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Edward Gordon Craig's Theory of the Theatre as Seen Through 'The Mask'.

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Edward Gordon Craig's Theory Of The Theatre As Seen Through The Mask

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech

by

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ABSTRACT

The object of this study is to present an analysis and interpretation of Edward Gordon Craig's theories of the theater as seen through *The Mask*, written almost exclusively by Craig and published at Florence, Italy, from 1908 through 1929. Craig's theatrical theory as developed in his books have been the subject of various studies. Up to this time, however, no one has attempted to pursue a comprehensive study of his theory as presented in *The Mask*.

Taking Craig's theory of the theater as the focal point of the study, the textual material in *The Mask* falls into two classifications: (1) theory of the stage scene which includes scenery, costumes, lighting and movement, and (2), theory of acting. Since Craig's major influence and contribution to the modern theater has evolved from his work in scene design and production methods, his theory of the stage scene receives the chief emphasis in this study. Craig's criticisms of the twentieth century theater have been presented in some detail to compare and contrast his theoretical concepts with the theater of his time.

Craig brought to the theatre a new concept of theatrical production as one integral, harmonious art. He started a reaction against distracting naturalism in setting, in lighting, in costuming, in acting,
that has become a vital aspect of the theater of today. He established a new trend in theater architecture which established a greater communion between actor and audience. His provocative essays stimulated the development of a new art form, the aesthetic drama, which achieved its effects largely through the theatre artist's decorative use of line, form, mass, rhythm and movement.
INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the twentieth century, a wave of revolt broke into the established theatres of Europe, England and America. The chief motivating force of the revolution was the dissatisfaction with the traditional theatre forms in production techniques and play composition. The name usually applied to this theatre revolt is The New Art Theatre Movement, and its leaders are referred to as the insurgents of the new art theatre. The names of the playwriting insurgents are well known to students of modern drama. To name a few, there were Ibsen in Norway; Galsworthy, Barrie and Shaw in England; Maeterlinck in Belgium, Rostand and Brieux in France; Strindberg and Hauptman in Germany; Mackaye and O'Neill in America; and Chekov and Tolstoi in Russia. These playwrights sought wide sweeping reforms in dramatic structure which would free the writing from the artificial conventions and outworn methods in plot construction, character delineation and dialogue composition. Their revolt centered in a desire to write an intensive drama dependent upon character-development and development of idea through story, and appealing to the emotions and intellect. Their aim was to write a drama divorced as far as possible from visual and sensuous appeal, affording deep emotional experience and intellectual stimulus.

The second aspect of The New Art Theatre Movement found its expression in a protest against the realistic methods of the pictorial and naturalistic methods of theatrical production. The leading insurgents in this phase of the revolt were Reinhardt in Germany;
Copeau in France; Stanislavsky, Meyerbold, and Bakst in Russia; Litmann, Fuchs, and Appia in Austria; Jones in America; and Barker and Craig in England. These men were theatrical designers rather than playwrights, and in contrast to the playwrights, they envisioned a type of theatrical production which would have its greatest achievement in visual and sensuous appeals. Consequently, this phase of the New Art Theatre Movement is often called the aesthetic theatre movement. This type of theatre, instead of relying upon character and story development as emphasized by the playwrights, makes a sensuous appeal through eye and ear mainly through beauty of sight and sound. It seeks to create a sustained mood through perfect harmony and unity of action, music, and setting. It relies on action in the physical sense rather than dramatic action in the sense of plot development.

Actually, The New Art Theatre Movement embraced two diametrically opposed currents: the intensive drama of thought and emotion, and the aesthetic theatre of sensuous appeal. While the two currents have not merged into one completely new theatre form, they have touched to the degree where there is evidence in the theatre of the last decade that an attempt has been made to bring all the arts of the theatre together in artistic harmony and to mount beautifully all plays of either the aesthetic or emotional and intellectual type.

Edward Gordon Craig was the chief prophet and spokesman for the aesthetic theatre movement. He was the first to develop theories and to advance the principles of the aesthetic theatre and the first to apply them to theatrical production. His essays on the art of the theatre, his experiments in production techniques and methods and
his revolutionary scene designs were the first source of inspiration to his fellow workers in the new theatre movement.

Considerable research has been done on Craig's theories and principles as developed in his three books, _Towards A New Theatre_, 1913, _The Theatre Advancing_, 1921 and _On The Art Theatre_, 1911. However, no investigation of _The Mask_, a theatrical journal written almost exclusively by Craig and published from 1908 to 1929, has been undertaken.

The purpose of this study is to provide a description and critical analysis of the theories and principles of theatrical production advanced by Craig in _The Mask_.

The primary source material for the study is the fifteen volumes that comprise _The Mask_. These fifteen volumes extend through twenty one years from March, 1908, through December, 1929. Volumes one through ten, and twelve and thirteen of _The Mask_ were available to the writer at the Louisiana State University Library. Volumes eleven, fourteen and fifteen were borrowed from the University of Nebraska. The bibliography will indicate that the writer examined also a number of books dealing with the theory and practice of the twentieth century theatre.

