Post, 17.7.1950)

There were technical problems on the first night with the loud-speakers that relayed the music to the auditorium, affecting the impression made by this scene and the reconciliation with Cordelia. Gielgud had difficulty

in projecting the role at first.¹² Yet, when this is taken into account, there was still an implicit confusion in the production's approach to the storm. Richard Findlater, who attended more than one performance, wrote:

Lear's first storm scene ... is the crux of the production: and here there seems to be a confusion of purpose, and a mixture of production styles. It looks fine but it doesn't sound right. It is pictorially splendid, deliberately formal and Cedric Thorpe-Davies's music is used effectively to create atmosphere. There is some heavy rain, thunder, lightning, a hum like a distant squadron of bombers. But what about Lear? The poetry should be doing the work, but Mr. Gielgud's voice is beaten by all the sound effects. What is more, these effects are not used consistently, and it is a fault that mars the tone and continuity of the production. (Tribune, 28.7.1950)

Consistency again. In many ways Gielgud's approach to the first storm scene heightened the operatic qualities of the language; he kept still, spoke with passionate sonority, subdued his characterization to the sound and images of the speeches, used musical expressions such as 'Tune in' and 'Oratorio' to guide his delivery. Should not music have been the ideal form of accompaniment to this style of acting, therefore? Apparently it was not. a) because music, as a formal medium, is inclined to sound incongruous alongside noises of the elements purporting to be realistic. b) because evocative poetry, unlike singing, tends to become submerged in an evocative musical context. The reason for this is that music is directly sensuous and works on the feelings through powerful generalised impressions, whereas poetry conveys specific meanings coloured with emotion and is more rigorously didactic. Although the two forms have much in common and can achieve occasional moments of lucid synthesis, as Shakespeare well knew, they are fundamentally distinct: music sounds, words mean. In this case, the bald sound cues provided by Lear's speeches existed in an uneasy compromise with a very elaborate sound collage.

The 1955 production did away with all the conventional scenic trappings, turning the heath into a weird surrealistic world that made no reference to nature. The stage was bare except for one angular rostrum in the centre (Lear's throne rostrum) and two more smaller rostrums set further back, on either side. Continually changing patterns of light were projected onto a neutral cyclorama creating 'a suggestion of snow changing to a mass of reeling lines and a confusion of whirling vortices ... an illusory universe teeming with a myriad foul fiends of darkness' (N.T. Leamington Courier, 2.12.1955). Electronic, atonal noises devised by Roberto Gerhard stood for the sounds of the storm. There were waves of rushing static, crackles, hissings and high-pitched, ululating wails turning to a demented whistling like the bowing of a musical saw in a B-rated horror film.¹³ A huge, black finger hung down from above and moved pendulum-wise over the rostrums. What was this grotesque, obtrusive object? 'A stalactite', said Alan Downer; 'a storm cone', said Lionel Hale; 'a black sausage', thought Gielgud; 'a black tongue', according to the production's running plot. 'The black shape represents doom', averred Noguchi.¹⁴ Clearly it was shocking, alien, imposing and it bore down on Lear, menacing him as if he were a puny dot beneath a giant exclamation mark. The 1940 and 1950 settings had been built around Gielgud's Olympian interpretation, making him appear grander, taller, more assertive. He had been raised to the level of the skies by built-up rostrums. Noguchi's décor, however, brought the skies down to meet Lear. The stark contrast between human pretensions and the harsh indifference of nature was reinforced almost in the fashion of absurdist drama.

Nevertheless, Gielgud's interpretation of Lear still distinguished the character's capacity for endurance, his indomitable resistance to fate. The prelude to the first storm scene showed Kent and the first knight being buffeted by the elements. The first knight entered from up

left, trudged over the stage to up centre and staggered, falling back onto the centre rostrum. Kent, crouching low, took two steps in from centre right and spied the first knight dimly through the murk. After the conversation, Lear strode on immediately from up left to up right around the storm finger, speaking as he came. He stood up to the tempest whereas the Fool scuttled on behind him bent double and straight away tried to take shelter behind the corner of the centre rostrum. Gielgud was accustomed to treating Lear's first storm speech as a static oration yet this time he punctuated the lines with restless movements. As Lear said, 'And thou, all shaking thunder' (III.2.6), he came downstage towards the left of the centre. Then he crossed in front of the storm finger to the centre for his challenge: 'But yet I call you servile ministers' (III.2.21). Turning upstage to face the point of the rostrum, he again showed his back to the audience, taking in the prospect of the skies as in 1950, and also allowing the Fool to crawl on his belly around the rostrum for his song. When Kent came on from up left, the Fool, still hunched low, wriggled round to the left side of Lear and raised an arm to signal their whereabouts. 'Marry, here's grace and a cod-piece; that's a wise man and a fool' apparently referred to himself as the wise man and Lear as the fool. While Kent clambered awkwardly over the centre rostrum Lear ignored him, moving to the right and then wandering distractedly upstage and circling the smaller rostrum on that side. As the Fool clutched Kent for support, Lear broke forward, urging the gods to find out their enemies. He started to left centre on 'Tremble, thou wretch, / That hast within thee undivulged crimes' (III.2.51) - the movement possibly indicating a vision like those of the mad scene at Dover. At the end of the speech, 'I am a man / more sinn'd against than sinning' did not have the heroic simplicity of the 1940 and 1950 productions. It was a harsh and dissonant statement which seemed no longer obviously true. Bernard Levin wrote,

the timeless message which this Lear announces is the message which the twentieth-century is sick to hear that evil does not exist but is created, that no man is an island, that the wages of sin is death. 'I am a man more sinned against than sinning' croaks Sir John Gielgud into the teeth of the storm and the storm gathers itself and gives him back 'Liar'. (Truth, 5.8.1955)

Kent began to lead Lear off to the right, but was interrupted by the Fool staggering towards them, kneeling, sobbing and clutching at Lear's garments. In the midst of all the commotion and clumsy jostling, Lear suddenly paused before saying, 'My wits begin to turn'. Still playing the end of the scene for pathos, Gielgud's Lear allowed Kent to lead him upstage to the left, in the direction of the hovel, so that the weak and exhausted Fool was unable to keep up. Lear then noticed that the Fool was in difficulties. He stopped, went back to him, raised him up saying,

Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee. (III.2.72)

The Fool put his left arm around Lear's neck. Kent returned and gently took Lear's left arm and then the three of them departed together.

The storm was probably the most well-orchestrated one that Gielgud's Lear had ever had to speak through. Audibility had always been a major problem for his three previous Lears in the storm scenes, yet in this instance the acoustic evocation was technically assured.

In the storm scene, played on a level stage, without any of the absurd impediments which helped to mar the effect of the scene in the 1950 production we begin to pity Lear. The storm does not drown Gielgud's words

said The Scotsman (2.11.1955). The storm finger, of course, could, and frequently was, classed as an 'absurd impediment' yet it was visually dominating only. What is more striking, from this point of view, was that Gielgud's acting in this production was bitter, more astringent and not at all romanticised. Lear was not so much a giant diverting the power of the storm into his passionate declamation as he was a naked, vulnerable human being alienated from nature. The Times (27.7.1955) said,

Gielgud interprets Lear on the level of realism. The most poetic of actors throws poetry to the winds and comes near to representing Lear as an old gentleman tottering about the stage with the help of a walking stick. He breaks up the verse into prose fragments. The result is that he seems for most of the time to be working too hard at the words and only rarely being carried along by them.

Some of this is exaggeration. Gielgud did not totter around the stage with a walking stick, but strode across it, around the storm finger, whilst Kent and the Fool were bent double. Still, his movements may have broken up the verse more, presenting it with less epic formality, and the atonal sound effects may have stressed the natural ruggedness of the play's language that already borders on prose in places:

Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy? Art cold?
I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow?
(III.2.68)

Then again Gielgud was at liberty to adapt his interpretation of the character to make the best use of the alienation effect induced by Noguchi's décor. Eric Johns wrote,

his interpretation differs from the Lear he played at the Old Vic in 1931 and 1940 and at Stratford in 1950. He is now convinced that Lear is just a stubborn, obstinate

and difficult old man - neither a romantic nor a saintly figure. His earlier interpretations had a certain nobility about them, but Gielgud has now arrived at different conclusions as the result of studying the part for the fourth time. He sees Lear as a victim, but the victim of his own tyranny; only when he has suffered does he realise what the world is really like, but even after he has been purged through suffering he still does not see life through the eyes of a noble being. Because Gielgud refuses to cheat and play the old man as a sympathetic figure, his performance is in striking contrast to the sentimentalised characterisations favoured by the great Victorian actors. ('Gielgud On Tour', Theatre World, September 1955)

But can any actor playing Lear divorce the character entirely from sympathy? Doesn't the play cease to be a tragedy if Lear is the deserving victim of his own tyranny receiving just retribution?

What emerges is that in this most strictly formalised of production settings Lear is thrown into stark relief as an almost entirely unglamourised realistic figure. The language of invocation to the storm, stripped of conventional associations, lacks a real sense of definition to sustain its imaginative richness. Thus a completely abstract style of production does not automatically dilute the power of the spoken word just because realistic elements of style can diminish it. The point is that Shakespeare's verse relies on a range of associations that are at once familiar and explicit and loftily abstract. Vague and imaginatively elevated symbolism works through intimate, easily-identifiable details that are drawn from the common fund of human experience to which we can all easily relate. Sometimes these details are so mundanely literal that their naivety is disconcerting as, for instance, Lear's allusion to the weather-cock on the homely church steeple stands out in its context of mighty, primeval forces contesting with each other. Yet the final impression is never one of mere naivety and through the familiar weather-cock image the undercurrents of association work their way deeply into the mind: the deluge drowns the weather-cock so that it can no longer retain its compass bearings; the only direction

that Lear can take on the heath is inwards into madness. The phallic cockerel is rendered impotent by the waves as Lear's daughters render him impotent. How much of this can carry in a theatre during the speed of a performance is, of course, open to debate, but it is certain that a production which denies objectivity to this colourful tissue of odds and ends that make up Shakespeare's speeches is least likely to demonstrate the breadth of the play's imaginative vision.

When Peter Brook directed the storm scenes of King Lear in 1962 he used huge, rusted metal thundersheets that were operated by stage hands in full view of the audience. The geometric, somewhat abstract, design of his production imitated certain characteristics of Noguchi's décor, but Brook was more careful to supply an uncivilised, semi-realistic background to moderate the abstraction.¹⁵

* * *

The advent of Edgar in his Poor Tom disguise coincides with Lear's complete mental breakdown. To mark this important transition, in 1940, Gielgud adopted an expressive pose. He remained on his knees down-stage after having spoken the prayer for the naked vagabonds and outcasts with the hovel behind him, to one side. His hands were covering his face. The Fool suddenly rushed screaming from the hovel followed, seconds later, by the feigning mad-man. Lear reacted to the commotion in a deranged fashion. There are two slightly different descriptions of what he did. Fordham describes Gielgud pressing his clenched fists to his head, but a letter to Gielgud from Granville-Barker offers the advice that the actor should lift his head and gaze through splayed fingers to suggest a 'madman

looking through bars' (Stage Directions, p.131). Possibly Gielgud experimented with both these actions on different occasions. Granville-Barker's letter is dated the thirtieth of April and the production had already been running for several weeks. The first performance was on the fifteenth of April. Once Poor Tom had emerged from the hovel, Lear got up and moved warily up-stage and around the intruder in a semi-circle. The action was isolated by the stillness of the other characters. When his face again came into view his expression was altered. His jaw was slack and his eyes rolled in his head. There was a wild and random quality in his gestures that betrayed the arrival of insanity.

Two stools were positioned on either side of a brazier at centre stage for the mock trial scene. Upstage, behind them, was a rude cot for Lear to lie on. Gielgud used both stools in the ensuing parody of a legal hearing to represent Goneril and Regan. Deriving warrant from Granville-Barker, who has attributed the chief significance of the scene to lie in the 'show' that it affords, he interpreted it as an extended surrealistic mime, getting the stage picture to symbolize the fantasy (Prefaces, 1, p.294). The Fool and Poor Tom sat on the cot, which thus became the legal bench. Lear placed the two stools standing for Goneril and Regan in front of them for the arraignment. Then he picked up the stool representing Regan by one of its legs and displayed it to the justices. To demonstrate the prisoner's escape the stool was swung round and round. Kent intervened, leading him over to the brazier and getting him to sit down. But Lear still retained his hold upon the other stool and he stroked its hard surface, linking the sensory impression with the metaphysical fact, as he asked 'Is there any cause in nature that make these hard hearts?' (III.6.76).

In 1950 Gielgud adopted a similar treatment. The bench where the Fool and Poor Tom sat was, however, placed at an angle, on one side of the platform. The cot was set further back, side on and parallel with the proscenium, and the stools were in a corner on the left. Lear collected them and placed them in front of the justices as he had done before. He flung the stool that stood for Regan upstage, beneath the cot, after having whirled it around his head. Then, instead of simply feeling the hard surface, he produced a noise by drumming on it with his hand. Alice Venezky describes how the blows were timed 'so that the hollow knocks counterpointed the words "hard hearts" '.¹⁶

The hovel and the mock trial scene were connected in 1955 by the use of the same set. To the edge of the angular dais a large, triangular shape was attached. This had a hole in the middle like the table in the scene at Goneril's house. The long, black gown which Lear wore was also riddled with huge holes that epitomized 'the loop'd and window'd raggedness' of the wretches for whom he prayed. When Lear and his companions took shelter, they climbed through the hole in the triangle and the mock trial scene began with them emerging from the same opening. Lear took the single stool that was present and planted it to the right of the centre, before the dais that was now to serve as the legal bench. The dais was higher at one end than the other and the panel of justices were arranged so that the Fool, the smallest character, sat at the highest point, Poor Tom in the middle, and Kent on the lower part. One stool stood for both offenders. When the Fool summoned Goneril for interrogation (III.6.49) Lear gave it to him and waited while the Fool turned the stool over in his hands. Then, as before, he held it up by the leg, swung it round and let go so that the object flew across

the stage to illustrate Regan's escape. This time he started to chase after it and was detained by Kent and Poor Tom. Kent put a cushion under Lear's head when he eventually got him to lie down on the dais to rest.

Compared to the two earlier treatments of this scene, the outhouse of Gloucester's castle was very sparsely furnished indeed. The stool, a lantern and the cushion were the only props and the dais was both the legal bench and the cot for Lear to lie on. The presence in the background of the hovel, with Lear's entrance bringing this scene and the earlier one together, as if the party had simply passed through it and come out on the other side, made the group's surroundings more indefinite. Whilst Noguchi employed bold hues of red, blue, orange and green at the beginning and end of the play to break up the predominant neutrality of his grey backgrounds, the draining of colour from the episodes around the hovel and the outhouse (III.4., III.6) mirrored the protagonist's exhaustion and decline. In contrast, Granville-Barker's introduction of a brazier into the mock trial scene shed a lurid, infernal glow over the proceedings concordant with Lear's diabolic delusions: 'To have a thousand with red burning spits / Come hissing in upon 'em -' (III.6.15). A gain arising out of this indefiniteness was that the dais that was used for the legal bench was the same as the dais from which the King dispensed justice in the opening scene. Thus the irony was intensified in a way that Granville-Barker would surely have appreciated.¹⁷

With the conclusion of the mock trial scene, the actor playing Lear has the opportunity for a rest, having completed the role's initial movement. Lear has been brought from prosperity to calamity in a series of shattering shocks mounting in waves that finally leave him outcast and bereft of his wits. This wave pattern of successive and irrevocable calamities is an important structural sequence that precipitates the protagonist to his doom and looks forward prophetically to the apocalypse. The play contains a number of religious parallels that confirm this connection explicitly. The most emphatic are Gloucester's 'This great world / Shall so wear out to nought' (IV.6.134) and Kent's question 'Is this the promised end?' (V.3.263). But it is counterpointed by the wheel of fortune, another principal structural motif that has a different impetus, suggesting the idea of perpetual recurrence. According to this second organizing concept, which qualifies the first, Lear's fall does have a limit and, once he has reached it, his fortunes will begin to rise again. The change is marked by the altering preoccupations of his madness. Whereas in the scene of the mock trial he is obsessed by the guilt of Goneril and Regan and their punishment, on the next occasion he appears at Dover he is preoccupied with the vindication of all wrongdoers. From a symbolic execution of justice there is a movement towards a nihilistic denial of justice. Although there is nothing schematic or clear cut about this progression - Lear still accuses the rascal beadle and plans to kill his sons-in-law - the broad impression of a new mood supplanting the old one is sustained and this is reflected in Gielgud's performance in which the humour of Lear is rediscovered once more. 'Happy King of Nature. No troubles' was his guiding note to the scene in 1940 and throughout the notes upon particular lines display this concern also. Directions appear such as 'Light', 'Almost

jolly', 'Comedy', 'Joke' and 'Serio-comic' (Stage Directions, p.127).

The second feature, allied to the first, is the continuity and precision of the actor's gestures and byplay that keep pace with the fluid, flexible association of ideas in the mad speeches. The spontaneous, improvisatory attitude that Gielgud exhibited here in his playing through the successive revivals stands out against the repetitive patterns he employed elsewhere such as in I.3 on the return from the hunt. The variations he introduced suggest a full response to the amplitude and the cryptic, oracular cogency of the writing. Shakespeare has exploited to the full the free-ranging, visionary quality of the madman's utterances, which are unfettered by logical constraints, so that the speaker sounds incoherent, but, at the same time, he has not neglected to pattern the words he puts into Lear's mouth. Lear's language sounds like the product of a disordered mind though there is nothing random about its poetic artfulness. The links between ideas may be unconventional and far-fetched, but they are links nevertheless. Puns, assonance, resemblances of images, gustatory and tactile impressions all bind his conversation together.¹⁸ Gielgud's reading of the part was especially sensitive to this aspect of the language and his movements sustained and enriched the density of the verse texture. In particular, his mime clarified and condensed Lear's wild imaginings expressing them in concrete and therefore accessible terms, so that it became impossible to separate his speaking of the lines from the physical actions which interpreted them.

His appearance in 1940 was devised to recall his original entry as a King. For this purpose he carried a branch of a tree that was similar to his royal staff, a garland like a chain of office and a leafy crown. The ragged garments that he wore were draped with plaited leaves to complete the

Autumnal evocation. Lear entered beneath a hot expanse of yellow sky, on a raised level at the back of the stage, and came down the steps, between two piles of ruined masonry, towards the front, speaking as he came. Gloucester and Edgar, still in disguise, stood to one side unnoticed. Treating his hallucinations as if they were real people, Lear took an imaginary coin from his pouch and gave it to an invisible soldier for press money. Then he pointed with his finger towards a recruit handling his bow clumsily. From the same pouch came a piece of toasted cheese to bait a field mouse that had caught his eye. The gesture of placing the cheese on the ground forged the next link in his monologue when it took on the semblance of throwing a gauntlet to the floor in token of a challenge. He imitated the dog barking at the beggar and leapt up to prevent the rascal beadle lashing the whore. The pygmy's straw was thrown between thumb and forefinger to pierce the beggar's rags. The boots that he believed he was wearing seemed to pinch his feet and Lear fell back against one of the piles of stones with his legs in the air until Edgar humoured him by removing them. For his sermon on the great stage of fools, Lear adopted a mock canonical attitude, looking skyward, speaking in solemn tones, one hand on Gloucester's shoulder, the other raised in a salute. From this position it was a simple matter for him to pat the blind man's head, which thus became the 'good block' that has been a source of editorial controversy. His strategem to shoe a troop of horse with felt was whispered into the ear of Gloucester. Then Lear crept away from the blind man, staff in hand, towards the centre, stealing upon his enemies. He began to lay about him on all sides, using the staff as a weapon to smite his invisible foes. But real people were stealing up around him. They were Cordelia's knights, and by the time Lear had noticed them he was completely surrounded. Yielding his staff to the doctor in both hands in the way a captive general would surrender his sabre, he seemed about to come quietly. However, at the last moment, he broke away, running off pursued by the knights.

Lear's entry in 1950 was contrived in a similar way to recall his royalty. He still carried a leafy branch like a kingly sceptre, but his leafy crown was now made of plaited straw. The spiky appearance of the straw brought it closer to the crown of thorns worn by Christ. Tied around him was a long, dirty rope of ivy leaves. His arms, which had been bare before, were covered by slashed and ragged sleeves. Over his shoulder he wore an animal's pelt (Plate 16). Entering from behind, he mounted a flight of the steps at the centre and came forward, between the oak pillars where the permanent features of the set would have aided in the parody of his former glory. The scene was performed against a backcloth depicting an open stretch of sea and part of the Dover coastline beneath a blustery sky with a suggestion of storm clouds and rain on the landward side. The impression of expansiveness and turbulent air was refreshing after the claustrophobic interiors and dungeon grilles of the earlier scenes and it contrasted vividly with the hot and oppressive yellow sky under which the action had taken place in 1940. Two blocks were set downstage. The one on the left hand side, nearer and slightly angled to the auditorium, was where Gloucester stood. Edgar stood by the other. The two of them watched as Lear came forward. 'Ha! Goneril, with a white beard!' (IV.6.96) was again addressed to Gloucester and Lear approached him. The King made a dart to the left, downstage, to encourage the personified luxury: 'To't, luxury, pell-mell' (IV.6.118). He sat down beside Gloucester to describe the simpering dame. No record exists in the promptbook to show how Gielgud proffered his hand to Gloucester to be kissed, but Gielgud's unusual seated position indicates a treatment differentiated from the 1940 revival. Alice Venezky described the mood conveyed :

Another small but memorable gesture was in IV.6 where Lear, heavy with suffering and madness, rests on a bench beside the blinded Gloucester, who asks to kiss his king's hand. Gielgud conveyed a world of weariness in his slight gesture and empty reply, 'Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality' (1.136)¹⁹



16. King Lear, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1950

The visionary sight of the beadle whipping the whore brought Lear to his feet once more and had him crossing to the centre to intervene. Before he returned to sit beside Gloucester, he put his staff down crosswise in the opening between the two pillars. When Lear finally did recognize Gloucester, he was sitting on the bench beside him. The blind man sank to his knees to pay homage. Now, without his staff, Gielgud had no instrument with which to assail his imaginary enemies. Neither could he perform the action of surrendering a sabre to the gentleman that approached him. But, as he tried to escape from his captors, he ran backwards through the pillars and tripped over it. Immediately he was surrounded and carried off by retainers. This new business, as well as looking forward more directly to Lear's next appearance in the custody of Cordelia, played up the King's helplessness and ended the scene on a bathetic note. Previously Gielgud's use of the staff had tended to enhance Lear's innate regality even in madness, where his surrender of it was dignified and ceremonial.

Further changes occurred in 1955. Lear entered from the far left to the centre singing. It is the first time that this detail is mentioned. He was dressed in a tightfitting white leotard and a loin-cloth. On his head was a crown of bent twigs and the familiar tree branch staff was in his hand. However, a notable omission was the foliage that had decked his person. His garments were not obviously soiled. These details combined to give him a severe and remote aspect that was increased by brilliant lighting. He appeared against a bleak, minimal background that consisted of an offcentre, white triangle with diagonal horizon lines sloping down towards its apex. To one side of the triangle two jagged teeth, suggesting vaguely the peaks of mountains, broke up the horizontal plane by thrusting skywards before a blue cyclorama. The stage itself was bare. Alan S. Downer called it 'a scene of literally breathtaking beauty and yet of incredible simplicity'.²⁰ Gloucester and Edgar stood downstage of Lear, upon

the left. Gielgud began speaking when he reached the centre. Noticing father and son at once, he handed the imaginary press money to Edgar. It was Edgar too who represented the soldier unable to handle his bow properly. Lear took a stick from him as if it was a bow. (Part of Edgar's peasant disguise was a bundle of sticks tied to his back.) The mouse that suddenly attracted his attention caused him to throw a piece of cheese down for it and then, in a movement recalling that described by Fordham in 1940, the piece of cheese was metamorphosed into a gauntlet. Then his preternaturally agile mind returned to the stick, from which he fired an invisible arrow. A fresh link of association was created by the actor's interpretation of the enigmatic 'good block' (IV.6.181). The patting of Gloucester's head in 1940 had intimated that Lear was thinking of a hat block. This then anticipated his next remark about shoeing a troop of horse with felt through the association of 'hats' and 'felt'. But Gielgud did not repeat the movement in 1955. When he came to the remark, he nursed his foot, implying that the good block was the cobbler's shoeing block thus linking the cobbler's art to that of the blacksmith's shoeing of horses. Lear displayed a new protective instinct towards Gloucester as Cordelia's knights crept up on him. He was less withdrawn in his fantasy of murdering his sons-in-law for on the six times repeated 'kill', he heard the knights coming and rose, passing the helpless Gloucester to Edgar. The first knight came down the centre towards Lear. The mad King tried to evade capture by running to the right, but was detained by two more knights who blocked his path with a stole that they carried between them. This they put over his shoulders and then knelt around him. Lear seized the opportunity to escape, running off to the right with two of the knights following.

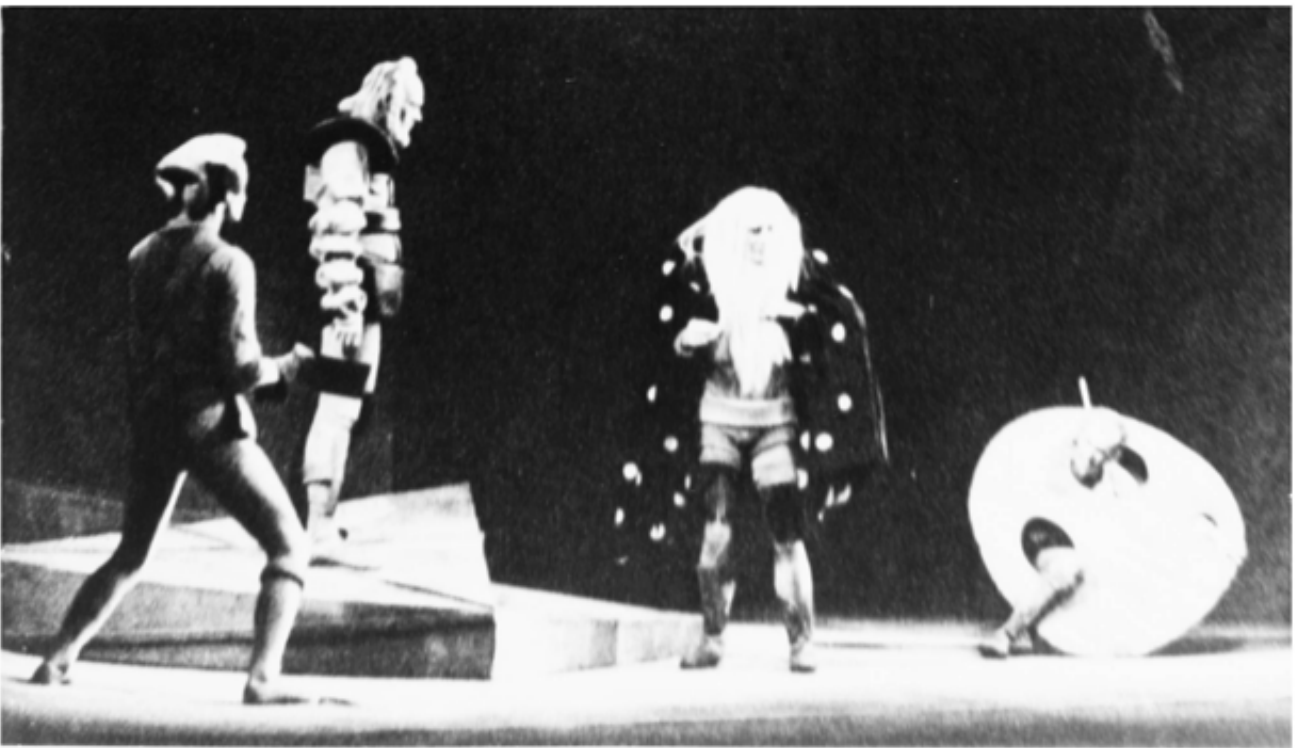
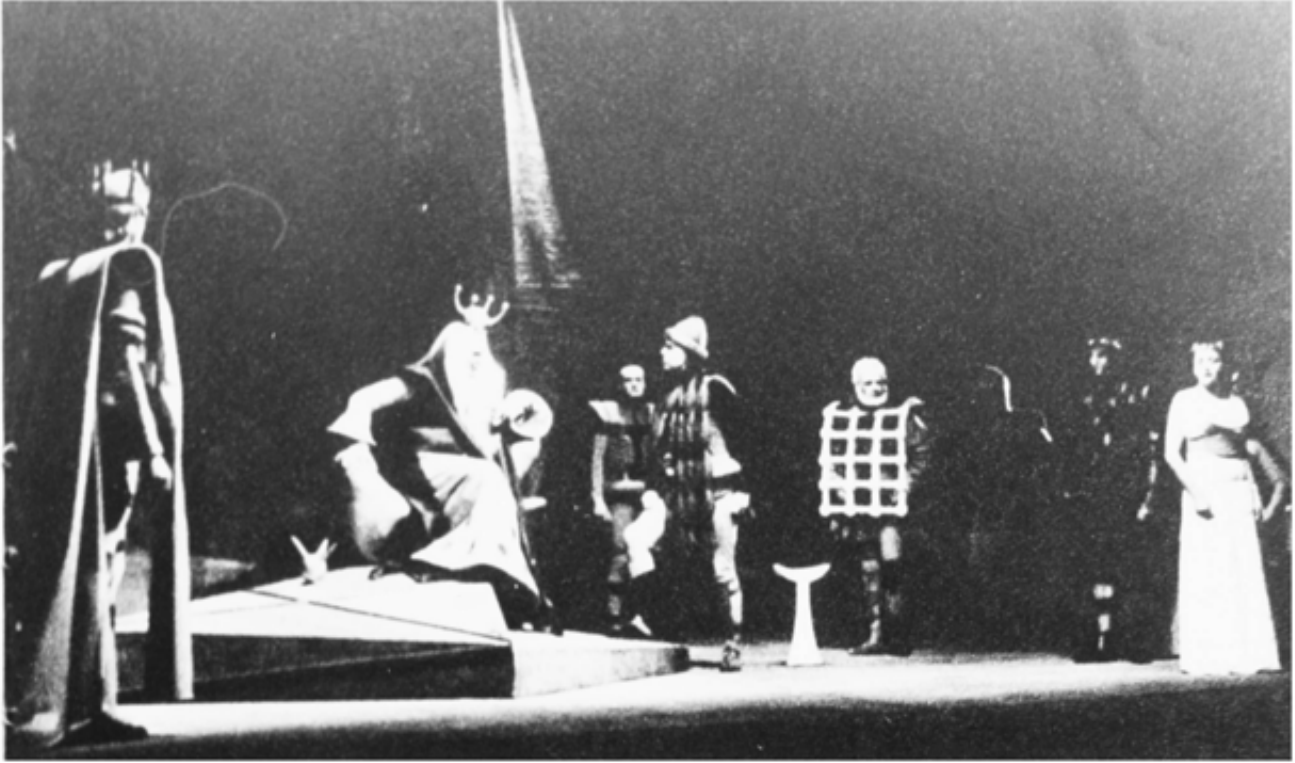
It is noticeable that the business with the stole lends a greater prominence to the clothing imagery of the play. Just as the steady

disintegration of Lear's mind was expressed by his changes of costume, so the onset of calm and lucidity that is the dominant mood in the reconciliation was signalled by Lear being reclothed. The stole, a long piece of striped cloth worn simply by winding around the body, was like a bandage for the King's wounds. Lear says, 'Let me have surgeons; / I am cut to the brains' (IV.6.193) and the two Gentlemen reply, 'You shall have anything' - the idea of bounty implied in the action of providing a garment. The business with the staff which Gielgud had used to show Lear's innate regality (1940), then his mad impotence (1950), had been replaced by a gentler mood though Lear still exits running, imagining himself to be the quarry pursued by hunters. His human frailty was already coming under Cordelia's protection. (See Plates 17 and 18 for the stole and Lear's other costumes.)

* * *

The return of Cordelia into the play is prepared for by the short scene between Kent and a Gentleman that was cut in all three presentations (IV.3).

Granville-Barker directed the reconciliation scene so that the conversation of Cordelia, Kent, the Doctor and the Gentleman occurred on the forestage in front of curtains. These parted to reveal the inside of a tent richly decorated with blue draperies and golden fleurs-de-lys and Lear, to one side, asleep in a chair. He sat in profile to the audience with his head bowed, his hair brushed back neatly from his forehead and his arms resting on those of the chair. Fordham and Gielgud's rehearsal notes disagree about the placing of the actor's hands. The rehearsal notes indicate that Lear's hands were in his lap, but Fordham's account states that they lay along the arms of the chair (Fordham, *Analysis*, IV.7., Stage Directions, p.127). Both agree about the importance of their visibility. If the chair did have arms then the hands would be difficult to see where they folded in Gielgud's



17. King Lear, I.1, I.4, II.4, Theatre Royal, Brighton, 1955

lap. A scarlet robe dressed Lear's body. Music was playing softly in the background and this gave to the actors' voices when they spoke a suspended stillness that could be heightened by pauses of unusual length. Lear awoke slowly, straightening his neck and fluttering his eyelids in the strong light. There was a long pause before his first words: 'You do me wrong to take me out o' th' grave' (IV.7.45). He shielded his face with a hand and then felt for the pin on his breast to reassure himself that he was not dreaming. It was Cordelia who, through her own action, suggested the idea of kneeling to Lear. She knelt on requesting his benediction. Lear followed suit, bending his knees, putting his hands together in a praying attitude. Cordelia prevented him from remaining in that position. The climax of the scene occurred, after agonizing delay, upon Lear's pronouncement of his daughter's name:

Do not laugh at me; ♪
 For, ♪ as I am a man ♪ I think this lady
 To be my child ♪ Cordelia. (IV.7.68)

The protracted pauses enhanced the tentative, groping progress towards recognition and each was tense with a feeling between 'joy and tears' (Fordham, Commentary, IV.7.3). As Lear reached the climactic word he extended his arm and Cordelia flung herself forward weeping. She took his hand and kissed it. He traced the tears on her cheek with two fingers. Then Lear became relaxed and serene. He arose from the chair on Cordelia's invitation to walk, holding her hand in his. The pair departed thus through the rear of the tent, which opened to admit them.

