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# The difficulties of staging Shakespeare in the high school

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE DIFFICULTIES OF STAGING SHAKESPEARE IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

Submitted by

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THE DIFFICULTIES OF STAGING SHAKESPEARE

IN THE

HIGH SCHOOL

William Shakespeare stands forth one of the supremely great forces in English Literature,--a dramatist as yet unequalled in the variety and in the imaginative power of his achievement. For over three hundred years, he has held the highest position in the field of the drama, unchallenged. Innumerable copies of his plays have been edited, and countless numbers may be found today in the libraries, in the homes, and in the classrooms. There is no Shakespearean reader who would not acknowledge the dramatic appeal of Shakespeare's plays, but of what avail would be his acknowledgement? It is not within the province of a reader to gage the spirit of a true drama: he may possess himself of all the words, he may idolize him, but he cannot estimate his full power as a playwright. . Only one who actually witnesses a Shakespearean production, who sees the characters sustained by flesh and blood performers, and who hears the words spoken by a human voice can realize the fullness of Shakespeare's genius. Not a book, but the stage is the vehicle of the drama; not the number of Shakespearean editions printed, but the number of plays presented give indication of Shakespeare's dramatic appeal. Yet, if Shakespeare were to be judged by the present popularity and frequency of his productions, the world would be forced to acknowledge either one of two deductions, (1) that Shakespeare has no dramatic appeal, or (2) that the present generation is incapable of recognizing it, is incapable of appreciating the enduring truth of his characters, the

richness of his humor, and the loftiness of his diction. Since the first of these is apparently false, it follows that the second must contain the key to the present Shakespearean situation, a situation which needs readjustment in order that English-speaking people may get the full benefit of the intellectual enlightenment which Shakespeare's work offers to the world. I say English-speaking people rightly, because it is a well-known fact in foreign lands, especially in Germany, Shakespearean productions are quite common.

Now, who are the present generation? None other than the High-school children of a dozen or more years ago, who studied a Shakespearean play as if it were a novel, wrote comparisons and sketches of characters, and listened apathetically to lectures of Elizabethan manners and customs. As a result of this study, the majority of these children grew up with a hatred of Shakespeare, thinking him 'high-brow', and having no desire to see his plays on the stage. Comparatively few even acquired a desire for further reading in him. A consideration, therefore, of the attitude of the present generation which is but a continuation of the one acquired in the High school would seem to indicate that the High school plays an important part in shaping the tastes of its students. So it does. It is a medium through which a future generation may come to a fuller appreciation of Shakespeare, because "the child is father to the man," and if the High school can lead its children to open their minds and hearts to the beauty in Shakespeare, those same children as they grow older will want to see Shakespeare's plays acted whenever possible.

Of late years, the high-school authorities have come to realize more and more that the best way to instill in the child a love for Shakespeare is to let him act Shakespeare. Despite this fact, they have not put their theories into practice even where they could do so, in their dramatic work. For the most part they have confined this to the performance of vapid farces and sentimental comedies, leaving Shakespeare to the class room and to an appreciation by a few more fortunate children. Their reason for this condition, they attribute to the difficulties of staging Shakespeare in the High school. They are right in this supposition, but only in so far as there are difficulties in the accomplishment of any worth-while task; they are wrong in their belief that the difficulties in this particular instance represent impossibilities. Their opinion, however, has not been based on blind conclusions, but rather on a mistaken philosophy concerning the real mission of Shakespeare on the stage which they have copied from modern producers, who deem the appeal of Shakespeare a visual one their argument being that any presentation on the modern stage that does not aim at spectacular magnificence has no claim to popular favor. The High school fails to recognize, however, that the view of modern revivalists is a purely commercial view, one that has no sound basis. That Shakespeare's plays would be tasteless and colorless commodities unless reinforced by the independent arts of music, painting, architecture, and sculpture has neither a financial nor a historical foundation. It is a well-known fact that recent Shakespear-

ean revivals, characterized by marvellously artistic settings have not always met with eminent success. It is also equally well-known that the first Shakespearean productions, acted in inn yards or on crude stages with few or no properties were attended by many and diverse people despite the lack of visual appeal. What did attract these people? What made them willing to put up with all manner of conditions to witness a Shakespearean performance? There must have been something more than a mere lack of something better to do. In all probability, it was perhaps the quality in Shakespeare which has made his plays live through three hundred years; a quality which is still present, a quality which makes its appeal to the head and to the heart of every true lover of Shakespeare. And, is it not possible for the High school to make this appeal on its stage, in order to create in its students a genuine love for this greatest of all dramatists?

There are High schools which have tried to put on Shakespearean plays but the results have been far from successful. The many changes of scenes have made the performances uninteresting; the attempts at display without the proper background have made them ridiculous; and the efforts to imitate the facial expressions and intonations of popular actors have made them mechanical and dull. The public failed to respond, and Shakespeare was banished forever from high-school dramatics.