In general, the textual material of _The Mask_ falls into three divisions: (1) reprints of historical essays, embracing acting, theatre architecture, stage machinery, scenery, puppetry, dance and masks; (2) Craig's critical essays on the alleged weaknesses of methods and practices in the theatre; and (3) essays and comments embracing Craig's theory and concepts of the art of the theatre.
Since the chief purpose in this study is to present an interpretation and analysis of Craig's theories and principles of the theatre, the investigator has presented only summaries of the first two divisions of the textual material. The summaries have been presented in the chapter dealing with the history and format of *The Mask*.

The organizational plan of the study is as follows:

Chapter I. Edward Gordon Craig: Family background, education, and training in the theatre.

Chapter II. *The Mask*: History, format, and purpose.

Chapter III. Craig's theory and practice of scene design.

Chapter IV. Craig's theory of acting.

A concluding chapter (Chapter V) summarizes Craig's influences on the theatre of the twentieth century.

In order to conserve space and simplify the reading, documentation of essays in *The Mask* has been restricted in this study to volume, issue, and page, inserted in parenthesis in the body of the text. When reference is made and quotations are used involving other sources, full documentation is given.
CHAPTER I

EDWARD GORDON CRAIG

Edward Gordon Craig was born on January 16, 1872, in the small village of Harpenden in Hertfordshire, England. He was the son of Dame Ellen Terry, the greatest English speaking actress of her time, and Edward W. Godwin, architect, theatrical critic, archaeologist and expert designer of stage settings and costumes. Craig's sister, Edith, was born in 1869. She became an actress, producer and costume designer. She died on March 27, 1947, in the same country house at Smallhythe, Kent where her mother, Ellen Terry, had died nineteen years before.

Ellen Terry herself was born at Coventry on February 27, 1848. Her father, Benjamin Terry, was an actor, her mother an actress. Neither had attained to any great success, although Mr. Terry had served under Macready and excelled in Shakespearian performance because of his beautiful diction. Miss Christopher St. John in her biography of Ellen Terry gives an insight into the temperament of the Terry family. She says:

Mr. Terry was Irish, a man of impulsive romantic temperament; handsome, no doubt, if I may judge by the good looks that he has transmitted to his family, and possessed of great personal charm. Of his antecedents I know little, and it is improbable
that he knew much. An immediate ancestor, I have heard, owned a timber yard, and met his death by smoking a pipe while seated on the top of one of his own timber stacks. It caught fire and consumed him. This incident suggests that the Terrys were not a careful family. ¹

Gordon Craig, writing in his book, Ellen Terry and Her Secret Self, speaks of his grandfather thus:

This old grandfather, if not an aristocrat by right of quarter-ings and azure fields and other blazonry, was in heart an ardent old aristocrat—and be damned to all democrats. To adversity—and he saw enough of it—he ever turned the cold shoulder: and while he did not become the actor of his age, he begat Katie Terry, Nelly Terry, Polly Terry and Flossie Terry—giving four genuine actresses to our stage—and then he gave it a younger son, Fred Terry—a genuine actor. Besides these five, he had two more sons, George and Charles Terry, who devoted some thirty to forty years' service to theatrical management . . . so, taken all in all, I think that Benjamin Terry and his wife deserve to be remembered, for it seems to me that their theatrical record is a high one.²

Ellen Terry made her acting debut at the age of eight at the Princess's Theatre in 1856, when she played Mamilius in The Winter's Tale. Throughout the next six years, the frequency of her appearances increased at a rapid pace. In 1862, at the age of 14, she joined J. H. Chute's acting company at the Theatre Royal, Bristol. Kate Terry, Ellen's sister, was the leading lady of the company and E. W. Godwin, who was then in his thirtieth year, was associated with the company as a designer. In 1864, Ellen Terry married G. W. Watts, an actor of


little prestige but a painter of considerable merit. She relates the circumstances of her marriage to Watts in her autobiography. She writes:

In the middle of the run of "The American Cousin" I left the stage and married. Mary Meredith was the part, and I played it vilely. I was not quite sixteen years old, too young to be married even in those days, when everyone married early. But I was delighted, and my parents were delighted, although the disparity of age between my husband and me was very great. It all seems now like a dream—not a clear dream, but a fitful one which in the morning one tries in vain to tell. And even if I could tell it, I would not. I was happy, because my face was the type which the great artist who married me loved to paint. I remember sitting to him in armour for hours and never realizing that it was heavy until I fainted!\(^3\)

Ellen Terry's marriage to Watts lasted until 1866. In December, 1867, she appeared in David Garrick's adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew* with Henry Irving at the Queen's Theatre, Long Acre, London. While playing at the Queen's Theatre, she renewed her acquaintance with Godwin, who on the death of his first wife had moved from Bristol to London.

Godwin was born in Bristol on May 26, 1833. In his youth he studied civil engineering and architecture. He became a devoted student of Peruzzi, Raphael, Serlio, Palladio, Sabbatini, Inigo Jones, John Vanbrugh, Ruskin and Shakespeare. In Ellen Terry's *Memoirs*, 1932, a revised edition of her autobiography, *The Story of My Life*,

which appeared in 1908, Edith Craig and Christopher St. John give an account of Godwin's work and influence. They write:

... It is strange that there is no biography of this brilliant man, who besides being an architect of distinction in the British school which broke away from the pseudo-classic style of the early 19th century period, was a learned archaeologist, a pioneer in the reform of domestic furniture and decoration, and the initiator of an aesthetic movement in the theatre which was destined to have a lasting influence.