The director's decision to place Lear in a chair, though not to have him revealed to the audience, was derived from a stage direction that appears in the First Folio: 'Enter Lear in a chair carried by Servants'. Granville-Barker particularly wanted to use a chair rather than a bed because of a chair's closer resemblance to a throne. It was a point of staging that illustrated



18. King Lear, IV.6, III.4, V.3, Theatre Royal, Brighton, 1955

his broader aim, which was to show that Lear had been restored to his former kingly state. Hence the scarlet robe instead of the white night-shirt that is often worn in this scene and the splendid heraldic hangings of the tent. The parting of the forestage curtains would have created a magnificent tableau that asserted Lear's recovery of regal status as well as his rescue by Cordelia. But, in 1950, no attempt was made to separate the forestage from the mainstage by the use of curtains. Kent, Cordelia, the Gentleman and the Doctor conversed in front of Cordelia's tent, the interior remaining visible the whole time. Lear was brought on in a bed, carried by four servants, who placed him inside actually during the scene. The bed, unlike the throne, was positioned in the centre, at an oblique angle, offering a three-quarters view of Lear asleep. He was dressed this time in a long, cream-coloured robe gathered in at the waist. A chain of office about his neck perpetuated the idea of the restoration of his royalty, so did the pendant centre piece that hung between the permanent pillars. This was a kind of giant diadem, heavily decorated with metal scrollwork, that gathered in the sides of the tent. It fitted into the centre between two pillars where Lear's throne had stood at the beginning of the play. The flaps of the tent rayed outwards in front of the pillars and were hung from the two sides of the stage where the graceful, curving folds vaguely suggested angelic wings. The audience could see right inside the tent. Archaic string music was playing gently. However, it was felt that the electronic amplification, probably badly adjusted for the opening performances, was too intrusive and did not enhance the mood of the scene (Birmingham Weekly Post, 21.7.1950, Richard Findlater, Tribune, 28.7.1950). When Lear's bed was brought in, Kent stood on the left and the Doctor and the Gentleman stood on the right where their presence directed the audience's attention inwards.

Cordelia's hesitancy was implicit in the indirectness of her approach to the bed. She moved to the foot of it, temporarily masking the sleeper. Then she came round behind it and eventually, by degrees, to the top, her arrival coinciding with her description of the assault of the lightning upon her father's unprotected head:

To stand against the deep dread bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick cross lightning? to watch - poor perdu! -
With this thin helm? (IV.7.32)

As Lear awoke, Cordelia and the Doctor crossed in to left and right of him. Her first direct acknowledgement was spoken from a kneeling position before the bed. The Doctor helped Lear to sit upright so that he could respond to her questions. The old man placed his feet tentatively on the floor as his vision of Cordelia as an angel began to give way to doubts and questions: 'Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight? / I am mightily abus'd ' (IV.7.52). This posture allowed Gielgud to drop easily to his knees in the climactic recognition. But it was an action that Lear appeared to carry out with great clumsiness. T.C.Worsley referred to the 'stumbling, pleading' quality of the recognition. Lear's movement was a 'fall on his knees that is half a fall from bed' (New Statesman, 29.7.1950). When Cordelia's name was at last pronounced the direction in the promptbook reads, 'Cordelia right up to Lear. Doc. step back'. Then she embraced him and 'patted his back soothingly as a mother quiets a troubled child.'²¹ But, according to Alice Venezky, the climax was sustained through to Cordelia's reply:

Ashcroft reflected the anxiety of the audience, and the choked-up eloquence of her 'no cause, no cause' both climaxed and relieved the emotion aroused by the scene.²²

Lear rose unaided and the back of the tent was lifted so that he and Cordelia could be seen departing down the centre in a long and lingering

exit, followed at a distance by the Doctor, Kent and the Gentleman. The scene was brought to a premature close on Lear's line: 'Pray you now forget and forgive; I am old and foolish' (IV.7.85).

Cutting also shortened the ending of the scene in 1955.

Cordelia, Kent, the Doctor and the Gentleman conversed in front of a striped banner hanging from a horizontal, golden spear suspended on wires. The raised banner hovered aloft, seemingly defying gravity, creating in itself a sense of wonder appropriate to its context:

The first scene at the French camp had a wonderful limpid calm created out of nothing; into which a single great banner on a golden arrow-headed pole dropped like a stone into a pool (N.T. Leamington Courier, 2.12.1950)

Four knights carried Lear on in a bed and placed it behind the banner at an oblique angle, affording the audience a slanted view of the reclining figure. His head lying upstage was neither full face nor profile. The Doctor's 'louder the music there' (IV.7.25) was the cue for the banner to be raised. Lear could be seen beyond it. He was dressed in a white, loose, quilted gown tied at the waist that emphasized his purity and humility rather than his former glory. Cordelia came in to him, circling to the head of the bed to indicate his white hairs as she said 'Had you not been their father, these white flakes / Did challenge pity of them.' (IV.7.30). The awakening of Lear caused her to start and she recoiled from him slightly. Because of Gielgud's recumbent position it was necessary for him to sit up before he could speak and it was, once more, the Doctor who provided him with the support he needed. The question of who kneels first in this scene is a crucial one since it is the protagonist's silent, kneeling attitude more than anything he says that marks his ultimate abandonment of pride and clearness of vision. Is the movement suggested

to him by anything that happens in the scene? Is Lear recalling the praying posture that he adopted on the heath when his first universal impulse of compassion occurred or does the idea simply arise spontaneously in his mind? Strictly speaking there is no need for anybody to kneel in this scene save the actor playing Lear. Cordelia's 'O, look upon me, sir, /And hold your hands in benediction o'er me' (IV.7.57) is often taken to imply that she kneels and this is indeed what happened on the stage of the Old Vic in 1940 where Jessica Tandy was required to lower herself to Lear's level in anticipation of his blessing.²³ Lear's genuflection had then echoed hers. The sacramental implications of the gesture had been conveyed by the actor knitting his hands together. In 1950 Peggy Ashcroft's Cordelia had kneeled the instant she addressed him directly and Gielgud's clumsy fall from the bed had brought him alongside her. But in 1955 everyone knelt including the Doctor, Kent, the Gentleman and Cordelia, all of whom acknowledged Lear the moment he awakened. The old man's failure to recognize her at once caused Cordelia to break away from him in anxiety. Reassured by the Doctor, she returned to his bedside and knelt again to plead for his blessing. Lear tried to imitate her but failed and had to be lifted back onto the bed by Cordelia before she could return to her former position. The original idea was for Cordelia to kiss Lear's hands as she assured him of who she was - a more reverential action than Peggy Ashcroft's patting of his back - but this direction has been crossed out of the promptbook, which contains no suggestion that any other piece of business was put in its place, and is given to the Doctor instead as a parting gesture. Cordelia's chief response was reserved for her 'No cause, no cause' (IV.7.75) where she laid her head upon her father's shoulder. This action and the pause that followed, surprisingly the only pause that is marked in the promptbook for this scene, creates the inference that it was here that the climax was reached. After they

had clung to each other in silence, Cordelia and Lear exchanged a few more words together before the Doctor respectfully intervened. The physician had a hand in raising Lear to his feet alongside Cordelia. Their lingering departure down the centre was repeated, Cordelia leading her father by the hand, with the addition of the attending knights turning in on them as they passed.

* * *

In 1940, for his last entry with Cordelia's body, Gielgud wore a harness beneath his cloak that enabled him to carry her in one arm. The main purpose of this was to restate the important theme of Lear's physical power, but, at the same time, it left Gielgud's other arm free for gesticulation. Lear was seen initially against a panoramic vista of tents above the heads of the other actors on the raised level as Edmund was being borne off by soldiers at the front, on the other side of the stage. His lateral progress was marked by a series of shuddering cries ascending in pitch and volume until the centre of the raised level was reached. Each 'howl' had its central vowel unnaturally extended and the final consonants lifted as well to produce the effect of an animal's cry rather than a human utterance. His free hand was brandished above his head to take in 'heaven's vault' and the hard, fricatives of the last word were emphasized explosively: 'Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so / That heaven's vault should crack' (V.3.258). Then descending the steps to the front, Lear laid the corpse down softly and, leaning on one knee, gazed intently into Cordelia's face. The dead bodies of Goneril and Regan had been laid together on a bier nearby for the first few performances. However, the unfavourable reaction of the audience had led to their removal altogether on subsequent nights so that the spectacle of the royal family

once more united was omitted later on in the run. A cushion was placed under Cordelia's head by female attendants, but Lear's request for a looking glass was passed over. As a substitute he plucked a feather from the air and rested it beside her nostrils. Throughout, Lear's byplay with Kent was designed to establish an undercurrent to his preoccupation with Cordelia, recalling the mood at the opening of the play. Kent's first interruption in this scene was greeted with a strong rebuff. For his second that leads to Lear's query about his identity, Gielgud was told by Granville-Barker in a letter to deliver the question in 'a highly indignant "how-dare-you-enter-our-presence-after-I-have-banished-you" tone'. Kent's rejoinder was then met by a weak repetition of the original gesture that Lear had used when banishing him (6.5.1940, Stage Directions, p.130) - an imperious wave of the hand with eyes averted.

Leaning over the body to plead with it, Lear imagined that he heard a reply. He put his ear to Cordelia's dumb lips:

Cordelia, Cordelia! Stay a little. Ha!
 What is't thou says't? Her voice was ever soft,
 Gentle and low - an excellent thing in woman. (V.3.271)

The three syllables of Cordelia's name had a melodious lilt to them like the refrain of a ballad. The emphasis fell on the 'e' and after this the voice trailed off without becoming indistinct, the high and then falling note producing a yearning quality. After 'stay a little' there was a quickening of pace. The rising inflection of the question was allowed to hover in the air on the last assonant syllable. Lear arose on

his recollection of former days, the Captain's acknowledgement of the truth of his slaying Cordelia's murderer temporarily renewing his ancient vigour. 'I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion, / I would have made them skip.' (V.3.276) was robust and hearty. He braced himself above the corpse. There followed an interlude during which a messenger brought the news of Edmund's death while Lear wandered upstage. It was Gielgud's idea, opposed at first but eventually accepted by Granville-Barker, that Lear should find the rope that had been used to hang Cordelia in the hands of one of the onlooking soldiers. Taking it from the man, he returned to the body and holding the rope in both hands, proclaimed in a rising shriek of agony: 'And my poor fool is hang'd!'. Through the use of this prop the audience could be in no doubt that the King was referring to Cordelia. He kneeled again beside her to repeat the five 'nevers'. There was a pause after the first. The second was reiterated dully as Lear pondered on the bald fact of death. The third and the fourth were a pair coming faster and delivered in mounting anguish. The fifth and last was separated from the others and was lower in pitch and hollow with despair. Several recordings of Gielgud's delivery of this passage exist and alongside the impressive display of technical virtuosity in distinguishing each of the 'nevers', the most remarkable thing about the actor's treatment is the definite progression of thought that he invests them with.²⁴ Lear lights upon the word seemingly by accident. There is a pause while he considers its implications. The essential meaning of the expression is contemplated in blank, empty detachment. He seems to be staring into a void. Then pain comes rushing back to fill the emptiness. He is appalled by the certainty of Cordelia's extinction and his mind revolts at it. Lastly, he exhibits bleak resignation at the prospect. The subtext is developed along these lines so that beneath the repetition there is a coherent dialectic.

The tightness of his clothes distracted Lear from his mental suffering. He put his hands to his throat to indicate that he was choking. It was Edgar who released the button that was pinching him. Standing up once more, Lear pointed down at Cordelia's face, his expression changing from pain to joy. The enigmatic last words of the character were interpreted as a sign that he imagined life to be returning to her. Gielgud's Lear, therefore, died of ecstasy, falling into the arms of Edgar. Albany and Edgar together lowered the father's body across that of the daughter. For the concluding tableau Kent knelt at Cordelia's head with Edgar and Albany standing above looking down upon the two deceased members of the old dynasty. The fall of the curtain made it unnecessary to remove the bodies from the stage.

In 1950 the premature entry of Lear and Cordelia as prisoners resulted in the tightening of the connection between the main-plot and the sub-plot. Only slight alterations were made to the scenic provisions after the reconciliation episode. The structure that had served as Cordelia's tent with its crown-like apex remained on view until the end of the play, but the back of the tent and the side awnings had been adjusted to allow the audience to look right through to the back of the stage. This meant that the remaining pieces of the tent and the crown constituted a kind of arch that reunited the permanent supports. Edgar and Gloucester were standing downstage, in the centre, in front of this arch, conversing, when Lear and Cordelia entered behind. They were guarded by three soldiers and Edgar stopped to look at them, before saying 'Ripeness is all' (V.2.11). So Lear and Cordelia provided an emblematic illustration of his sentiment just as Edgar, in his Poor Tom disguise, had embodied many of the mad King's remarks on the heath. The incident was mentioned by Ruth Ellis in The Stratford-upon-Avon Herald and South

Warwickshire Advertiser (21.7.1950) where it was taken to illustrate how the continuity of performance pointed to some of Shakespeare's more subtle intentions.

The last scene was invested with the stately, ceremonial atmosphere that had been lacking in 1940. Goneril and Regan were brought in on two biers carried by four soldiers, each from opposite sides. A further two soldiers followed the pallbearers, holding banners aloft, and the two processions came to a halt, setting down their loads to the right and left of the pillars, in a mirror formation. Edmund died onstage and was borne off by a drummer via the right assembly (the later references to his death were cut) while Lear came on from the left at the back, his approach masked by a general movement of the crowd in the direction that the body was being carried. When he turned to come down centre, passing through the pillars beneath the arch of the tent, he stood in front of the suspended diadem with Cordelia in both arms and the corpses of Goneril to the left and Regan to the right, setting forth the tragic reunion of the family. The full depth of the entrance imparted to the tableau a resonant finality.

Cordelia was placed on the floor, downstage, with Lear bending over her. Together the pair constituted an image of private agony with Kent, Albany and Edgar, the potential sympathisers, isolated to the right. Kent kneeled formally to acknowledge Lear's eventual recognition of him. But the temporary reanimation of Lear's old spirit, that prompted him again to rise and stand stalwartly over the body as he remembered his fighting prowess, quickly dwindled. Turning away from his faithful servant, Lear wandered back towards the oak pillars where he found the rope that had been used to hang Cordelia lying upon the ground. Cutting led to the juxtaposition of Albany's 'What comfort to this great decay may come / Shall be applied'

(V.3.296) and Lear's implicit denial of comfort 'And my poor fool is hang'd' (V.2.205). The five 'nevers' were spoken again kneeling over the body and yet it was Kent who, more fittingly, performed the last office for his master of releasing the button that was suffocating him. Indeed, the conclusion was devised to bring Kent to the fore. Granville-Barker's final tableau had tended to allow Albany, Edgar and Kent to share the importance. Now, although it is still Edgar who catches the body of Lear as he collapses, the job of carrying it from the stage was allocated to the Earl. The postponement of the fall of the curtain until after the stage is cleared produces the more ceremonious conclusion.

Albany moved downstage. Soldiers raised the bodies of the three sisters and moved in that direction also. Having picked up Lear, Kent stood in the centre. When the bearers had reached the front he started to come forward. They turned upstage and made their way beneath the hanging diadem, filing out slowly. Edgar and Albany followed. Kent stood upon the forestage with Lear in his arms; then he turned and made after the others. The processional exit was performed to the rhythmic beat of a drum.

In 1955 three red kites were placed in front of the Dover background for the last movement of the play to create an impression of resurgent conflict. The biers of Goneril and Regan were brought on in state to a dead march, from the right, and placed on either side, diagonally, with their heads downstage. Alteration of Lear's entry down centre was occasioned by the asymmetry of the set. He came from the same direction as the biers along the back, carrying Cordelia in both arms with her head resting on his right shoulder. His downward movement was made before he reached the centre, at a point to the right of it. Passing between the biers, he was met by Kent and Albany who helped him to lay the body upon the ground.

In the ensuing pause, Lear looked down at her and then knelt to pronounce 'She's gone for ever, / I know when one is dead and when one lives; / She's dead as earth' (V.3.261). Kent's ceremonious kneeling was ignored. There was a solemn pause after 'All's cheerless, dark and deadly' (V.3.290). While Albany conferred his power upon Edgar, Lear found the hangman's noose that had been responsible for his daughter's death. However, instead of brandishing it to accompany his agonized shriek 'And my poor fool is hang'd!' (V.3.305), Gielgud introduced the innovatory business of catching up Cordelia in his arms. Half kneeling over her, nursing the lifeless torso, he rocked it violently. The vigorous action contrasted with the earlier gentle handling of Cordelia in the 1940 production, where cushions had been propped under the actress's head, and suggests a starker, more frenzied interpretation. J. C. Trewin was struck by the ferocity of the business: 'Before dying he shakes his hanged daughter wildly in his arms' (Illustrated London News, 13.8.1955) . It was Kent who once more undid the button that was choking his master. In death, without rising first, Lear fell across the body of his daughter. Edgar seems to have had much less influence over the final scene than had been allowed to him previously, he was not there to catch the dead King as he fell, and this was reflected in the assignation of the concluding words of the play to Albany who now emerged as the principal figure.²⁵

* * *

To achieve legitimate recognition for himself in an individual role an actor must persuade his audiences that the interpretation he is offering is one of many valid readings. He is unlike, say, a painter who produces an independent artistic entity that may be exposed to frequent reappraisals. As Lear, Gielgud has never succeeded in winning whole-hearted public acceptance of the same kind that was given to his Richard II and Hamlet,

both 'standard' interpretations that have become yardsticks for future performers. This is not to say that his Lear has failed to engage the imagination or arouse intense excitement as well as much serious critical consideration. If certain hysterical reactions to George Devine's production are discounted, then it may be avouched that it has consistently done all these things. Still, his interpretation remains controversial. A general survey of reviews covering his four performances reveals three broad themes of continuity underlying many diverse opinions:

1) The extent to which Lear's tragedy may be communicated in theatrical terms remains an open question. Although few reviewers would contend that the productions Gielgud has appeared in have demonstrated that the play is fundamentally unactable, their frequent invocations of Charles Lamb, and the romantic tradition that his opinions express, show that they retain reservations about the theatre's ability to transmit the complete range and scope of the tragedy. The feeling perseveres that there is a further dimension to the play that the stage has so far left untouched. Possibly this is a warrant for further theatrical developments and experimentation. It certainly need not be taken to rule out the eventuality of a dramatic representation, under different conditions, offering an experience closer in spirit to that of Shakespeare's poetic score.

2) A certain distance has always been felt to exist between Gielgud's emotional and imaginative identification with the character and the physical and vocal means that he has used to project it. No actor can transcend his physical limitations entirely (although with skill he can play down their influence considerably) and Gielgud's qualities of speech and physique have continued to be discernible through his assumption of the Lear Persona - not always to the advantage of the characterization.

3) The unusualness of the Gielgud interpretation has remained manifest. His Lear, partly due to his natural endowments and partly to the distinctive acting style that he has developed, has persistently challenged prevailing assumptions about the part's primitive, stentorian and patriarchal eminence. Reviewers have been struck not only by the smaller scale and flickering, nervous energy rather than the sustained dynamism of his interpretation but also by its mental depth, refinement, pathos, humour, civilized condescension (aided by production styles that have distanced the play's primitivism?) and strict integrity. It was Ivor Brown writing about the 1950 production at Stratford who described Gielgud as 'the text incarnate' (Observer, 20.8.1950).

These three themes offer a uniform perspective on what are otherwise four very distinct productions. In 1931 Harcourt Williams's simple, stylized arrangements of cubes and blocks and black velvet curtains provided the play with 'an unlocalised setting that might be anywhere', though the costumes, with their bold runic devices, alluded to a vaguely Celtic, pre-Roman Britain (John Gielgud interviewed by G.W.B., Observer, 12.4.1931). His use of the drop-curtain and realistic sound effects of wind, thunder and lightning ran aground in the storm scenes, however, where the action was broken, and did not help Gielgud in suggesting Lear's complete mental breakdown. This was the only occasion when Gielgud played in a context that set the story so far back in time and, even here, the allusion was faint and indefinite.

In the 1940 production the accent was on sophistication with Roger Furse's medieval palace setting and elaborate costumes illustrating a society on the point of decadence. Lear's rich robes, curled beard and the elegant manners of his court highlighted the sense of false appearances as did the sight of Regan, in opulent mourning costume, making up before

a mirror while she conversed with Oswald in IV.5. Emblems such as the sword, the crown and sceptre were used to reinforce the idea of Lear's greatness and these were supported by accompanying tableaux devised to echo the imperial theme. Thus Lear entered, mad, at Dover, wearing a crown of leaves and carrying a branch, recalling his original entry in the scene of the division of the kingdom; when he was reunited with Cordelia he sat in a chair like a throne, wearing a scarlet robe. In the final scene when Lear, standing over Cordelia's body, recognized Kent, he repeated the gesture that he had used at the beginning of the play to banish him. Episodes such as these were then thrown into relief by the simple, homely style of the scene at Goneril's residence where Lear returned from the hunt, shed his outdoor clothes and a table was laid for dinner or the scene where he pronounced judgement on the two joint stools before a glowing brazier in the hut Gloucester had provided for shelter from the storm.

This production, too, foundered in the storm scenes because it failed to synthesize the realistically treated grandeur of the elements with the poetic grandeur of Gielgud's acting. Whilst the static, oratorio treatment of the verse lent prominence to Lear's spoken evocation, the lighting and the sound effects remained intrusive (as in 1931) and were ill-harmonized together. Granville-Barker also used curtains to divide his stage, causing the action to be played sometimes in front and sometimes directly revealed as when Lear and the Fool were suddenly discovered in place, on a rostrum, under the violence of the wild sky (III.2). The production had greater continuity and was more thorough in its attention to interpretative detail than its predecessor, which seems to have been effective in sporadic bursts only. Whereas Gielgud, under Harcourt Williams's direction, demonstrated his virtuosity in a series of dazzling displays that were weakly connected, particularly during and after the first

storm scene, Granville-Barker found an effective shape for the whole performance that got the action moving smoothly and ensured the coherence of Lear's development. The only part of the play where the director's method definitely faltered was in the partially technical problems of coordinating the storm effects. Andrew Cruickshank, who played alongside Gielgud in 1940 as Cornwall and in 1950 as Gloucester, summarised the decisive influence Barker had over the two productions:

It was clear that between 1958 when he {Barker} published his prefaces to the play and 1940 he had thought a lot about Lear, just as Gielgud had pondered much on it between 1940-1950. In 1950 he was more mature, the measure of the play was more under control and ideas of Barker's which he had pencilled into the text, emerged in 1950 - the continual sense of irony between Lear and Gloucester the one mentally bereft, the other physically deprived ... He had difficulty in assaying the concepts of Lear until Barker appeared, who helped him 'measure' the play. Measurement of the great plays is given to very few actors. {Measurement - the technical appreciation of the full shape of a play in performance.} (Letter to the writer, August 1979)

The 1950 production was indeed the most lavish, the most technically assured, of the four productions we have been considering. The permanent setting, despite its visual assertiveness, was very useful in focussing the action and relating the two diffuse narratives of the play. Leslie Hurry's design preserved the sweeping, epic grandeur of King Lear and at the same time kept up a symbolic commentary on the action that enhanced the lucidity of the story. Whilst his style appears somewhat dated now, typical of the fashion for ostentatious, eye-catching décor at Stratford in the late forties and early fifties that Gielgud's Much Ado About Nothing catered for, it was a very practical, serviceable arrangement also. The costumes maintained the emphasis on decadent sophistication, updating the play still further to the period of Elizabethan England with the appearance of ruffs, farthingales and jewelled clothing. The aim was not to be explicit

about a period, but rather represented a search for a style of formalism that would support the play's wide frame of reference. The great doors closing on Lear when he is locked out of Gloucester's castle and the winged-crown emblem of Cordelia's tent at once perpetuated the ideas formulated by Granville-Barker in the earlier production; they also increased the range of imaginative associations. The shape and scale of the sets not only added to the formal symmetry and the sense of pattern of the stage groupings - which was also very important to Barker - they influenced the whole tone of the performance by giving the actors something to play up to. The storm music, however, provided too decorative and elaborate a context to relay the naked power of Lear's invocations to the elements and Gielgud's voice had again to compete with a badly integrated sound score. Of the four productions, this was, nevertheless, probably the most visually stunning.

The 1955 Noguchi/Devine production developed formalism in a different direction towards the modern world of abstract art and the classical Japanese theatre. The tonsured wigs and the vaguely stylized movements of the players (Goneril and Regan in the first scene, for instance) against the symbolic, abstract shapes of kites and giant mobile screens removed the play so far from conventional period associations that many of the reviewers imagined King Lear to be set in the futuristic fantasy world of science fiction. This produced an alienation effect on the character of Lear, causing some commentators wrongly to attribute a complete change of interpretation to Gielgud. There was a genuine intention to enhance the absurd element in Lear arising out of the incongruity of the pretensions of men and the place they occupy in a mysterious, austere universe. Business supported the décor in establishing both a harsh and a grotesque atmosphere.

Lear's knights maintained a conspicuous presence: when Lear defended his train against Goneril's accusations of rowdy behaviour, he singled out Kent who had just finished beating up Oswald; in the final scene Gielgud presented Lear's grief with stark frenzy, shaking Cordelia's body wildly in his arms. But this was no more than the text warranted and Gielgud certainly played for emotional sincerity at the end of the first storm scene with the aid he offered to the Fool, the pathos of the mad scene at Dover, and the kneeling reverence shown to Lear in Cordelia's tent. So, in the final analysis, one is inclined to agree with J. C. Trewin and Derek Granger that Gielgud's interpretation of Lear was less altered by the production context than most critics suggested. Bernard Levin and Eric Johns were certainly wrong in thinking that the role that had been entirely refashioned.²⁶ Gielgud's Lear was

a further extension of the performance which he gave memorably a few years ago. As ever, the voice is most noble, and the playing of a superb lucidity and revelatory comprehension. Certain moments - the first hint of madness and the recognition of Cordelia at the end - are given an almost startling pregnancy. However, the final impression is as if we were watching emotion behind glass, just as a frame is looked for around Noguchi's arrangements. (Derek Granger, Financial Times, 27.7.1955)

The 1955 production was a partially innovative experiment, representing an incomplete grafting of the visual dimension with the verbal one, and yet in shattering the conventional mould of décor it stimulated a genuinely progressive trend of re-evaluation. It had a direct influence on Peter Brook's 1962 production of Lear and, in some ways, anticipated the Royal Shakespeare Company's later preoccupation with austere, symbolically abstract décors, but Gielgud was the wrong sort of actor to carry it through successfully and any production that does not totally support the interpretation of the central character must inevitably break down. Devine's and Noguchi's basic error emerged fully in the first storm

scene where the extreme style of formalism they used was revealed to be at odds with Shakespeare's use of familiar, detailed, semi-realistic allusions. The versatile, eclectic style of the language did not agree with the severely formal décor.

In view of the amount of variety in these productions it would be misleading to argue that they were steadily developing the play in any one direction. Quite clearly they were each original and independent treatments that overlaid the text with a definite, distinctive style of their own devising, though, if we were looking for a broad classification, we might group the two Old Vic productions together (1931, 1940), because of their lighter, less overtly symbolic formalism and the direct nature of Granville-Barker's influence, and the two later ones (1950, 1955) because they were markedly formalistic and symbolic and employed very elaborate visual settings. In 1950 and 1955 Granville-Barker's influence was still there, of course, in Gielgud's acting, but this did not give the productions their distinctive ambience so much as the settings and the costumes did.

What links the productions is the underlying consistency of Gielgud's interpretation and the manner in which this was presented in production styles that have all emphasized the civilized decadence and sophistication of the Lear world rather than its primitive harshness. The productions all played down the significance of the historical setting in ancient Britain and sought to present the play as a timeless myth, either through the blending of stylized, vaguely historical symbols, (Regan's ruff and Lear's gothic throne in 1950, for example) or through an entire disregard of any kind of period convention, as with the Nogochi décor. Gielgud's Lear has always looked strong, spry, and well-groomed in the early scenes, or at least presented an appearance of sartorial show in keeping with the

avant garde fashions of his society. His body has been generally covered throughout the play even when the text might have been taken to support more physical nakedness. At Lear's 'Come, unbutton here' (III.4.108) after he has seen Poor Tom on the heath, Eric Porter removed all his outer garments. Gielgud kept his on and wore besides, at different times, glorious robes and rags, long loose gowns, white surplices, animal skins, a leotard, perforated cloaks and he has been surrounded by all the royal trappings: staff-sceptre, diadem, crowns of leaves and twigs, hats, whips, chains of office, rings, jewels and swords. His acting has set off the rich human complexity of Lear alongside his archetypal grandeur.

Gielgud has presented Lear as a man of sanguine temperament and powerful, dangerously unstable passions. At the same time, along with the deep primeval emotions of love, hatred, rage, and compassion, he has discovered sarcasm, irony, affectation, pride, slyness, and civilized dignity even in the later madness. His condescension towards servants and casual assumption of social distinction, by turns arrogant and compelling, has justified Kent in saying 'but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master... Authority' (i.2.28) and helped to keep alive our sense of the play's preoccupation with ordered hierarchy and divided duties. He has suggested the qualities of surprise, suspense, and pervasive atmosphere within Lear's speeches beneath their obvious intensity and passionate rhetoric. He has found a way of counterpointing the amplitude of the tragedy with physical inventiveness just as Barker observed Shakespeare's poetry focussing on the universal through the particular - the magnitude of the cataclysm at the end of the play distilled in Lear's anxiety to release the button at his neck which is choking him. The fluency and the imaginative sensitivity of Gielgud's smallest actions and the evocative way in which he has used simple props such as the rope around Cordelia's neck has recreated before audiences the dramatically close-knit texture of Shakes-

peare's writing, proving that it is not necessary to see Lear wielding thunderbolts to have a physical image of his heroic struggle with fate. The ability to play one mood off against another, to build up a sense of the contradictions in human behaviour and still retain a coherent impression of character is something that Gielgud has amply demonstrated in his fusion of the mad gaiety of Lear with his nihilistic despair. The ecstasy Gielgud's Lear experienced on the point of death has been another way of presenting truth through contradictions.

Gielgud's interpretation has really been an attempt, then, to present a subtle, intricate, credible, poignant, humanly diversified character, true to the intellectual coherence of the verse, who would still possess the awesome grandeur and the numinousness of a patriarchal symbol. One is not so much struck by the fact that, in the last analysis, he failed to realize the full dimensions of the role, but by how few were the concessions his technical artistry made to the quality of his build and personality. Great Lears since the 1950's have tended to fall into two categories: the primitive, physically rugged giants, boldly rhetorical underplayers of pathos, such as Scofield, and the smaller, versatile, nervous, charismatic, kingly play-actors like Yuri Yarvet in Grigori Kozintsev's Russian film. Seldom do we see an approach that attempts, as Gielgud's did, to combine the pathos and the intellect of the one type with the emotional force and the sensuous reality of the other.

1. Except where otherwise indicated, information on the productions discussed in this chapter is principally based on the following sources:

OLD VIC, 1931

Harcourt Williams, Four Years at the Old Vic

John Gielgud interviewed by G.W.B., The Observer (12.4.1931)

Hallam Fordham. 'The Player in Action: John Gielgud as King Lear',
Typescript

OLD VIC, 1940

Hallam Fordham, 'The Player in Action: John Gielgud as King Lear',
Typescript

John Gielgud, 'Granville-Barker rehearses King Lear', Chapter V and
'Harley Granville-Barker on King Lear' Appendix I in Stage Directions

Andrew Cruickshank, Letter to the writer (August 1979)

SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE, 1950

Harry Andrews interviewed by the writer, Cassette (5.3.1980)

Illustrations, Theatre World (August 1950)

Cedric Thorpe Davies, Incidental Music for King Lear, recording
promptbook
programme

John Gielgud, The Ages of Man, recording
King Lear with John Gielgud, recording

Andrew Cruickshank, Letter to the writer, (August 1979)

THEATRE ROYAL, 1955

Isamu Noguchi, 'Designer's Note' in The Folio Press Shakespeare King Lear

'John Gielgud Discusses the Controversial Lear with R.B. Marriot', The Stage, (18.8.1955)

Roberto Gerhard, Incidental Music for King Lear, recording
programme
promptbook

2. Gielgud has appeared as Thomas Mendip in Christopher Fry's The Lady's not for Burning in England: (Globe, 1949) and America (Royale, New York, 1951).
3. Charles Lamb, 'On the Tragedies of Shakespeare', The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb, edited by W. Macdonald, A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy.