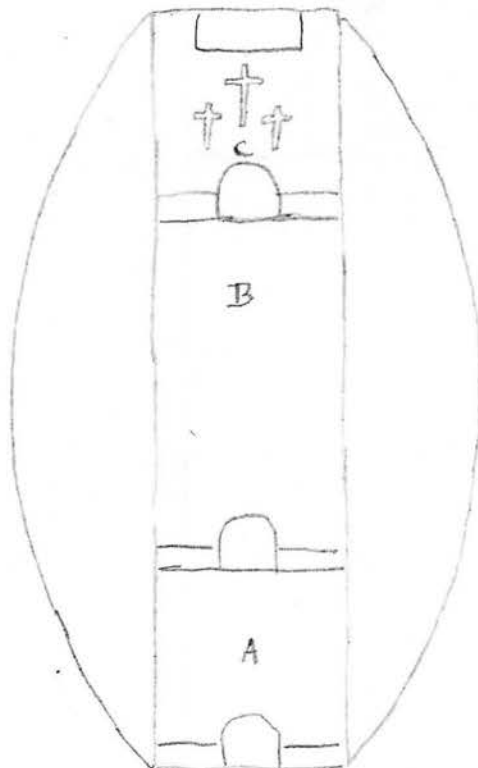
In order to bring Shakespeare back, the High school must discover an adequate way of presenting him on its stage. This



has been the purpose of the following study. In order to arrive at my conclusions, I have studied the stage through Shakespeare's day to learn the essential features of the typical Shakespearean stage and the reasons for its success and popularity. With this, I have contrasted the modern stage pointing out the comparatively few Shakespearean productions and the reasons attributed to this condition. Finally I have endeavored to show that Shakespearean productions have been most successful and can only become frequent when they are characterized by simplicity as they were on the typical Shakespearean stage; moreover that simple presentations give opportunity for a full play of the imagination and intellect and for the appeal to the head and to the heart of man. Simplicity, therefore, being the keynote of a worthy Shakespearean production presents little difficulty for the High school. The High-school stage is simple, often crude, but it must recognize this fact: it must acknowledge its primeval condition: it must strike out boldly for itself: in short, it must go back to the days of Shakespeare for its inspiration. In this way it will soon realize its true difficulties of staging Shakespeare on its stage and become aware of its possibilities. If it can do this, Shakespearean productions in High schools may become a usual thing, and the generation to come may have a wider, a fuller, and a more genuine appreciation of William Shakespeare.

In order to realize the full significance of the Shakespearean stage, it is necessary, first, to understand the pre-existing conditions which by the latter half of the 16th century made the great Shakespearean stage possible. Early dramas in England, as in Rome, had for their stage the Christian churches, and for actors, the Christian priests. In the dim light of the old cathedrals, the first dramatic audiences witnessed with keen interest and enjoyment the dramatization of the birth of Christ, his passion, and his death.

The whole performance was highly systematized, the stages including the entire Church from choir to nave, and consisting of three parts, the nave, the choir, and the sanctuary. The following is a typical drawing which I have taken from Dr. Albright's book, "The Shakespearean Stage;" The crucifix, as



A B C. The three divisions of the stage, corresponding to the nave, choir, and sanctuary of a church.

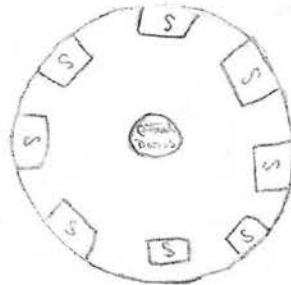
usual, was over the altar. Down through the church were domus, loca, or sedes set at intervals against the pillars. These domus were raised platforms, some with few properties, their purpose being to localize scenes. Dr. Albright in his book on the Shakespearean stage has given a careful description of these sedes: "For every localized scene, there was an appropriate sedes on which to play it. The scenes of heaven had their Ciel sedes; those of hell, their Enfer sedes. Nicodemus had a special domus, so had Pilate and Caiphas. There was a sedes for the sepulcher, another for the jail, and so on: Hell, heaven, the jail, the sepulcher, etc. were not all incongruously crowded on the same scaffold--that is, when the heaven scene, for example, was ended, its scaffold did not immediately become hell, and in turn Galilee, the jail, the sepulcher, the home of Nicodemus, and all the rest--but each scene that required localization had its own stage." Between the sedes was a space whereby the performers might journey from one sedes to another, called the platae. The sedes differed greatly in respect to properties some having none, others having a considerable quantity. Throughout the performance, the audience crowded in the aisles of the church watching the spectacle.

Gradually, however, the drama was transferred from Latin to the vernacular, from clerical to lay actors, from church to market place. As the priests had made the church the church for their liturgic plays, so the laymen made the guild-halls and the market places the stage for the presentation of the morality

and the miracle plays. Their performances were of two kinds, (1) stationary plays, given on a number of fixed or movable platforms, (2) processional plays, produced on a number of pageant wagons moving in procession through the town.

In this connection, it is interesting to note how the guilds carried from the church the stage plan of its peculiar structure.