Born in Bristol in 1833, he was little more than a boy when he won the three premiums in the competitions for designs for the assize-courts in his native town. At the age of twenty-five he built the Town Hall at Northampton. Another important architectural achievement is the Town Hall at Congleton. Of the many houses Godwin built, the White House in Chelsea, designed for his friend Whistler, is best known. His wide learning and keen perception of beauty made him dissatisfied both with the archaeological and aesthetic standards of production in the theatre of his youth.

After Godwin left Bristol for London he continued to practice his profession as architect, but from the year 1875 when he supervised the Bancrofts' production of "The Merchant of Venice" (in which Ellen Terry played Portia) his work for the theatre engrossed him. Its extent is not measured by the actual number of productions in which he collaborated. He prepared scene and costume designs for many other plays, and was a prolific writer of articles on his special subject, archaeology in relation to the theatre. His most notable achievement was the production of "Helena in Troas" at Hengler's Circus in 1886. He designed and built a theatre on the Greek model within the existing structure, and applied his detailed knowledge of the past to the reconstruction of a Greek performance. A contemporary picture of this production, in which Sir Herbert Tree (who years afterward acknowledged Godwin as his master) appeared as Paris, suggests that it was quite as remarkable for its beauty as for its accuracy. Godwin died in the autumn of the same year at the age of 53.... His contemporaries who wrote about him after his premature death are more eloquent about what he did than about what he was. There are a few faint indications in these obituary notices. "He was learned without having a particle of the Dryasdust about him." "He assumed an air of superiority at times, but he found many who willingly recognised his right to it." "He was a friend of Whistler's, of Sandys's and of Swinburne's, and had a singular fascination for those whom he cared to please." "His pale ascetic
Ellen Terry, unable to obtain a legal divorce from Mr. Watts, left the stage in 1868 and quietly and secretly eloped with E. W. Godwin to a little cottage on Custerwood Common in Harpenden. In her autobiography, she recounts an interesting incident associated with her elopement. She writes:

... Perhaps it was because I knew they [her parents] would oppose me that I left the stage quite quietly and secretly. . . .

Then a dreadful thing happened. A body was found in the river--the dead body of a young woman very fair and slight and tall. Every one thought that it was my body.

I had gone away without a word. No one knew where I was. My own father identified the corpse, and Floss and Marion, at their boarding-school, were put into mourning. Then mother went. She kept her head under the shock of the likeness, and bethought her of "a strawberry mark upon my left arm." (Really I had one over my left knee). That settled it, for there was no such mark to be found upon the poor corpse. It was just at this moment that the news came to me in my country retreat that I had been found dead, and I flew up to London to give ocular proof to my poor distracted parents that I was alive. Mother, who had been the only one not to identify the drowned girl, confessed to me that she was so like me that just for a second she, too, was deceived. You see, they knew I had not been very happy since my return to the stage, and when I went away without a word, they were terribly anxious, and prepared to believe the first bad tidings that came to hand. 

In 1869, Ellen Terry's first child, Edith, was born. In the same year Godwin designed and built a house for his family at Fellows

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5 The Story of My Life, pp. 76-77.
Green just out of Harpenden. In 1872, a second child, Edward, later known as Edward Gordon Craig, was born. By 1873, Godwin had left his family and married a Miss Beatrice Phillips. Ellen Terry stayed on at Harpenden until 1874, when she returned to London and the stage. She appeared at the Olivia Theatre in Charles Reade's play, The Wandering Heir. The children were left in the country and brought to London a year later. According to her, Edy and Teddy, as they were affectionately called by their mother, revealed an interest and talent for the theatre at an early age. She writes:

... I never had the slightest fear of leaving them to their own devices, for they always knew how to amuse themselves, and were very independent and dependable in spite of their extreme youth. I have often thanked Heaven since that, with all their faults, my boy and girl have never been lazy and never dull. At this time Teddy always had a pencil in his hand, when he wasn't looking for his biscuit—he was a greedy little thing! --and Edy was hammering clothes on to her dolls with tin-tacks! Teddy said poetry beautifully, and when he and his sister were still tiny mites, they used to go through scene after scene of "As You Like It", for their own amusement, not for an audience, in the wilderness at Hampton Court. They were by no means prodigies, but it did not surprise me that my son, when he grew up, should be first a good actor, then an artist of some originality, and should finally turn all his brains and industry to new developments in the art of the theatre. My daughter has acted also—not enough to please me, for I have a very firm belief in her talents—and has shown again and again that she can design and make clothes for the stage that are both lovely and effective. In all my most successful stage dresses lately she has had a hand, and if I had anything to do with a national theatre, I should, without prejudice, put her in charge of the wardrobe at once!