4. References are to Fordham followed by the citation of the specific section of the work discussed (Commentary, Analysis, Gielgud's Notes) and the corresponding act and scene groupings. The pages of the typescript are not numbered.
5. Descriptions of this entry may be found in Four Years At The Old Vic (p.112) and in Fordham.
6. Gielgud's note on this section of the scene seems to imply the contrary for the note reads: 'Eat and drink heartily' (Stage Directions, p.122) But Lear, in fact, did not finally eat although Granville-Barker wanted him to at first. The disagreement between actor and director over this point is referred to in Fordham (Gielgud's Notes, 1.4). The practical instinct of the director was here at odds with the theoretical reconstruction in the Preface where the following statement is made: 'We know that he {Lear} sets out on a long hard ride, dinnerless after his hunting' (p.288).
7. The curse is contained on a cassette (Sir John Gielgud in His Greatest Roles , ZCF 351) introduced by Ralph Richardson.
8. Significantly, Salvini, whose physical stature and powerful voice made him capable of delivering the curse as a mighty oration preferred to deliver it with quiet intensity too. He supplied the main precedent for Gielgud's approach, though Gielgud does not seem to have set out to consciously imitate him.
9. Fordham (Analysis 1.1) refers to the consideration and omission of this piece of staging from the 1940 production where Lear entered apart from the other characters. The point is discussed in William Poel's Shakespeare in the Theatre (London, 1913) in which Poel argues in favour of a dual entry.
10. Reviewers such as T.C. Worsley and Alan S. Downer did make the distinction (New Statesman, 6.8.1955) ('A Comparison of Two Stagings; Stratford-upon-Avon and London', Shakespeare Quarterly, 6 (1955), 429-433).
11. H.G. Matthews, 'The Stratford Season', Theatre World, August 1950, 19-35 (p.35).
12. Philip Hope Wallace, Time and Tide, 29.7.1950. Alice Venezky, 'The 1950 Season at Stratford-upon-Avon: A Memorable Achievement in Stage History', Shakespeare Quarterly, 2 (1951), 73-77. Most of the storm sounds and music were on discs which were cued manually. A wind machine was operated separately. There were no live musicians for this production.

13. Recordings of the incidental music for this production and also for the one in 1950 are available at the Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon where they produce a comical effect when listened to on ordinary playing equipment. With the appropriate amplification, in the context of a theatrical performance, however, the effect could have been menacing in the extreme.

14. Alan S. Downer 'A Comparison of Two Stagings; Stratford-upon-Avon and London', Shakespeare Quarterly, 6 (1955), 429-433. Lionel Hale, Everybody's London (30.7.1955), An Actor and His Time, A B.B.C. radio series produced by John Powell, 'Designer's Note', The Folio Press Shakespeare: King Lear.

15. The connection with Paul Scofield's performance under the directorship of Peter Brook has been explored by A. J. Harris 'King Lear in the Theatre: A Study of the Play through the Performances of Garrick, Kean, Macready, Irving, Gielgud and Scofield', Ph.D., University of Birmingham, 1966. Peter Brook has acknowledged the influence of George Devine's 1955 production.

16. See 12.

17. Granville-Barker mentions the relationship of this montage to the montage at the beginning of the play: 'Where Lear, such a short while since, sat in his majesty there sit the Fool and the outcast with Kent whom he banished beside them; and he, witless, musters his failing strength to beg justice upon a joint stool. Was better justice done, the picture ironically asks, when he presided in majesty and sanity and power?' (Preface, p.294).

18. Kenneth Muir offers examples of the way in which the various expressions Lear uses spark each other off (The New Arden Shakespeare: King Lear, edited by Kenneth Muir, p.163).

19. See 12.

20. See 14.

21. See 11.

22. See 12.

23. See Ronald Watkins and Jeremy Lemmon, The Poet's Method, p.78. It is noticeable that Lear makes no mention of Cordelia kneeling in his description of their mutual imprisonment that seems in part to be based on the occurrences at their meeting (V.3.10). In The True Chronicle History of King Lear Cordelia does kneel.

24. The Ages of Man, Philips, ABL 3269, ABL 3331; King Lear, 121987 - 121993 (British Institute of Recorded Sound). Both have been of use in reconstructing speeches in this last scene.

25. The Quarto attributes the final speech to Albany whereas the Folio attributes it to Edgar. Contemporary stage practice agrees with modern critical opinion in tending to favour Edgar as the speaker, but this solution is by no means standardised. (See Note 332-5, The New Arden Shakespeare: King Lear, p.206) The allocation of the speech to Edgar does perhaps make for the most optimistic conclusion since he is the younger, more forward-looking of the two characters. Albany is demoralized and intent on resigning his power to more capable men.

26. J. C. Trewin, Birmingham Post, 27.7.1955; Bernard Levin, Truth, 5.8.1955; Eric Johns, 'Gielgud on Tour', Theatre World, September 1955, 24-25.

CHAPTER SIXTHE TEMPEST

Trinc. What have we here? a man or a fish?
 dead or alive? A fish: he smells
 like a fish; a very ancient and fish-
 like smell ... this is no fish, but
 an islander, that hath lately suffered
 by a thunderbolt.

Steph. This is some monster of the isle with
 four legs, who hath got as I take it,
 an ague ... This is a devil, and no
 monster; (II.2.25-91)

In trying to interpret The Tempest, commentators are apt to experience some of the perplexity that Trinculo and Stephano face when they try to identify Caliban huddled under his gaberdine. The play can take on a variety of shapes depending upon the elements concentrated on by analysis, just as Prospero's servant is transformed by the clowns into fish, islander, monster and devil. On one level it is a spectacular extravaganza with an immediate sensuous appeal in its etherial music and songs, feats of conjuring, fabulous creatures and elaborate shows of shipwreck, broken banquet, masque of goddesses and a hunt with spirit hounds. On another level it is a casuistic fable with a serious moral purpose concerned with good government both on the individual and the social planes. Justice is administered; the guilty make atonement and the virtuous are rewarded after each has undergone a trial culminating in a symbolic vision which reflects the inner nature of the percipient. From this angle it is tempting to view the play as a moral allegory which adopts a parabolic attitude towards its fantastic subject matter, encouraging the audience to extract a lesson from what they see and

hear similar to that which might be derived from the popular Elizabethan emblem books. Yet again there is a feeling that such a reading, when it is applied, does not pay full credit to the play's visionary dimension, its wistful preoccupation with dreams and illusions in their own right as phenomena which characterize the intense, compelling, but shifting and transitory, world of the imagination. Caliban's arrested dream of the clouds opening to shower riches upon him; Gonzalo's fantasy of the ideal commonwealth, disrupted, if not destroyed, by the cynical commentary of Sebastian and Antonio; the harmonious masque of Ceres and Juno with its discordant conclusion; the final image of the actor divested of stage magic and character mask, dependent upon the spectator's approval; all help to qualify the positive, almost militant, affirmation of the duties and responsibilities towards one's fellow man and the extent to which we may redeem ourselves through the exercise of art and virtue. For, in the end, despite its spiritual elevation, its harmonious reconciliation and the tantalizing glimpses of paradise that it affords, The Tempest is essentially tenuous and indeterminate in tone. The balance that it strikes between hope and despair is precarious and the brave new world which it prefigures remains a haunting and nebulous postulate only. The conclusion of The Tempest does not so much resolve tension as release it, dismissing all the unstable, antagonistic forces it has held in temporary unity as Prospero releases the spell-stopped visitors to his island.

The aloof and enigmatic figure of the wizard dominates the play and in him too we are aware of numerous overtones which are extended in different directions, so that he is at once apprehended as the protagonist caught up in the ethical dilemma that is propounded as the story develops, with a deep personal involvement with the other characters, and also as the presenter and controller of events: a type of projection of the creative potential of the artist.

the stage-director as an interpreter of Shakespeare with a personal vision of the play to get across to his audience and how this has affected the style of Gielgud's acting. It is not simply that Harcourt Williams's production (Old Vic, 1930) and Marius Goring's and George Devine's production (Old Vic, 1940) lay more modest claims to money and resources than do Peter Brook's (Shakespeare Memorial Theatre/Drury Lane, 1957) and Peter Hall's productions (National Theatre (Old Vic) 1974). Brook and Hall inhabit the world of post-War theatre characterised increasingly by state subsidy and the figure of the university-educated director. They are, of course, active and widely influential workers in the theatre of today and Gielgud's changing interpretations of Prospero are highlighted by the changes that the theatre itself has undergone.

I have said that Peter Brook and Peter Hall are directors who work through a conceptual vision of the play, that they are interpreters rather than straightforward presenters of the text. But clearly the distinction is one of emphasis not of strict demarcation. Harcourt Williams regarded himself as an interpreter of Shakespeare and he alluded to the definite ideas he had about the play in a modest programme note:

In producing this play as fantasy I have tried to avoid the use of symbol or allegory.

Hardly a militant manifesto; it does, however, state a definite point of view that The Tempest is not a directly symbolical work with characters standing as ciphers for specific attributes: Prospero as art, Ariel as the imagination, and Caliban the Devil or that Shakespeare, in the guise of Prospero, is bidding farewell to his professional life in the theatre. That Williams should need to deny this and affirm that the play is 'a

fantasy', nevertheless, points to the strong relationship between 'fantasy' and 'allegory' and the unclear position The Tempest occupies between them. The more fabulous and stylized a story is, the more obviously removed it is from ordinary life, the more we tend to look for underlying patterns that have a schematic relationship to the real world.

Although some of the proposed schemata sound rather ludicrous - such as Shakespeare/Prospero counselling Doctor Hall/Ferdinand to work diligently to win the hand of Miranda/Shakespeare's real daughter Susan (why couldn't he just write him a letter?) - the persons in The Tempest do have the semblance of being more than they profess to be. Some of them have paranormal powers; they exist in antithetical relationships with one another and their various characters are revealed in rigidly compartmentalized plots. Often they express themselves in set speeches, insulated from the surrounding action, such as Prospero's speech on the ending of the revels and his Epilogue, Caliban's account of the past history of the island, Gonzalo's description of the ideal commonwealth.

Harcourt Williams implicitly recognized this fact by building his set around a central wooden bridge which, in spite of the programme announcement, did have an overtly symbolic function. The bridge was curved in shape, painted red and had a wooden hand-rail, making it similar to the bridge in the willow pattern crockery designs. But it did not span any ordinary actual obstacle, being intended instead to provide an access 'over which the spirit world would pass in answer to Prospero's magic' (Four Years At The Old Vic, p.84) as was suggested in performance by having Ariel dance across it every time he entered in response to Prospero's summonses. Prospero too stood on the bridge to cast many of his magic spells and probably looked down on the banquet from this position

where the stage direction calls for him to enter 'on the top, invisible' (III.3). However, there was also a gallery above and he may have looked down from this. The goddesses in the masque entered across this bridge and it will be remembered that Iris, the first to enter, is identified with the rainbow, another kind of bridge across the sky that joins Ceres's 'bosky acres' to Juno's peacock heavens. Underneath the bridge was Prospero's cell. In front of it was a red bench, to the right a flight of steps, behind a painted scene of a calm bay beneath a clear sky of ultramarine. The bridge was hidden occasionally by a painted curtain showing 'bizarre trees' which could be drawn across from the left (Star, 7.10.1930). Here Caliban met Stephano and Trinculo for the first time. In the initial shipwreck scene the bridge also did service as the poop-deck of the ship.

Harcourt Williams's idea was to create a vaguely Eastern atmosphere like that of The Arabian Nights and for this reason the costumes of the people who had been living on the island were exotic and sensuous. Ralph Richardson made up as Caliban with a tonsured, Chinese style wig, Mongolian features, a pig-tail and a hump on his back. The shapes that carried in the banquet wore Eastern devil masks. Gielgud's Prospero wore a turban and a long dark green robe (Plate 19). His magic mantle, which slipped easily over the robe, was red - the same colour as the supernatural bridge. On the suggestion of Komisarjevsky who told him 'You ought to look like Dante', Gielgud wore no beard (An Actor and His Time, p.202). This created a precedent for many later Prosperos who went clean-shaven. The solemn gravity of earlier actors' interpretations was often judged to be increased by the length of the beard, but far more important than the elimination of a conventional piece of disguise was Gielgud's decision to make Prospero younger. He was, of course, a young actor, but again, as in his approach to Lear in 1931, it would be wrong to say that Gielgud had not first carefully assessed the requirements of the part before



19. Prospero, Old Vic, 1930, a woodcut by Powell Lloyd

attempting to act it. He was not in the position to conduct extensive textual investigations; however, his creative imagination saw Prospero as a virile man in his late forties and that there was nothing to be gained by making him older than he needed to be. There is, incidentally, more textual evidence to support Hamlet having a beard than Prospero having one.

The shipwrecked party were in Elizabethan costume so that when they came into contact with the islanders there was a visual sense of contrast. The stiff, angular Elizabethan costumes also stood out against the natural setting of the island. Harcourt Williams was using his ingenuity, in an entirely legitimate fashion, to focus on a principal antithesis of the play - that of civilization and nature. He evidently saw no contradiction between his insistence that The Tempest was not a symbolic allegory and his attempt to show that the play had a meaning beyond that of a simple escapist fantasy. But the reviewers did not see it in quite that way: 'Williams meddled with the simple fantasy giving it an intellectual turn', said The Star (7.10.1930),

Prospero, wearing a turban and set in the East, was made to typify the idealism of intellect at war with the cynical Italian princelings and their low-brow followers engaged in murderous conspiracies. Certain words were emphasized and highlighted to achieve this effect. The scheme seemed defeated by the beauty of the love scene between Ferdinand and Miranda. Human sentiment and emotions and the ultimate reconciliations seemed inspired, despite Williams, by the heart rather than the intellect.

The Times thought,

a more serious consequence of this definitely Eastern background is that it seems to set a gulf between the forces of culture and the forces of anarchy and to throw away the consummate art with which Shakespeare contrived a world of fantasy in which all the characters, human and imaginary, and all the action, possible and impossible, should be of a piece. (7.10.1930).

Thus any attempt to come to terms with the play as an imaginatively coherent work of art was promptly stifled in a blurring, romantic mist. Yet Williams's 'intellectual' conception went little further than to relate the world of the play to a popular schoolchildren's romantic fable: The Arabian Nights. Even the reviewers who liked the production found that Shakespeare had been given 'an intellectual twist'. 'Shakespeare with a moral might have been Mr. Harcourt Williams's motto for his production', said The News Chronicle (7.10.1930). 'The play became a new and mysterious thing without maltreating the text or the spirit - the Eastern atmosphere suiting the excellent Caliban and the impressive Prospero'.

Another consequence of the production's setting was that its vaguely Eastern background aroused confusion about where, exactly, the play was supposed to be. How far the reviewers were in earnest about placing the production geographically and how far they were playing a literary equivalent of pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey is their secret. The island was located off the coast of China (Morning Post, 7.10.1930), somewhere in Persia (Era, 8.10.1930), in Japan (Star, 7.10.1930), Mongolia (Morning Post, 7.10.1930), Arabia (Ivor Brown, Observer, 12.10.1930) and both the near and the far East (G.M., Gateway, November 1930). To the extent that Williams was really thought to have intended the island to be anywhere (and, in any case, where is The Arabian Nights set?), we can see how literary convention was confused with geographical fact. The major significant point, however, is that what today would be regarded as a fairly modest interpretative bias in a production was here regarded as a controversial departure from tradition: whether as an illuminating, didactic insight or a piece of impenetrable, highbrow distortion.

Leslie French played Ariel in a gilded loin-cloth and a golden-winged helmet. His naked body was bronze-coloured. He used the stylized movements of a ballet dancer to suggest Ariel's supernatural speed and lightness,

his ability to

fly
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride
On the curl'd clouds. (1.2.190)

Ariel took short steps on the tips of his toes. He raised his arms above his head and flexed them as though they were wings. He sang in a clear, masculine voice looking like 'a sort of Oriental Mercury' (Morning Post, 7.10.1930). His relationship with Prospero was characterized by Prospero never looking directly at him. This suggested a mysterious rapport that was beyond the range of ordinary perception.

Come, with a thought. I thank thee,
Ariel; come. (IV.I.164)

says Prospero and Ariel responds:

Thy thoughts I cleave to. What's thy pleasure?

indicating a telepathic link exists between them. The lack of eye contact between Prospero and Ariel does not seem to have interfered with their dialogues and in fact the business worked so well that it became a permanent feature of Gielgud's performances; in playing Prospero he has never looked at Ariel on the stage.

The Ariel of Shakespeare's text is an androgynous figure. The skilled boy actor who would have played him on the Jacobean stage has twice to assume the feminine disguises of sea nymph and harpy. Moreover, he is a light, delicate, singing sprite and this has led to the part frequently being taken by a female soprano. The operatic traditions in producing A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Tempest had reached their

nadir in the nineteenth century and were on the wane by the time Harcourt Williams's production appeared. Gielgud and Leslie French had already challenged these traditions successfully as Puck and Oberon in Harcourt Williams's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream in the previous year. But it was still unusual to see a man playing the part of Ariel at this time. Leslie French's virile, masculine portrayal had more edge to it than a woman's. He stood up to Prospero when he asserted his right to freedom at the beginning of the play and made a better target for the rebuke that this earned him. The Gateway referred to

the bold stroke of casting Ariel as a man. Leslie French shows great skill and taste. Prospero's bitterness and anger expressed to Ariel at the beginning are less offensive when spoken to a man. The atmosphere created by a male Ariel is more in keeping with this spirit.

(G.M., November 1930)

The goddesses in the masque appeared 'aloft' (in the upper gallery?) to the accompaniment of invisible Celtic harps (Ivor Brown, Observer, 12.10.1930). They were wearing tall, ornate head-dresses irreverently dubbed 'tea pots' by The Morning Post (7.10.1930).

Gielgud's Prospero had 'the dignity and distinction which comes from owning a beautiful voice' (Daily Mail, 7.10.1930). He was an 'Italian gentleman, rich in melancholy, musical' with an 'anguished eye and a dying fall' to his voice. 'The real Prospero for the first time'. (Ivor Brown, Observer, 12.10.1930). Yet he did diversify the character, indicating Prospero's 'weary, overburdened' nature. He was 'terrible and impressive', 'a dark sorcerer' (Star, 7.10.1930). He spoke with 'the weary cadence of embittered maturity', had 'a stately bearing' and was 'impatient of opposition'. Prospero's state of mind was gradually altered during the course of the play so that his early anxiety and rages eventually disappeared as he grew in assurance. He 'steadily gains in power as the

evening progresses' until he reached 'a quiet, but all pervading beauty' in bidding farewell to his magic (Times, 7.10.1930).

Gielgud's earliest recording of Prospero's speech on the ending of the revels displays a good deal of stylization in spite of the fact that the Old Vic company were renowned for their high-speed, colloquial style of delivery (Linguaphone Shakespeare Series, 1930). The speech is very characteristic of the play in that the intense visionary experience it communicates transforms the direct action of the stage into an indirect commentary on the mutability of all things. Although it is ostensibly addressed to Ferdinand and it refers to the dismantling of the masque that has just been performed on the stage, it has no direct bearing on the action itself and could be removed without damaging the story. It undermines the audience's sense of involvement in what is going on immediately in front of them by promoting a detached, dream-like attitude. The masque itself is an illusion, we are told, 'a baseless fabric' of dramatic metaphor acted by spirits and this metaphor is a metaphor for the unreality of the world and everything in it. The speech is also something of a set piece, like the actual performance of the masque, like Gonzalo's description of the imaginary ideal commonwealth, like Prospero's farewell to magic; it stands out from its context and for this reason it is a favourite subject for anthologies and recitals.

Perhaps this is what accounts for the marked degree of stylization Gielgud uses. It is one of the most formalized pieces in the whole recital. The 'O' and 'AE' vowels are sonorous and open; there is heavy use of vibrato, particularly on the climactic words 'dissolve' and 'leave' and the metre is firm and regular. It is far too regular, in fact, and there is a definite false note struck in the first line: 'You do look, my son, in a mov'd sort 'where the apostrophe to signify elision is ignored and

'mov'd' is pronounced as a disyllable. Gielgud possibly underestimated the flexibility and ruggedness of the verse in The Tempest, making it sound too much like Richard II. He does, however, break up the verse on certain lines with pauses to heighten the dramatic effect:

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

The pauses suggest a gentle, relaxed ebbing away towards death. Three pauses in two lines, nevertheless, is quite a generous concession to artifice and when we also notice a pause after 'rack' sound and sense seem to part company. On the other hand, the general shape of the speech is preserved exactly. Gielgud pitches his voice low for 'the baseless fabric of this vision' and then it becomes higher and grander in tone as he comes to 'The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces, / The solemn temples'. The sound swells and accumulates, steadily building, colouring the imagery, and then reaching a climax: 'Yea, all which it inherit'. The feeling of dissolution is captured in the syllabic structure of 'dissolve', the first syllable having a level intonation, the second syllable, with its broad vowel, a falling cadence. The last lines trail off gradually so that the architecture of the written words, like that of a curved arch, is recreated in sound. Gielgud's voice, even in those early days, was an extremely flexible instrument capable of highly intricate sound patterns. It is noticeable that the first priority of his technique is to preserve the structure of the speech as a whole and not endlessly to colour individual words and phrases. One is not listening to music so much as a series of coherent messages strung together on a melodic line attuned to the sense of what is being said. When Prospero says

These our actors,
 As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
 Are melted into air, into thin air

the words would sound interesting to a non-English speaking listener. The sudden rising intonation on 'all' and the mysterious whisper on 'spirits' would create surprise. The breathy, aspirate quality of the first 'air' as if the word seemed to float and the soft, descending wonderment of the second, separated by a thin-stretched, rapidly rising note, would sound unusual and significant.

There are two main considerations for an actor in dealing with this speech. It is addressed to Ferdinand, but how relevant are Prospero's remarks to his son-in-law? Ferdinand is disturbed by the abrupt break in the masque. He looks 'mov'd' and Prospero asks him to be cheerful. He has already expressed curiosity about the identities of the masquers and Prospero is supplying him with further information. But what has an apocalyptic vision of a dissolving world to do with a young man on the eve of his betrothal? Is this intended as another of Prospero's lessons on 'not giving dalliance too much the rein'? How the audience perceives the situation will depend to a large degree on what Ferdinand and Miranda do during this speech. Are they sitting next to one another? Does Ferdinand have his arm around her? Is he totally absorbed in what Prospero is saying? Prospero, too, confesses that he is moved and the mysterious, poignant tone of the lines, sustained in Gielgud's reading on an adagio tempo, are more indicative of Prospero's visionary absorption than they are with counselling Ferdinand to be cheerful. Gielgud, in fact, says 'be cheerful, sir' in a sad, wistful voice that has little to do with uplifting Ferdinand. The actor, therefore, has the option of treating the middle section of the speech from the 'baseless fabric of this vision' to life 'rounded with a sleep' as a prolonged aside, heightening the personal,

reflective quality and Prospero's isolation. This is the approach Gielgud chose to adopt.

* * *

Ten years passed before Gielgud again appeared in The Tempest after his early success as Prospero. The play was this time jointly directed by George Devine and Marius Goring as part of a season at the Old Vic to be presented in conjunction with King Lear. In the midst of the war years, the island, designed by Oliver Messel on a shoe-string budget of two hundred pounds, was appropriately bleak. Messel built a kingdom for Prospero sparsely and economically furnished with rocky hillocks, a dark cave mouth, transparent gauzes and gnarled branches all executed in cool tones. To the right stood Prospero's cell, a gloomy aperture in a mountainous outcrop with leafless boughs thrusting out from behind. A ramp was placed just in front of the entrance. Against this forbidding habitation, Gielgud stood out at the end of the play in his bright costume, once more dressed as the Duke of Milan. A photograph in Theatre World (August 1940) shows him hatless, an ornate Elizabethan ruff around his neck, dressed in a rich doublet slashed with bands of a lighter colour and light, knee-length boots or gaiters. In this respect his handsome outfit resembled in general style the Elizabethan dress of the people that stood before him in short cloaks, hanging elegantly off one shoulder, ruffs, padded jerkins, and rapiers. Alonso was distinguished as King of Naples by the plume that he wore in his hat and his long robes. The décor contrasted the civilized, colourful, eye-catching attire of the actors with the inhospitable, uncouth presentment of the magic isle. Prospero was visually at one with his guests.

To the left of the cell, on the other side of the stage, was a short flight of steps leading off and up through a rocky gully. Between the steps and the cell was an open view of hillocks receding in perspective. A touch of the marvellous was introduced in the ghostly transparencies that were stretched from floor to ceiling towards the left, amongst the rocks. On the steps, Jessica Tandy, a fair, long-haired, blue-eyed Miranda in a simple, long dress, found that her father's tale of their adventures awoke heaviness in her and lay down to sleep. Gielgud rested his magic garment at centre stage on the spur that thrust out from his cell-cave, where it remained prominently visible during his ensuing speech. The set awoke strong feelings, some finding that it's cold, lifeless austerity was ill suited to the tropical verdure that the text glances at: 'The Tempest seems to have occurred off Iceland', complained The Observer (2.6.1940), 'the trees are as naked as the ones on Lear's heath'. Others enjoyed its remote weirdness: 'An ideal setting', countered The Manchester Guardian (31.5.1940), 'Prospero's cell is something bleak and strange after the surrealist manner of Dali'. Bleak the island was indeed, but it may have been the director's intention to emphasize the strict privation Prospero had been forced to undergo, the oppressive atmosphere finally being relieved by the fruition of his magic in the masque. This was a diaphanous spectacle, again making use of transparencies, performed to the music of Bach, with dancing nymphs wearing sedg'd crowns ingeniously woven from pipe cleaners. Harcourt Williams's production presented the island as a playful, fairytale, never-never-land based on romantic folklore. Marius Goring and George Devine, on the other hand, made it a harsh, barren place of confinement, haunted by ghostly visions.

Gielgud, likewise, made Prospero look older and more severe. He was still far from being a dotard, however, and Prospero appeared to be in his late forties. But the romantic aura that The Times thought 'seems

to challenge the pretensions of his daughter's lover' had gone (7.10.1930). He resembled a monk, with a tonsured head, sandals on his feet and a drab, wide-sleeved habit gathered in at the waist by a belt with pouches for gathering magic herbs and simples like Friar Laurence in Romeo and Juliet. There was a small, light brown beard on his chin and the hair below the tonsure was close-cropped. A pair of spectacles completed the image of the scholarly ascetic whose eyes had been strained from long poring over obscure books. Gielgud did not wear these spectacles all the time, but slipped them on and off occasionally, thus again demonstrating the importance of the eye-sight theme to his performance. He did not need spectacles either to see Marius Goring's Ariel whom he never looked at during the course of the play. (Plate 20).

He established at once a close rapport with Miranda, pacing about while she was seated during his extensive recollection of the past. The length of this speech, and Prospero's admonition for his daughter to attend, easily lend themselves to parody, but Gielgud resisted the temptation to burlesque and concentrated on the artful phrasing and scrupulous pointing of the meaning of his lines. The rapt intensity of the teller involved in his tale was what he wished to convey, developing with ample textual warrant the repeated urgency of address: 'The very minute bids thee ope thine ear' (1.2.37), the insistence upon attention, the sense of personal grievance and the trance-like state induced in the hearer whereby events are not merely related but actively felt over again as if the traumatic experience had lain dormant and was now being relived in all its emotional tension. For The Observer (2.6.1940) 'this strategy paid off and for once 'one really listens to Prospero's exegesis'. But for A.E. Wilson the demands of the oratory were a strain upon the actor and it was 'difficult for him to avoid the effect of being a professor of magic and spells attached to one of our starchier universities' (Star, 30.5.1940).



20. Prospero and Ariel, Old Vic, 1940

Marius Goring's interpretation of Ariel had more grotesquery in it than that of Leslie French and the relation between master and slave took on perhaps a darker resonance. An outlandish costume with spiny projections and glittering sequins conspired with a heavy makeup to reduce the actor's human resemblance. The sockets of Ariel's eyes were dark and ornamental spikes like those which appear on certain forms of shellfish, protruded from his shoulders and thighs. Sharp-looking crests stood up behind each of the ears. His blue-grey colouration possibly looked green under particular lights and there was something also about his costume that reflected sinister overtones upon the captivity he was subjected to by Prospero. The reviewer for Truth (7.6.1940) declared that there was 'more than a hint about it of being singed by the infernal fires'. A detail like this would stand out from the dialogue when Gielgud threatened Ariel with torments for his disobedience. Yet it was Jack Hawkins's Caliban, a simian monster with a dangling tail and a leperous disfigurement on his face, who posed the strongest challenge both to Prospero's rule on the island and the centrality of the magician in the play. Helped by the tradition that confers distinction upon Caliban as the leading role (this part was appropriated by Benson and Tree), Hawkins played with a ferocity and gusto that attracted great attention. When he first came onto the stage his challenge to Prospero's government was very powerful indeed, as The Stage (6.6.1940) suggested. 'One might say that Jack Hawkins as Caliban is physically and vocally so realistic that when he is on the stage Caliban is The Tempest and The Tempest is Caliban'. It was all that Prospero could do to contain him and having to deal with such an obstreperous creature may have been another reason for Gielgud's increased severity in comparison with his last performance. Whereas Ralph Richardson had been criticised for his want of savagery and commended for his pathos (The Times, 7.10.1930), Jack Hawkins constituted the exact antithesis: 'A performance by Mr. Hawkins of insufficient pathos but immense, Man-Fridayish spryness', wrote James Agate (Sunday Times, 2.6.1940).

Prospero was assisted by Ariel to disarm Ferdinand, a manoeuvre that was achieved simply by the raising of a thin wand while Ariel stood between the two combatants with his arm extended. Miranda was thrust behind. Later on, abjuring his rough magic and dismissing the spirits of the masque, Gielgud spoke nobly with 'an almost mystic appreciation of the beauty of the verse' (Daily Telegraph, 30.5.1940). His elevated omniscience at this point led to his inevitable association with the playwright. The Times (30.5.1940) asserted that in the valedictory lines he conveyed the impression that he was thinking of Shakespeare's farewell to the stage. Opinions on this matter vary, however, and The Catholic Herald (G.T., 7.6.1940) was cautious in attributing any biographical import to the actor's delivery of these climactic speeches: 'If Prospero is Shakespeare Mr. Gielgud puts no obscurative personal interpretation between the poet and posterity'. What hints can be gleaned about the last scene of reconciliation suggest that it was played without any undue highlighting of the sombre undertones that point to the frailty of the harmony which has been restored. Prospero avoided any sense of anticlimax in releasing his victims from the spell that held their reason in thrall.

the approaching tide,
will shortly fill the reasonable shore
That now lies foul and muddy. (V.i.80)

was spoken with a tactful self-possession that illustrated the gentleness of their return to earth. Miranda's admiration of the brave new world that she has suddenly encountered aroused laughter in the audience which one hopes did not drown her father's rejoinder: 'Tis new to thee' (V.1.

184) (Truth, 7.6.1940). An inquiry to Andrew Cruickshank, the Antonio of this production, indicates that no business was adopted between the two brothers to emphasize the unregenerate nature of the usurper, as it would be later. Antonio simply 'drifted off' with the others when they made their exit'.²

Gielgud's second Prospero attracted more adverse criticism than his first, though the reception to his performance is bound up in part with critical reservations about the play. The Catholic Herald (7.6.1940) thought that a consequence of the more youthful interpretation of Prospero was to deprive him further of character. Apparently unaware of Gielgud's previous appearance in the role, which had also removed years from the wizard, the critic speculated that it was his recent attempt at Lear which made him accent Prospero's youth. Compared to Caliban, 'the most acutely characterized person in the play', the leading actor's performance was pallid. But The Tempest was, anyway, a deeply flawed if strange and beautiful work and the quality of voice and the stateliness of manner which it is then conceded that Gielgud possessed are therefore perhaps to be rated higher as commendation than they otherwise might appear. The Sunday Times (James Agate, 30.5.1940) and The Star (A. E. Wilson, 30.5.1940) were also in agreement that The Tempest, particularly in its central character, resists managerial efforts to bring it to life. The mind of Prospero is elusive and all too lacking in sympathetic projection. James Agate called it an ungrateful part which Gielgud nevertheless demonstrated could be played well. What he distinguished as the prime feature of the actor's portrayal was the peculiarly aloof manner that he exhibited, coupled with a smooth technique that avoided any traces of exhibitionism. This rarefied supernatural aura kept him at the heart of the drama, singled out from the other characters. Prospero was acted 'very nobly and beautifully, not by excess of virtuosity, but through

the more subtle method of withdrawal, whereby it seemed that he continually held the centre of an undrawn circle marking him off from even such flesh and blood as Miranda owes'. Perhaps it was this feeling of remote rarity that the reviewer for Truth (7.6.1940) was referring to when he cited the cryptic mood that the production had distilled. With beautiful literalness and coherence the distinctive charm of the language was preserved while speculation was allowed to range freely over each mysterious event.

Prospero was unusual in his looks and his vitality and the great virtue of Gielgud's playing was in the spontaneity with which he invested everything he said and did. The testament was echoed by Ivor Brown when he commended the production's skirting of pedantic intellectual explanations - a danger that some of Harcourt Williams's critics implied that he had run straight into. Brown noticed the atmosphere of revelry that buoyed up the acting and, repeating what he had written in 1930, affirmed the verisimilitude of this Prospero's age. The vigorous, sensible and sensitive forty year old that Gielgud presented, constituted a credible portrait of Italian, Renaissance gentility (Illustrated London News, 15.6.1940). The Manchester Guardian (A.D., 31.5.1940) , on the contrary, thought that Gielgud's younger, eccentric looking Duke tilted the play too far towards the bizarre. Still, if Gielgud's character was more or less the same age that he had played him previously, his acting technique had ripened with his advance in years. It was The Daily Telegraph (30.5.1940) that made explicit the maturity of his performance as opposed to the years which had been dropped from his imaginative representation. This manifested itself in his increased calm dignity and eloquence.