In the stationary plays, the stage plan was practically the same as that of the Church. The stage was arranged in the form of a circle about one hundred feet in diameter, encircled by a ditch or bar. In the center of the circle stood the central domus, and around it within a radius of seventy-five feet as many more stations or sedes as were needed, so that the stage represented a design similar to the following:



The different characters had their homes on one or other of the sedes, and all the propertied scenes took place on or before these stages while the unlocated ones, such as the traveling scenes were acted on the 'plateae' between the sedes. In this way, the action passed from one sedes to another without delay of time, confusion of location, or incongruity of setting.

Accounts in various town records show that the stationary play was of frequent occurrence throughout England during the mediaeval

period.

The processional plays, too, borrowed from the early Church dramas in their stage setting. Their name immediately brings to our mind the great cycles of York, Chester, Townley, Norwich, and Coventry, when the players went traveling through the kingdom of England presenting an action from its beginning to its end on consecutive days, such as "The Beginning of the World," "The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ," and "The Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ." An idea of the method of presenting a processional cycle may be obtained from "A Breauarge of the Cittie of Chester," collected by the Reverend: Mr. Robert Rogers" (1609): "The manner of these playes were, every company had his pagiant, which pagiant weare a high scaffold with 2 rowmes, a higher and a lower, upon 4 wheels. In the lower part they apparelled themselves, and in the higher rowme they played, being all open on top, that all beholders might hear and see them. The places where they played them was in every street. They began first at the Abay gates, and when the first pagiant was played, it was wheeled to the highe crosse before the Mayor, and so to every street and so every streete had a pagiant playing before them at one time, till all the pagiants for the day appointed weare played; and when one pagiant was neere ended, worde was broughte from streete to streete that soe they might come in place thereof, exceedinge orderly, and all the streetes have their pagiant afore them all at one time playeing together; to see which player was great resorte, and also

scaffolds and stages made in the streets in those places where they determined to play their pagiants." These wagons took the place of the old sedes, and were stretched into a line instead of in a circle as they were in the stationary plays.

As time went on, people began to demand more frequent and shorter plays. There was consequently a lessening of the cycle plays, and the introduction of interludes, short plays written to adapt themselves to a single scaffold which was taken bodily from the old staging. Dr. Albright has divided these plays into four classes for the purpose of distinguishing the stage structure. "(1) Plays in which the action was entirely unlocated and required no properties, that is, the action took place on neutral ground in the great somewhere, and no properties, such as tables, chairs, trees, etc., were needed. (2) Plays with located and propertied action. The stage for this class was set before the play opened with the properties necessary for the action, and was not cleared and re-set during the performance. (3) Plays in which the scenes were unlocated and required only such properties as could stand wherever needed. (4) Plays in which the scenes were located in or near some building but in which no properties were mentioned and in the most cases not needed." A careful view of these divisions reveals the fact that the main difference classifies itself under propertied and unpropertied plays given on a stage no bigger than the original domus, loca, or sedes of the Church dramas.. Thus by 1500, the stage had started on its transitional era, the main movement

being towards a simplification of the stage to meet the exigencies of the shorter plays.

So great became the demand for these short plays, that it was a practice for itinerant troupes of actors to give their performances in any place that chance provided--open street squares, barns, town halls, moot courts, schoolhouses, and most frequently, the yards of inns. In fact, in London the players were forced to make use of inn yards entirely, strolling players being forbidden to perform on land controlled by the City. A yard generally consisted of a large open court, surrounded by two or more galleries. At one end, a temporary platform could be erected for a stage; in the adjacent stables a dressing-room could be provided for the actors; the rabble, always the more enthusiastic part of the audience could be accommodated with standing-room about the stage; while the more aristocratic members of the audience could be comfortably seated in the galleries overhead.

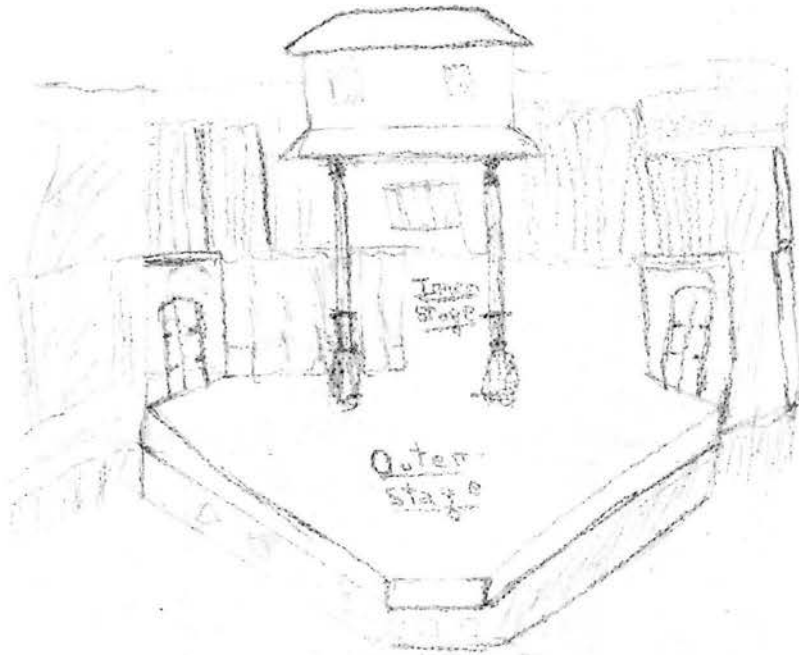
Just before the advent of the theatre, the mediaeval stage represented two kinds of scenes--those requiring properties, which were set out before the play began, called localized scenes, and those with no properties or unlocalized scenes. In the first, the action was generally in keeping with the stationary properties. It was the mission of the theatre to provide a stage for both propertyed and unpropertyed scenes with the action congruous with the stage properties. This stage was to be the vehicle of Shakespeare's plays.