I may be a proud parent, but I have always refrained from "pushing" my children. They have had to fight for themselves, and to their mother their actual achievements have mattered very little. So long as they were not lazy, I have always felt that I
could forgive them anything! 6

When Ellen Terry returned to London in 1875, she lived in
lodgings at Camden Town. A year later she took a cottage at Hampton
Court where her children entertained the neighbors with their amateur
theatricals. Edy was five and Teddy was three. In discussing the
dispositions of her children, she refers to her son's obstinacy, a
trait which, in the opinion of the author, became stronger as Craig
grew older. Edy, says Ellen Terry, was more gracious than Teddy.

She writes:

... My little daughter was a very severe critic! I think if I
had listened to her, I should have left the stage in despair. She
saw me act for the first time as Mabel Vane, but no compli­
ments were to be extracted from her.

"You did look long and thin in your grey dress,"

"When you fainted I thought you was going to fall into the
orchestra—you was so long." 7

Teddy was of a more flattering disposition, but very obsti­
nate when he chose. I remember "wrestling" with him for
hours over a little Blake poem which he had learned by heart,
to say to his mother. ...

All went well until the last line. Then he came to a stop.
Nothing would make him say sheep!
With a face beaming with anxiety to please, looking adorable,
he would offer any word but the right one.

"And the hills are all covered with----" 8

"With what, Teddy?"

"Master Teddy don't know."

"Something white, Teddy."

"Snow?"

"No, no. Now, I am not going to the theatre until you say the
right word. What are the hills covered with?"

"People."

"Teddy, you're a very naughty boy."

At this point he was put in the corner. His first suggestion
when he came out was:

"Grass? Trees?"

"Are grass or trees white?" said the despairing mother with
her eye on the clock, which warned her that, after all, she would
have to go to the theatre without winning.

While playing at the Court Theatre in 1876, Ellen Terry
obtained a divorce from Watts and married Charles Wardell, whose
stage name was Charles Kelly. The circumstances surrounding the
marriage to Wardell are reported by Christopher St. John in Ellen
Terry's Memoirs, which she wrote in collaboration with Edith Craig.

She says:

The belated divorce proceedings taken by G. F. Watts had
left Ellen Terry free to marry again. Watts has been severely
censured for not taking these proceedings earlier at the time of
Ellen Terry's elopement with Godwin... But I have no data
on the explanation of the delay. It may be known to some of
Ellen Terry's friends whether Watts would have applied for a
divorce earlier had she wished it, and he been convinced it
would be to her benefit, but I am in the dark about it... No
doubt one of her motives then (after separation from Godwin)
for deciding to marry was a desire, in her children's interests, to
regularize her position. Yet it is conceivable that she was
strongly attracted by Charles Wardell... But this man of
brawn, although a good fellow in some ways -- he had a genuine
affection for his wife's children, who for a time bore his name --
had a violent and jealous temper which Ellen Terry eventually
found intolerable. 9

6 Ibid., pp. 84-85.

7 Ibid., pp. 134-135.

In 1877, Ellen Terry's children, who from their infancy had been called Edith and Edward Terry, were baptized Edith and Edward Wardell. In 1878, Ellen Terry received an invitation to become a permanent member of Henry Irving's Company at the Lyceum Theatre. Arduous as her work at the Lyceum was, she did not neglect the education of her children. In her autobiography, she writes:

Of course, I thought my children the most brilliant and beautiful children in the world, and, indeed, "this side idolatry," they were exceptional, and they had an exceptional bringing up. They were allowed no rubbicky picturebooks, but from the first Japanese prints and fans lined their nursery walls, and Walter Crane was their classic. If injudicious friends gave the wrong sort of present, it was promptly burned! A mechanical mouse in which Edy, my little daughter, showed keen interest and delight, was taken away as being "realistic and common." Only wooden toys were allowed. This severe training proved so effective that when a doll dressed in a violent pink silk dress was given to Edy, she said it was "vulgar"! 9

Edy and Teddy were first sent to a private school in Foxton Road, Earl's Court. In writing about the school of Foxton Road, Christopher St. John says:

...it was kept by a Mrs. Cle, a lady with ideas which in the eighties were considered advanced. ... Among the schoolmates of Ellen Terry's tots at Foxton Road, were Walter Raleigh, three of the Sickerts, and the children of Sir Edwin Arnold. Edith Craig tells me that her brother and she, when they first entered the school, were the most backward of the pupils in all but drawing, music and Shakespeare. 10

When, in 1883, Ellen Terry made her first tour of America,

9 The Story of My Life, pp. 79-80
10 Memoirs, p. 191.
Teddy was sent to a boys' school in Kent. His education was interrupted in 1885 when his mother took him with her on her second American tour. When the company returned to England, Teddy, who was then thirteen years old, was sent to Bradfield College. He was there when his father, E. W. Godwin died on October 6, 1886. He left Bradfield at the end of the school year and in the fall of 1887 enrolled at Heidelberg College in Germany. His work at Heidelberg College has been reported by Enid Rose. She says:

Dr. Holzberg, the principal of Heidelberg, remembers him as a boy of lively and impulsive temper, already devoted to art which he preferred to mathematics (although the only prize he won was in this subject). He was recognised as a talented pupil, who found little difficulty with his general studies while he was also athletic. He picked up German very easily, and this was afterwards to be of use to him in work and friendship. At the suggestion of his mother and of Henry Irving, Dr. Holzberg read Shakespeare with him privately, once or twice a week, and the master was struck with the high intelligence of the youthful student and the readiness with which he caught the spirit of the plays. 11

Teddy was expelled from Heidelberg College during his second year as punishment for a boyish escapade; a penalty which his mother thought much too severe.