Not until 1957 did Gielgud have the opportunity to appear in a presentation conceived along more generous lines than was possible under the stringent conditions of the thirties and forties at the Old Vic. Peter Brook was the director of the production that began its run at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and was afterwards transferred to Drury Lane. Gielgud had worked with Brook on Shakespearean revivals twice before, once, significantly, upon another late play related to The Tempest. The Winter's Tale had featured Gielgud's Leontes in 1951 at the Royal, Brighton (it toured afterwards) and he had played Angelo a year earlier in Measure for Measure (Shakespeare Memorial Theatre). In this time he had built up a fertile working relationship with Brook which would govern their future ventures and which established at least one curious point of contact between The Tempest and what was probably its nearest chronological predecessor in the sequence of Shakespeare's composition. I shall come back to this later. For the moment the basic conditions of the revival are to be sketched in.

The play was given in two halves with an interval after Ferdinand's log carrying scene where his troth plight is made. This broke the action calmly on Prospero's quietly auspicious, 'I'll to my book; / For yet ere supper time must I perform / Much business appertaining' (III.1.94) but ignored the act division. The interval is more usually placed between Acts Three and Four so that the narrative ends on the spectacular disruption of the banquet and can be resumed with the grand spectacle of the masque. Brook's arrangement, apart from the practical consideration of a more even temporal division (the first half lasted one hour and nine minutes, the second lasted fifty nine minutes), had

the additional advantage of bringing the three visions of banquet, masque and gorgeous garments closer together and consequently reflected the importance of the masque in this production. Introducing a pause after the descent of Ariel in harpy form, naturally tends to build up the importance of the symbolic perdition of Prospero's enemies. On the other hand, when the broken banquet and the masque are brought together the director has to be careful that the masque will not be an anti-climax.

Textual omissions were made to lighten the burden of the actor in having to hold his audience during Prospero's exposition. The involved subordinate clause 'with that which but by being so retir'd. / O'erpriz'd all popular rate' is taken out to remove a stumbling block. So too goes the convoluted simile:

like one
Who having into truth, by telling of it,
Made such a sinner of his memory
To credit his own lie - (1.2.99)

The obscurity created by Ferdinand's mention of Antonio's son who has no existence outside of this single allusion, disappears and leads to the loss of Prospero's capping aside:

The Duke of Milan
And his more braver daughter could control thee,
If now 'twere fit to do't (1.2.438)

Ferdinand also lost one of his oaths of assurance just before the masque begins because of its cryptic evocation of Elizabethan psychology. Prospero did not reply with the single word 'well!' which can indeed be coloured in a remarkable variety of ways by the actor to make it convinced, sceptical or dismissive (IV.1.54-56). Comments made by Prospero in the last scene that might be taken to indicate his garrulity are carefully edited. He is not allowed to recount to Alonso, what the audience already know, that he has been shipwrecked and marooned like them upon the island nor check himself for a breach of decorum:

No more yet of this;
 For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,
 Not a relation for a breakfast, nor
 Befitting this first meeting (V.1.162)

Neither did he promise to regale his guests with the story of his life - a prospect that they might have entertained with mixed feelings (V.1.304). In this brief cut one detects perhaps some deference to Gielgud's postulate that Prospero was still in his prime. His life was not yet over and he returns to Milan to active rule and not to secluded retirement. Sycorax's power of controlling flows and ebbs that relates her magic to that of Prospero in raising the sea storm is never touched upon (V.1.120) and other minor omissions include Prospero's deferring of further explanations until the meeting in his cell and his instruction to release the charm holding Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban. Most of the cuts relating to Prospero are just and viable, although it is hard to prune such a condensed play as The Tempest without the loss of something significant. The shortening

of Gonzalo's choric paen that serves to draw the plot together seems particularly unfortunate. On the grounds of plot resume it is perhaps redundant and distorted, giving an ill-proportioned importance to Claribel's marriage, but its value as a commentary on the action, serving to demonstrate the harmony and balance of what appeared to the participants at the time to be chaotic and disturbing experiences, is undeniable. There is a magnificent coda in

O, rejoice
 Beyond a common joy, and set it down
 With gold on lasting pillars: in one voyage
 Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis;
 And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife
 Where he himself was lost; Prospero his dukedom
 In a poor isle; and all of us ourselves
 When no man was his own. (V.1.206)

But the passage which loses most, no doubt because of its complexity and the coolness with which modern audiences respond to its wit, is the dialogue of the courtiers when they first land upon the island (II.1). Some fifty two lines are missing in piecemeal cuts from a scene of three hundred and eighteen, including certain parts of Antonio's temptation of Sebastian to murder his brother. The basic structure of the episode suffers as a result. Adrian and Francisco's lines are combined to make a single character.

The essential set for the island was a bleak cavern with sliding partitions in the facing wall that could be opened to reveal a cyclorama. Screens stood in front, one on either side, with apertures in them that Prospero could use to spy on his charmed subjects. The screen on the right had two irregularly shaped apertures, one on top of the other. From



21. Prospero and Ariel, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre/Drury Lane, 1957

the highest of these Prospero looked down at an angle upon Ferdinand wooing Miranda. At the end, the rock opened to his command to reveal the lovers ensconced in a subterranean nook at the centre of the stage absorbed in their game of chess. The cavern was furnished with boulders, two towards the left of the centre and one towards the right, which the actors used as seats. At first these scenic provisions conjured up an image of spartan barrenness relieved only by splashes of colour and the organic touches that had been introduced into the costumes. Thus Ariel's body was covered in translucent fronds that had a ghostly sheen. At the side of his head a tendril sprouted upwards like a plume. Prospero's magic garment was a silver cloak embossed with decorative creeping vines. His wand sent out leafy shoots at its apex (Plate 21). Caliban was a hairy ape with a purple face and a grotesque false chest with bulbous paps. But by the time Ferdinand and Miranda confess their love for each other the island had blossomed into a riotous jungle of looped vines trailing across the inset cavern area, feathers, huge palm leaves, and exotic, burgeoning fruits through which the actors carefully made their way. The masque represented a climax to this movement with bunches of foliage and vegetable shapes being used to reinforce the imagery of fertility. The rugged, unlocalised stage environment, which Brook had designed himself along with the costumes, awoke the impression that it was 'oppressive' (Unidentified, Birmingham Reference Library) and that the action was taking place in a submerged realm (Daily Telegraph, 14.8.1957). The music also composed by Brook, contributed to the pervasive austerity. It consisted of metallic raspings, crashing cymbals, rushing winds, wails, tapping, humming and whistling notes prerecorded and distorted electronically. The absence of a true melodic line in the song arrangements led to the pieces being chanted atonally. Brook's music was not just there to create the atmosphere of a magic island 'full of noises, / Sounds and

sweet airs'; it was actually used to characterize some of the island's inhabitants. Trinculo, Stephano, Ariel and Caliban each had their own musical motif. Stephano's, for instance, was a nursery rhyme jingle reminiscent of the Laurel and Hardy theme. The childish faltering melody, sounding as if it was played on bird-whistle, xylophone and recorder, glanced at his drunkenness and clownish appearance. Stephano was fat and bowler-hatted like Oliver Hardy, with a trace of Hardy's overweening pomposity. He was also frequently compared to George Robey (Birmingham Mail, 14.8.1957; Times, 14.8.1957). Trinculo was tall, thin and even more absurdly dressed with a sou'wester on his head worn sideways, a quilted jacket, running shorts and Turkish slippers. Brook's production lent prominence to the comic sub-plot of conspiracy.

Seated on a gnarled rock in his remote, desert kingdom, Gielgud's Prospero looked like Blake's Newton. His hair was grizzled and cut short. His features were sharp and chiselled without any facial hair to disguise their hard clarity. Beneath his coarse brown toga he wore nothing save Roman sandals, a leather belt and a metal arm band clamped around his bicep, so that the left side of his torso and the left shoulder were bared. He was again virile and well-preserved, in his middle forties - a lean, ascetic suggesting more a pagan Greek than a Christian monk. The Bolton Evening News (17.8.1957) described him as 'a Timon of Athens fighting to gain sanity and human kindness'. The ducal robes that he had to change into at the end of the play were, on the other hand, rich and ceremonious, with symbolic adjuncts that marked his full return to civic responsibility. He wore an open, wide-sleeved gown of blue silk and a high collar, a skull cap, a coronet and a chain of office extending from shoulder to shoulder.

Attached as a frontispiece to the play was a suspended globe hung behind a gauze curtain with a circle of cloud painted on it. The audience

looked through the gauze at a full moon, a symbol suggestive of Prospero's control over the sea and the cyclic movement of the action. The production brought out this point by returning the action at the end to the realistically conceived ship's deck where it had all started. When the house lights dimmed and the sound of the storm came up - a cacophonous rushing of waves, a regular crash of surge undercut by an uncanny roaring - a lamp that had been laid flat on the front, right-hand side of the stage, attached by a long pole to a central fulcrum, rose into the air to describe a huge, giddy, semicircle before falling extinguished on the other side. With this, the stage lights came into operation and the sailors were revealed struggling with the quivering ropes and cat's cradles hanging from above the level of the proscenium that comprised the ship's rigging. At the same moment, a smaller lamp, similarly attached, began to repeat the movement of the first in the centre, at the back. The sky was violet-green and fire balls were whizzing through the air (though in later performances this effect was abandoned). There was a sudden cessation of the commotion before the vessel finally sunk 'a spell-stopped, ominous quiet ... a moment few directors had vouchsafed' writes J.C. Trewin (Peter Brook: A Biography, p.101). Then the din proceeded once more and darkness descended on the huddled figures praying desperately for their lives.

At the end of the evening, Prospero spoke the Epilogue on the forestage while behind him the scene was instantaneously transformed into the deck of the ship once more. The mariners stood with their backs to the audience, manning the tackle, looking out towards Naples in the direction the ship was supposedly travelling, four to the left and five to the right. Miranda and Ferdinand were together in the middle, at the back, looking over the ship's rail. Alonso and Gonzalo and Sebastian and Antonio stood a little downstage in profile, face to face, in pairs. When Prospero had finished speaking he turned to join the others. His costume and his central position

in the tableau established his continued jurisdiction over the others and the communion that he shared with them. He was bound triumphantly home for Naples, ready to resume his office, the play having returned upon itself. The words of the Epilogue assumed a tone of grandeur that was appropriate to this spectacular finale. Yet this treatment rather overlooked the fact that Prospero refers to himself as still on the island at the end of the play. The Epilogue begins:

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have's mine own,
Which is most faint. Now'tis true,
I must be here confin'd by you,

'Here' has to be taken very loosely to refer to the ship's deck, while the expansive tableau does not help to promote Prospero's fear of confinement. Brook, of course, wanted to finish his production with a big, theatrical coup and he may have been prompted by the appeal for applause that Prospero has to make in line 10 to give the audience something immediately worth applauding. But he achieved a kind of specious unity for his production by reducing the personal urgency of the allusions to failing strength, confinement, mercy, judgement and redemption.

Gielgud cut a very different figure when he first took the stage. After the shattering impact of the storm, he was quietly revealed. Wilfred Clark recalled his materialization from the background gloom (Birmingham News, 17.8.1957). The silver cape he was wearing would have shown up uncannily amongst the shadows. Miranda crossed in to him to remove his mantle which he laid down with his wand upon the right hand rock nearest to the centre. Shakespeare constructs the primary phase of his scene, concerned with the dialogue of father and daughter, around a fundamental antithesis. Miranda's anxiety for the poor souls whom she imagines she has seen drowned in the beleaguered vessel is opposed to Prospero's

calm assurance. Then Prospero's intense felt-knowledge of the past is opposed to Miranda's ignorance of it. She has to be gradually educated to see things as he does. So there is a kind of balance about this early exchange which turns upon the idea of Miranda first being made not to feel deeply about something and then being made to relive through the mind of her father his past sufferings. The second branch of this antithesis stood out in Gielgud's reading, for it was Prospero's unrest rather than Miranda's that was made the chief topic of concentration. She made one anxious start forward as he consoled her from a stationary position with the entreaty to wipe her eyes. Then he took the centre of the stage, using Miranda, who seated herself on the rock to the right in obedience to his order, as a focal point for the ensuing tale. Gielgud wove a restless pattern around the stage which broke up the long, backward-looking speech with immediate activity and seemed to illustrate Prospero's continued involvement with events long gone. He came in towards Miranda to underline the propitiousness of the hour, 'The hour's now come; / The very minute bids thee ope thine ear' (1.2.36), and crossed back to his dominant central position to begin the interrogation of her memory. 'The dark backward and abysm of time' (1.2.50), an expression whose weightiness and suggestive extension is signified by the balancing of the double metaphors on the pivot word 'and', warranted a further move back to the rock where Miranda sat. Still facing her, he took one step away as he began his recollection by calling to mind the twelve-year gap of time that separated the events of his narrative from the present. But the story was temporarily forestalled by Miranda's abandonment of her place to cross in to his left to receive assurance that she indeed was his daughter.

The way became open for Prospero's tale to begin in earnest and his eyes now turned from his daughter to gaze into the auditorium where he seemed to see in a memory vision the 'foul play' that led to their

being cast adrift. Following downstage to Prospero's right, Miranda sat on the floor to listen. The parallel between Prospero and Antonio was made from a standing posture that complemented his proud self-awareness. Prospero was here absorbed in the knowledge of his status and reputation for learning. He was the prime Duke unrivalled in the liberal arts. The next section of his speech, dealing with the confession of neglect in his duties, calls for a more intimate form of delivery and Gielgud accordingly dropped to his knees alongside Miranda. His mounting indignation at the catalogue of Antonio's subversive activities then forced him to rise so that he stood tall and straight when he likened himself to a tree entangled in the ivy of his brother's secret plot. The main events of the political overthrow were then related in a static tableau disrupted only by Miranda's move into Prospero on her sympathetic cry: 'O the heavens!' (1.2.116). Gielgud's speaking was rapt and continuous except for a pause that separated the plotting of the intrigue from its actual execution:

and confer fair Milan
With all the honours on my brother.
Whereon, a treacherous army levied, one midnight (1.2.126)

When Miranda started to cry again, this time in compensation for the unknowing tears she shed when they were originally smuggled from the city, Prospero conducted her back to the rock where she was sitting. He sat down upon it and Miranda reclined on the floor beside him, leaning against his knees, her father's arm consolingly placed on her shoulder. The pair of them constituted a picture of mutual condolence that corresponded with the solace in each other's presence that they took when they were years ago aboard the rudderless bark. From this position it was an easy matter for Miranda to sink her arms and head to the vacated rock when Prospero, his story over, got up and, retrieving his magic cloak and staff, silenced her questions with a wave of his hand, charming her to sleep.

Throughout it was noticeable that Gielgud had combined this speech with more activity than is strictly called for by the text. There are in fact only two implicit directions in Shakespeare's dialogue, when Prospero tells Miranda to sit down at the beginning of his story (1.2.32) and his 'Now I arise', (1.2.69) at the end of it, which implies that he too has been seated. Now, whilst it is a usual practice for actors to introduce additional colour into Prospero's monologue by varying their posture and positioning, the chief characteristics of Gielgud's treatment are the postponement of sitting until well into the tale, after Antonio's usurpation is complete and the tenderer subject of the sea voyage with the infant is turned to, and his crossing in to and away from Miranda prior to that. His manner during the performance of these actions was agitated and passionate. Punch (21.8.1957) recalled that in the exposition 'he is plainly in an advanced anxiety state'. This must have contributed to the urgency of the language and the audience's sense of the smarting grievance Prospero had been nursing as it worked against the idea of the speech as a passive reverie that so easily leads itself to parody. Gielgud laboured to keep the emotional temperature high as he spoke, finding a psychological correlative for the exposition that transcended the level of plot mechanics. His excitement was prolonged into the meeting with Ariel.

As Ariel came onto the stage from up centre, Prospero stood to the side, face turned to the auditorium, so that he could not see Ariel's approach, yet he reacted to his presence. Ariel came forward to the middle, but stopped before he came into the field of Prospero's vision, just behind the boulder seats to the left. As he described the storm to Prospero, the crisp, staccato phrasing of Ariel's words was mirrored in the weaving, circuitous course that Brian Bedford charted around Gielgud.

Beginning at the rock where Miranda was sleeping, he came down in a long curve to the front centre, crossing in front of Prospero, who served as the midpoint of the irregular circle his path described . From here he travelled back upstage between the two rocks that stood to the left, around behind Prospero, and back again to approximately where he started, arriving to answer his master's question about the time (1.2.239). All the while this complicated manoeuvre was being executed, Gielgud inclined slightly towards him as if an invisible string bound them together. The abrupt halt which Ariel came to and his subsequent drop to the floor were thus all the more striking. His grudging refusal to obey amounted to a sit-down protest as he came to rest at left centre. The disciplining that he received was harshly administered. Prospero's behaviour towards Ariel permits Shakespeare to present necessary information to the audience which goes some way towards justifying its discursive length.

However, in the character dimension, the scope and ferocity of his threats may appear to be greater than the occasion warrants. Ariel has not positively refused to obey, but merely shown signs of reluctance, and his behaviour elsewhere, apart from a certain propensity towards wayward mischief, does not indicate any malevolent purpose. When threats of coercion and torture are resorted to to secure his obedience the audience can experience a negative reaction towards Prospero. Prospero's power after the shipwreck is for a second time alarmingly manifested and the underlying ambiguity of his position is brought out by his introduction of the figure of Sycorax, whose black magic Ariel has been rescued from. Having associated Sycorax with the imprisoning of victims within the trunks of trees, he then goes on to cast himself in the role of evil conjuror promising to outdo the sorceress in rending an oak and imprisoning his servant within that. The boundary between black and white magic is then finely drawn indeed. In performance, Gielgud's peremptory handling of

insubordination disclosed 'sadistic relish' (Punch, 21.8.1957). He closed in menacingly on the seated Ariel, who crouched in fear. The figures of master and slave were visually opposed during the account of Sycorax's magic as Ariel cringed at the feet of the standing, domineering Prospero. Gielgud broke the configuration at the introduction of Caliban into the conversation, crossing to the left between the two boulders so that Ariel could crawl towards him slightly when he begged to be pardoned. On his promise to free Ariel after two more days, he held up his wand and Ariel likewise rose, taking the stick from him and putting it on the floor, the crisis being passed. He left by the upstage exit.

Miranda was woken up by a touch on the arm from her father. She rose and went to the right, beneath the line of the proscenium. From behind the boulder to the right, Prospero took up a whip and moved to a position above his daughter on the opposite side of the stage. The conference between the returned Ariel in his sea nymph guise and Prospero took place well forward in the centre. Then Gielgud went up stage to the right, positioning himself between Miranda and the central entrance above in preparation for Caliban's entry.

Caliban ascended from a trap as if from hell and came downstage, a little to the right, to deliver his curse. After this fearsome introduction, the comic side of the character was quickly asserted by his taking a seat upon the most inward of the two boulders on the left and producing a shoulder bone to coincide with his protest: 'I must eat my dinner' (1.2.230). The mixture of fear and hatred that he entertained for Prospero was suggested by his wary evasion of the wizard as he came in towards him. Caliban rose, leaving his dinner beside the rock, and came downstage to the centre, maintaining the distance from his master. When Prospero stood to the left beside the boulders, Caliban was driven upstage to the opening of the

cavern. Prospero's statement that Caliban responded not to kindness but to beatings (1.2.3-5) was pointed by the whip that he held in his hand. Moments later he had occasion to use it when, acknowledging the accusations of rape that were made against him, Caliban darted in towards Miranda, who ran to the left edge of the proscenium line to escape him. Punishment for this outrage was meted out by Prospero in the form of a whipping. He cut off Caliban's advance by breaking to the right, intercepting the culprit at the right hand boulder, and proceeded to thrash him while Caliban lay prostrate on the floor. Thus Prospero's role as a stern disciplinarian was under-written as in his treatment of Ariel. After this lesson, Caliban employed more caution when he expressed his resistance. The announcement of his intention to populate the isle with his own breed, an aspiration that he subsequently transfers to Stephano, was accompanied by the defiant placing of a foot upon the boulder seat. However, his foot was immediately withdrawn as Prospero motioned with the whip. Gielgud then threw the instrument to the floor, relying on his threats of magical punishments to preserve his authority. Caliban was careful to retrieve the bone before allowing himself to be bullied off. Under Prospero's promises of torture, he came forward once more to cower as Gielgud made a move again towards the whip where it had been dropped above the right boulder. At the front, he was in a good position to deliver his aside to the audience, touching the floor with his hand in a ritual salutation of Setebos, linking the god with that region below the stage level from which he had emerged. The stern gaze of Prospero called forth one last challenging growl before he shuffled off, dismissed through the right assembly exit.

An ethereal tableau was contrived for Ferdinand's entrance by the concentration of light upon a transparent cheese-cloth that was hung over the inset playing area while the forestage illumination was dimmed. This

created the illusion that the audience were looking out from the dim recesses of a cave at a distant region bathed in grey light. Ariel, in a golden wig, led a blindfolded Ferdinand, who seemed to float in space. Miranda and Prospero stood on either side, downstage, framing the picture, Miranda held in thrall by the magic pass Prospero made. The Leamington Courier (N.T., 16.8.1957), describing the incident, called it 'a moment of complete enchantment', but the reviewer expressed his disappointment at the musical setting of Ariel's song, which did not do justice to the beauty of the tableau 'against it he merely intones the words, like a vicar at matins, occasionally breaking into speech'. The blindfold was an unusual touch that evidently denoted Ariel's invisibility. Ferdinand was brought gradually forward until he was inside the cavern, having passed through the veil at its entrance. Disappearing to the right after the first song, Ariel then reappeared from the same direction to sing the second one to a kneeling Ferdinand below the cheese-cloth. As the young man gathered his wits, Prospero circled above him to retrieve his magic wand. Prospero's florid euphemism which establishes the tone of the ensuing love scene - 'The fringed curtains of thine eye advance / And say what thou seest yond' (1.2.408) - released his daughter from the spell she was under and she had her first sight of Ferdinand standing up centre stage in the cave opening. She abandoned her isolated position, traversing the width of the platform, her eyes fixed on the bewildered stranger wandering aimlessly above. The way was then clear for Prospero to come downstage to where she had been standing to project his aside with ease: 'It goes on, I see / As my soul prompts it' (1.2.419). Miranda and Ferdinand met in the centre. Richard Johnson's Ferdinand knelt to signify the sacramental nature of his first speech to the woman who he mistakes for a goddess. Yet this did nothing to mitigate the rudeness of Prospero's interruption when he broke inwards, compelling Ferdinand to turn. The

impatience of the wizard's stiff interjection inditing the young man for an error was coloured by Gielgud shifting his weight from one foot to another. Ferdinand stood in front of the boulders on the left, to face his accuser, but was soon distracted by his venture of a proposal to Miranda - an overture that brought him back a little towards the girl. His first attempt to gain Ferdinand's attention having been disregarded, Prospero interposed himself between the two lovers when next he spoke, forcing them to take notice of him. He tried to lead Ferdinand up stage towards the right to the dungeon he had prepared for him, bringing Miranda in tow, but at this moment Ferdinand drew his sword. The stage picture suddenly became restless as Miranda came between the two men in her attempt to intercede for her lover. Gielgud moved sharply round her, his wand raised aloft. This forced Ferdinand's sword hand down and then his knees to buckle under him so that his enforced genuflection to Prospero countered his voluntary genuflection to his daughter. Kneeling is an important and ambiguous symbol in The Tempest, as it is also in King Lear. Here it is indicative of both willing devotion and surrender to tyranny. Sebastian cites it as a gesture of beseechment when he says to Alonso, 'You were kneel'd to, and importun'd otherwise' (III.1.122), reminding us that it is the conventional attitude of a subject towards his sovereign, and Stephano receives the adoration of his servant monster through his kneeling abasement and foot licking. The kneeling of Ferdinand therefore reinforces the parallel with Caliban, which is a link that Prospero advertises in this scene when he says to Miranda, contradicting the opinion he has expressed sixty-five lines earlier, 'To th'most of men this is a Caliban' (1.2.450).

Ariel did not participate in the disarming of Ferdinand as he did in 1940. Ariel's presence on the stage often leads to his incorporation into the dramatic action, although Shakespeare assigns to him no other function

than the reception of Prospero's peripheral comments. The promptbook's maintenance of him as a passive observer concentrates solely on the softening influence he has upon his master's assumed identity, helping to maintain the distance between it and the benevolent intentions Prospero really possesses. The persistent allusions Prospero makes to freedom in the remarks he addresses to Ariel serve as a kind of refrain to establish the metaphysical paradox of Ferdinand's achievement of liberty through his entry into bondage. Even as the wizard is proposing to enslave Ferdinand the atmosphere is lightened by his assurances to Ariel that the spirit will soon be freed. Miranda too knelt in supplication to her father, grasping his robe. Still her entreaties had no effect on Prospero, who began to draw his prisoner away to the veil in front of the cave mouth, leaving her distraught upon the floor. As Ferdinand reached the cheese-cloth, manacles descended magically from above and he put his hands into them.

The abbreviated dialogue of the shipwrecked courtiers followed. Business involving their sitting down to play cards and passing round of a bottle of wine was introduced. They were dressed in Elizabethan costume, wearing ruffs and tall hats, and when Sebastian made his sneering retort, 'Scape being drunk for want of wine' (II.1.140) to Gonzalo's rhetorical question about his imaginary rule on the island, he drank from the bottle that Antonio had passed to him. Temporarily, at least, they seemed to have made themselves very much at home in their unfamiliar surroundings, indulging at once in their incongruous, 'civilized' habits.

Brook made the banquet itself the main focus of attention in the scene where Ariel appears as a harpy (III.3), having it descend at centre stage on vine ropes. The table, richly covered with strange delicacies,

was set longwise, in front of a tangled jungle, to the sound of ghostly wailing. The direction which calls for Prospero to appear 'on the top' was interpreted loosely to mean above stage level and Gielgud occupied a peripheral position, looking down on his enemies from one of the apertures at the side as they prepared to fall to. Ariel's entry as a harpy was rendered spectacularly by the use of a mushroom lift just to the right of the banquet table. He came up through the stage floor and was raised to a level above the feast, dressed in a black body-costume with red, sparkling pinions attached to his shoulders. His face was recognizably that of Prospero's henchman. (The lift was abandoned when the play was taken to Drury Lane.) The action on three distinct levels corresponded to three distinct planes of reality with the ordinary humans at floor level, Ariel, on his lift, the astral plane of spirits, and Prospero looking down on all like a God. A plaintive, humming chant on two repeated notes faded gradually as the shapes removed the banquet.

There was a black out and when the lights came up again the stage was set for the masque. The jungle had been cleared away and the bare walls of Prospero's cave were visible once more with a cyclorama behind. Prospero stood to the left, at the front; Ferdinand and Miranda sat in front of him on two boulders. The masque sustained many alterations when the production transferred to Drury Lane, but Brook's basic conception of it as a magical fertility rite did not alter.

He introduced a chorus of nature spirits wearing strange, amorphous costumes of translucent foilage and with them the figure of Father Time. Big bundles of leaves were strewn across the stage floor. The chorus chanted repetitively:

Barns and garnerers never empty;
Vines with clustring bunches growing, (IV.1.3)

A gauze curtain was hung in front of the masquers and the goddesses were suspended on wires.

The cave mouth opened wider to admit Iris. She came on from up left in a white diaphonous gown and veil, carrying a bouquet, but at Drury Lane she had a more individual costume in the colours of the rainbow that distinguished her from the other goddesses, who wore white (Illustrated London News, 21.12.1957). Ceres came on from up right, carrying a sheaf of corn, led by Ariel who departed immediately over the left assembly. The textual warrant for this occurs in IV.1 where Ariel says,

When I presented 'Ceres',
I thought to have told thee of it; (Caliban's conspiracy)(167)

Brook, therefore, showed Ariel presenting Ceres, although Peter Hall's production actually increased Ariel's range of disguises by having him play Ceres's part in the masque. In either case, the presence of Ariel served as a visual reminder of the link between the masque and the mind of its maker as well as enhancing the atmosphere of pretence and conjuration generally. Ceres asked why she had been summoned and Iris, in replying, moved downstage of her to the left to indicate Ferdinand and Miranda. Then Ceres, too, came forward on the right in referring to the plot of Dis to abduct her daughter, Proserpina. Iris crossed in to Ceres to reassure her. Juno was lowered from the back of the stage from gilded clouds 'in a golden chariot. Her translucent veil was supported by a spiky crown and underneath the veil her face was painted white. She carried a hollow orb to indicate her universal sovereignty, recalling the pendant globe first seen through the gauze curtain at the beginning of the play:

'the great globe itself' (IV.1.153). Juno alighted from the chariot and came down centre to be acknowledged, standing between Iris and Ceres.

The three goddesses moved around the stage during the songs with patterned formality. Juno crossed to Ferdinand and Miranda, on the left, making room for Iris in the centre. Ceres came to the centre for her song, Iris moving over to the right and Juno tucking back into formation on the left.

When they had performed their songs, Juno and Ceres conferred together at centre stage. Iris moved to the extreme right to introduce the dance while they moved back upstage with slow grace. The four reapers were not only wearing their 'rye-straw hats' (IV.I.136) - their entire bodies were covered with straw so that they were like lifesize corn-dollies. They used small, one-handed sickles in the dance. The nymphs had 'sedg'd crowns' (IV.1.129) like tiaras of plaited grass and dresses of riverweed fronds. While the dance was going on, to the music of an organ at Drury Lane, 'the grouped trinity {of goddesses on wires} hover poised above the dancing numphs and reapers' (Illustrated London News, 21. 12.1957). Suddenly Father Time appeared behind the moving forms of the dancers, carrying a huge scythe and an hourglass, his long white beard and hair falling over his shoulders. It seems likely that he came up through the trap at centre stage, his appearance being masked by either the goddesses, before they rose into the air, or the dancers themselves, although both promptbooks are inexplicit on this crucial point. The trap is clearly marked, however, as are the careful groupings of the goddesses around it.

Prospero's words followed:

I had forgot that foul conspiracy
 Of the beast Caliban and his confederates
 Against my life; the minute of their plot
 Is almost come. (IV.1.139)

'The minute of their plot' - the precision of the time reference was strongly underlined by the sudden appearance of the sombre figure within the heart of the gay spectacle of the masque. Prospero crossed to the middle of the stage to Father Time's right side and gripped his sickle, breaking the spell and causing the spirits to depart. He paced restlessly upstage to the left of the centre, giving point to Ferdinand's observation:

This is strange; your father's in some passion
 That works him strongly. (IV.I.143)

Miranda rose and Ferdinand moved away from her slightly, in towards Prospero, who then turned and took the centre of the stage alongside Ferdinand to speak 'Our revels now are ended' (IV.I.48).

The Evening Standard (14.8.1957) thought Brook had added too many contrivances to preserve the integrity of the verse:

One blunder is the ballet Masque where three
 fluttering Hermione Gingolds in white chiffon were
 surrounded by dancing artichokes, a Father Time figure
 interrupting the proceedings.

The fecundity of invention in the masque, nevertheless, had a special thematic significance for the production in as much as the island represented the harsher face of nature, for the most part. The barren rocks of Prospero's cave and the tangled, chaotic jungle through which the castaways struggled had produced a claustrophobic, inhospitable impression of the environment. The masque had to redress this balance by revealing the positive, creative potential of Prospero's magic

to transform nature. It had to be the major climax and a significant contrast to the earlier scenes of austerity. But Kenneth Tynan's description suggested that the concern to make the masque extraordinary had made it incongruous instead:

There is only one big visual gaffe: the dance of nymphs and reapers, in which men dressed as stooks wave plastic sickles and are surrounded by chanting vegetables. This is over-literal and uncomely. The music, tape-recorded by what sounds like a combination of glockenspiel, thunder-sheet, Malayan nose-flute and discreetly tortured Sistine choir boy, twangles just as dreamily as Caliban said it would, though it fails to supply even passable settings for the songs. (Observer, 18.8.1957)

The masque, of course, insists on a musical and spectacular treatment as it also insists on being an etherial vision capable of melting into air. Yet the more heavily spectacular it is the more substantial it becomes. Spirits with 'plastic sickles' were all too real. So was it simply a case, as the headline of The Evening Standard put it, of 'Mr. Brook Beats Ariel At The Tricks Games'?

Brook's use of 'quaint devices' such as trap-doors, lifts, sliding-cave partitions, mechanical shipwrecks and musique concrète was mannered enough to feed the vulgar image of himself as the restlessly ingenious director confronting audiences with weird, avant-garde productions. However, with the enormously influential productions of Measure for Measure (1950) and Titus Andronicus (1955) behind him, Brook was having to come to terms with his own reputation. It was not just that audiences were growing accustomed to his style and developing an immunity to shock tactics. Brook himself was trying to find a way forward out of the cul-de-sac his earlier Shakespearean productions had led him into. J. C. Trewin, in his biography of Brook, agreed with Tynan that the ingenuities of this production of The Tempest 'could be excessive', but he also points out

the production's novelty, arising from its position as a watershed in Brook's career:

As soon as we had reached the island, meeting ground of elemental forces, caves opened and closed, grew and shrank; actors, poised in close harmony, shot from trap-doors or disappeared into them as if they had been hardened to the business since boyhood; diaphonous spirits floated downstage, gauzes dissolved, outsize tropical fruits hung from branches as thick as drain-pipes (a hint here, maybe, from Messel in The Little Hut). The musique concrète was as its busiest, either a thousand twangling instruments that hummed about our ears, or others that rolled like bells from la cathédrale engloutie. The music reached us from what Brook called a 'mescaline-world of sound'. Again the actual nature of the first sound was unimportant; through a process of re-recording, with a mosaic-maker's patience, he could create complex and extended patterns of tone and rhythm.