In 1564 William Shakespeare was born. Twelve years later, The Theatre was built by James Burbage, followed in the next year by the erection of The Curtain. There is little record of either of these theatres, nor in fact is there much first hand information about any of the subsequent Elizabethan theatres, all but one of which were built in Shakespeare's lifetime--the Rose 1592, the Swan 1594, Blackfriars 1596, Globe 1599, Fortune 1601, Red Bull 1608, Hope 1613, Cockpit 1616, and Salisbury Court 1629. The last three remained through the Commonwealth, and were used at the opening of the Restoration, but the others entirely disappeared during the suppression of the theatres by the Puritans, the only traces we have of them being a few paintings, and some principles and special features of the Restoration stage which seem to be survivals of Elizabethan times. Yet in one more place does the Shakespearean stage still live--in the plays of the great dramatist, plays written expressly for the stage of his own day and best presented on that stage. Since this is so, it seems essential that we should discover the essential characteristics of this stage as a means of helping ourselves to a better production of Shakespeare.

There are four pictures extant which have been regarded as illustrations of the Shakespearean stage: the drawing by Van Buchell of the Swan stage, the sketch of the Red Bull Play house, and the two frontispieces to the edition of the tragedies of Roxana and Messallina. The Swan and Red Bull pictures, however, have been challenged, but the Roxana and Messallina



may be accepted as authentic pictures. Accepting these pictures to be true, we find the stage to be similar to the following drawing:



As will be seen, this stage consists of an outer and an inner stage, separated by a curtain, of two proscenium doors, two balcony windows, a gallery, and a "heavens." Thus it will be seen how the Elizabethan stage combined the main features of the Church drama with those of the interludes and short moralities; for the outer and inner stages combined represented the old *sedes*, of which the property stage was a continuation, while the outer stage with curtains closed represented the *plateae* or the unproperty stage.

On the inner stage were arranged the properties which were changed for a new scene either during an act division, or during a scene on the outer stage. Thus it was possible to

have continuous action throughout an act regardless of the number of scenes, strangely different from the modern chopped-up' manner of presentation. In citing instances in Shakespeare's plays proving that he wrote them for the Elizabethan theatre, Dr. Albright has shown how he allowed for the interchange of propertied and unpropertied scenes. Taking one act of the Merchant of Venice, we notice the following division: "Act I Scene (1) A street. Outer scene. Scene (2) A room in Portia's house. Inner scene. Curtains drawn, action on both stages. Scene (3) A street. Outer scene

It often happened that the curtains around the inner stage were used for doors as a means of passing from one room to another, or from outside to inside. The upper stage served as walls of a city, fort, or prison, and the balcony windows were used chiefly to provide a means of carrying out in a realistic manner the many secret courtship scenes, like the famous one in "Romeo and Juliet." Sometimes if properties were wanted on the outer stage, they were put on and removed in full view of the audience, banquets being one of the things that were frequently brought in. As for costumes, there was no attempt to dress the actors in any appropriate or characteristic way. They wore the most gorgeous clothes regardless of time and sense. Furthermore, there was no scenery; the walls were draped with tapestry or curtains, and the spectators were obliged to supply the change of scene by their imagination assisted by the words of the poet. To this fact is due many of the

beautiful descriptions so common in Shakespeare..

Under these simple conditions--a bare stage, few properties, no music, no lighting, and no shelter from the inclemencies of the weather--Shakespeare's plays delighted Elizabethan audiences. To some of Shakespeare's popularity may be due the fact that in the Elizabethan period, the theatre filled the place of the magazine and the newspaper, and the people went there for information and news. Yet, probably the greatest part of the play had no current news in it, and still the people came from all ranks and especially from the lowest classes. J. Brander Matthews has given us an interesting picture of a typical Shakespearean audience. "The main body of spectators had to stand in the yards exposed to the inclemency of the weather. They were a turbulent lot, often apprentices and sailors mixed with riff-raff and rabble of the sea-port. They came to the theatre after a solid British midday meal; and before the performance, during intermission, and even while the play was going on, they talked freely; they cracked nuts and drank beer; they smoked; they often bandied words with gallants seated on the stage. They had their loftier likings as well as their baser instincts. They wanted to see on the stage in more brilliant or repulsive colors, in more accentuated hues, what they dimly observed within or around themselves; what they felt but could not express."