In January, 1887, Edith and Edward Wardell were christened and confirmed. Christopher St. John reports the occasion of the christening thus:

11 Enid Rose, Gordon Craig and the Theatre (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1931) p. 16.
Lady Geraldine Gordon, an old friend of Ellen Terry's and Henry Irving, acted as god-mother and god-father at the christening of the boy, the explanation of the Henry and Gordon being added to the name of Edward by which he had been called from infancy after his father. Edith received the additional names of Geraldine and Ailsa; Geraldine she derived from her god-mother, Lady Gordon, Ailsa from Ailsa Craig. During a tour in Scotland in the early eighties, Ellen Terry, in the company of Henry Irving and her boy, had visited Ailsa Craig. Ailsa Craig was the name of a precipitous island in the Firth of Clyde. "What a good stage name!" Ellen Terry said. "A pity you can't have it Ted. I shall give it to Edy." It was given to Edy at her christening, by her god-father, Henry Irving, and the "Craig" was appended to her brother's Christian names also. 12

When Craig entered Irving's company in the fall of 1889, he dropped the name Henry and took the name of Edward Gordon Craig. Enid Rose says, "This name was legalized by deed-poll and an announcement of the fact appeared in The Times of February 24, 1893." 13

On September 28, 1889, Craig appeared opposite his mother in his first play in Irving's company at the Lyceum. He played the part of Arthur St. Valery in The Dead Heart, Christopher St. John, in her biography of Ellen Terry describes the effect created by Craig in his first appearance at the Lyceum. She says:

The boy had appeared in public once before as Joey in "Eugene Aram", during one of Irving's American tours, and had given promise of great talent, but no one could have imagined that he would step on to the stage of the first theatre in London and


13 Gordon Craig and the Theatre, p. 17.
achieve such a remarkable success as was his in "The Dead Heart". If he obtained the part of Arthur St. Valery through favour and heredity, he had no sooner played it than he had a title to it—and parts of more difficulty and importance—through his own fitness and ability. Gifted by nature with uncommon graces both of face and figure, a voice full of tone and melody, an exquisite ease of bearing, Ellen Terry's son seemed a living example of the theory that the actor is born not made. Unfortunately for the English stage, where the poetic young actor is a rarity, Gordon Craig's interest in the theatre soon began to wander to a wider issue than acting. 14

At seventeen Craig was beginning to show some of those physical characteristics by which he was so prominently identified throughout his life. He was, as Sam Hume says in a letter to the author, "a handsome man with a magnetic personality, a fascinating talker and conversationalist". Hume describes him as a "finely set up man who could stand out with a natural distinction in any group". Like his mother, Craig was tall and slender and he had the same finely chiseled face and large, well formed head. Mordecai Gorelik describes the young Mr. Craig thus:

The passage of years, and a pince-nez, have not altogether hidden the earlier Craig of the tossing blond mane and almost feminine features. 15

In the following three years, 1890-1893, Craig continued to act at the Lyceum during the winter seasons, while during the months of the summer vacations, he toured with provincial touring companies.

14 Ellen Terry, pp. 66-67.

His interest in the acting profession continued to increase and there
was little, if anything, in his behavior to indicate that he was soon to
retire from the stage as an actor. His talent for designing was hard-
ly yet manifest, but, as his mother relates, he lost no opportunity of
practicing drawing. Ellen Terry says that her son demonstrated
talent in drawing at an early age and as he grew older he constantly
carried a notebook and pencil. When he was not on stage at the
Lyceum, he could be found back stage sketching members of the com-
pany, or drawing parts of the stage and the setting used in the play.
Ellen Terry reports that Craig was naturally studious and became a
devoted student of Walt Whitman's poetry, John Ruskin's and William
Hazlett's essays and Shakespeare's plays. According to his mother,
Craig was influenced by nearly every poet, designer and painter in
whom he could discover a single dramatic touch. She mentions in
particular Rembrandt, Blake, Callot, Piranesi, Howard Pyle and
Edwin Abbey.

In 1893, Craig was married to a Miss Elena Pryde and went to
live at Uxbridge. There were two children, Nellie and Edward
Anthony. Edith Craig and Christopher St. John, in their chapter
notes in Ellen Terry's Memoirs, report on Ellen Terry's affection
for her son's wife and of her own devotion to the children. They
write:

"... Ellen Terry had not been a foolish-fond mother, and in
these days she was not a foolish-fond grandmother. She was
indeed far more daft about Elena, whose single-hearted devotion to her son and his work won her heart, than about Elena's offspring. . . . She soon recognized that although the boy at this time had the greatest desire to act, and was more teachable, the girl had more natural talent for the stage. Ellen Terry's conviction that "poor old Nenny", as she often called her backward pupil, was a born actress, did not seem strange to those who noticed how completely the dull, rather apathetic child, less graceful and charming than little Teddy in real life, was transformed in the theatre. The few appearances on the stage she made in early youth justified Ellen Terry's belief in her vocation. She was never to follow it however . . . . 16

Craig's son, Edward Anthony, who now works under the name of Edward Carrick, became an artist, designer, and producer of cinema in Italy and England.