The epithalamic masque, with its all-white goddesses, had a sign of the Brook to come, a reiterated fertility-rite chanting of key phrases about barns, garner, vines and plants ... All said, the revival kept a balance between Brook's decorated and undecorated periods. If his settings were basically austere, those craggy caverns, South Cornish in feeling, by a 'sea-marge, sterile and rocky-hard', his effects were capriciously inventive:

(Peter Brook: A Biography, pp. 101-102)

Both Measure for Measure and Titus Andronicus had been very austere productions. Gielgud's lean, haggard, black-capped Angelo in a dark blue-grey robe, grey tights and a black wollen cloak, moving like a shadow through the stone arches or pausing beside a long candlestick with a single lighted candle had typified the whole look of the production. There was no music in Measure for Measure - Mariana's song had been unaccompanied - and in Titus Andronicus the musique concrète had been limited to the most primitive of evocative sound effects: metallic raspings, crashes, clicks. The Tempest was richer, more abundantly fanciful than these two productions and severer than earlier Brook productions such as Love's Labour's Lost (Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, 1946) with its

Watteau décor and atmosphere of romantic langour.

The production that I would single out as the one to which Brook's Tempest owed most is The Winter's Tale (Phoenix, Edinburgh Festival, 1951). The more obvious similarities - both plays belonging in the group of late Romances and possessing parallels of mood and theme, and Gielgud's playing of both Leontes and Prospero - were focussed by the appearance of Father Time as a figure in the masque. He seemed to have wandered through the whirling snow storm that introduced him in Brook's production of The Winter's Tale and somehow found his way on to Prospero's island, his intrusion coinciding with the recollection of Caliban's imminent plot. This suggests that Brook wanted to establish the continuity of the time theme between two plays that are very different structurally. The action of The Winter's Tale is bridged by the choric speech of Time, who announces the passage of sixteen years and Perdita's growth to maturity; Brook's production, however, was divided into three acts with two intervals, which served to emphasize the time taken to journey from Sicilia to Bohemia and back again. The intervals occurred after the editors' II.2 and IV.4 so that the whole of the programme's Act II took place in Bohemia and the whole of Acts I and III in Sicilia. Gielgud told Michael Elliott:

Brook never tells you how he is going to do a play. In The Winter's Tale the only talk he gave before the production was about Shakespeare's feeling for going out on adventurous journeys and coming home and the reconciliation of the last act and this feeling of leaving and returning.³

These remarks would be equally applicable to the production of The Tempest. The Tempest contains no actual journey, but at the end of the play Prospero prepares to set out on one and this impression was reinforced by Brook in setting the Epilogue on board the ship bound for Naples. Time and distance

were again related through the idea of a journey.

Now time's passage in The Winter's Tale undergoes seasonal transformations from the tempestuous, winter world of Leontes's Sicilia, where a sad tale is the most appropriate kind to tell, to the high summer of the sheep shearing in Bohemia and on to the eventual reawakening of life in Sicilia again where Perdita is welcome 'As is the spring to th' earth' (V.I.152). Gielgud's Leontes aged visibly during the course of the action. At the beginning of the play he had jet black hair, a small dark beard, an ear-ring, a high white collar with an insignia at the neck, a black sash over dark robes and a dagger in his belt,

muzzl'd
Lest it should bite its master and so prove
As ornaments oft do, too dangerous. (1.2.156)

At the end his hair and beard were grizzled, his face deeply lined and his ashen robe was collarless. The Tempest, on the other hand, has no direct way of presenting seasonal change and mutability because the action is measured in minutes and hours instead of months and years. The insistent chronological references in The Tempest serve to condense time rather than dilate it, the whole action only taking, supposedly, three to four hours. This is, in fact, adopting the shortest estimate, only fifty-two minutes longer than the production's running time. However, the symbolism of the masque mirrors obliquely the cycle of the seasons and, in the business Gielgud's Prospero performs with Father Time within the masque, we can see how his renunciation of magic was regarded.

The masque evokes the myth of Dis's kidnapping of Ceres's daughter, Proserpina, so that in the midst of the congenial atmosphere of fertility there is a suggestion of the deathly underworld and winter hardship just as

there is in The Winter's Tale (IV.4.116). But this is part of the sub-text that does not interfere with the enjoyment of the celebration of nature's prosperity, which is concentrated on the summer months from the rising sap of 'spongy April' (IV.I.65) to the reaping of the rich 'August weary' harvest (IV.I.134). The masque blends the different characteristics of the seasons rather in the way a good prime minister chooses his cabinet from people of different persuasions in the hope that divisions will be transcended in the group situation and original resolutions will be passed. So it is no contradiction to say that the references to the seasons mediate a timeless experience that points backwards to the Garden of Eden and forward to the great harvest of the Last Judgement.

Spring come to you at the farthest
In the very end of harvest! (IV.I.114)

sings Ceres, using a paradox to affirm a synthesis.

Father Time's sickle associated him with the reapers in the dance as it also supplied Prospero with a means of entering the masque to dispel the spirits in the way spectators were really absorbed into the great spectacular entertainments of the Jacobean court to join in the dancing with the actors. But Prospero's entry was prematurely forced by an external agency which had nothing to do with the spirit of revelry. The plot of Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo on his life has to be carefully contrived in performance so that it will not appear to be merely an arbitrary pretext for changing the scene and rounding off the story. The gorgeous garments scene is, of course, a convenient buffer episode of farcical comedy between the elevated masque and the final emotional scene of reunion. Audiences are used to laughing at the incompetent bunglings of a naive monster and two drunks and it is questionable how far their plotting can be

viewed as a serious challenge to Prospero's supremacy. Some of the reviewers suggested that Alec Clunes's Caliban was too comically grotesque to bear the burden of original sin; The Evening Standard (14.8.1957) said that he had been 'deprived of his symbolic significance' by being 'converted into a hairy member of the Crazy Gang' while The Times (6.7.1957) dubbed him 'a buffoon simply'. Yet Prospero has to call Caliban 'A devil, a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick' (IV.I.188). Brook's production accentuated the slap-stick fun of the clown scenes with raspberry blowing and Caliban's assumption of a battered panama hat to add to the incongruity of Stephano's bowler and Trinculo's sou'wester during their drunken bacchanal, but he also underlined the ominous significance of the interruption to the masque with the sombre figure of Father Time - a grim reaper.

Prospero's action of entering the masque and seizing hold of Father Time's sickle to dissolve the magic related the scythe to his wizard's wand. The resemblance was increased by the tall shape of the wand which curved slightly at the tip and had sprigs of foilage sprouting from it (Plate 21). Earlier on, Prospero had referred to the hour-glass also in a context that may have been suggestive of its influence on his magic (1.2.240).

How we view Prospero's magical control of the action in performance depends to some extent on the visual significance of the wizard's paraphernalia: principally the mantle, the book and the wand. Two of these objects, at least, the mantle and the wand, were conspicuously present in Gielgud's performance, and when he came to the speech of farewell to his art where each object is discarded in turn, the ambivalence of the wand was extended

through its association with Time's scythe. Gielgud delivered the speech with unusual dynamism, exploiting the imagery of conflict to suggest that Prospero's mood was violently unstable. The virile austerity of his interpretation supported the attempt at a full-blown, rhetorical climax. The effect was cathartic, arousing momentary fear and uncertainty and then a sense of passion spent. T. C. Worsley wrote,

The test of a successful production - which this one for me triumphantly passed - is that we are intensely stirred and moved when Prospero performs that act of forgiving his enemies ... Under Mr. Brook's guidance the moment is made the most of ...

If, all the same, we feel this change of heart more intensely than is common, it is because of Sir John Gielgud's Prospero. It is not just that his Prospero is not for once hidden behind an old man's wrinkles and nodding beard, but stands up tormented, grizzled and human. But here Sir John draws a deep line of emphasis under the dark side. His Prospero is under the threat of being engulfed by his sense of being wronged. He has to fight against the temptation to give way to it. His very magic is a part of that temptation, leading him into fearful territory. He is perhaps as frightened of his powers as he is proud of them. To renounce them, then, to return to his merely human state is, when it comes, a relief, as we might find it if we were playing with some dangerous power which we decided of our own free will to renounce. (New Statesman, 24.8.1957)

Worsley then went on to notice that 'the act of reconciliation is an act of renunciation (of revenge) - this doubles the force of the scene'. However, he added 'we feel these subtleties by implication rather than directly' (New Statesman, 24.8.1957). The Times, however, thought that Gielgud's interpretation overstepped the mark:

It is clear that Sir John Gielgud's purpose in emphasizing the impassioned elements in Prospero's nature is to introduce a suggestion of dramatic conflict which is necessarily lacking in an action moving at the will of an omnipotent being. At the prospect of coming face to face with his old enemies this Prospero is visibly agitated. The conflict of emotions in his breast is sharp. We are almost invited

to wonder if forgiveness will after all triumph over lower feelings. For though the performance of the actor throws out a persistent suggestion that though Prospero intends of his own accord to surrender the omnipotence which he has only valued as the instrument of impersonal ends, he nevertheless has an inner battle of his own to fight. His magical power has become very dear to him.

It is a pity, of course, that Shakespeare did not write the speech that would have given this interpretation a clinching effect. For it is a performance of power and beauty which draws from every speech its full poetic value and almost forces the words to take on the meaning that the actor is reading into them. (14.8.1957)

Before taking up the point that 'Shakespeare did not write the speech that would have given this interpretation a clinching effect', we should notice that both reviewers argue from the premiss that conflict and suspense about the main character's actions is what makes a play interesting. But if Prospero's plan is established at the outset of the play and the final outcome is never in doubt does this mean that The Tempest is less interesting? It is typical of the elliptical structure of The Tempest that we find Prospero indulging in no self-consciously analytical soliloquies of the kind given to Hamlet that suggest he is undergoing some sort of psychological process of transformation during the course of the action. The aside rather than the soliloquy is his characteristic form of expression. This is not to say that Prospero is a static, dehumanized character; he is, on the contrary, highly susceptible to change, shifting from irascibility to melancholy, from anxiety to exultation. His changing moods do not add up to anything, however, so that it is impossible to say, as you could with Hamlet and Lear, that he is a different person at the end of the play to the one he was at the beginning. This is no great loss for which the actor playing the role has to seek around for excuses; it simply means that indeterminate, inconclusive, ephemeral states of feeling may be communicated in the theatre as well as powerful, intense, accumulative states of feeling. Having said this, Prospero can be played with more or less moral ambiguity, with more or less dangerous, volatile passion. The

Tempest does reach a spectacular climax in Act IV with the masque and a rhetorical climax at the beginning of Act V with Prospero's speech, but there is no crucial turning point to precipitate the conclusion. If this is what The Times means by a big, interpretation-clinching speech, then there isn't one.

The rough magic speech causes Prospero's power to be seen as something outside himself. It is again slightly offset to the main development of the plot since the feats of conjuring that are described do not align exactly with how the magical feats have been represented on the stage. Whereas Prospero's ability to 'set roaring war twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault' (V.I.43) has been amply demonstrated in the sea storm of the first scene, his ability to uproot trees and raisethe dead has not. Neither does the havoc wrought on nature by the magic's destructive energy - plucking up the pine and cedar, turning day into night by dimming the mid-day sun - suggest the bountiful, life enhancing magic of the masque, or, for that matter, its entertainment value as a means of playing tricks, causing people to dance and soothing them with sleep and music. The negative depiction of sorcery serves two purposes: to build up the atmosphere for the ensuing recognitions and to assign its operation to the charge of nonhuman creatures such as 'elves' and 'demi-puppets'. The magic is a powerful tool which bends the objects of the material universe to the will of the magician, but in doing so it creates disorder in the world. Good pasture land becomes contaminated: 'whereof the ewe not bites'. The spirit executors rejoice in darkness and set the elements at war. Thus the magic works on nature but is itself dangerously unnatural. Gielgud showed how Prospero's identification with spirits and gods threatened to undermine his humanity. He could not entirely avoid the impression that the intention to forgive his enemies lacked spontaneity. 'The transition from vengeance to forgiveness after the tiniest of wrestles with his

conscience', Punch (21.8.1957) found 'barely convincing'.

When Prospero did finally confront his enemies in the grand blue robe, crown and skull-cap of the Duke of Milan, he pardoned them 'with a touch of asperity' (Derek Granger, Financial Times, 6.12.1957). Antonio fell to his knees to accept mercy. The lines where Prospero refers to his wish to 'retire' to Milan 'where / Every third thought shall be my grave' (V.I.310) were 'lightly spoken' (Bolton Evening News, 17.8.1957). The Epilogue on board the ship ended on a 'wistful, half-humorous note' (W.T., Nottingham Journal, 14.8.1957). The production maintained the emphasis on spectacular tableaux right until the end with the transformation of the island into the ship's deck. Thus the impression of Gielgud's third Prospero was strongly mediated through lavish stage effects. It was the most technically elaborate production Gielgud has been in so far.

* * *

By some coincidence it was again a seventeen-year period that elapsed between this, the third, and the latest of the Gielgud revivals of The Tempest. During this time the theatre had undergone major changes, possibly the most important being the emergence of large subsidized companies committed to a repertoire of classical plays and long-term contracts for actors. The Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre could command much greater resources than had previously been available for the mounting of Shakespearean plays. Peter Hall had been behind the foundation of both organizations. Gielgud's latest appearance in The Tempest was in a production by Peter Hall, at the Old Vic, under the auspices of the newly opened National Theatre. It was, in fact, the

first production of Hall's administration, the director having come from Glyndebourne where he had been working on such operas as Monteverdi's Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria and Cavalli's La Callisto. These pieces of Venetian baroque art were to have an influence upon Hall's method of producing The Tempest - evinced in the operatic elements he introduced into the masque of Ceres and Juno and his highly decorative, visual approach to the play. The goddesses were ample, bare-breasted women attired in gaudy seventeenth-century finery. 'Iris and Juno should be in some way Reubenesque - with glorious false breasts', wrote Hall in a note to his designer, John Bury.⁴ Juno resembled Queen Elizabeth. All the words of the masque were sung. The strange shapes that carried the banquet were grotesquely deformed creatures with extra babies' heads and arms growing out of their bodies. Inigo Jones and the spectacular tradition of court masques also had a strong influence on the staging and, in this respect, The Tempest's début coincided with a resurgence of interest in the masque form that was occurring at the time outside the theatre. Stephen Orgel's and Roy Strong's comprehensive study of the subject had been published a year earlier and it was Roy Strong who wrote a short article for the programme:⁵

The mysterious banquet with its attendant shapes, the many disguises of Ariel, are directly visual experiences which achieve their effect on the audience by their impact on the eyes. Shakespeare is concerned with stage spectacle as a means whereby the repertory of visual metaphor might be added to that of verbal on the stage. The Tempest above all reflects his ability to neutralise into his late plays the revolutionary concepts of Inigo Jones's theatre of the platonic idea.

No tongue! All eyes! Be silent. (National Theatre)

Hall himself had said that in working on his production he had 'started from the masque and worked outwards to the rest of the play. It is itself

a series of Masques' (The Theatre of Heaven and Earth: Peter Hall interviewed by John Higgins', The Times, 9.3.1974). He was, however, concerned to stress that his intent was not merely to display a series of engaging pictures and transformations. He wanted to create images that meant something. The 'emblematic theatre' he envisaged in reaction to a purely literary genre where words were everything, was to have a conceptual content as well as a perceptual one. Even so, he showed a literary specialist's respect for the text, performing it in its entirety. The New Penguin edition of the play, edited by Anne Richter, was used and adhered to closely, including its return to the Folio spelling of 'mushrumps' in Prospero's speech abandoning magic. Gielgud pronounced this as it was spelt, creating a much more rugged shape for the line than is customary:

and you whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrumps, that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew; (IV.1.39)

John Bury designed a set that looked as if it had been made of bamboo slats, laid in different directions, producing an interesting crosshatched effect. Inside these screens was an inset area that could contain a ship's mast, perspective flats, a sun, clouds, cut-out trees and rocks. In front of them the stage curved outwards in an irregular kidney-shaped rostrum, raised slightly above the main platform. Prospero's cell was located to the left, halfway downstage, and Caliban's den was situated to the right. There were mirrors in the cell that caught the actors' reflections. It was a picturesque creation constructed to contain the overhead winches and numerous mobile elements that were to figure in the many transformations and tableaux that Hall had planned. Bury's costumes



22. Prospero and Ariel, National Theatre (Old Vic), 1974

were Elizabethan. The basic outfit for Ariel, who underwent a series of metamorphoses involving costume changes from sea nymph, to sentinel, to a jester parody of Trinculo, to a huntsman, consisted of a body stocking and pleated Elizabethan breeches. His hair hung in golden ringlets and his face was like that of one of Botticelli's androgynous adolescents. Michael Feast played the part and sang as a countertenor. Gielgud was got up to look like the Elizabethan conjuror, Doctor John Dee, with a black skull cap; full, grey, pointed beard; and a ruff of cream lace. He had a long, brown gown, buttoned up the front and fastened at the waist with a leather belt; a brown, magic cloak, embroidered with cabbalistic symbols on the inside; and suede shoes. Made up to look much older than he had ever been before as Prospero, he was in many ways much closer to the image of the traditional sage and ancient conjuror. Not personally content with his appearance, he allowed himself to be assimilated into the overall production style (An Actor and His Time, p.204, Plate 22).

The play began, amidst keening wind and thunder, with the sight of a lurching ship's mast framed by the bamboo slats. Sailors, rocking with the movement of the ship, tugged at ropes hanging to the left and right to lower the yard arm, which eventually descended and was wound up in the sail. At the centre of the stage, in front of the mast, was an open trap, the door fixed upright, suggesting the ship's hold where the lords' quarters were situated. Brook had placed his ominous hush before the splitting of the ship (1.1.56), but Peter Hall had timed it to occur earlier, as the ship ran aground (1.1.47). Everyone repeated the Boatswain's line, 'off to sea again', and then froze for four beats while the prompter switched off the wind effects. Pandemonium ensued when, striking the rocks, the ship shuddered and the mariners were sent sprawling. Gonzalo

was the last to leave the stage, departing through the trap, which was slammed shut behind him. Immediately, Miranda and Prospero were revealed where they had been hidden by the open door. Prospero was standing to the left, wearing his magic cloak and carrying the wand that he had used to raise the sea storm, and a new prop had been added to the wizard's accoutrements alluded to by the text, but not necessarily requiring representation: Gielgud held in his other hand a book of spells. Already the side flats had closed in to make a narrower opening and behind them the sky was beginning to clear, with blue strips moving across the horizon. The sound of thunder and rain had changed to a faint etherial chanting. Thus with the sensational realistic staging of the shipwreck and the lightning transition to the enchanted island, Hall had set the tone for the richly decorated and technically elaborate sequence of merging pictorial emblems in which he had conceived the action.

The storm, however, was not entirely dispensed with after the change of scene, just as the recurring stage directions requiring 'a noise of thunder' and Shakespeare's imagery keep it alive in the mind long after it has ceased to function in the plot. Not only do Miranda and Ariel create it in retrospect through their speeches, but Prospero is also intimately related to the storm through his introduction as its controller. The distance between Prospero the wizard, and Prospero the man, was emphasized by the continuation of the tempest into the present scene until Gielgud had doffed his magic robe, wand and book, thereby symbolically laying aside his identity as an adept versed in secret arts. While the storm remained, he was tense and alert, preserving it through his concentration. Miranda was the first to come downstage, running to the tip of the rostrum and looking into the auditorium where the storm was seemingly still going on out at sea. Then she ran back to Prospero to plead with him. Gielgud was looking away when he began to speak and only

turned towards her eventually on 'No harm' (1.2.15). There was a pause as he collected himself. As he said ''Tis time / I should inform thee farther'(1.2.22) there was a distant rumble of thunder. The direction in the promptbook reads, 'Storm subsides. Prospero relaxes'. 'His magic robe weighs him down. It is a relief to shed it' noted The Observer (10.3.1974). His cloak was unfastened by Miranda and laid on the floor to the left of centre stage. He laid his wand to the right, but still retained his book. Crossing above Miranda to her right, he offered a few words of comfort and then came down to a rock that was positioned in front of his cell, sitting down upon it to quiz the girl about her memories. Miranda sat near to him on the edge of the rostrum. The tableau remained static for a considerable stretch of the dialogue while Gielgud sought to hold the attention of the audience through his voice alone. In 1957 he had inserted much more movement to reshape the speech for the stage and to outline the impatience and indignation of a man who was still passionate and active. Now he made little of the pedantic asides to Miranda accusing her of inattentiveness. The quip about cuckoldry, which is the nearest Prospero ever comes to a joke in the play, went by unremarked (1.2.56). Instead there was a subdued intensity in the actual narration of the events of his story, audible in the groundswell beneath 'Twelve year since, Miranda, twelve year since', the repetition coming like a dim far off echo stretching the gap of time, that led on to a gradual quickening of pace as he became caught up in his own story telling:

Hence his ambition growing -

Dost thou hear?

Mira. Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.

Pro. To have no screen between this part he play'd ... (1.2.105)

His increasing involvement swept right over Miranda's interpolation, gathering momentum as the thread was pursued without slackening. The rapt stillness was eventually broken by Prospero getting up and putting the book of magic on a shelf in his cell, returning at once to continue. This limited and functional movement signalled the drop back into a humbler tone with which Prospero contrasts his own studious ambitions with the worldly aspirations of Antonio - 'Me, poor man - my library / Was dukedom large enough' (1.1.109) - as it also served the practical purpose of locating his cell. On resuming the story he remained standing, going to a position above the rock seat. There was a period between the opening gambit, 'Now the condition' (1.2.120), and the return to the subject rather like the indentation of a paragraph in prose. So another slight break was inserted after the description of the plan Antonio and Alonso had hatched and before its execution (1.2.127). Gielgud, in this one feature, was constant to his last appearance at Stratford, where the pause had come in exactly the same place. In the gap, he came onto the rostrum and stepped above Miranda, to the left.

As she came personally back into the tale with Prospero's reference to their midnight exile, Miranda rose and came in towards him. Prospero reacted to her offer to cry their woes once more by taking two or three steps downstage away from her. Soon he had drawn her to the edge of the rostrum where they were both reseated next to one another - their physical proximity imaging their companionship on the rotten bark upon which they were cast adrift. The telling effect of variations in tonal colour to reinforce meaning had already been demonstrated by Gielgud in the descent from the noble elegaic 'alas, poor Milan!' to the low disgust of the phrase which accompanies it 'To most ignoble stooping' (1.2.115). He

was standing when he said this and his upright posture seemed to counterpoint the prostrated attitude that the metaphor confers upon his kingdom. The lyrical tenderness with which he invested his description of Miranda as a 'cherubim' constituted a further prominent example of his control of the device. Shakespeare seems to have prepared for its human intimacy by the introduction of an ornamental conceit where the seeming indifference of the elements is reversed:

There they hoist us,
To cry to th'sea, that roar'd to us; to sigh
To th'winds, whose pity, sighing back again,
Did us but loving wrong. (1.2.148)

So far the words that have been spoken serve to emphasize Prospero's present power and security against his past weakness. The helplessness of his plight expressed in the mimic cries of the elements that steered his vessel aimlessly are opposed to the control he now exercises over them. Yet Prospero's answer to Miranda's question as to how they came ashore is the first explicit acknowledgement of a power that is above the wizard's art.

Gielgud phrased his initial speech to bring out the importance of providence. He paused after using the word (1.2.159) and again when referring to the 'accident most strange' that brought them to the island. His voice climbed high to suggest 'the auspicious star' riding in the zenith of the heavens. While he was speaking of the star, a shimmering, angelic chanting - one of the characteristic sounds of the magic island - began. This sound continued until Miranda was charmed asleep. Prospero got up, but he did not don his magic cape straight away as the direction in most editions requires. Gielgud's Prospero put on the cape and picked up his staff, fifteen lines later, when he told Miranda to stop asking questions.

Ariel was lowered from above on what one critic called 'a bone-shaped trapeze' (Times, 8.3.1974). This resembled an inverted letter 'p' attached to visible cables that ferried the actor from the airy region with which he was associated. A foot could be inserted into the loop of the p, designated in the promptbook as a stirrup, while the rider steadied himself with an arm around the upright. The stirrup and its occupant descended behind Prospero, so that Gielgud had his back to Ariel as he addressed him. Their absence of eye contact was once more a consistent theme of their relationship. The opening speeches of Ariel describing the storm were spoken from above Prospero's head. Gielgud's voice took on a higher, lighter colouring as he spoke to the hovering apparition. The rapidity of his words and the mood of elated excitement that they expressed matched the tone of Ariel and increased their mystic communion. Each seemed to share in the other's experience. As questions and answers were exchanged about the dispersal of the prisoners, the stirrup came lower, floating three feet above the platform. It finally came to rest on the floor, marking the end of Ariel's account of his mission. The actor alighted to make his response to Prospero's query about the time of day. The change of level was also conducive to bringing out the underlying opposition of the two figures. Here we begin to see emerging Hall's concern to invest his scenario with an emblematic significance. While the spirit floated above the wizard like a suspended exclamation mark they shared an empathy. But, as soon as Ariel touched the ground, conflict was initiated. This was incorporated into the actor's movements beyond the mediation of the stage mechanism. The aggressive, challenging ring that Michael Feast gave to Ariel's statement of the promise of liberty that had been made to him, provided Gielgud with an occasion to pitch his voice lower and break away from the rebellious

servant to the nearby rock stool in denying that freedom. In executing this manoeuvre, he was careful to keep downstage of Ariel to avoid any suggestion of an exchange of glances as he was followed half way. The intransigence of the situation that had been reached was implicit in the stubborn seated attitude Prospero adopted on the rock and the crouching ball that Ariel had become on the left side of the rostrum, still slightly upstage of Prospero though near to him. The bent body of the spirit mirrored the picture of Sycorax 'who with age and envy / Was grown into a hoop' (1.2.258).

The history that is provided on Ariel's earlier far worse imprisonment and the birth of Caliban was used to supply a further illustration of Prospero's awesome power. Its static quality as exposition was given dramatic immediacy by making it into a curse. As Prospero revived the past he was also visiting punishment upon his reluctant helper. Ariel began to squirm on the floor as he was denounced as 'a malignant thing' (1.2.257) and continued to show signs of pain when the conditions of his imprisonment in the cloven pine were made vividly manifest. Details in Prospero's story like the pause marked 'thou didst vent thy groans / As fast as millwheels strike' (1.2.280) had him reliving his cramped torments. The affinity between the characters was such that for Prospero to remember something was enough for Ariel to experience it, just as Prospero had seemed to share in the animated spontaneity of Ariel's embodiment of the storm. His pain ceased abruptly after the rescue from the pine was re-enacted and this gave to Ariel's grateful 'I thank thee, master' (1.2.292) an element of expedient compulsion. The line was inserted quickly after Prospero's grating reproach as if to indicate Ariel's anxiety to avoid further immediate suffering. Prospero's return to good

temper was equally sudden. The promise to free Ariel after two days was melodiously serene. In many ways he showed restraint in handling the crisis, never allowing his indignation to explode into an uncontrolled tantrum. A distinction was kept between Sycorax's 'unmitigable rage' (1.2.276) and his own righteous ire that was perhaps not so clear in 1957. If there was a hint of danger in what this Prospero spoke, it was kept subordinate to his firm and far-reaching purpose. Ariel's resistance, on the other hand, was forcefully stated, if rapidly quelled, and fully justified the epithet 'moody' that Prospero attached to it.

Since thou dost give me pains,
Let me remember thee what thou hast promis'd,
Which is not yet perform'd me. (1.2.242)

was an angry shout of precocious defiance that affirmed the wayward dynamism of Ariel. Despite his subjection to mortal authority, the conflict between Ariel and Prospero disclosed the slender means that enabled Prospero to maintain his ascendancy. Robert Speaight clarified this issue when he wrote, 'we realised, as we rarely do, that Ariel is stronger than Prospero.'⁶

Gielgud released the tension by standing to renew the bargain of freedom for service and Ariel unwound the knot that he had tied himself into, sitting up to respond to it eagerly. For Ariel's exit, Prospero turned upstage and opened his cloak to allow Michael Feast to slip off unobserved, behind, as the stirrup flew upwards empty. Thus

Prospero's command for him to become invisible was at once carried out, the upward movement of the empty stirrup being employed to chart his progress through the air. Miranda was revived slowly and gently by her father. Prospero went back to his position above the rock and called out softly the triple 'awakes' that dismiss his spell, pausing before the first and last to form a delicate cadence. The adagic tempo of this small connecting unit that stands as a buffer between the dialogues with Ariel and Caliban was taken up in the hesitancy of Miranda's replies.

Prospero's voice dropped again, assuming a different harshness, whilst summoning Caliban, at centre stage, from the dark den that loomed to the right. With this entry, the principal compass points on the stage were fixed. Ariel's location above the proscenium placed him in a completely different order of being, higher than the human. To stage right was Prospero's cell containing his books: a haven of civilization and culture. To stage left was Caliban's barbaric cave. The anthropoid and diabolic status of Sycorax's son had been illuminated in Peter Brook's production both by the ape-like make-up Alec Clunes had worn and his appearance on a trap from below stage level - a region known colloquially as 'hell' in the Elizabethan playhouse. Caliban appeared to be on a lower rung of the evolutionary ladder than Prospero and to be superstitiously linked to the evil underworld. Quilley's Caliban confronted Prospero more directly on the same level - the den and the cell standing as relativistically opposed regions just as primitive societies exist alongside industrial-technological societies in the modern world. He looked 'Mohican-like' (Plays and Players, March 1974) with 'red scars on his cheek' and spoke 'this island's mine' with 'anti-colonialist fervour' (New Statesman, 15.3.1974). It was brought out clearly in the production that neither

Caliban nor Antonio, the two main representatives of types of evil, could be regenerated. They remained fundamentally antagonistic to the renewal of relationships engineered through the dénouement. The southern point of the compass, below the platform, was this time appropriated by the court party, who had disappeared beneath the hatches as the waves of the tempest were about to close over them in an emblem of perdition. Later on, this level would be used again in Prospero's reversal of the process, when Ferdinand and Miranda came up on a lift, engrossed in their game of chess, to be reunited with the castaways.

When Caliban failed to come forth on his summons, Prospero crossed to the den and opened its door outwards. Cover was thereby provided for Ariel's fleeting entrance as a sea nymph from the same den that would, seconds later, reveal his earthy counterpart. A brief whispering occurred on the threshold and then he ran off to the middle left exit. Caliban instinctively gravitated towards Miranda when he emerged - coming down centre and pointedly ignoring her father. His defiance of authority was shown by the way he chased her. Miranda was pursued up the centre of the stage, Caliban halting in the middle, warned to go no further by the wizard's inward course of interception. Prospero was much rougher with Caliban this time than with Ariel, even though Shakespeare has arguably made less distinction in the text and has emphasized points of similarity such as the analogous threats of torture, the confinement to rock and pine, the capacity of the imagined groans of the prospective victim moving animals to pity (1.2.287), (1.2.731), and the identical application of the term 'slave' to bring each rebel to heel. He was possibly taking his cue, as the business adopted by Caliban on his entry would indicate, from the attempted rape of Miranda. In any case, Caliban's first remark directed solely at Prospero showed that he was influenced by the imminence of retribution. 'I must eat my dinner.' (1.2.330) was spoken while trying to retreat into the den. Giving his own version of the past history of

the island, he crouched above the door, then suddenly drew himself up to his full height, stepping in, attaining a kind of primitive grandeur as he affirmed his primordial royalty:

For I am all the subjects that you have,
Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me
In this hard rock, whiles you keep from me
The rest o' th' island. (1.2.341)

Prospero's eyes met Caliban's before the latter turned to the den to point the end of his speech.

It is worth recalling that in 1957 Gielgud had reacted by whipping the creature. Now he moved three steps up stage, to the left, away from Caliban during the rejoinder, speaking in a level voice:

Thou most lying slave,
Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have used thee,
Filth as thou art, with human care, (1.2.345)

Earlier, with the instrument for delivering the stripes ready in his hand, the hard, coercive aspect of the judgement had been uppermost. The later effect is less easy to pin down. The note Gielgud used is ostensibly more reasonable and thus stabilizes the counter-claim against the obviously jaundiced view of the bristling Caliban. A too-violent contradiction of Caliban backed up by force is inclined to tilt the balance of sympathy against the wizard, showing him to be exactly the kind of tyrant he is accused of being, as perhaps the recourse to the whip is to be indicted on these grounds anyway. (However, Gielgud noticeably refrained from using it until the very last moment, when a move from Caliban demonstrated that Miranda's honour was endangered.) His grave

denial with its hint of weariness, as if to suggest the many similar episodes he had re-enacted with this incorrigible enemy, was far more persuasive than that. But, at the same time, the slight movement away from Caliban and the less vigorous assertiveness seem designed to conceal the full range of the speaker's feelings. Does he perceive a qualification to his opinion that the mind of his adversary is too gross to grasp? The second enunciation at least allows this question to hang over a studiously underemphatic and shaded reading that hints at moral complexities. Caliban's departure to fetch in wood was made up stage, to the right, behind a mobile scenic truck that slid across the inset in the bamboo frame.

When Ferdinand appeared from behind the same moving truck, a link was forged between the two characters in a similar fashion to the one that had been established by Ariel's discovery behind the door to Caliban's den. Again the magical transformations were directed to reinforcing the thematic connections of the play. Though this, in essence, is what took place, a mechanical verbal description can only dimly convey the splendour of the transformation. Several scenic pieces were involved in the change, including two sets of wings that moved outwards and rocks that traversed the inset area trailing blue strips, which created an impression of a general broadening of the tableau. At the same time a rising sun appeared in the sky. The arrival of Ferdinand on the shore was regarded as an auspicious event that called for a sudden efflorescence of the island's wonder and magic. The tableau embraced Prospero and his daughter who, while this was going on, stood to one side. The wizard charmed Miranda with a gesture and had her turn to face the auditorium, her eyes closed, so that she would not at once perceive Ferdinand. Then he led her to the rock stool in his cell doorway where he could observe without being in the way.