Shakespeare's popularity in his own day is further evidenced by his financial position, and by his estate Stratford-on-Avon.

Directly in contrast with the Elizabethan stage is our modern American theatre. At first appearance, there seems to be no resemblance to the old inner-outer stage of Shakespeare's day; yet if we look closely at it, we can come to some realization of what has happened. After Shakespeare's death, the general progress continued in the direction of more localization, less incongruity, and more alternative. There was an increase in the number of scenes clearly designed for the use of the inner stage and there was an increase in the number of those that indicated locality sufficiently to suggest its use. As a result, the outer stage became smaller and smaller; there was no need for it. The inner extended itself until it came to occupy the entire stage, the little space before the curtain being the only trace of the old outer stage. This type of stage adapted itself very well to the modern dramas with their few changes of scenery, but it could not present Shakespeare with the continuity of the old Shakespearean stage .

Today, the theatre is not merely an affair of spoken words and accompanying gestures; it presents further a series of pictures with the beauty which only a painter can give them. It has brought to its use all the arts of painting, dancing, architecture, and sculpture, and has tried to make every production as realistic as possible. If a scene is to be in an orchard, the setting represents an orchard by means of the most beautiful scenic painting. If it is to be a castle, the scene goes through the hands of an architect, and the result is a

magnificent castle stands before the audience. Everything is done to make the play appealing to the spectator. There is no need to consider the evolution of the present lighting system, but it is evident that lighting plays an important part in the modern theatre and it is true that lighting could be sometimes used to much better advantage than it is in the theatre of today.

We can easily see the effect of the modern stage on Shakespearean productions: in order to present them as the new theatre requires, it means a tremendous outlay of money, with the result that Shakespearean revivals have become rare.

The dramatic interest of Shakespearean drama is considered inadequate to keep the attention of the audience alive; this is only retained by startling decorations and spectacular embellishments with special musical accompaniments. Mr Percy Fitzgerald in his book on "Shakespearean Representation" says: "Something novel and surprising must be evolved. Money, lighting, painting, dresses, music, dancing--nothing is spared. The framework of the piece groans and totters under the superincumbent weight." Shakespeare is presented in a dazzling plentitude of color in both England and America. It is not my intention to discredit these magnificent productions. As works of art, some of them have been superb, but the difficulty lies in the fact that the expense involved in these marvellous productions has made them rare. Furthermore, during recent years, Shakespeare as a dramatist has become more and more un-

popular in England and in America.

In foreign countries, especially in Germany, there is an entirely different attitude towards the presentation of Shakespeare. In Berlin the year before the war, there were sixty-six companies playing Shakespeare, and eight theatres gave twenty-five different Shakespearean productions. In his book, "Shakespeare and the Modern Stage," Mr. Lee has given an interesting account of a German presentation: "The currently accepted method of presentation can be judged from the following personal experience. A few years ago I was in the Burg -Theater in Vienna on a Sunday night--the night on which the great working population of Vienna chiefly take their recreation, as in this country it is chiefly taken by the great working population on Saturday night. The Burg-Theater in Vienna is one of the largest theatres in the world. It is of similar dimensions to Drury Lane Theatre or Covent Garden Opera house. On the occasion of my visit the play produced was Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra." The house was crowded in every part. The scenic arrangements were simple and unobtrusive, but were well calculated to suggest the Oriental atmosphere of the plot. There was no music before the performance, or during the intervals between the acts, or as an accompaniment to great speeches in the progress of the play. There was no making love, nor any dying to slow music, although the stage directions were followed scrupulously; the song 'Come, thou Monarch of the Vine,' was sung to music in the drinking scene on board Pompey's galley,

and there were the appointed flourishes of trumpets and drums. The acting was competent, though not of the highest calibre, but a satisfactory level was evenly maintained throughout the cast. There were no conspicuous deflections from the adequate standard. The character of whom I have the most distinct recollection was Enobarbus, the level-headed and straight-hitting critic of the action--a comparatively subordinate part, which was filled by one of the most distinguished actors of the Viennese stage. He fitted his part with telling accuracy. The whole piece was listened to with breathless interest. It was acted practically without curtailment, and, although the performance lasted nearly five hours, no sign of impatience manifested itself at any point. This was no exceptional experience at the Burg-Theater. Plays of Shakespeare are acted there repeatedly--on an average twice a week--and, I am credibly informed with identical results to those of which I was an eye-witness."

On the other hand, there is also in Germany a great outlay of money for suitable presentation of Shakespeare. The German theaters have invented elaborate mechanical devices in order to change scenes easily and quickly. Chief among these are the revolving stage, the wagon stage, and the sliding stage. Professor Max Reinhardt of the "Deutsches Theater" in Berlin is in great measure responsible for the success of many of these. To him is also due much of the German Shakespearean production because Shakespeare was his

inspiration on the stage and his god. Yet, even Reinhardt's settings may be characterized as conservative. He believes in utmost simplicity of form and strong, severe lines, securing exquisite effects of pure design and harmonious discreet color.