While living at Uxbridge, Craig undertook the production of several plays; he continued to act in touring companies and intermittently played at the Lyceum.

In 1897, Craig left Irving's company and retired from the stage as an actor. There has been considerable speculation as to the motive that prompted Craig to forsake what promised to be a successful acting career. G. B. Shaw said that Craig quit the stage because he could not compete with the "overwhelming" and "absorbing" personalities of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry. He says:

He had to save his soul alive. Make no mistake about it: Ellen Terry, with all her charm and essential amiability, was an impetuous, overwhelming, absorbing personality . . . . It was not until he had put the seas between them that he himself

16 Memos, pp. 304-305.
developed an impetuous and charming personality. . . . He still
respects the great Ellen Terry, the woman who would have
swallowed him up if he had stayed within her magnetic hold. . . .
Craig was buried at the old Lyceum for years, with the person-
ality of Irving absorbing anything that his mother had left. . . .17

Certainly there is some validity in Shaw's assertion. Craig
was then twenty-five years old. He had been with the Lyceum company
for eight years and during this time he had worked in the shadow of
the greatest acting team of the nineteenth century English Theatre.
It is not unlikely that Craig felt the urge to escape the dominance of
Henry Irving and Ellen Terry and seek a career in the theatre through
his own initiative and talent. In Shaw's contention that Craig resented
Ellen Terry there is less than a grain of truth. There is certainly
nothing in Craig's writings to substantiate Shaw's argument. It is
true that Craig saw his mother at rare intervals after he left for
Europe in 1904. Their correspondence slackened as Ellen Terry
aged and ceased altogether for some time before she died in 1928.
Perhaps Craig could have described the manner in which he quit the
stage in the same words he used when he told of his mother's elope-
ment with E. W. Godwin and her marriage to Mr. Carew. He said:

One day Nelly (Craig referred to Ellen Terry affectionately
as Nelly) stamped her foot and flung theatre and friends away
for the worth-while thing . . . . . My mother married Carew,

17 Ibid., pp. 358-360.
who is four years my junior, in 1907. On hearing the news I felt delighted that our mother should have the pluck to face that daunting phase of life once more. . . . 18

One is inclined to admire Craig for his pluck in leaving a position which a man of less sturdy fiber would have accepted in order to bask in the fame of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry. From a study of Craig's temperament, one suspects that he wished to travel in his own orbit, illuminated by his own ecstatic talents.

Craig, in his book, Woodcuts and Some Words, 1924, gives his own explanation of the crisis which precipitated his retirement from the stage in 1897. He says:

I formed an odd Labour Party--a strange anarchist, for I was alone. A Labour Party which consists of more than one member seems to me to be a strike below the belt, the anarchy of the mob a bit idiotic. For to strike, to labour, to anarch (if there be such a job) is deuced difficult and a difficult thing must be done alone. Quiet is essential; silence imperative. Then when you strike, labour, or dance a war dance, something electric happens. No? --Well, it happened with me--I woke up. 19

Precisely what Craig had in mind when he said, "I woke up" is not ascertainable. Whether he had, after eight years of practical experience, come to a realization of the specific nature of the reforms needed in the theatre or whether he had the unhappy feeling that the stage was not as it should be and left the theatre to cogitate

18 Ellen Terry and Her Secret Self, p. 27.

on the problem, one cannot be sure. However, since he returned to
the theatre three years later, not as an actor, but as a director, pro-
ducer and designer with a revolutionary concept of scenic and acting
methods, one is inclined to suspect that Craig did not leave the
Lyceum exclusively for the purpose of satisfying a selfish ambition.
What is important to note in Craig's description of the manner in
which he voluntarily exiled himself from the theatre for three years
is the statement that "a difficult thing must be done alone." Here we
see the beginning of the Craig legend of martyrdom. Craig was
responsible for the promulgation of the legend and it worked against
him every day of his life. As he grew older, he actually believed that
the theatre workers had formed a conspiracy against him. Craig
martyrized himself and his cause. He came to believe that it was
necessary for him to sell himself as the great messiah - the great
talent and great genius who had come to save the theatre. There is
more than a shade of truth in Craig's conception of himself as an
outsider. He believed that he had the status of one removed from
the marketplace of the theatre. In the latter issues of The Mask he
repeatedly says that he was forced into exile while others pilfered
his ideas. This characteristic quality of his disposition prevented
him from developing the patience that understands lesser men and
slowly and painstakingly bends them to his desire. At twenty-five
and for no discernible reason other than self-deception Craig
deluded himself into believing that reform in the theatre was his personal fight and that he had to chart the strategy "alone". Henceforth Craig became the theorist who, being denied the opportunity to test his theories, retired to the studio and the writing table. One gathers that the creative impulse could not drive itself through the practical theatre to proper expression. Had Craig been born to a world outside the theatre, unknown to the literary and theatrical artists of the day, then there might have been some small justification for the martyrdom with which he deluded himself. But he was born to the environment of the theatre and he grew to manhood under the very shadow of the great artists of the day.