Ariel drew Ferdinand to the middle of the stage as he sang the songs in countertenor to the accompaniment of an organ and dispersed backing voices. The original setting of 'Full fathom five' by Robert Johnson was used. As Ariel did so, a balletic motif was also introduced. Ariel stretched out his hands towards Ferdinand without touching him, curtsied and got him to curtsy in return, caressed him and evaded his grasp, finally held a hand above his own head, the fingers splayed, to imitate the comb of a cockerel.

In Love's Labour's Lost, Berowne is expressing a commonplace when he says that love is 'first learned in a lady's eyes' (IV.3.323). As an instance of Shakespeare's continued preoccupation with the idea, we have Prospero's metaphysical conceit spoken of Ferdinand and Miranda: 'At the first sight they have changed eyes' (1.2.440). Ariel has already suggested the significance of eyes as a symbol of metamorphosis in an arresting, surrealistic image that occurs in his second song: 'Those are pearls that were his eyes' (1.2.308). But here the organs of sight are blind though made of precious mineral substance. Invisible in the presence of humans except when he wishes to beguile them in the form of ignis fatuus or terrorise them in the form of a monstrous bird, Ariel is incapable of real affection, if not apparently devoid of the power to inspire this in others. When he asks Prospero finally if he loves him, his master's reply is 'Dearly, my delicate Ariel' (IV.1.49). Such associative patterns extended into the stagecraft, shed an illuminating ambience over the love at first sight of Ferdinand and Miranda and the contribution of the presence of Prospero and Ariel.

The awkwardness of Prospero's interference in the love affair can arouse discomfort in the theatre despite the explanation that is offered for it in an aside:

They are both in either's power; but this
 swift business I must uneasy make lest too
 light winning make the prize light. (1.2.450)

Gielgud delivered this frankly, without any trace of burlesque. However, he did not altogether disregard the comic potential in the scene and in one place particularly, the undercutting of his line 'Speak not you for him; he's a traitor' (1.2.460), wryly glossing over the ambiguity of Ferdinand's betrayal as a thing of little consequence, aroused laughter. The laugh on the live recording discharged some of the tension surrounding Ferdinand's capture. If an actor can distil some of Prospero's gaucheness in his performance, without of course descending to farce, he may be furthering an underlying purpose of the episode to contrast the facility of the magician's magical influence over persons to the clumsiness of his interaction as a human being. In this love encounter sorcery can only bring the young people together. The actual process of their falling in love can neither be stimulated nor arrested by the supernatural and so Prospero is forced to intervene on the human level where he operates less effectively. The eye contact sustained between the players of Ferdinand and Miranda tended to underline his isolation and threw into relief the absence of visual contact between Ariel and Prospero. Similarly, the climbing rapture of Prospero's oblique remarks to his servant mediates the excitement of the participants in the enthralled love bond.

The development was initiated first of all by Gielgud coming behind Miranda and passing a hand over her head to release his spell. There was a charged pause before he pronounced the lines that are a key signature to the exchange:

The fringed curtains of thine eye advance,
 And say what thou seest yond. (1.2.408)

Miranda obeyed, catching sight of Ferdinand wandering upstage. This was the signal for Prospero to leave her seated on the rock while he crossed the stage below to a position, down stage of Ariel on the right, where his aside could include him. Because Ferdinand had had his back turned, Miranda could not see his face initially. Thus the turn he put in, when his lines require him to see her, meant that their first facial glance was a moment of spell-binding mutual recognition. His kneeling prayer to her brought him to centre stage and Miranda rose. Prospero's interjection won Ferdinand's attention only temporarily away from her and Miranda's next remark had him again preoccupied. As Gielgud's aside containing the conceit about their changed eyes announced their love match, the interplay of perspectives was established, with the closed circuit of the lovers' sharing of gazes at the centre of the stage, on the rostrum, and the overpeering eyes of the father and Ariel sharing a mental rapport not mediated by physical sight. Miranda came forward for her aside, momentarily freezing the action:

Why speaks my father so ungently? This
Is the third man that e'er I saw, the first
That e'er I sighed for. Pity move my father
To be inclined my way! (1.2.444)

Then she stepped back into the group, breaking to Ferdinand. The insistence of Prospero on a further word motivated his movement into the middle, where he rudely cut off the lovers' mutual regard. The action suddenly became violent. Prospero commanded the dazed Ferdinand to follow, advancing on him. Ferdinand backed up stage two steps, checking the wizard with his drawn sword. Miranda came between the men to face her father and try to ward off his threats. She was waved aside. Ferdinand retreated further

upstage and then to the left before Prospero's advance. Ariel moved in from his crouching attitude on the extreme right to above the right bamboo wing. His sudden resort to activity may have signalled his participation in the spell that Prospero cast, by lifting his wand, to render Ferdinand harmless. The brisk sequence ended with Ferdinand and Miranda at the lower end of the rostrum below the centrally dominant Prospero and Ariel above him, to the right. Miranda clutched at her father's cloak and kneeled in supplication as Ferdinand slowly collapsed. Music was played during the spell and signified its completion. Miranda and Ferdinand shared one more glance as he looked up from the floor, to renew their intimacy. The meeting of their eyes was timed to coincide with Ferdinand's evocation of Miranda's image being beheld through the bars of his prison. Then Gielgud led the way up centre and off, followed by Ariel and his stumbling prisoner, the sliding shutters closing behind them almost catching Ferdinand. The stage picture narrowed to the lonely figure of Miranda watching the procession go before she entered Prospero's cell disconsolately.

For all its command of novel resource and co-ordination of group action, Hall's production of the banquet scene was probably less effective in one respect than the original, simpler Blackfriar's staging, as far as it is possible to imagine it. Because the set had no balcony it was impossible for Prospero to reveal himself aloft at the centre, where one feels he should be to focus attention on his ritual primacy of place. He is after all, a priest officiating over his own ceremony of expiation and his location on one side, to the left, aboard a scenic truck, does not establish him so clearly as the nucleus around which the scene is built. The setting of the banquet table endwise to the auditorium, on the right side of the rostrum, with the courtiers between Prospero and it,

must have led to emphasis being placed on the right side of the stage opposite to where he stood. Technical apparatus and extra man power figured prominently in impressing upon the audience the crucial nature of this phase of the play, which was to constitute an awesome decisive stroke of magic, bringing to a climax Prospero's artful ensnarements of his adversaries. The interval occasioned a breathing space separating this scene from the masque of Ceres and Juno, that was also elaborately conceived. Nine grotesque shapes were of service in bringing on the banquet which they laid with real food. The process involved the pouring of wine into goblets, the ladling of soup, the breaking of bread and the tasting of victuals - a nice touch this to suggest the fear of poison that would attend the great state banquets of the Italian nobility. The shapes came on from all sides and described a peculiar weaving course around the central group of astonished courtiers. Then, with a tremendous shriek, Ariel descended on his stirrup dressed as a harpy and stamped on the table. Smoke billowed up over the viands, hiding them from view, as a hidden trap opened in the table top and the food fell through into a box beneath. The table cloth stretched to the ground so that the box was undetectable from the auditorium. The trap closed again and the smoke cleared, leaving the shapes to carry out the empty table. Ariel was flown out to the sound of thunder.⁷ From his lofty perch Prospero congratulated Ariel on his performance. Gielgud's speech was grand and orotund, preserving the crescendo that had been reached with the arrival of the harpy. Antonio, Alonso and Sebastian stood frozen and helpless below him. There was an imminent danger in the exultation with which he invested the statement 'They now are in my pow'r' (III.3.90). But a pause and the drop back into a softer, tender pitch dispersed the vocal climax that he had seemed to be working up to as, at the same time, he started to climb down off the truck and leave to the left. The three stricken lords ran off to the right, with swords drawn, followed by their

anxious colleagues.

After the interval, the curtain opened to reveal Prospero standing centre stage with Miranda and Ferdinand in front of him, facing each other. Prospero took Miranda's hand and gave it to Ferdinand. He released their hands again, however, when he added the caution that they should refrain from sex until they had been properly wedded. There was a faint trace of scepticism in the low 'Well!' with which he greeted his son-in-law's assurance of fidelity. To watch the entertainment that had been devised for them, Miranda and Ferdinand sat on the downstage end of the rostrum, Ferdinand in the centre and Miranda four feet to his right. Prospero sat removed from them on the rock outside his cell.

The masque had a sumptuous, operatic splendour which made it at once the heart of the visually orientated, technically flamboyant production and a self-contained unit of entertainment within its own right. The effect of all the masquers singing was to distance their mannered poetic arias from the surrounding dialogue. With the change of medium, we seem to move onto a different plane of reality. The ornate, idealized world that is disclosed begets its own integrity through its playing up of artifice and convention. As Ferdinand says 'this is a most majestic vision, and / Harmonious charmingly' (IV.1.118). On the recording this remark is interrupted by applause, the audience showing their appreciation of the inset operetta, and Ferdinand has to begin his words again, after the clapping has subsided. But this kind of treatment had its own dangers and there were those who thought that in concentrating so much upon the masque, and especially the operatic elements within it, Peter Hall was in danger of upsetting the balance of the play. The Sunday Telegraph (16.3.1974), for instance, called the production 'a love affair with Inigo Jones rather

than with Shakespeare'. The reviewer went on to argue that the play had become severely compartmentalized and that 'with the appearances of the Goddesses the whole thing turns into opera'. It might be said in the director's defence that The Tempest, of all Shakespeare's plays, derives its distinctive character from song, dance and pictorial opulence and that in making the masque of Ceres and Juno into the showpiece of his production, Hall was offering a complete and crucial manifestation of Prospero's art, underlining its potential prior to his renunciation of magic. The admiration and scope of thought that it awakens in its on stage audience (Ferdinand's comment is that it turns the whole island into paradise (IV.1.123), Prospero evokes the ending of the world to describe its vanishing) clearly challenge the ingenuity of the theatrical director. Yet Shakespeare's achievement is that he has integrated the pantomime, the musical interludes and the rich stateliness of court revels in a dramatic, hybrid form and he is especially careful to ensure that the epithalamic masque fits into the wider context of the action. One of the ways he has done this is by building up gradually to the goddesses' duet through a series of ceremonious introductions. These begin with Prospero's announcement of his intention to bestow upon the betrothed couple some vanity of his art, which offers a dramatic rationale for what is going to occur. Then Ariel is told to fetch the spirits. Music starts to play softly and Iris comes on to speak an introduction for Ceres. Ceres, in turn, introduces Juno. Only then do the goddesses burst into song. Hall's arrangement rather blurred the subtlety of these distinctions with a jarring transition to opera at the outset as soon as music starts to play. The progression from blank verse, to rhymed couplets, to song was broken up indecorously.

Nevertheless, once this criticism has been made, it should be added that the execution of the plan was carried out with consistent visual and vocal eloquence. Iris was lowered on a swing to about fifteen feet from the floor with a glittering, broken rainbow that craned completely over the rostrum. She sang to an organ drone and guitar accompaniment a melody that incorporated exotic embellishments on an Indian scale. Despite their melodic conception, each word was clear and distinct. The 'grass plot', mentioned at the end of her first song, was represented in the form of a heart of green silk drawn from a trap by nymphs and spread over the rostrum for a carpet. Ariel himself stood in for Ceres (a literal reading of his statement 'I presented Ceres' (IV.1.167)) coming from up right, underneath the silk heart and through a slit in its centre, connecting the deity he symbolised with the verdant earth. Juno came down in a throne with a corona of eyed peacock feathers. Prospero had become the centre of his own artistic creation in 1957, highlighting the masque convention by which the spectators were included. This time it was Miranda and Ferdinand themselves who were drawn into the revel. They sat in the middle of the green heart to receive the blessing of Ceres and Juno and then stood up while the dance of nymphs and reapers went on clockwise around them – the direction of the movement perhaps recalling the passage of time. Prospero remained seated on his rock, visually isolated from the celebrations that were occurring, called to attention only once, when Ferdinand had to turn downstage to question him about the identity of the masquers. On the instant Miranda and Ferdinand were about to join in the dance with the nymphs and reapers, the action froze and the stage was dimmed as lights snapped onto the wizard. It was enough for Prospero to rise and bellow his dismissal for the masque to collapse in confusion to a discordant crash and groaning.

The silk heart was raised upstage and then sucked through the downstage trap-door. The rainbow was flown out. Prospero came downstage, to the right of the centre, with Ferdinand standing in front of him on his right, at a distance from Miranda. He spoke 'Our revels now are ended' (IV.I.146) with sad nostalgia, emphasizing the sense of disillusionment and loss. One reviewer remarked that the speech was 'savage rather than lyrical' (Observer, 10.3.1974) and on the recording Gielgud's voice certainly sounds bitter; it has a gritty texture; the vowels are allowed to drag slightly like Macbeth's in the 'Tomorrow and tomorrow' speech.

A comparison with the recording he made in 1931 illustrates the much stronger impression of Prospero's underlying restlessness in 1974. Gielgud does not pause so often; the iambic beat is less insistent; the music of the lines is never so assertive; the tempo is much quicker. The constant pronounced vibrato of the earlier recording has faded almost to nothing and the modulations of scale are not so obviously and generously distributed. The main difference lies in the fact that whereas the earlier style audibly recreates a detailed formalism that is partly within the verse and partly a kind of archaic invention and then tries to wrest every ounce of feeling and expression out of the words, the later style does not try to do nearly as much. It is more plainly didactic, not so generous of effect or ostentatiously expressive. The artifice of the verse form is implicit in what is being said, neither asserted or disguised, and the emotion is concentrated through relative understatement. Gielgud's conception of the broad structure of the speech is not substantially altered by any of this. The lines from 'Our revels now are ended' to 'The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces' build gradually. The climax remains on 'the great globe itself / Yea, all which it inherit' and the wave breaks once more on 'shall dissolve' so that the shape of the word-arch is preserved.

The whole tone of the speech was clarified by the production's treatment of the masque and Gielgud's resemblance to John Dee. The Tempest is, of course, a Jacobean play and yet Juno was presented in the masque as a royal Elizabethan. Plays and Players (March 1974) noted the parallel that was drawn between Prospero's supervision of the masque from outside and Juno's from within, 'who closely resembles the dead Queen Elizabeth'. This was used to create 'a measure of nostalgia in Prospero's hierarchical dreaming'. Dee was Queen Elizabeth's astrologer and he enjoyed a very influential and eminent position in Elizabethan society, but was discredited when James I came to the throne, and died in obscure poverty. The effect of this was further to isolate Prospero in identifying him as an ageing manifestation of John Dee, with the vanished, idealized age of Elizabeth. Prospero's bitterness at having to break up the masque was coloured by the fact that the cultural values he expressed through it were undermined by present reality.⁸

A break was introduced into the action to observe the Act division in which Ariel was raised three quarters of the way out slowly on his stirrup and Gielgud dressed again in his magic robes, retrieving his book and wand. The positions the two actors took up for the final scene repeated their original attitudes in the second scene of the first act, when Ariel had described the ship labouring in the storm. Prospero, near the front of the rostrum, looked outwards. His servant hovered ten feet from the floor behind him. Their separation became this time important in conveying their insularity. Each inhabited a distinct region. Occurring without the mediation of glances nor the sharing of the same physical plane, Ariel's expression of sympathy for Gonzalo was as unprecedented as it was significant and justified Prospero's seizing upon it. Coming to the words 'tears' and 'tender', Ariel paused over them and then pronounced each with deliberate articulation to indicate that they were outside the

normal range of his vocabulary:

His tears run down his beard, like winter's drops
From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works 'em
That if you now beheld them your affections
Would become tender. (V.1.16)

Caliban, too, had shown his lack of sophistication by having trouble with the pronunciation of 'nonpareil' and 'utensils' (III.2.92) (III.2.96). In his reply, Gielgud preserved the distance between Ariel and himself by inflecting the last word of his question 'Dost thou think so, SPIRIT?' (V.1.19). This was lifted upward to Ariel on his perch. Ariel replied, 'Mine would, sir, were I human', and Prospero paused before his voice fell and levelled off with, 'And mine shall' (V.1.20). For Robert Speaight this was one of the key moments of the production and he noticed that the 'compassion cue was taken not too easily from Ariel hovering above' (Tablet, 25.5.1974). But John Peter thought that there was 'no suggestion of an inner crisis in Prospero from vengeance to forgiveness' (Times Educational Supplement, 29.3.1974) and The New Statesman (15.3.1974) said that Prospero did not seem to be 'struck to th'quick' by the wrongs done to him: 'Fury never stood a chance of overcoming Gielgud' as it did in the 1957 production. 'He is beyond bitterness, vindictiveness, mortal malignity ... a self-contained, aloof figure.' Prospero's pause on the recording, which is not marked in the promptbook, therefore, remained fairly ambiguous. The recurrent disagreements of reviewers about this piece of dialogue seems to confirm the existence of textual ambiguity. The point is, as I have argued, that inexplicitness about Prospero's state of mind is part of a calculated dramatic effect. Many reviewers are addicted to red herring, however.

Ariel dismounted from his stirrup and waved it out. When he had walked to the left to release Alonso and the others from the charm that held them, Prospero was left alone to draw his magic circle clockwise, in the centre of the stage, with his wand. Red sawdust was used to make visible this large ring, that has to be big enough to contain all the courtiers within its circumference. The speech beginning 'Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves,' (V.I.33) was treated as a formal conjuration with the speaker standing in the centre of the circle, duplicating the position of the dancing elves within the green sour ringlets. Prospero spoke lightly and swiftly at first to convey the quick, ~~unstable~~ motion of the fairy sprites, but soon grew stronger through the thrusting dynamism of the modified 'midnight mushrumps', that seemed to distil the power with which these plants forced themselves up through the earth, to the climactic 'Graves at my command / Have wak'd their sleepers' (V.1.48) with its abrasive, open-stopped, initial vowel. At the reference to 'heavenly music', a mysterious choiring, all on one note, swelled beneath the verse. The presence of book and staff underpinned his vow to dispose of the tools of his magic trade, though Gielgud chose not to introduce any business with them to distract from his oration. Prospero moved aside to down right, out of the circle, to signify the end of his incantation and to make room for the charmed lords ushered in by Ariel. The positions of the lords on entering the circle were Alonso, four o'clock; Antonio, seven o'clock; Sebastian, six o'clock; Adrian, ten o'clock; the first Lord, eleven o'clock; and Francisco, twelve o'clock. Gonzalo kneeled outside the circle next to Alonso, the only one in possession of his senses. The importance of Gonzalo's sorrow for the predicament of his Duke in determining Prospero's policy of contrition was kept up until the very last moment.

All those within the circle started to breath deeply and make slow movements as Prospero crossed on to the rostrum to speak to each one in turn. Then he came off the rostrum and to the rock in front of his cell to be attired once more as Duke of Milan. To the hat and rapier Prospero mentions in the text were added a crown and mantle. Gielgud already had on a grey-green doublet with a brown silk sash, short grey-green breeches and brown tights that were revealed when he slipped out of his tunic. The undressing and dressing was a fairly elaborate procedure, involving for Ariel four trips to the cell, and in itself became a point of convergence for several themes of the play that emerged in production. Going on beneath Ariel's song and some of the following dialogue, it was attended by a solemn pause when Prospero, turning inwards to face Alonso, said, 'Behold, Sir King. / The wronged Duke of Milan.' (V.1.106). Prospero first held out his book and wand. Ariel took them into the cell while he was getting out of his magic cloak. Then Ariel returned and helped him off with it, taking this also into the cell. He came back singing, in time to relieve Prospero of the buttoned tunic he had removed. When this had been taken into the cell, Ariel returned carrying a black and brown silk mantle that he clipped around Prospero's Milanese costume. The fetching of a black hat, with a crown attached to it, and a sword and a belt and scabbard provided the occasion for his final journey. When Ariel's song finished, Gielgud fitted the sword into its sheath, removed his skull cap, gave it to his servant and put on the hat with the crown that signified the completion of his transformation. He now looked very much like his evil brother, who stood in close proximity to him, still recovering gradually from the spell. With the entrance of Stephano wearing the crown and finery he had stolen from the clothes line, the triangle was completed and the hitherto compartmentalized plots that dealt with the attempts of two false monarchs to consolidate their treason were bound graphically together (Observer, 10.3.1974). Prospero's resumption of regal status

was shadowed by the thwarted ambitious projects of the other contenders for the title. The way in which this qualified his success came out gradually in the continued opposition of the two brothers.

In welcoming Alonso and his company to the island, Prospero neglected to include Antonio in the general handshaking and acknowledgements. After the embrace Alonso received, all the Lords saw the exiled Duke and reacted to him, though their reactions were still vague and slow. Prospero says afterwards, 'You do yet taste / Some subtleties of the Isle' (V.1.123). Alonso was the first to break the circle that acted as an objective indicator of the finite boundaries within which the circuit of Prospero's fragile resolution was drawn. Observing Alonso's precedence, the wizard then moved amongst the other members of the assembly, hugging Gonzalo to his bosom and shaking hands with Adrian, Francisco and the anonymous Lord. He came downstage, between Sebastian and Antonio, to hail them, responding with a strangely distant but emphatic negative to Sebastian's accusation that he speaks through diabolical agency. The reply was firm and not angry, coming after a short, reserved silence. Prospero was evidently in no hurry to contradict his accuser and the playing down of his former abruptness rather complemented his contained stoic posture. At last, coming to Antonio, he took three steps downstage away from him so that the insulated nature of his verbal address to his usurping brother was thrown into relief by the evasiveness of the action. The phrasing of this, the only direct remark that Prospero makes to Antonio in the play, notably denies him any opportunity to reply:

For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother
Would even infect my mouth. I do forgive
Thy rankest fault - all of them and require
My dukedom of thee, which perforce I know
Thou must restore. (V.1.130)

in 1957. Beneath the crown his head was bald. He came down centre and all the stage lights were turned up. Under the bright illumination his Elizabethan costume looked shabby and old. The reading that he gave was poignant and low-keyed. A plaintive rising intonation was given to the lines which deal with the penetrating influence of prayer:

And my ending is despair
 Unless I be reliev'd by prayer
 Which pierces so that it assaults
 Mercy itself, and frees all faults. (15)

On coming to the last line, Gielgud inserted a break after 'and frees' to delay the rhyme, adding a wistful tentativeness to the longing for freedom that caught up the play's preoccupation with the theme. The final introduction of the rhyme was pronounced with a gentle falling cadence. He lingered over the last line, making it into three distinct units that finished on a low emphatic note:

Let your indulgence / set me / free.

Then, turning round, he walked slowly upstage. The lights started to fade gradually as he reached the tip of the rostrum. Instead of entering the cell with the other characters, his isolation was confirmed by the continuation of his movement past the entrance on and up deep into the scene, eventually disappearing on the far right as the lights died. This sad and muted close produced an intensification of the enigmatical qualities of a speech which, although it makes a conventional appeal for applause, touches upon the great terminal issues of redemption, despair and death. The question mark that was left hanging over the ending supplied the finishing touch to a portrait that was grave, mysterious and remote.

What does freedom mean for Prospero? Freedom to return to Milan? Freedom to exercise his powers as Duke? Freedom from the audience's displeasure? Freedom from life, perhaps? Despite a distinctively un-Shakespearean beard, Gielgud, in Elizabethan clothes and with a natural bald dome, looked like the Droeshout likeness of Shakespeare. He was already engaged to play Shakespeare in Edward Bond's Bingo at The Royal Court in August of that year. Thus we can see how a traditional myth that the Epilogue represents Shakespeare's personal farewell to the stage was incorporated into the production and exploited in an unusual way. It is Edward Dowden's criticism that presents perhaps the most ambitious attempt to see the plays as mirroring the mind of the author, and which then goes on to produce a romantic image of a serene and wise figure settling down to a peaceful, contented retirement in Stratford, bidding a personal farewell to the stage through Prospero's Epilogue (Edward Dowden, Shakespeare: a Critical Study of his Mind and Art). The idea was very agreeable to the bourgeois minds of the Victorian age, because it faithfully duplicated their own aspirations. Bingo represents an equally conjectural myth for the twentieth century, by a Marxist writer, of an impotent, baffled bard retreating from the problems of the world into his own cocoon of despair and eventually committing suicide by taking poison.

It was no part of Hall's or Gielgud's original intentions to underline the Shakespeare resemblance: 'It came at rehearsals. John took off his hat and suddenly there was Shakespeare', said Hall. However, once the discovery was made, it became a tantalizing, yet not greatly emphasised, part of the completed production which impressed Robert Speaight amongst others (The Tablet, 25.5.1974).⁹ Gielgud's Shakespeare was a rather seedy old man - a poignant, alienated figure whose hope for redemption flickered feebly against the shadow of despair, without quite succumbing, and so the

stress on the last word, 'free', of the Epilogue suggested a longing for freedom from life.

No play is ever complete until it is performed, but The Tempest acquires definition in performance like no other play of Shakespeare's. It is the play which is least intelligible as a poem; the most firmly based on a synthesis of the performing arts: song, dance, speech, music, and spectacle. For this reason one cannot read The Tempest without being brought up against the bald inadequacy of the stage directions standing as simple ciphers for a rich, complex dramatic experience:

Solemn and strange music; and PROSPERO on the top invisible. Enter several strange Shapes, bringing in a banquet; and dance about it with gentle actions of salutations; and inviting the King etc., to eat, they depart. (II.3.17)

The aural-visual signals are focussed on an event, something which is intended to occur on a stage in front of us. The signals themselves, however, are only there to lay down the broadest of guidelines and they ignore many fundamental dramatic details such as the number, the appearance and the very nature of the 'Shapes'. All this implies a collaborative creative attempt on the part of actors, designers and director to make the vision substantial. It is because The Tempest is so thoroughly reliant on the stage as a meeting place for the various skills of the theatre, the playwright's dialogue being only one element of a composite picture, that productions can display so much latitude and still be valid.

It is remarkable how different are the plates of Gielgud's four Prospero's included in this study compared to those of his Hamlet, for instance (Plates 19-22). Each Prospero appears to be an entirely distinctive character; there is not the same obvious continuity of outline overlaid

by certain changes in age and attire as with the Prince of Denmark. Instead we have a process of almost wholesale alteration: a different face, a different costume, a different air. Even when the symbols of wizardry, the magic mantle and the staff, are repeated, they do not look at all alike. A red mantle for the 1930 production gave way to a plain cloak-like mantle in 1940 which could be flung back over the shoulders to leave Prospero's arms free for making magic signs. The silver mantle of 1957 was much bulkier and covered the entire body. Its stiff, combersome appearance, with those long tentacular roots spreading over it, must have made movement uneasy, suggesting the oppressiveness of Prospero's art as well as its authority. During one performance the heavy, ornate clasp did actually become jammed and Gielgud had to break loose (Daily Express, 6.7.1957). The mantle in 1974 was described as 'heavy' in the wardrobe list and Gielgud brought this out in his performance, indicating that Prospero was weary of the burden of magic. It was an undistinguished brown on the outside, but the cabbalistic symbols of the inner lining introduced a motif of concealment. When Prospero made the gesture of opening his arms the symbols were revealed. Again, the phallic wand of 1957, with leafy shoots and curling tip, was unlike the straight, peeled wand of 1974, except that in both cases their equal lengths would have allowed them to be used as walking-sticks, like Lear's staves. Prospero was twice beardless (1930, 1957) and twice bearded (1940, 1974). He was twice in a skull-cap, at the end of the 1957 production and throughout the 1974 production, although he went humbly bare-headed for the Epilogue and was bare-headed for most of the 1940 production. In 1940 and 1957, Gielgud wore sandals 'to give me the look of a hermit' (An Actor and His Time, p.204). The variety of appearances, I think, points to more than the simple fact that The Tempest does not have the same weight of stage tradition behind it as Hamlet, and that the looser expectations

of audiences allow the actor more freedom. Prospero is essentially a more remote, in some ways an indefinite character. One expects a style of symbolic freedom in his representation that would not be acceptable in Hamlet, since a wizard is already an object of dream-like amazement before he assumes a definite shape.

The visual contrasts Gielgud evoked in the role are underlined by his contrasting interpretations, only here the contrasts point clearly to a dialectical development. Gielgud's first Prospero was a re-evaluation of a tradition that insisted that the part showed a sage and ancient wizard, with a long, flowing beard and locks, against a heavy, romantic-opera setting. Gielgud made Prospero younger, beardless and gave him a turban. His playing was set off by a winged, mercurial Ariel who was much more robust than the female Ariels of the past. The Arabian Nights setting caused some confusion at the time, but it allowed a clear distinction to be made between the Elizabethan castaways and the exotic inhabitants of the island. Nature was kind and fertile on the island, offering a glimpse of calm bay and limpid blue sky and a forest of bizarre trees rather in the manner of Gonzalo's description:

but nature should bring forth,
Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people. (II.1.153)

The castaways, with swords visible at their sides, had come to disrupt Prospero's peace and there was an undercurrent of resentment in Gielgud's performance which suggested that he was loath to give up his idyllic existence for the responsibilities of state. 'Our revels now are ended' was spoken with dreamy, luxuriant melancholy; the command to Ferdinand to be cheerful sounded incongruous and there was a note of youthful competitive ardour in Prospero's attitude towards the courtship of Miranda.

He was played as a romantic, sceptical of the benefits of civilization and half withdrawn from reality into the fairy-tale world of his imagination, and this impression was enhanced by an attractive, youthful appearance and a smooth, facile style of delivery.

The 1940 production questioned radically the basic premises of Gielgud's original interpretation by accentuating the grotesque and the austere. It was performed in the same theatre, under similar conditions of financial restraint, so that the productions had to be scenically inventive without being elaborately costly. However, the play's mood of picturesque fancy in the depressed nineteen-thirties was transformed into a sombre, surrealistic vein in the war ravaged nineteen-forties. Gielgud was a distinctively unromanticised Prospero with thinning hair, short beard and round glasses. With his adoption of sandals and a monk's habit we begin to see the emphasis on renunciation emerging which is extended into the Brook production in 1957 where the mud-coloured toga and Roman sandals give Prospero a kind of classical severity that reminded The Bolton Even News (17.8.1957) of Timon of Athens and The Birmingham News (Wilfred Clark, 17.8.1957) of Gielgud's own appearance as Cassius in Julius Caesar. The island was no longer a pleasant retreat from the pressures and strains of civilized life, but evoked a sense of mystery and purgatorial oppressiveness that was captured in the shadowy, spartan cave mouth of Prospero's cell and the ghostly transparencies amongst the barren rocks. Nature was not so ready to be utilized; Prospero had to hang his mantle on a spur of rock and the branch of the tree that hung over his cave was gnarled and leafless. The irony of Gonzalo's description of a primitive people living in harmony with their environment was stressed and his later words of complaint were the more descriptive:

By'r larkin, I can go no further, sir;
 My old bones ache. Here's a maze trod, indeed,
 Through forth-rights and meanders! By your patience
 I needs must rest me. (III.3.1)

This tended to make Prospero's return to Milan readily understandable and give the play a forward-looking movement to the Epilogue where Prospero's plea for freedom was unalloyed with sentimental reservations. The transformation of Prospero back into the Duke of Milan was marked in this production by Gielgud's assumption of a bright, elegant Elizabethan costume, with a full ruff, that assimilated him into the group of the richly-dressed court. As far as the evidence goes, the suggestions were of a happy reunion without any highlighting of the limitations imposed on the regeneration of the characters.

Tension was focussed on the relationship between Prospero and Ariel, who was much less prepossessingly human than Leslie French; indeed, all Gielgud's later Ariels have been more heavily disguised. The contrast of Ariel's athleticism and Prospero's stillness has remained a more or less constant feature of Gielgud's performances, as has his avoidance of eye-contact with Ariel, although the 1930 and 1974 productions developed this to its furthest extent. The balletic movements of Leslie French's Ariel and Michael Feast's use of a flying stirrup like a circus trapeze artist, have been far more striking than the sinuous floor-work of Brian Bedford in 1957 and his jack-in-the-box antics on a mushroom lift. Ariel's musical ability has been inclined to vary more often, the singing of Leslie French and Marius Goring being far less conspicuous than the weird atonal chanting of Brian Bedford and Michael Feast's operatic counter-tenor. No one has yet seemed attracted to the idea of making Ariel into a multi-instrumentalist, however, the allusion to tabor and pipe in the text (III. 2.21) never being elaborately insisted on. In 1957 Ariel ignored half the

stage direction , playing a pipe without the tabor (Bolton Evening News, 17.8.1957). In 1974 half the direction for Ariel to enter playing and singing to Ferdinand was cut (1.2.375) and neither pipe nor tabor was used in the gulling of Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban, although Ariel did use a drum to charm the courtiers to sleep and pretended to blow on a horn, without actually producing the noise, when he helped Prospero to manage the hounds that were going to foil the conspirators. Playing a pipe and tabor whilst hovering on a flying stirrup would, of course, require an artistic expertise bordering on the suicidal.

The 1957 production represented a further extension of the 1940 production's preoccupation with the bleakness of Prospero's imprisonment and the harshness of his struggle to win what was understood to be the coveted prize of freedom. Brook set the action in a symbolically vague cave-like enclosure, whose dimensions could be altered by opening and closing the rear entrance partitions, and which contained a suggestion of catacombs in the presence of spy-holes at different levels on either side. The aura of grizzled, middle-aged abstinence that Gielgud radiated as Prospero was counterpointed by a suggestion of powerful, intemperate passions that could only be held in check by a stern, iron will. This manifested itself in a number of ways, such as the display of restlessness during the opening tale to Miranda explaining her past origins, the whipping of Caliban, the coercion of the cowering form of Ariel at the beginning and the prominence lent to the rough magic speech at the end, tense and fraught with emotion. One can see how the theme of renunciation instigated in 1940 could be readily developed into an interpretation that underlined emotional instability. The logical consequence of a Prospero who was living in a bare stone cell and outwardly resembled a monk naturally corresponded to an inner repression. The influence of Freud is so firmly imprinted on our age that Gielgud, who rejected the Oedipus complex

theory in his performance of Hamlet, could still suggest in his playing of Prospero that strict self-denial and the exercise of control over others was accompanied by intense, irrational feelings, the more powerful for being pent up. I do not intend to assert, on this basis, that Gielgud's approach to the part was therefore explicitly Freudian, for Gielgud is temperamentally and intellectually averse to this style of acting. He has said:

dissecting plays realistically and psychologically serves to confuse rather than clarify... If the actors use their imagination and speak the lines they are given with true rhythm, appreciation and understanding, they will carry out the poet's intention. But they must not seek for too subtle motives and worry themselves and their performances to death. Their own instinct and musical sense are often much more useful than their brains.
(*'Shakespeare Belongs on a Stage, Not under Microscopic Analysis'*, New York Herald Tribune, 9.8.1959)

But the inevitable impression of a tough, virile Prospero, whose scrupulousness in keeping himself and others to the mark parallels his all-but-complete magical control over nature, is of a man labouring under a tremendous psychological burden.