Before taking up the high-school problem, I shall first bring together the characteristics of the Elizabethan Theater as opposed to the Modern Theater. "The three main principles of Elizabethan staging are the following: I. The properties of a regular setting were located on the inner stage, and changed for a new setting either during an act-division or during the playing of a scene on the outer stage. II. When the curtains were closed, the space before them was a stage in itself; when the curtains were drawn, the outer and inner stages became one, and the properties on the inner gave the setting for the whole. III. By means of the alternation of outer and inner scenes, and the succession of outer as well as certain inner scenes, the action in an act, regardless of the number of scenes, was practically continuous from the beginning to the end." The keynote of the whole presentation was SIMPLICITY.

The principles of modern staging are the following: I. There is but one stage the old inner. II. Every time there is a change of scene, there is a dropping of the curtain, and the audience is obliged to wait until new scenery is brought on. III. Every scene is made as near the actual thing as possible so as to leave no illusions in the minds of the audience.

The keynote is MAGNIFICENCE.



In considering Shakespearean presentation in the High school, it is first necessary to understand something of the nature of Dramatic work in this institution.

In almost every High school there is a dramatic society. Its membership is open to any student who is not failing in his or her work, and each member pays no more than fifty cents a year for the privilege of belonging to the society. They have meetings which amount to very little, and which are not at all well attended until there is a sign of a coming production which happens at least once a year. The work of the society is directed by a teacher generally in the English Department who has had little or no training in the art of producing plays, but who has to depend on her own ingenuity and inborn talent to aid her in the selection of plays and in the coaching of them. Considering their lack of preparation for this work, some of them have succeeded marvellously well in the direction of High-school plays. All the plays are given on the High-school stage which is a small edition of the modern theatrical stage with the exception that it often has to do without the aid of scenery and has to content itself with the properties it can gather around the school house or from neighboring homes. The money charged for admission generally goes to the school as a gift from the dramatic society for the purpose of getting more books for the library or some new apparatus for the gymnasium. Gathering these characteristics, the high-school stage is distinguished (1)

by simplicity due to its lack of scenery (2) by a lack of properties and costumes due to its financial condition (3) by an inadequate director--all of which represent the difficulties of staging Shakespeare in the High school. There is no scenery--then, how is it possible to have as many as five different scenes in one act? There is no money--then how is it possible to secure a throne or a queen's dress, or a fool's costume? There is no trained coach--then how is it possible to give to Shakespeare's blank verse the musical quality it demands? These are the questions that I shall attempt to answer, basing my answers on the foregoing study.

The modern idea that Shakespeare would have no dramatic appeal unless characterized by spectacular magnificence must first be refuted. In recent years Shakespearean popularity on the stage has waned, this condition as far as I have been able to discover being attributed to two reasons (1) the cost of producing Shakespeare in our day, and (2) the lack of good actors and actresses who can make Shakespeare's lines distinguishable to the audience.

Taking the first of these reasons, is it Necessary to expend so much money in order to produce Shakespeare in a fitting manner? Let us consider the Shakespearean stage. It was for a theatre with bare platforms cluttered along its side with seated spectators, with no curtain and no scenery, with its two doors and its gallery above, with its pendent tapestry at the back that Shakespeare composed his plays.

Mr. Lee says: "There was no scenery, although there were crude endeavours to create scenic illusion by means of 'properties' like rocks, tombs, caves, trees, tables, chairs, and paste-board dishes of fool. There was at the outset no music, save flourishes on trumpets at the opening of the play and between the acts. The scenes within each act were played continuously without pause." Yet to this theatre flocked the Elizabethan mobs to witness Shakespeare, which is proof positive of a signal imaginative faculty in an exceptionally large proportion of them. In our day, when Shakespeare is presented in all his splendour and magnificence, the people fail to respond except in Germany. They have no genuine appreciation of Shakespeare as he really is; therefore, it is necessary that a future generation should acquire a genuine love for him.

If the High-school stage is simple, then the better can it adapt itself to the conditions of the stage for which Shakespeare, himself wrote. There are those who say that Shakespeare, himself lamented the lack of scenery in the well-known chorus before the first act of Henry V of which the following is an excerpt:

O for a muse of fire, that would ascend  
The brightest heaven of invention,  
A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,  
And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!  
Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,  
Assume the port of Mars; and at his heels,  
Leashed in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire  
Crouch for employment. But pardon, gentles all,  
The flat unraised spirits that have dar'd  
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth  
So great an object: can this cockpit hold

The vasty fields of France? or may we cram  
Within this wooden O the very casques  
That did affright the air at Agincourt?  
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may  
attest in little place a million;  
And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,  
On your imaginary forces work.  
Suppose within the girdle of these walls  
Are now confined two mighty monarchies  
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts,  
The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder;  
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;  
Into a thousand parts divide one man,  
And make imaginary puissance:  
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them  
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth.  
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,  
Carry them here and there jumping o'er times,  
Turning the accomplishment of many years  
Into an hour glass.