When Craig left the stage in 1897 he gave up eight pounds a week for nothing a month except what he could earn by drawing for journals and designing book-plates. There is little doubt that he was sincere in his desire to reform the theatre. His sincerity demands attention more when it is realized that he was often penniless and that his independent spirit was maintained chiefly on hope deferred.

In 1900 Craig reentered the theatre but this time as a producer and designer. In the following three years he produced four operas with Martin Shaw; Laurence Housman's Biblical play, Bethlehem; Ibsen's Vikings; and Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing with his mother and sister. Ellen Terry in The Story of
My Life gives an account of the productions in which she collaborated with her son. She writes:

... What more natural than that his mother should give him the chance of exploiting his ideas in London? Ideas he had in plenty—"unpractical" ideas people called them; but what else should ideas be?

At the Imperial Theatre, where I spent my financially unfortunate season in April 1903, I gave my son a free hand. I hope it will be remembered, when I am spoken of by the youngest critics after my death as a "Victorian" actress, lacking in enterprise, an actress belonging to the "old school," that I produced a spectacular play of Ibsen's in a manner which possibly anticipated the scenic ideas of the future by a century, of which at any rate the orthodox theatre managers of the present age would not have dreamed.

Naturally I am not inclined to criticise my son's methods. I think there is a great deal to be said for the views that he has expressed in his pamphlet on "The Art of the Theatre," and when I worked with him I found him far from unpractical. It was the modern theatre which was unpractical when he was in it! It was wrongly designed, wrongly built. We had to disembowel the Imperial behind scenes before he could even start, and then the great height of the proscenium made his lighting lose all its value. He always considered the pictorial side of the scene before its dramatic significance, arguing that this significance lay in the picture and in movement—the drama having originated not with the poet but with the dancer. ... 20

One gathers from Ellen Terry's statements that the response of neither the British public nor the British patron of art was hearty to Craig's productions. Three years earlier, Craig had voluntarily terminated his acting career. Now his career as a designer, producer and director was ended by an unsympathetic English public. He had served twelve years of apprenticeship in the English Theatre and

20 The Story of My Life, pp. 326-327.
all under the best talent of the day. Yet he did not get on. He was now thirty-two years old, an age when a man's temperament and disposition are clearly discernible. Indeed, Craig was a strange man, and to make a definite statement about him is to wonder the next minute whether it is true. It cannot be denied that he was self-centered. He sought personal publicity and his temperament was its own press agent. He was an ardent champion of ivory towers and he was unalterably opposed to compromise. He lived in a perpetual state of exaltation. He was petty and querulous with those who would not or could not see his point of view. He loved to play the role of the martyr and he became childish and arrogant when he could not have his way. He had something of Oscar Wilde's aestheticism, which at times caused him to seek beauty for the sake of beauty. His affectations often times bordered on the bizarre.

Isadora Duncan speaks to the point of Craig's affectations when she describes him and his studio in Berlin in 1904. She writes:

"[Craig's studio has a] black waxed floor with rose leaves, artificial rose leaves strewn all over it. . . . An ordinary walk through the streets with him was like a promenade in Thelus of Ancient Egypt with a superior High Priest." 21

Reports are numerous as to the manner in which Craig officiated at the Arena Goldoni in Florence where he had established his

21 Isadora Duncan, My Life (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1927) p. 75.
school of the theatre in 1913. It is said that he promenaded among
the ancient columns attired in a spotless white robe. At least Craig
had learned from his experience in Irving's company how to drama-
tize himself. Craig was an iconoclast and, like his father and
mother, he refused to be restrained by traditional boundaries.

There is a prophetic note in Ellen Terry's statements in
regard to the two productions she did with her son. When she says
that he "produced a spectacular play of Ibsen's in a manner which
possibly anticipated the scenic ideas of the future by a century" and
that her son "had to disembowel the Imperial behind the scenes be-
fore he could start", she little knew that her son, during the next
twenty-five years, would become the prophet and chief theorist and
spokesman of a theatre renaissance that would change the basic con-
cept of theatre art.

In July, 1904 Craig exiled himself to the continent, and it was
there that his ideas were to take root.
CHAPTER II

THE MASK

History

The desire to publish a theatrical journal in which, both by writing and engraving, Craig could tell others what he had to say about the theatre had been in Craig's mind for several years before he began publication of The Mask. Already he had published The Page, 1898-1901, for which he had engraved about two hundred and forty boxwood blocks.