The magic, nevertheless, is not something that the audience is invited to evaluate in purely abstract, psychological terms. It has an immediate sensuous impact throughout the course of the play, especially in the scenes of the shipwreck and the masque. Harcourt Williams's production compromised between formalised and realistic staging, using the spirit bridge of Prospero's island for the bridge of the ship, but consulting John Masefield to make the actions of the sailors and the condition of the vessel as real as possible. There have been attempts to present the storm in The Tempest in purely symbolic terms, as George Devine and

Isamu Noguchi attempted to present the storm in King Lear in 1955.

Actors have used their bodies to represent the motion of waves and choruses have chanted the sounds of the splitting ship and the drowning sailors, but the success of the productions of Peter Brook and Peter Hall suggests that they were right in treating the shipwreck with spectacular realism. Brook's was the first Gielgud production to underline the potency of Prospero's art with a bravura display that really lived up to the expectations created by the verse:

The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to th'welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer! A brave vessel,
Who had no doubt some noble creature in her,
Dash'd all to pieces! (1.2.3.)

Brook and Hall treated the masque, on the other hand, in an elaborately stylized way. They heightened its fantastic artificial atmosphere with their own freely inventive use of song and visual emblems. Yet their interpretations were radically different, Brook regarding it as a fertility rite celebrating the union of the two royal houses of Naples and Milan, leading up to Prospero's triumphant reinstatement as Duke, whereas Hall made it into an elegaic lament for lost order that betokened Prospero's ultimate withdrawal from life.

Brook's production anticipated Hall's in making the masque the centre of the play, though not in contrasting the barrenness of nature on the island with the life-enhancing magical fertility of the masque. Here the 1940 production anticipated Brook. Hall went further in insisting that the play 'is itself a series of masques', presenting the action in a succession of merging emblems and sudden transformations: Prospero and Miranda revealed instantaneously by the closing of a hatch after the ship-

wreck, Ariel disappearing to reveal Caliban, Ferdinand entering with the rising sun at his back. Ironically, the operatic conventions underwent a revival in Hall's production and were in danger of overwhelming the spoken text once again as in the Venetian baroque opera style of the masque. Hall used the full text of the play; Brook cut one scene heavily (II.I) and introduced Father Time into the masque; but in either case there were moments when Gielgud's acting and Shakespeare's verse could have been left to speak for themselves more freely. Was it necessary in 1957, for instance, to make the Epilogue such a triumphantly assertive celebration of Prospero's royalty? Would not Prospero's ducal robes and grandiloquent phrasing have been enough to indicate that freedom for him was a return to a full and active life of political responsibility without the expansive tableau of the ship; did the showman in Brook perhaps get the better of his artistic insight? The image of the lonely figure under full stage lighting, with the dramatic illusion half-dispelled, in Hall's production, was more compelling.

In 1974 Gielgud's Prospero substituted enigmatic restraint for emotional restlessness. He gave what was perhaps his most aloof performance maintaining a relatively low profile in his confrontations with Ariel and Caliban, never suggesting the smouldering passions that lay beneath the surface of his interpretation in 1957. His full beard, skull-cap and long robes concealed his earlier nakedness and intensified the aura of mystery that surrounded him. 'Our revels now are ended' had an undertone of tired melancholy about it that indicated Prospero's attraction to death and this was brought home at the end of the play when, separated from the reconciliation of the other characters, he departed alone, with bared head, like a ghostly image of Shakespeare. It was clear from the

opposition to Caliban and Antonio that his plan to regenerate the characters and ensure a harmonious succession to the thrones of Milan and Naples was only a partial success. In the final scene of the play Antonio represented a negative polarity as aloof as Prospero was. Caliban broke the trend of the two previous productions in being more Indian than simian and challenging Prospero's supremacy with a not-entirely appeasable claim to having suffered injustice. The island was floridly beautiful and grotesque throughout and the operatic masque had an element of nostalgia in it that reflected on Prospero's allegiance to a vanished order.

At the beginning of this chapter it was noted that the essential quality of The Tempest was its ambiguity and that this ambiguity posed the main challenge to stage interpretation. We can see now, from the hindsight of Gielgud's latest performance, how ambiguity found its dramatic fulfillment not just in a range of diversely valid interpretations of a single role spread out over the years, but in terms of the opposition of characters within a production as well.

1. Except where otherwise indicated, information on the productions discussed in this chapter is principally based on the following sources:

OLD VIC, 1930

Harcourt Williams, Four Years at the Old Vic

OLD VIC, 1940

Illustrations, Theatre World (August 1940)

SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE/DRURY LANE, 1957

Peter Brook and William Blezard , Incidental Music for The Tempest,
 recording
 promptbook, Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
 promptbook, Drury Lane
 programme (Winters Tale)

OLD VIC/NATIONAL THEATRE, 1974

'The Theatre of Heaven and Earth: Peter Hall interviewed by John Higgins' The Times (9.3.1974)

Arthur Lowe interview, The Northampton Chronicle and Echo (7.3.1974)
 promptbook
The Tempest, recorded at The National Theatre

2. A letter to the writer (August, 1979). It should be added that Andrew Cruickshank confesses that after twenty-nine years his memory is not very clear on this point.
3. 'Style in Acting: Sir John Gielgud talks to Michael Elliot', typescript.
4. Included with the promptbook.
5. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court, 2 vols.
6. Robert Speaight, 'Shakespeare in Britain, 1974', Shakespeare Quarterly, 25 (1974), 391-394, (p.394).

7. This 'quaint device' did not always function as it was supposed to. A note from Peter Hall to his chief technician reads, 'The table. Over the five performances that I have seen the table has so far worked once'. The technician's comment was 'this prop is not fool-proof'.
8. See Frances Yates, Shakespeare's Last Plays: A New Approach. Frances Yates presents the evidence for Prospero's identification with John Dee and suggests that in the group of last plays Shakespeare was alluding to a hoped-for Elizabethan revival through James's children, Princess Elizabeth and Prince Henry. The Elizabethan revival, however, failed to occur because it was never countenanced by the King.
9. 'The Theatre of Heaven and Earth: Peter Hall interviewed by John Higgins' The Times, (9.3.1974 and 6).

CONCLUSION

Sir John Gielgud began his career as a Shakespearean actor at a time when the scenic representational methods of production practiced by the Victorians and Edwardians were fading out of the theatre and the ideas of William Poel, Gordon Craig and Granville-Barker were gradually becoming established. His pre-War Shakespeare roles and productions covered an immense range and were clear demonstrations of a considerable individual talent, but they could not have made the mark they did had they not been expressions of a larger pattern of change which was then occurring in the theatre. Verse-speaking was becoming faster and more lightly stressed; continuity of action was becoming increasingly emphasized; settings were either permanent or quickly adaptable; décor was formal and symbolically suggestive rather than being archaeologically detailed and realistic; fuller texts and the recognition of the overall shape of a play was leading to more balanced interpretations with less concentration on one 'star' actor; Shakespeare's craftsmanship as a playwright designing his work for a certain kind of playhouse with a specific set of stage conditions was acknowledged; there was greater sensitivity shown towards the artifice of theatrical language, towards the thematic imagery, symbols and the conventions of soliloquy and aside. These were the main principles that served to guide Gielgud's approach to Shakespeare and which made it so refreshingly innovative and illuminating to audiences in the 'thirties . It is, indeed, these same principles that represent the continuity of that tradition with today.

When Gielgud first began to establish a reputation as a Shakespearean actor during his seasons in repertory at the Old Vic he owed no professional allegiance to any other style of presentation. His connections on

his mother's side with the Terry family had instilled in him a sympathy and respect for the old school of Shakespeare production, but did not create any direct conflict with the pursuit of his practical vocation. He was therefore in a much better position than his older contemporaries, who had been trained under Henry Irving and Frank Benson, to advance the cause.

This may sound as if Gielgud was setting out to follow some prescribed course of action already laid down for him, in reality the direction of his career was by no means obvious. The inspiration he, amongst many others, derived from Barker, Craig and his friend and colleague Komisarjevsky was tempered by the need to make a living as a performer taking on various engagements, developing his experience in a range of plays including many that had nothing to do with Shakespeare. Moreover, Shakespeare was not really considered to be viable commercial theatre at this time, except for a few small repertory companies, and much of the new thinking about producing him was regarded as totally impractical outside an idealized set of circumstances involving a non-existent National Theatre, state subsidies, or private incomes to be spent without any hope of reimbursement. Craig and Barker had both had to pay handsomely for the privilege of trying out their methods on a stage. Gerald Du Maurier, the leading actor of the period, had never appeared in a single Shakespearean role.

Against this background, Gielgud's productions of Hamlet (1936) and Richard II (1937) appeared in the West End. Gielgud did not proceed straight to directing plays in the West End from the Old Vic. He directed Romeo and Juliet (1932) and Richard II (1936) for the Oxford University Dramatic Society first and his run of Shakespeare plays was preceded by Richard of Bordeaux (1933), which won for him recognition among

a much wider public than had ever attended the Old Vic. The distinctive style of Gielgud's pre-War Shakespeare productions was principally derived from his association with the design team Motley who were responsible for designing Richard of Bordeaux, Romeo and Juliet, and The Merchant of Venice (1938) as well as Richard II and the two Hamlets (1936, 1939). These productions displayed two main characteristics: they employed simple, formal décor of a vaguely symbolic suggestive kind compatible with swift action and fluent verse-speaking and, at the same time, they provided a visually flamboyant, sensuous and decorative accompaniment to the spoken word. Perhaps they are open to criticism for this reason - the décor was inclined to offer a commentary on the text rather than seeming an integral part of it; however, the productions did promote a kind of general harmony in key with the imaginatively heightened language. They were never prosaic. Richard II characteristically erred on the side of too much flamboyant exaggeration. The play got lost in so many embellishments - the scroll-work on furniture, the proliferation of flowers and screens - but Richard II is a play of intense mannered lyricism. Gielgud, at this point in his career, had found a way of synthesizing the verbal richness of poetic drama with fashionable artdeco. The drabness of so much of the world outside the theatre in the 'thirties was offset by the splendour represented within.

If the stage tended to reverse the mood of peace time privation and Gielgud's early Shakespeare was influenced in consequence, then the War brought with it a corresponding harshness in his playing and a darker resonance of interpretation. This was the period of Gielgud's fourth and fifth Hamlets (1939, 1944) (the open-air Hamlet belongs more in this group than to the former in spite of Motley's collaboration), King Lear (1940) directed by Barker, The Tempest (1940), Macbeth (1942), and A Midsummer

Night's Dream (1945), where even Gielgud's Oberon appeared, as one critic put it, 'not unreminiscent of Hamlet's father' (Birmingham Gazette, 27.1.1945). The War did not interrupt Gielgud's career as it did that of so many other actors, but it was to have far-reaching repercussions on the theatre and literature in general that would feed back into the traditions of Shakespearean performance. An immediate effect was its final displacement of Gielgud's romantic, matinee-idol image. Although Gielgud had never allowed himself to become fully typecast in his roles, it was undeniable that the parts for which he was best known, Hamlet, Richard II, and Richard of Bordeaux, all exploited his youth, good looks, and instinctive regality and that this had earned him a certain fan following. His balding, bespectacled Prospero, well groomed, close-bearded Lear and mature Prince of Denmark put an end to that. Gielgud's uncharacteristic experiments with make-up during this period denote restlessness of a kind, an uncertainty about the visual significance of his characterizations which was also apparent in the productions I have left unexamined. As Macbeth he wore a heavy make-up which was modified to show the protagonist's progressive degeneration. As Oberon he had green skin, a green beard, a metallic breastplate and head dress which reminded Beverley Baxter of a 'Roman Centurion' (Evening Standard, 27.1.1945). The settings for the plays were visually restrained in comparison to the ornate flourishes of Motley before 1939. The bleak Daliesque landscape of the magic island in The Tempest and the sombre, darkly-lit palace of Elsinore in the 1944 Hamlet distilled the oppression of global conflict as well as testifying to the obvious financial shortages. Gielgud made a sole appearance in a play of John Webster's too, that darkest of Jacobean dramatists, playing Ferdinand in The Duchess of Malfi (1945).

After the War and his E.N.S.A. tour of Hamlet, Gielgud did no more Shakespeare for the next three years and, whilst he was still enjoying a high degree of professional activity, at forty-two years of age his career had reached a critical point:

By the end of the War I was pretty well tired out. I had fulfilled so many of my youthful ambitions that I did not know where to go. I had a fairly bad patch for a few years when I did not choose plays particularly well and my luck seemed to have run out. I did a version of Crime and Punishment in 1946, for instance, that was fairly interesting, but I was really too old for Raskolnikov. Many times in my career I have been bothered about the question of age, though I cannot help admiring old actors who can still give an impression of youth. (An Actor and His Time, p.157).

Then in 1949 his production of Much Ado About Nothing appeared at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford with Anthony Quayle, then in charge of the running of the theatre, as Benedick. The following year the production was revived with Gielgud replacing Quayle in the part of Benedick and also appearing as Angelo in Measure for Measure, Cassius in Julius Caesar, and King Lear. The season demonstrated that those lean years immediately following the War, whilst they seemed at the time to signal the ebb and exhaustion of Gielgud's powers, were really a watershed in which the current had been building up. In some ways post-War Shakespeare production was picking up where pre-War production had left off. Décor was becoming increasingly ostentatious and elaborate. Scenic contrivances were again exaggerating the play's pictorial significance. There was a resurgence of colour and gaiety in comedy that Gielgud's Much Ado About Nothing epitomized. In tragedy grand monumental pillars and impressionistic painting tended to dominate. Warwick Armstrong's set for Rome in Julius Caesar was a honeycomb of classical pillars and protruding

buttresses. The inclusion of mullioned windows was typical of the taste for studied anachronism. Leslie Hurry placed Lear's gothic throne between the towering columns of a cleft oak. The division of the stage into three playing areas signified the King's fragmented mind, sundered through the relationship with his three daughters.

All this emphasis on design may possibly have led to a more compartmentalized view of the actor as someone less able to influence the tone of the whole production. Gielgud's work with Granville-Barker and Komisarjevsky before the War had shown that he was capable of responding to the independent director. Perhaps it is significant that he chose to make his Stratford début as a director rather than a performer. In any case, there was a new generation of directors adopting a radical posture of interpretation towards their material. Peter Brook's production of Measure for Measure was unprecedented in its discovery of a neglected masterpiece and in the opportunity it gave to Gielgud to concentrate and chasten his style within the context of a complex, devious characterization. Angelo is a subtle character, rich in contradiction, undergoing fundamental changes as the play progresses, but who nevertheless has relatively few scenes in which to make his impact, and Gielgud, who was used to playing the great tragic roles in which a character is driven along relentlessly by some dominating passion to destruction, had to adjust to a more tentative rhythm. His Angelo and Leontes in Brook's production of The Winter's Tale in 1951 led up to the rugged, Timon-like Prospero who stalked the boards in the 1957 Tempest where Gielgud completed the process of deromanticising the part which he had begun in the 1940 production. Gielgud's long-term association with Brook was a major factor in helping him to complete the transition from the War to his post-War Shakespeare. In between these dates his Benedick was also becoming craggier, less of the fop than the soldier.

From 1950 to 1960 an increasing amount of Gielgud's time was taken up with directing. The 1952 Gielgud production of Macbeth had little success with Ralph Richardson miscast in the title role and, while the presence of Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh ensured Twelfth Night (1955) did good box office, the critics generally agreed that Gielgud's production 'though sensitive and tenderly melancholy was subdued and remote as if it had been set too far behind the Memorial Theatre's deadening proscenium arch' (W. A. Darlington, Daily Telegraph, 21.4.1955). Gielgud's production of Richard II (1952), with Paul Scofield, also proved to be an extended exercise in lyricism, but here the atmosphere was less damaging to the integrity of Shakespeare's verse.

The year 1955 was an important one for the English theatre in that this was the date of the English premiere of Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot. (It had originally appeared on the stage in Paris two years earlier.) On the 8th of May 1956, John Osborne's Look Back in Anger was presented at the Royal Court. Both plays were milestones, signifying a change in social values and a sudden increase in people's awareness of the legitimate realms of dramatic expression and, although Osborne's conventionally-crafted piece set in a London bed-sit and Beckett's tragicomedy about two tramps waiting under a tree, on a country road, have little in common, they each threatened to outdistance Gielgud and dismiss the post-War revival of his art. At first sight this seems to have little direct bearing on Shakespearean performance, but there is no such thing as an entirely insulated tradition of classical dramatic interpretation and any big change in contemporary drama is bound to be reflected sooner or later in how Shakespeare is brought to the stage. In this way the Noguchi/Devine production of King Lear can be seen as fitting into the general climate of restlessness and the confused response it awoke,

symptomatic of the half-assimilated views then current. Gielgud's growth in the part of Lear had been considerable since his original attempt in 1931; however, his basic failure to improve on his 1950 performance was due to the imperfect grafting of a playing tradition developed from Barker with an incompletely innovative production style and not to any failure in his powers as an actor. Evidence that Gielgud was in fact acquiring a greater flexibility of acting technique during this period is supplied by his experiments with Shakespeare in different media: his two film roles of Cassius in the M.G.M. Julius Caesar (1953) and Clarence in Olivier's Richard II (1956), and his solo recital The Ages of Man (1957).

The nearer we come to the present with Gielgud the harder it is to classify his work and see it as part of a larger pattern. We are too close to the way Shakespeare is being presented now to be able to notice any but the most conspicuous trends in performance, let alone to make predictions about the future; the field is wide open. The foundation of the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1960, nevertheless, stood as a landmark separating post-War Shakespeare from what may be loosely described as the modern period. In 1959 Gielgud's revival of his production of Much Ado About Nothing in America showed that its style was out of date; the décor was too pictorially decorative and ostentatious for American audiences in spite of the vehicle it provided for some polished performances. The following year at Stratford, Peter Hall began to lay down the guidelines that would lead to productions like The Wars of The Roses (1963) and Peter Brook's King Lear (1962) with Paul Scofield. Hall did not issue a formal manifesto to Royal Shakespeare directors who were obviously allowed to express their own individual talents and capabilities, but a company style did gradually emerge which realigned the Shakespearean tradition of playing in this country and became widely influential abroad. The set designs of John Bury were distinct from those of his predecessors in that

they were assembled in three dimensions from basic materials like wood, leather and sheets of metal. Painted flats and canvas of the kind used by Mariano Andreu, Gielgud's designer for Much Ado About Nothing, were no longer in use. Bury's early work had a rugged austere quality which was due in large part to the type of plays he was required to design for, but which was also tied in with the director's concept of the play. Thus it was decided to use steel in The Wars of The Roses because the directors, Hall and John Barton, interpreted the action in terms of the harsh realities of political power evoked through the machinations of cynical, sword-carrying politicians. The simplistic, rudimentary symbolic statement, and the brooding atmosphere generated by the metallic set were typical of the new style as also was the emphasis on the stage floor. The set was thought of as an environment for actors and the whole of the décor, lighting, speech and movement had something of the significance of an extended metaphor worked out through close and possibly highly selective reference to the themes, poetic symbols and images of the text. The title of Peter Brook's book on the theatre, The Empty Space, with its allusion to the latent possibilities of the bare stage, a place of immense, diverse potential, is significant in this respect. So is Brook's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream (1970), with its white box set neither a wood near Athens nor a place of any recognizable time or location - simply a magic box where things happened.

Verse-speaking was also changing, not necessarily towards a more naturalistic style, although the success of the Method school of acting in America was exerting this sort of influence, but to a technique which was less overtly musical, more dispassionate on the surface and intellectually succinct. Since the advent of John Osborne and the wave of 'angry

young man' literature that had followed in the wake of Look Back in Anger, regional accents, genuine and assumed for a character, were more acceptable. These trends, particularly in so far as they affected verse-speaking, testified to the powerful influence of Gielgud until well into the 'fifties, despite the fact that the rivalry of Laurence Olivier had never allowed one actor to have it all his own way. They did not prevent Gielgud from appearing in Franco Zeffirelli's ill-fated production of Othello at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in 1961.

Yet it is Gielgud's production of Hamlet in 1964 and his performance as Prospero in 1974 in a production directed by Hall and designed by Bury which help to focus the relevance of the developments in the Shakespeare tradition for this study. The Gielgud production of Hamlet was an exercise in the sophisticated directing-as-extended-metaphor mode coined at Stratford. Its unconventional rehearsal ambience reformulated the idea of dramatic illusion, seeking a poetic form of statement to release the language's full range of association. Broadly speaking, we can see a connection with the Noguchi/Devine Lear in that this too arose out of a dissatisfaction with traditional décor and seemed equally avant garde. However, the Noguchi/Devine Lear reacted against one kind of scenic elaboration by replacing it with another, whereas Gielgud's Hamlet production tried to make décor altogether more insubstantial, returning to a fundamental basis of utility. It is the first of his Shakespeare productions to make use of a concept in the modern sense and it suffers from the limitation common to all such productions in that its accessibility really depends on the concept being generally understood. One may listen to the recording of this production, on the other hand, and come away with nothing more than the impression of some singularly fine performances.

The Tempest (1974) coincided with Gielgud's increasing preoccupation with film work and his breakthrough into the most recent post-Beckett drama with roles in Edward Bond's Bingo (Royal Court, 1974), David Storey's Home (Royal Court, 1970) and Harold Pinter's No Man's Land (National Theatre, 1970) again under Hall's direction. It is hard to say whether these modern roles influenced his Shakespearean playing directly, but the sense of isolation and enigma that surrounded his fourth Prospero suggests parallels with the figures in these other plays. The very fine verbal shading of the merest phrases and the eloquence of Prospero's pauses and silent presence on the stage were prominent traits in this context.

Throughout his career Gielgud has frequently demonstrated his flexibility in the face of new currents of innovation in the theatre. When we compare his early performances to his very latest ones we notice the greatly reduced level of sustained tone and obvious vibrato which he employs now. His sense of rhythm is freer; his phrasing more exact. He does not luxuriate in emotion quite so much, plunging his nose with zest into the bouquet of humiliation' as Agate said of Richard II. His feeling for the overall structure of a speech has remained more or less constant. The pace of the verse has increased, though not to any great extent. Whilst he has never been renowned for his physical transformations, his ability to create a distinctive visual characterization has developed with age as Gielgud's hold over certain roles has slackened. The range of his characterizations has widened since the 'fifties and their intellectual subtlety has been enriched, but his special ability has always been to find the core of simplicity beneath the contradictions and the mental complexities of Shakespeare's figures.

Ralph Richardson can transform the commonplace into the extraordinary; Gielgud takes an exceptional character and makes him commonly understood without diminishing his qualities. He does not attack a part with the same nervous energy he did once. On the other hand, his greater relaxation allows a performance to be more exactly pitched and measured. Sometimes the emotional intensity of a part has eluded him: he has never been able to encompass the full force of Lear's rage or Othello's jealousy, although he articulated Leontes's frenzy with complete conviction (which is another reason for thinking that Shakespeare's treatment of the same jealous emotion in these two plays is so fundamentally different). His career has displayed unevenness. As a director he has brought to the plays the virtues of tonal integrity, visual harmony, ensemble playing, textual fidelity, practical common sense, and conceptual insight. In an age where the ingenuity of productions often bulks larger than their authenticity, from the early part of this century to the present day, Gielgud's preservation and advancement of the best in the traditions of Shakespearean performance is a valuable bequest.

APPENDIX I

A Chronological Table of Shakespearean Parts and Productions

This table does not include revivals nor does it indicate the duration of a production. Dates refer to production débuts.

1921	MARCH, OLD VIC	HAMLET	(WALK ON)
1921	NOVEMBER, OLD VIC	HENRY V	HERALD
1922	MARCH, OLD VIC	KING LEAR	SERVANT (WALK ON)
1924	FEBRUARY, R.A.D.A.	ROMEO AND JULIET	PARIS
1924	MAY, REGENT	ROMEO AND JULIET	ROMEO
1926	JANUARY, SAVOY	THE TEMPEST	FERDINAND
1926	JUNE, COURT	HAMLET	ROSENCRANTZ
1927	APRIL, APOLLO	OTHELLO	CASSIO
1929	SEPTEMBER, OLD VIC	ROMEO AND JULIET	ROMEO
1929	OCTOBER, OLD VIC	THE MERCHANT OF VENICE	ANTONIO
1929	NOVEMBER, OLD VIC	RICHARD II	RICHARD II
1929	DECEMBER, OLD VIC	A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM	OBERON
1930	JANUARY, OLD VIC	JULIUS CAESAR	MARK ANTONY
1930	FEBRUARY, OLD VIC	AS YOU LIKE IT	ORLANDO
1930	MARCH, OLD VIC	MACBETH	MACBETH
1930	APRIL, OLD VIC	HAMLET	HAMLET
1930	SEPTEMBER, OLD VIC	HENRY IV PART 1	HOTSPUR
1930	OCTOBER, OLD VIC	THE TEMPEST	PROSPERO
1930	NOVEMBER, OLD VIC	ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA	ANTONY
1931	JANUARY, SADLER'S WELLS	TWELFTH NIGHT	MALVOLIO
1931	MARCH, OLD VIC	MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING	BENEDICK
1931	APRIL, OLD VIC	KING LEAR	KING LEAR
1932	FEBRUARY, O.U.D.S.	ROMEO AND JULIET	DIRECTOR
1932	DECEMBER, OLD VIC	THE MERCHANT OF VENICE	DIRECTOR
1934	NOVEMBER, NEW	HAMLET	HAMLET, DIRECTOR
1935	OCTOBER, NEW	ROMEO AND JULIET	MERCUTIO, ROMEO, DIRECTOR
1936	FEBRUARY, O.U.D.S.	RICHARD II	DIRECTOR
1936	OCTOBER, EMPIRE	HAMLET	HAMLET

1937	SEPTEMBER, QUEEN'S	RICHARD II	RICHARD II, DIRECTOR
1938	APRIL, QUEEN'S	THE MERCHANT OF VENICE	SHYLOCK, DIRECTOR
1939	JUNE, LYCEUM	HAMLET	HAMLET, DIRECTOR
1940	APRIL, OLD VIC	KING LEAR	KING LEAR
1940	MAY, OLD VIC	THE TEMPEST	PROSPERO
1942	JULY, PICCADILLY	MACBETH	MACBETH, DIRECTOR
1944	AUGUST, HAYMARKET	HAMLET	HAMLET
1945	JANUARY, HAYMARKET	A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM	OBERON
1945	OCTOBER, E.N.S.A	TOUR OF THE FAR EAST	HAMLET, DIRECTOR
1949	APRIL, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE	MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING	DIRECTOR
1950	MARCH, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE	MEASURE FOR MEASURE	ANGELO
1950	MAY, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE	JULIUS CAESAR	CASSIUS
1950	JUNE, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE	MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING	BENEDICK, DIRECTOR
1950	JULY, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE	KING LEAR	KING LEAR, DIRECTOR
1951	SEPTEMBER, PHOENIX	THE WINTER'S TALE	LEONTES
1952	JANUARY, PHOENIX	MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING	BENEDICK, DIRECTOR
1952	JUNE, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE	MACBETH	DIRECTOR
1952	DECEMBER, LYRIC	RICHARD II	DIRECTOR
1953	MAY, M.G.M. FILM	JULIUS CAESAR	CASSIUS
1953	JULY, THEATRE ROYAL	RICHARD II	RICHARD II, DIRECTOR
1955	APRIL, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE	TWELFTH NIGHT	DIRECTOR
1955	JUNE, THEATRE ROYAL	KING LEAR	KING LEAR
1955	JUNE, THEATRE ROYAL	MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING	BENEDICK, DIRECTOR
1956	DECEMBER, LONDON FILMS	RICHARD III	CLARENCE
1957	AUGUST, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE	THE TEMPEST	PROSPERO
1958	MAY, OLD VIC	HENRY VIII	WOLSEY
1959	AUGUST, METROPOLITAN BOSTON ARTS CENTRE	MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING	BENEDICK, DIRECTOR
1961	OCTOBER, ROYAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRE	OTHELLO	OTHELLO
1964	MARCH, SHUBERT THEATRE	HAMLET	DIRECTOR

1966	MAY, INTERNACIONAL FILMS	THE CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT	HENRY IV
1969	JULY, COMMONWEALTH UNITED FILM	JULIUS CAESAR	JULIUS CAESAR
1974	MARCH, OLD VIC (NATIONAL THEATRE)	THE TEMPEST	PROSPERO
1977	MARCH, NATIONAL THEATRE (OLIVIER)	JULIUS CAESAR	JULIUS CAESAR

APPENDIX 2

This appendix contains cast lists with the opening dates of the performances discussed in each chapter and the theatres where the openings took place. If the production was subsequently transferred to another theatre that theatre will be named. If the production transferred to a number of different theatres the word 'tour' will be added.

1. Shakespeare at the Old Vic : 1929-1931

ROMEO AND JULIET 14.9.1929

Adeney, Eric	;	Capulet
Beers, H. Stanley	;	Gregory, Apothecary
Brett, Monica	;	Lady Montague
Burne, Rosamond	;	Page to Paris
Dixon, Adèle	;	Juliet
Fothergill, Philip	;	Musician
Francis, Molly	;	Chorus
Gielgud, John	;	Romeo
Hunt, Martita	;	Nurse
Isham, Gyles	;	Mercutio
James, Francis	;	Benvolio
Killner, John	;	Peter
Lloyd, Powell	;	Friar John, Musician
Richardson, Gordon	;	Page to Mercutio
Riddle, Richard	;	Paris
Smyrk, Charles	;	Cousin to Capulet, Musician
Smyth, Owen P.	;	Watch
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Montague
Webster, Margaret	;	Lady Capulet
Wills, Brember	;	Friar Laurence
Wolfit, Donald	;	Tybalt
Wolston, Henry	;	Escalus, Prince of Verona
Young, Leslie	;	Sampson

Directed by Harcourt Williams

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE 7.10.1929

Adeney, Eric	;	Aragon
Beers, H. Stanley	;	Tubal
Craven, Margaret	;	Balthazar
Dixon, Adèle	;	Jessica
Gielgud, John	;	Antonio
Hunt, Martita	;	Portia
Isham, Gyles	;	Bassanio
James, Francis	;	Gratiano
Killner, John	;	Launcelot Gobbo
Lloyd, Powell	;	Old Gobbo
Philips, Eric	;	Salanio
Richardson, Gordon	;	Leonardo
Riddle, Richard	;	Salarino
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Duke of Venice
Webster, Margaret	;	Nerissa
Wills, Brember	;	Shylock
Wolfit, Donald	;	Lorenzo
Wolston, Henry	;	Morocco
Young, Leslie	;	Stephano

Directed by Harcourt Williams

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM 9.12.1929

Adeney, Eric	;	Egeus
Dixon, Adèle	;	Titania
Fothergill, Philip	;	Starveling
Francis, Molly	;	Hippolyta
French, Leslie	;	Puck
Gielgud, John	;	Oberon
Hall, Elizabeth	;	A Fairy
Hunt, Martita	;	Helena
Isham, Gyles	;	Bottom
James, Francis	;	Lysander
Killner, John	;	Snout
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Theseus
Watts, Michael	;	Philostrate
Webster, Margaret	;	Hermia
Wills, Brember	;	Quince
Wolfit, Donald	;	Demetrius
Wolston, Henry	;	Snug

Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth and Mustardseed were played by girl pupils of The Ginner-Mawer School.

Music was by Cecil Sharp

Directed by Harcourt Williams

JULIUS CAESAR 20.1.1930

Adeney, Eric	;	Decius Brutus, Lepidus, Messala
Beers, H. Stanley	;	Servant to Antony, Messenger
Craven, Edward	;	Metellus Cimber, Flavius, Strato
Dixon, Adèle	;	Calphurnia
Gielgud, John	;	Mark Antony
Hunt, Martita	;	Portia
James, Francis	;	Soothsayer
Killner, John	;	Clitus, Cobbler, Poet
Lloyd, H. Powell	;	Pindarus, Caius Ligarius
Nelson, John	;	Servant to Caesar
Parks, Murray	;	Soldier
Peduzzi, Victor	;	Cinna the conspirator
Philips, Eric	;	Cicero, Servant to Octavius Dardanius
Richardson, Gordon	;	Claudius
Riddle, Richard	;	Marullus, Young Cato Popilius Lena
Simpson, Basil	;	Lucius
Smyrk, Charles	;	Carpenter, Varro, Publius
Smyth, Owen P.	;	Volumnius, Artemidorus
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Trebonius, Titinius
Watts, Michael	;	Cinna, the Poet
Williams, Harcourt	;	Brutus
Wills, Brember	;	Julius Caesar
Wolfit, Donald	;	Cassius
Wolston, Henry	;	Casca, Lucilius
Young, Leslie	;	Soldier

There were four male and twelve female Roman citizens.