I do not believe this charge. The lines seem rather a wonderful appeal to the audience to use the imagination since such dreams as Shakespeare conjures up could never be fully realized on any stage even the splendid modern one. They reach their full meaning only as they become a part of the inward eye which needs to be awakened.

How is the high-school stage to adapt itself to the Shakespearean stage with its inner-outer stage effect? It cannot make of itself a replica of this effect, but it can utilize the idea by the use of curtains and drops. These curtains may be of any material, but the cheapest is the variety of gunny-sacking known as hessian. It is very rough and loose in texture, and may be bough for very little if bought in a quantity. The putting up of this curtain might easily become the task of certain children who would have no interest in acting and little talent for it. It would be their work to

study the stage, find the best means of getting the curtain in workable order in which work they would naturally be directed by the teacher in charge. It sometimes happens, that a high school stage can make use of the regular curtain for this purpose, there being a sufficient space in front of the curtain to allow for considerable action. The difficulty of this idea is that the curtain may be of a brilliant color, not suitable as a background of all scenes, or that there may be no access to this front stage.

The advantage of such a curtain is that it does away with the need of scenery by substituting a conservative background that may serve for the outside of a house, a short inside scene with no properties, or a street, at the same time allowing for a continuity of action resembling that of the Shakespearean stage. This also will move the children to exercise their imaginations, and to attend more closely to the words of Shakespeare. Furthermore, participation in a Shakespearean play will involuntarily cause the child to get a better understanding and knowledge, to say nothing of a deep appreciation for this dramatist. From my own experience and observation, I have come to the conclusion that anyone who takes part in a Shakespearean production, who makes the lines of Shakespeare his lines, who makes the character his character cannot fail to be imbued with the spirit of Shakespeare and with a desire to see every Shakespearean production that is presented.

Granted, however, that simplicity is a desirable in a Shakespearean production, and that the high-school stage can

well adapt itself to this condition, it still remains true that it cannot always secure adequate properties, nor buy suitable costumes. In regard to the properties, I have cited many instances of the lack of properties in Shakespeare's day. The High school can do better than this. It does not need elaborate properties. Many times with the use of a conservative background which the curtain affords, it can symbolize a scene by one or two effective properties, a shrub, or a garden bush. However, when specific properties are required, such as thrones, benches, or settles, it may turn to its boys to produce the proper effects. Almost every high school has a manual training department which often turns out very little work. Considering the modern trend of education with its characteristics of use and interest, it seems feasible to suggest that the manual training department might confine a little of its work to the useful and interesting employment of supplying the needs of the dramatic society in its efforts to put Shakespeare on the high-school stage.

Costumes still remain a problem. Mr. Lee says: "Garrick played Macbeth in an ordinary Court suit of his own era. The habiliments proper to Celtic monarchs of the eleventh century were left to be supplied by the imagination of the spectators or not at all. No realistic "effects" helped the play forward in Garrick's time, yet the attention of the audience was never known to stray when he produced a great play by Shakespeare." The high school, however, has no Garrick, nor would it be satisfactory to attempt Shakespeare without costuming his characters

Again, however, the High school may have recourse to its domestic science department as well as to the members of the Shakespearean caste. To be sure there is a lack of money, but as is so frequently the case in art, and in all life for that matter, the very slenderness of its resources may prove its means of salvation. Then, too, one set of costumes will do for a number of Shakespearean performances because it is not necessary to cling strictly to historical accuracy. It is far more important to realize the inner soul of the great Hamlet, Othello, Katharine, or Rosalind, than to get a mental photograph of their outer appearance.

For the men, the standard costume should be simple, smock-like tunics and hose. For the women, it should be a one piece gown, cut princess style, with shaped panels falling from shoulder to floor or with a full skirt gathered on a close-fitting bodice. It is possible to secure much information on costuming and on making of costumes in an economical way--this would also prove an interesting way to study in an incidental manner Elizabethan dress and manners.

Now, it is very evident that this work would be of no avail unless carried on by a competent person, one with executive ability who would be in charge of the whole performance exclusive of the coaching of the play. It would be necessary to divide the work among the students, arranging them in groups, each group having a manager or director over it. There would

probably be a Property Manager, a Stage Manager, a Costume Manager, and a Business Manager. In addition to this, there would have to be a coach, one who knew how to teach children to be natural and not conventional, one who appreciated the melody and the music of Shakespeare's blank verse, and one who understood how to interpret Shakespeare's characters. This would be possible only to one who had a genuine appreciation for Shakespeare. Therefore, it would seem necessary for every English teacher and every other teacher interested in dramatic work to become thoroughly familiar with Shakespeare on the stage and off the stage, and to learn how to produce plays in the best manner.