Music was by Maurice Jacobson

Directed by Harcourt Williams

AS YOU LIKE IT 10.2.1930

Adney, Eric	;	Duke Senior
Beers, H. Stanley	;	A Lord
Brett, Monica	;	Celia
Burne, Rosamond	;	1st Page Attendant on Banished Duke
Craven, Edward	;	Charles
Dixon, Adéle	;	Phebe
Francis, Molly	;	A person representing Hymen
Gielgud, John	;	Orlando
Holloway, Balliol	;	Jacques
Hunt, Martita	;	Rosalind
James, Francis	;	Silvius
Jones, Kay	;	2nd Page Attendant on Banished Duke
Killner, John	;	Adam
Lloyd, H. Powell	;	Amiens
Philips, Eric	;	A Banished Lord
Richardson, Gordon	;	Jacques De Bois
Riddle, Richard	;	Le Beau
Smyrk, Charles	;	Dennis
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Oliver
Watts, Michael	;	William
Webster, Margaret	;	Audrey
Wills, Brember	;	Corin
Wolfit, Donald	;	Touchstone
Wolston, Henry	;	Duke Fredrick, Oliver Martext

Directed by Harcourt Williams

MACBETH 17.3.1930

Adeney, Eric	;	Duncan, Old Siward
Beers, H. Stanley	;	Servant
Burne, Rosamond	;	Fleance
Craven, Edward	;	Angus, 2nd Murderer
Dixon, Adèle	;	2nd Witch
Gielgud, John	;	Macbeth
Hall, Elizabeth	;	3rd Apparition
Hunt, Martita	;	Lady Macbeth
James, Francis	;	Malcolm
Killner, John	;	Old Man, 3rd Murderer, 1st Apparition
Lloyd, Powell	;	3rd Witch
Macalaster, Margot	;	2nd Apparition
Moore, H.	;	Son of Lady Macduff
Peduzzi, Victor	;	Caithness
Philips, Eric	;	Lennox
Porter, Neil	;	Banquo
Raphael, Oliver	;	Messenger, Menteith Donalbain
Richardson, Gordon	;	Messenger
Riddle, Richard	;	Young Siward, 1st Murderer
Smyth, Owen P.	;	Seyton
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Ross
Trend, Henrietta	;	Waiting Gentlewoman
Webster, Margaret	;	Lady Macduff
Wills, Brember	;	1st Witch
Wolfit, Donald	;	Macduff
Wolston, Henry	;	Porter, Doctor

The costumes, settings and masks were designed by Owen P, Smyth

Directed by Harcourt Williams

HENRY IV PART ONE 13.9.1930.

Balfour, David	;	2nd Traveller
Bell, Clephan	;	Peto
Brown, Lyon	;	2nd Messenger, A Vintner
Chapin, Harold	;	Sir Michael
Curder, Francis	;	Bardolph
Dyall, Valentine	;	Earl of Northumberland, Douglas
Fothergill, Philip	;	1st Traveller
French, Leslie	;	Poins
Gielgud, John	;	Hotspur
Grantham, Wilfrid	;	Earl of Westmorland
Green, Dorothy	;	Lady Percy
Hawtreay, Anthony	;	John of Lancaster
Howe, George	;	Earl of Worcester
Lloyd, Powell	;	Owen Glendover
Lytton, James	;	1st Messenger, Servant
Palmer, Elsa	;	Mistress Quickly
Peduzzi, Victor	;	Chamberlain
Philips, Eric	;	Gadshill, Vernon
Purdy, Doreen	;	Lady Mortimer
Richardson, Ralph	;	Henry, Prince of Wales
Richardson, Gordon	;	Francis
Riddle, Richard	;	Edmund Mortimer
Sangster, Alfred	;	King Henry IV
Small, Farquharson	;	1st Carrier
Smyth, Owen P.	;	Archbishop of York
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Sir Walter Blunt, Sheriff
Wolston, Henry	;	Falstaff
Young, Leslie	;	2nd Carrier

Directed by Harcourt Williams

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA 24.11.1930

Balfour, David	;	Diomedes, Taurus
Brown, Lyon	;	Varrius
Dyall, Valentine	;	Proculeius, Soothsayer
French, Leslie	;	Eros
Gielgud, John	;	Mark Antony
Grantham, Wilfrid	;	Scarus, Silius
Green, Dorothy	;	Cleopatra
Harben, Joan	;	Iras
Hawtreys, Anthony	;	Alexas, Dolabella
Howe, George	;	Octavius Caesar
Lloyd, Powell	;	Menas, Canidius
Palmer, Elsa	;	Octavia
Peduzzi, Victor	;	Dercetas
Philips, Eric	;	Agrippa
Purdy, Doreen	;	Charmian
Richardson, Ralph	;	Enobarbus
Riddle, Richard	;	Gallus, Thyreus, Demetrius
Sangster, Alfred	;	Lepidus
Small, Farquharson	;	Mardian
Smyth, Owen P.	;	Ventidius
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Maecenas, Philo.
Williams, Harcourt	;	Messenger, Clown
Wolston, Henry	;	Pompey, Soldier

Directed by Harcourt Williams

TWELFTH NIGHT, SADLERS WELLS, OLD VIC, 6.1.1931.

Balfour, David	;	Curio
Dyall, Valentine	;	Priest
French, Leslie	;	Feste
Gielgud, John	;	Malvolio
Grantham, Wilfrid	;	1st Officer
Green, Dorothy	;	Viola
Harben, Joan	;	Olivia
Hawtreys, Anthony	;	Sebastian
Kenton, Godfrey	;	Orsino
Palmer, Elsa	;	Maria
Philips, Eric	;	Valentine
Richardson, Ralph	;	Sir Toby Belch
Riddle, Richard	;	Fabian
Sangster, Alfred	;	A Sea Captain
Wolston, Henry	;	Antonio

Directed by Harcourt Williams

2. Richard II

RICHARD II, OLD VIC, 18.11.1929

Adeney, Eric	;	York
Beers, H. Stanley	;	Duke of Surrey
Craven, Edward	;	Ross
Fothergill, Philip	;	Lord Willoughby
Francis, Molly	;	Duchess of Gloucester
Gielgud, John	;	Richard II
Hunt, Martita	;	Queen
Isham, Gyles	;	Henry Bolingbroke
James, Francis	;	Aumerle
Killner John	;	Bagot
Lloyd, Powell	;	Green
Macalaster, Margot	;	Herald to Bolingbroke
Philips, Eric	;	Bushy
Richardson, Gordon	;	Servant to York
Riddle, Richard	;	Henry Percy
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Salisbury, 1st Gardener
Trend, Henrietta	;	Herald to Mowbray
Watts, Michael	;	Sir Pierce of Exton
Webster, Margaret	;	Duchess of York
Wills, Brember	;	Gaunt
Wolfit, Donald	;	Mowbray, Bishop of Carlisle
Wolston, Henry	;	Northumberland

Directed by Harcourt Williams

RICHARD II, OLD VIC, 10.11.1930

Balfour, David	;	Herald to Bolingbroke Servant to the Gardener
Bell, Clephan	;	Herald to Mowbray Keeper of the Prison
Brady, Francis	;	Boy to the Gardener
Brown, Lyon	;	Lord Fitzwater
Chapin, Harold	;	Duke of Surrey
Dyall, Valentine	;	Aumerle
Fothergill, Philip	;	Lord Willoughby
French, Leslie	;	Green, A Groom
Gielgud, John	;	Richard II
Glendinning, Ethel	;	2nd Lady to the Queen
Grantham, Wilfrid	;	Earl of Salisbury
Green, Dorothy	;	Duchess of York
Harben, Joan	;	Queen Isabella
Hawtreay, Anthony	;	Bagot
Henry-May, Pamela	;	1st Lady to the Queen
Howe, George	;	Bishop of Carlisle
Lloyd, Powell	;	Lord Ross, Sir Pierce of Exton
Lytton, James	;	Servant to Pierce of Exton
Malvery, Christian	;	3rd Lady to the Queen
Palmer, Elsa	;	Duchess of Gloucester
Peduzzi, Victor	;	Welsh Captain
Philips, Eric	;	Bushy, Abbot of Westminster
Richardson, Gordon	;	Servant to York
Richardson, Ralph	;	Henry Bolingbroke
Riddle, Richard	;	Henry Percy
Sangster, Alfred	;	Duke of York
Smyth, Owen P.	;	Sir Stephen Scroop
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Thomas Mowbray, A Gardener
Williams, Harcourt	;	Gaunt
Wolston, Henry	;	Earl of Northumberland

Costumes and settings designed by Owen P. Smyth

Heraldry by Michael Watts

Directed by Harcourt Williams

RICHARD II, QUEEN'S, 6.9.1937

Andrews, Harry	;	Lord Fitzwater, Sir Pierce of Exton
Ashcroft, Peggy	;	Queen
Bannerman, Alaister	;	Lord Berkeley
Carew, Denis	;	Servant to York
Devine, George	;	Gardener
Dillon, Barbra	;	Duchess of York
Ford, John	;	Henry Percy
Gielgud, John	;	Richard II
Green, Dorothy	;	Duchess of Gloucester
Guinness, Alec	;	Duke of Aumerle, Groom
Hare, Earnest	;	Lord Ross, Salisbury
Howe, George	;	Edmund of Langley
Lloyd, Frederick	;	Northumberland
Price, Dennis	;	Green
Quartermaine, Leon	;	Gaunt
Quayle, Anthony	;	Duke of Surrey, Welsh Captain
Redgrave, Michael	;	Bolingbroke
Russell, Hereward	;	Lord Willoughby
Shaw, Glen Byam	;	Mowbray, Sir Stephen Scroop
Williams, Harcourt	;	Bishop of Carlisle

Costumes and settings designed by Motley

Music was by Herbert Menges

Directed by John Gielgud

RICHARD II, THEATRE ROYAL, BRIGHTON, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE,
LYRIC, 8.12.1952

Amer, Nicholas	;	Green
Bayldon, Geoffrey	;	Lord Berkeley, 2nd Gardener
Bennett, John	;	Henry Percy, A Groom
Bird, Norman	;	Earl of Salisbury
Ciceri, Leon	;	Aumerle
Daneman, Paul	;	Mowbray, Carlisle
Dodimead, David	;	Sir Stephen Scroop
Hardwick, Paul	;	3rd Gardener, Sir Pierce of Exton, Herald
Henson, Basil	;	Bushy
Lomas, Herbert	;	Gaunt
Mason, Brewster	;	Earl of Northumberland
Mulhare, Edward	;	Bagot
Parker, Joy	;	Queen
Porter, Eric	;	Henry Bolingbroke
Sallis, Peter	;	Keeper
Scofield, Paul	;	Richard II
Taylor, Geoffrey	;	Lord Willoughby
Turleigh, Veronica	;	Duchess of Gloucester
Webb, Gillian	;	Duchess of York
Wellman, James	;	Welsh Captain
Whitbread, Peter	;	Lord Fitzwater, Herald
Whiting, John	;	Lord Marshal, Abbot of Westminster
Wordsworth, Richard	;	Edmund of Langley
Wright, Jennifer	;	Lady to the Queen
Yates, David	;	Lord Ross, Duke of Surrey

Costumes and settings designed by Loudon Sainthill

Directed by John Gielgud

3. Hamlet

HAMLET, OLD VIC, QUEEN'S, 28.4.1930

Adeney, Eric	;	1st Player
Archdale, Alec	;	Voltimand
Beers, H. Stanley	;	4th Player, Sailor
Craven, Edward	;	Reynaldo, Captain
Dixon, Adèle	;	Ophelia
Gielgud, John	;	Hamlet
Hunt, Martita	;	Gertrude
Isham, Gyles	;	Horatio
James, Francis	;	Laertes
Killner, John	;	Francisco, Guildenstern
Lloyd, Powell	;	Bernardo, 3rd Player, Priest
Peduzzi, Victor	;	Cornelius
Philips, Eric	;	Rosencrantz
Purdy, Doreen	;	Gentlewoman
Smyth, Owen P.	;	Fortinbras
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Marcellus, English Ambassador
Watts, Michael	;	Osric
Webster, Margaret	;	2nd Player
Williams, Harcourt	;	Ghost
Wills, Brember	;	Polonius
Wolfit, Donald	;	1st Gravedigger
Wolston, Henry	;	1st Gravedigger
Young, Leslie	;	2nd Gravedigger

The settings and costumes were designed by Owen P. Smyth

Directed by Harcourt Williams

HAMLET, NEW, TOUR, 14.11.1934

Ainley, Richard	;	Rosencrantz
Atkins, Ian	;	4th Player
Banbury, Frith	;	Courtier
Beasley, Sam	;	2nd Player
Cowie, Laura	;	Gertrude
Culff, Harrison	;	Marcellus
Devine, George	;	1st Player, Bernardo
Devlin, William	;	Ghost
Field, Ben	;	1st Gravedigger
Gielgud, John	;	Hamlet
Guinness, Alec	;	Osric, 3rd Player
Hawkins, Jack	;	Horatio
Howe, George	;	Polonius
Murray-Hill, Peter	;	Francisco, Captain
Playfair, Lyon	;	2nd Gravedigger
Quayle, Anthony	;	Guildenstern
Shaw, Glen Byam	;	Laertes
Tandy, Jessica	;	Ophelia
Toone, Geoffrey	;	Fortinbras
Vosper, Frank	;	Claudius
Winter, Cecil	;	Reynolds, Priest

The costumes and settings were designed by Motley

Music was by Herbert Menges

Directed by John Gielgud

HAMLET, EMPIRE, NEW YORK, SAINT JAMES'S, NEW YORK, 8.10.1936

Anderson, Judith	;	Queen
Andrews, Harry	;	Horatio
Bissel, Whitner	;	Cornelius, Lucianus
Byron, Arthur	;	Polonius
Cromwell, John	;	Rosencrantz
Dinan, James	;	Voltimand
Emery, John	;	Laertes
Farley, Morgan	;	Osric
Gielgud, John	;	Hamlet
Gish, Lilian	;	Ophelia
Herring, Reed	;	Bernardo, Fortinbras
Keen, Malcolm	;	Claudius, Ghost
Kelly, Barry	;	Marcellus, 2nd Gravedigger
March, Ruth	;	Player Queen
Mestayer, Harry	;	Player King
Nash, George	;	1st Gravedigger
Rhoerick, William	;	Guildenstern
Stanley, William	;	Sailor
Triesault, Ivan	;	Prologue, Priest
Vincent, George	;	Captain
Vye, Mervyn	;	Francisco

The costumes and settings were designed by Jo Mielziner

Directed by Guthrie McClintic

HAMLET, LYCEUM, ELSINORE CASTLE, DENMARK, 28.6.1939

Andrews, Harry	;	Laertes
Compton, Fay	;	Ophelia
Cowie, Laura	;	Gertrude
Cruickshank, Andrew	;	Rosencrantz
Gates, William	;	Guildestern
George, Richard	;	Bernardo, Captain
Gielgud, John	;	Hamlet
Goring, Marius	;	1st Player, Osric
Hawkins, Jack	;	Ghost, Claudius
Howe, George	;	Polonius
Robinson, John	;	Fortinbras, Marcellus
Russell, Hereward	;	3rd Player, 2nd Gravedigger
Shaw, Glen Byam	;	Horatio
Tickle, Frank	;	1st Gravedigger
Whitehead, Peter	;	2nd Player, Gentleman
Woodman, Pardoe	;	Francisco, Reynaldo

The costumes and settings were designed by Motley

Directed by John Gielgud

HAMLET, CAMBRIDGE ARTS THEATRE, THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET, 28.8.1944

Adrian, Max	;	Rosencrantz, Osric
Ashcroft, Peggy	;	Ophelia
Bain, Donald	;	Gentleman
Blatchley, John	;	2nd Gravedigger
Colmer, Tom	;	3rd Player, Fortinbras
Crean, Patrick	;	Laertes
Drake, Francis	;	Priest
Gielgud, John	;	Hamlet
Goldie, Eric	;	Player Queen
Hare, Ernest	;	Voltimand, Captain, Francisco
Leather, John	;	Cornelius
Lister, Francis	;	Horatio
Malleson, Miles	;	Polonius
Quartermaine, Leon	;	Ghost
Spencer, Marian	;	Queen
Trouncer, Cecil	;	Marcellus, Player King
Williams, D. J.	;	Reynaldo, 4th Player
Woodbridge, George	;	Bernardo, 1st Gravedigger

The setting was designed by Ruth Keating

The costumes were designed by Hamish Wilson

Directed by George Rylands

HAMLET, SHUBERT THEATRE, BOSTON, LUNT FONTANNE, NEW YORK, 24.3.1964

Alexander, Hugh	;	Cornelius, 2nd Gravedigger
Burton, Richard	;	Hamlet
Coolidge, Philip	;	Voltimand
Cronyn, Hume	;	Polonius
Culkin, Christopher	;	Player Queen
Cullum, John	;	Laertes
Drake, Alfred	;	Claudius
Ebert, Michael	;	Francisco, Fortinbras
Evans, Dillon	;	Reynaldo, Osric
Fowler, Clement	;	Rosencrantz
Garland, Geoff	;	Lucianus
Gielgud, John	;	Ghost
Herlie, Eileen	;	Gertrude
Hughes, Barnard	;	Marcellus
Marsh, Linda	;	Ophelia
Milli, Robert	;	Horatio
Redfield, William	;	Guildenstern
Rose, George	;	1st Gravedigger
Sterne, Richard	;	Gentleman
Voscovec, George	;	Player King
Young, Frederick	;	Bernardo

The setting was designed by Ben Edwards

The costumes were supervised by Jane Greenwood

Directed by John Gielgud

4. Much Ado About Nothing

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, OLD VIC, SADLER'S WELLS, 15.3.1931

Dyall, Valentine	;	Don John
France, Alexis	;	Margaret
French, Leslie	;	Verges, Balthasar
Gielgud, John	;	Benedick
Glendinning, Ethel	;	Hero
Grantham, Wilfrid	;	Borachio
Green, Dorothy	;	Beatrice
Howe, George	;	Leonato
Palmer, Elsa	;	Ursula
Philips, Eric	;	Conrade
Richardson, Ralph	;	Don Pedro
Riddle, Richard	;	Claudio
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Friar Francis
Wolston, Henry	;	Dogberry

Directed by Harcourt Williams

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE, 19.4.1949.

Andrews, Harry	;	Don Pedro
Davell, Robin	;	Boy
Guard, Philip	;	Claudio
Gwynn, Michael	;	Antonio
Hansard, Paul	;	Balthasar
Hardwick, Paul	;	Conrade
Kasket, Harold	;	Friar Francis
Lander, Eric	;	Messenger
McCullin, Clement	;	Don John
Munday, Penelope	;	Margaret
Quartermaine, Leon	;	Leonato
Quayle, Anthony	;	Benedick
Rose, George	;	Dogberry
Sandys, Pat	;	Hero
Shuttleworth, Bertram	;	Watchman
Slater, John	;	Borachio
Squire, William	;	Verges
Whitehouse, Lorna	;	Ursula
Wroe, David	;	Watchman
Wynyard, Diana	;	Beatrice

The costumes and settings were designed by Mariano Andreu

Music was composed by Leslie Bridgewater

The Choreography was by Pauline Grant

Directed by John Gielgud

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE, 6.6.1950

Ashcroft, Peggy	;	Beatrice
Audley, Maxine	;	Ursula
Badel, Alan	;	Don John
Cruickshank, Andrew	;	Leonato
Dare, Richard	;	Verges
Dunbar, John	;	Watchman
Gielgud, John	;	Benedick
Green, Nigel	;	Messenger
Hardy, Robert	;	Friar Francis
Hardwick, Paul	;	Borachio
Herbert, Percy	;	Watchman
Hines, Ronald	;	Sexton
Jefford, Barbara	;	Hero
Kasket, Harold	;	Antonio
Lander, Eric	;	Claudio
Lepper, Charles	;	Watchman
Quartermaine, Leon	;	Don Pedro
Rose, George	;	Dogberry
Russel, Mairhi	;	Margaret
Shaw, Robert	;	Conrade
Wright, John	;	Boy
York, John	;	Balthasar

Directed by John Gielgud

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, PHOENIX, 11.1.1952

Anderson, Robert	;	Boy
Bird, Norman	;	Watchman
Casson, Lewis	;	Leonato
Edwards, Kenneth	;	Watchman
Faulkner, Trader	;	Messenger
Gielgud, John	;	Benedick
Goodliffe, Michael	;	Don John
Hansard, Paul	;	Balthasar
Hardwick, Paul	;	Conrade
Hardy, Robert	;	Claudio
Howe, George	;	Friar Francis
Mason, Brewster	;	Borachio
Moffatt, John	;	Verges
Munday, Penelope	;	Margaret
Nightingale, Michael	;	Watchman
Patrick, William	;	Watchman
Rose, George	;	Dogberry
Scofield, Paul	;	Don Pedro
Stewart, Hugh	;	Antonio
Tutin, Dorothy	;	Hero
Whiting, John	;	A Sexton
Wolfit, Margaret	;	Ursula
Wynyard, Diana	;	Beatrice

Directed by John Gielgud

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, THEATRE ROYAL, BRIGHTON, TOUR, 6.6.1955

Ashcroft, Peggy	;	Beatrice
Brady, Nicholas	;	Watchman
Burham, Jeremy	;	Messenger
Cherry, Helen	;	Ursula
Cross, Beverley	;	Balthasar
Devine, George	;	Dogberry
Easton, Richard	;	Claudio
Garley, John	;	Watchman
Gielgud, John	;	Benedick
Hardwick, Paul	;	Friar Francis
Harley, Timothy	;	Boy
Ireland, Anthony	;	Don Pedro
Lang, Harold	;	Borachio
Lister, Moira	;	Margaret
Malnick, Michael	;	Conrade
Marlowe, David	;	Watchman
O'Brien, David	;	Verges
Retey, Peter	;	Watchman
Stott, Judith	;	Hero
Thomas, Powys	;	Antonio
Westwell, Raymond	;	Don John
Wynne, Kenneth	;	Sexton

Directed by John Gielgud

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, METROPOLITAN BOSTON ARTS CENTRE, BOSTON,
LUNT FONTANNE, NEW YORK, 17.8.1959

Anderson, Johnathan	;	Balthasar
Fischer, Havard	;	Watchman
Furstenberg, Betsy Von	;	Margaret
Gielgud, John	;	Benedick
Hatfield, Hurd	;	Don John
Ingham, Barrie	;	Claudio
Jarvis, Graham	;	Watchman
Keen, Malcolm	;	Leonato
King-Wood, David	;	Friar Francis
Leighton, Margaret	;	Beatrice
Leonard, Mark	;	Conrade
MacLiammoir, Michael	;	Don Pedro
Macollum, Barry	;	Watchman
Marchand, Nancy	;	Ursula
Marsh, Jean	;	Hero
Moffatt, Donald	;	Verges, Messenger
Panazecki, Joe	;	Watch
Ranson, Herbert	;	Antonio
Rose, George	;	Dogberry
Sparer, Paul	;	Borachio
Tenley, Theodore	;	Watchman

Costume execution was by Ray Diffen

Directed by John Gielgud

5. King Lear

KING LEAR, OLD VIC, SADLER'S WELLS, 13.4.1931

Balfour, David	;	Messenger
Dyall, Valentine	;	Gentleman
French, Leslie	;	Fool
Gielgud, John	;	King Lear
Grantham, Wilfrid	;	Burgundy, 2nd Servant to Cornwall
Green, Dorothy	;	Goneril
Hawtrey, Anthony	;	King of France
Howe, George	;	Gloucester
Lytton, James	;	Herald
Macnabb, Patricia	;	Cordelia
Palmer, Elsa	;	Regan
Philips, Eric	;	Oswald
Portman, Eric	;	Edgar
Richardson, Ralph	;	Kent
Richardson, Gordon	;	Curan
Riddle, Richard	;	3rd Servant to Cornwall
Sangster, Alfred	;	Cornwall
Small, Farquharson	;	Old Man
Speaight, Robert	;	Edmund
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Doctor, 1st Servant to Cornwall
Wolston, Henry	;	Albany

Directed by Harcourt Williams

KING LEAR, OLD VIC, 15.4.1940

Carson, Lewis	;	Kent
Coleman, Basil	;	Burgundy
Compton, Fay	;	Regan
Cruickshank, Andrew	;	Cornwall
Donald, James	;	A Captain
Gielgud, John	;	King Lear
Haggard, Stephen	;	Fool
Hannen, Nicholas	;	Gloucester
Harris, Robert	;	Edgar
Hawkins, Jack	;	Edmund
MacCallum, John	;	Herald
Nesbitt, Cathleen	;	Goneril
Somers, Julian	;	Oswald
Staite, Charles	;	Curan, Doctor
Tandy, Jessica	;	Cordelia
Tickle, Frank	;	Old Man
Williams, Harcourt	;	Albany

The costumes and sets were designed by Roger Furse

Directed by Lewis Casson based on Harley Granville-Barker's
Preface to King Lear and his personal advice besides.

KING LEAR, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE, 18.7.1950

Andrews, Harry	;	Edgar
Ashcroft, Peggy	;	Cordelia
Audley, Maxine	;	Goneril
Badel, Alan	;	Fool
Bates, Michael	;	2nd Servant to Cornwall
Bayldon, Geoffrey	;	1st Servant to Cornwall
Bond, Godfrey	;	Old Man
Cruickshank, Andrew	;	Kent
Ffrangcon-Davies, Gwen	;	Regan
Gielgud, John	;	King Lear
Green, Nigel	;	Edmund
Gwynn, Michael	;	Albany
Halliday, Peter	;	3rd Servant to Cornwall
Hardwick, Paul	;	Cornwall
Hardy, Robert	;	First Knight
Henchie, Peter	;	Curan
Hoskins, Basil	;	King of France
Kelly, Michael	;	A Captain, employed by Edmund
Money, John	;	A Herald
Norris, Peter	;	Doctor
Quartermaine, Leon	;	Gloucester
Rose, George	;	Oswald
Shaw, Robert	;	Burgundy
Williams, Ward	;	A Captain, employed by Edmund

The costumes and scenery were by Leslie Hurry

Music was composed by Cedric Thorpe-Davies

Lighting was by Michael Northern

Directed by John Gielgud and Anthony Quayle with acknowledgements
to the late Harley Granville-Barker.

KING LEAR, THEATRE ROYAL, BRIGHTON, TOUR, 14.6.1955

Ashcroft, Peggy	;	Cordelia
Burnham, Jeremy	;	King of France
Cherry, Helen	;	Goneril
Conville, David	;	2nd Servant to Cornwall
Cross, Beverley	;	A Herald
Devine, George	;	Gloucester
Easton, Richard	;	Edgar
Garley, John	;	Oswald
Gielgud, John	;	King Lear
Hardwick, Paul	;	Burgundy, Old Man
Ireland, Anthony	;	Cornwall
Lang, Harold	;	Edmund
Lister, Moira	;	Regan
Malnick, Michael	;	A Captain, 3rd Servant to Cornwall
Marlowe, Davie	;	Curan
O'Brien, David	;	Fool
Retey, Peter	;	Doctor
Spice, Michael	;	A Soldier in Cordelia's Army
Thomas, Pavys	;	First Knight
Westwell, Raymond	;	Albany
Wynne, Ken	;	1st Servant to Cronwall

The scenery and costumes were by Isamu Noguchi

Music and sound-score was by Roberto Gerhard

Directed by George Devine

6. The Tempest

THE TEMPEST, OLD VIC, 6.10.1930

Balfour, David	;	Ferdinand
Brown, Lyon	;	Master of a Ship
Dyall, Valentine	;	Antonio
French, Leslie	;	Ariel
Gielgud, John	;	Prospero
Grantham, Wilfred	;	Francisco
Green, Dorothy	;	Juno
Harben, Joan	;	Miranda
Howe, George	;	Trinculo
Lloyd, Powell	;	A Boatswain
Macalaster, Margot	;	Iris
Palmer, Elsa	;	Ceres
Philips, Eric	;	Sebastian
Richardson, Ralph	;	Caliban
Riddle, Richard	;	Adrian
Sangster, Alfred;	;	Gonzalo
Taylor-Smith, Peter	;	Alonso
Wolston, Henry	;	Stephano

Music was performed by Kate Coates

Costumes and settings were by Owen P. Smyth and Michael Watts

Directed by Harcourt Williams

THE TEMPEST, OLD VIC, 29.5.1940

Ascherson, Renée	;	Iris
Atkins, Alfred	;	Boatswain
Cartwright, Percy	;	Master of a Ship
Casson, Lewis	;	Gonzalo
Cruickshank, Andrew	;	Sebastian
Donald, James	;	Adrian
Fay, W. G.	;	Stephano
Gielgud, John	;	Prospero
Goring, Marius	;	Ariel
Guinness, Alec	;	Ferdinand
Hawkins, Jack	;	Caliban
Lindsay, Vera	;	Ceres
Maitland, Marne	;	Antonio
McCallum, John	;	Francisco
Morell, Andre	;	Alonso
Ross, Oriel	;	Juno
Tandy, Jessica	;	Miranda
Tickle, Frank	;	Trinculo

Costumes and settings were by Oliver Messel

Directed by George Devine and Marius Goring

THE TEMPEST, SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE, DRURY LANE, 13.8.1957

Aris, Doreen	;	Miranda
Bedford, Brian	;	Ariel
Bidmead, Stephanie	;	Ceres
Clunes, Alec	;	Caliban
Dignam, Mark	;	Antonio
Gielgud, John	;	Prospero
Haddrick, Ron	;	A Boatswain
Harris, Robert	;	Alonso
Johnson, Richard	;	Ferdinand
Lloyd, Robin	;	Sebastian
Luckham, Cyril	;	Gonzalo
Miller, Joan	;	Juno
Palmer, Peter	;	Master of a Ship
Revill, Clive	;	Trinculo
Robertson, Tony	;	Adrian
Wenham, Jane	;	Iris
Wymark, Patrick	;	Stephano

Costumes and settings were by Peter Brook

Music was by Peter Brook

Directed by Peter Brook

THE TEMPEST, OLD VIC (NATIONAL THEATRE), 6.3.1974

Agutter, Jenny	;	Miranda
Carington, Julie	;	Iris
Cusack, Cyril	;	Antonio
Feast, Michael	;	Ariel
Frazer, Rupert	;	Ferdinand
Gielgud, John	;	Prospero
Gillespie, Dana	;	Juno
Guard, Christopher	;	Francisco
Lowe, Arthur	;	Stephano
Markham, David	;	Gonzalo
McCrindle, Alex	;	Master of a Ship
Mellor, James	;	Boatswain
O'Connor, Joseph	;	Alonso
Orchard, Julian	;	Trinculo
Quilley, Denis	;	Caliban
Rocca, Peter	;	Adrian
Squire, William	;	Sebastian

Music was composed and performed by Gryphon

Costumes and settings were by John Bury

Directed by Peter Hall

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Antonio is neatly prevented either from making effusive apologies and professions of repentance or raising objections to the surrender of the dukedom.

In preparation for the disclosure of Ferdinand and Miranda, Prospero directed the attention of his guests towards his cell at the side of the stage. When he said 'pray you, look in' (V.1.167), they all gathered round the entrance and were therefore prevented from noticing that a trap door had opened down stage on the same side. As the courtiers turned from looking into the cell at another word from their host, they were greeted with the sight of Miranda and Ferdinand rising through the floor on a lift. They were playing chess on the rock stool that had served the wizard for a seat. Ferdinand and then Miranda moved onto the rostrum, becoming a composite body with the courtiers as Prospero drifted forward to the right, becoming more isolated. Miranda's innocent salutation of the 'brave new world' she perceived was thus spoken in the midst of the packed group, taking in good and bad alike, whereas Prospero's balancing reply, 'Tis new to thee', was given half as an aside to the audience from his aloof situation at the front edge of the platform (IV.1.184).

The difficulty of the Epilogue is that, occurring where it does after a general exodus from the stage and being cast in rhymed couplets, it becomes detached from the rest of the drama and treated as a conventional afterpiece. Shakespeare no doubt intended some relaxation of tension, yet he has also incorporated into it ideas essential to a full understanding of the character of Prospero and indeed the play as a whole. The actor has therefore to hold the audience with it until the very last line is spoken. In 1957, by setting it on board a ship sailing across the sea, the removal of the dramatic

characters taking part in the reconciliation had been avoided and the speech was made into part of the broader action. The scope of its projection was amplified and uplifted by the pageantry, and stateliness and authority had been conferred upon its speaker. It had, in short, become an essential part of Gielgud's full interpretation. Peter Hall, instead of trying to avoid the clearance of the stage and the isolation of the solo speaker, actually exploited these conventions to create an impact. As the play drew to its close, Prospero was standing on the tip of the rostrum with the Lords, the sailors and Miranda and Ferdinand behind him. Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo had already been dismissed. There were twelve performers remaining on the stage, including Ariel on his stirrup. Prospero dismissed him from downstage, looking upstage to invite the others into his cell. The lesser Lords and sailors had edged to the left, above the cell, and when the principal characters started to walk towards the threshold it was a simple matter for them to slip off up left. Alonso, Gonzalo, Miranda, Ferdinand and Sebastian all entered the cell, but Antonio lingered to the left of the centre. The prompt-book describes what happened next:

Antonio lingers right of centre till Sebastian has gone.
Exchange a look with Prospero. Exit haughtily into cell.

This was the clinching effect that made Antonio's silence throughout the last scene significant and defined the uneasy atmosphere of antagonism that existed between the two brothers. Antonio remained unregenerate. A shadow had been cast over the resolution Prospero had engineered that tinged Gielgud's speaking of the Epilogue.

There was a moment's silence during which he crossed to the left edge of the rostrum and removed his crown in a movement that symbolized his humility and the laying aside of dramatic illusion. He had kept the crown