There may still be some objection to the length of Shakespeare's plays, but this may easily be remedied. The Elizabethans themselves did not cling rigidly to the text, often cutting lines. This is a wise procedure, and many times it is necessary, in order to secure fewer changes of scene for the fewer the scenes are in excess of the number of acts, the smoother and more delightful will be the performance. Moreover, many of the lines found in Shakespeare are lacking in propriety and are better out than in in a high-school production.

For the purpose of showing how these conclusions adapt themselves to a Shakespearean play, I have taken the play of "As You Like It" cutting scenes and passages, and arranging it for a high-school production.



Act I

Scene I. An orchard. The curtain drop.

Properties--shrubs, bushes, or any woodland decoration available.

Omissions--Oliver's speech, omit line 84:  
"I pray you, leave me." Instead have Oliver exit, drawing the front curtain on Adam's speech. Omit remainder of scene

Scene II. A Lawn before the Duke's Palace.  
Raise curtain drop, having behind it some scenic effect, representing entrance or terrace of lawn.

Properties--Same with the addition of some garden benches.

Omissions--Lines 114, 115, 128-134.  
Do not have Charles enter. Omit his lines. Have Orlando exit at line 208, the duke with him, their lines being spoken off stage, Rosalind's and Celia's on, seeming to witness the wrestling off the side of the stage.

Scene III A Room in the Palace.  
Change to the same as Scene II  
As Orlando goes out, Rosalind comes in.

Act II

Scene I The Forest of Arden.

Properties--If possible some manner of trees rustic logs, stumps, and stools.

Scene II Omit.

Scene III. Before Oliver's house. Drop curtain.  
It is also possible to have this scene before Scene I, and is advisable when the forest setting would interfere with this one.

Scene IV. The forest

Scene V. Another part of the Forest  
Same as Scene Iv. As Rosalind and Corydon  
go out, Amiens, Jackques, and Others enter.

Scene VI. Another part of the Forest.  
Use same scene a continuation

Scene VII Another Part of the Forest  
Use same scene, having foresters coming  
in, bearing boards to set up a table.

Omit any lines advisable.

The curtain may be let down in order to give the audience  
a rest, but it is possible to let the next act be a con-  
tinuation of this one, by reason that the first scene , I  
should omit.

### Act III

Scene I Omit

Scene II. The forest.

Omit entrance of Corin and Touchstone.

Enter Rosalind.

Omit lines 102-119, 125-132.  
lines 177-182, 192-198, 208-215, 246-267.  
Any other lines advisable.

Scene III. Another Part of the Forest.  
Continue Scene II.  
Omit all Jacques' lines and himself.  
Omit lines 37-43  
Touch. But, be it as it may be, I will  
marry thee.  
Audrey. The gods give us joy.  
Touch. Amen. A man may, if he were of a  
fearful heart stagger in this attempt;  
for here we have no temple but the  
woods, no assembly but horn-beasts.  
But what though? Courage. Come,  
sweet Audrey.  
Omit rest of scene. This does away  
with Sir Oliver Martext.  
Exeunt Audrey and Touchstone.

Scene IV. Another part of the forest. Same scene.

Omit lines 7-18, 21-26  
Omit Corin, joining Scene IV with V

Act IV.

Scene I Omit  
Scene II Omit  
Scene III The Forest

Act V.

Scene I. The same as Scene III  
Omit lines referring to Sir Oliver Martext.

Scene II. Continuation  
Omit whenever necessary

Scene III Omit

Sc Scene IV Omit, until line 26, having curtain go up on the Duke Senior, Orlando, Silvius, Phebe, Oliver, and Foresters in the forest.  
Omit lines 56 until the entrance of Rosalind. It is not necessary to have the masque of Hymen.  
Have the scene end with the Duke's speech--Play music! and you, brides and bridegrooms all,  
With measure heap'd in joy, to the measures fall.  
Have the play end with the dance.

It is not necessary to omit all the lines I have suggested. On the other hand, there are many more that may also be omitted. I have said nothing about costuming, believing that my first suggestion may afford a way of meeting this exigency.

In conclusion I wish to say that there is an infinite possibility for the High school to present Shakespeare on its stage. What has been done with this play to make it shorter, and to secure a more continuous action may be done in many

ways to Shakespeare's other plays. Not all of them are suitable for high-school production, but a sufficient number will afford a variety to high-school production. I believe that simplicity gives opportunity for the exercise of the imagination, and that when the people learn to appreciate the beauty and vigor of Shakespeare, they will want to see him often which is only possible under more economical conditions than are present on the modern stage. It has been said, as I pointed out in beginning this discussion that one of the reasons for the present Shakespearean situation is the lack of actors and actresses to render the blank verse of Shakespeare in an intelligible way. Does it not seem possible also that frequent high-school productions may inspire some of our young men and women to supply this lack? At all events, it would be a worthy experiment. The modern stage has failed to retain the popularity of Shakespeare; it has depended on display for its appeal: let the High school try SIMPLICITY, the only method possible on its stage, and the only one possible on the Shakespearean stage for which Shakespeare himself wrote.

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