There were numerous high quality theatrical journals being published on the European Continent and in England and America for which Craig could have written, but he objected to their editorial policies. Speaking through his pseudo-editor, John Semar, Craig says that the contemporary theatrical journals are topical in that they report only what is currently being done in the theatre. While admitting the practical value of a topical journal, Craig maintained that a journal, if it is to be of real value to the theatre, must not only present current events but it must also review the theatre's past and point to the future (I, 2, p. 23). He writes:

Europe and America do not lack theatrical journals. There are, to mention but a few, "The Stage" and "The Era" in England; the smaller "Beltaine," and "Samhain" the organs of the Irish
Literary Theatre in Ireland; "El Teatro" in Spain; the "Theater Courier" and the "Schaubuhne" in Germany; the "Musik & Theater Zeitung" and the "Osterreich Theater Zeitung" in Austria; "L'Art du Theatre" and "Le Theatre" in France; "La Rivista Teatrale" in Italy; "The Dramatic Mirror" in America and many others too numerous to name; while in addition to these larger journals, there are the daily or weekly announcement sheets which, though hardly to be called "papers" at all, yet serve their practical purpose. The motto of our journal is not, however, that of any of these. With them the Theory is first; is, indeed, everything; with us it follows upon the Practise. Let us explain what we mean. We take it that their papers contain merely a record of what is being done; and in speaking thus we do not for a moment undervalue or doubt the usefulness of these journals. On their own lines they serve many excellent purposes, mainly professional; while at times, as in the 'Schaubuhne' and the 'Art du Theatre', other, and more progressive matters, are gone into very seriously. But the value of a journal should not end there. It, like all other things, reflects the idea or the personality behind it, and, if we may be critical to our contemporaries, all the weakness of these theatrical journals lies in the fact that nine times out of ten their guiding spirit is a gentleman without any practical experience of the ropes of a theatre, and with but little knowledge of that far more vital and important thing, ... the Art of the Theatre. Lacking both knowledge and convictions; knowing little of the vessel they are guiding and without any fixed idea as to the port toward which they steer, such men keep no direct course, but hesitatingly tack from side to side. In their indecision they invite into their ship, as it were, many persons from different countries, each eager to turn the vessel's head and win his way across the ocean to some desired haven of his own. The result of this is obvious. Where there is no unity of purpose each individual strives to accomplish some purpose of his own; to seize the helm and guide the vessel where he will.

Now the object of a journal is two fold. It should not only announce what has been but what is to be. The first task is a light one; the second hazardous, and only those who have practised an art can without danger speak of the developments of the near or far future. Therefore a journal, if its record of the past, its annunciation of the future, are to be of value, needs an experienced leader, and this we have found in Mr. Gordon Craig, who, not only with his pen and pencil but with his advice, will guide the fortunes of this magazine. His guidance will be valuable in that he has himself practised what we shall preach, and we, preaching what he has practised and what others may add to that practise, shall by so doing attempt to
show where lies the future of the Theatre. Moreover, in securing Mr. Craig's guidance we may claim to have secured that of the head of a movement which has actually taken place, which is spreading far and wide in the European Theatre, and of which the Theory now needs to be definitely and clearly stated so that convictions may be strengthened, scattered forces united, and all move forward with stability and unity of purpose towards one object, --the re-establishment in its original dignity of a beautiful and ancient Art.

Craig looked about for a publisher. He was told by one that £10,000 would be needed to publish the first issue of The Mask. Unable to find a publisher, Craig decided to go it alone. In March, 1908, he published in Florence, Italy, Volume I, number 1. Craig has insisted that he started The Mask with a working capital of £5. He continued, not without difficulties and interruptions, to publish the magazine until December, 1929. Nearly every issue carried a plea for financial support, but there is no evidence to suggest that Craig was successful in enlisting any financial aid. In VII, 2, p. 184, he makes one of his frequent pleas to the subscribers to renew their subscriptions. He says:

... The Mask is not a topical journal, and cannot consider the topical subjects with which the theatre of war is filled; but it can continue along its old path, though not without difficulty, if a number of the subscribers who have not yet done so will send in their subscriptions.

The money goes to pay the one or two compositors, the printer, the paper, the envelopes and the stamps.

No money whatever goes to any of the writers or illustrators, or to the Editor or to anyone else.

At the end of the year, 1908, Craig took over the Arena Goldoni, an open-air theatre in Florence, Italy. There he had his
headquarters and the publishing office of The Mask. The history of the
Arena Goldoni and the manner in which it was used for his workshop
and publishing office has been related by Craig himself. He writes:

The gentle placid life of the nuns seems to have continued
until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when, after the
suppression of many of the religious orders, the adjoining
buildings of Annalena and Sta. Chiara entirely changed their as-
pects and their aims.

We are told that "a clever and courageous intraprendente,
Signor Luigi Gargani, purchased them with the view of founding
there an establishment which should unite various kinds of decent
diversions for every season of the year," his scheme comprising
an Arena, a Theatre, gardens, billiard rooms, ball rooms and
other places of amusement.

His first proceeding was to build a theatre for evening perfor-
mances, no such thing existing in the southern quarter of the city,
and this, planned with many 'elegant additions' for the use of both
the Court and the general public, was "dedicated to the immortal
Carlo Goldoni, from whom the whole establishment has taken its
name."

This theatre was opened to the public on April 7th, 1817, and
in the following spring the Arena for daylight performance was
also completed and opened, with houses, stables, billiard rooms,
a ball room, (adjoining the Arena and now used for the inspection
of recruits), and a large garden with liggias and covered galleries.
Indeed, the whole scheme was in accordance with the name of
"Delices Goldonian" given to the place by a writer of that period.

Garagiolli writing about 1818, asserts that the Arena was built
on the foundation of the convent of Sta. Chiara, an ancient religious
house which, under one rule or another, dated back to the eleventh
century, whereas the 'Osservatore Fiorentino' asserts that this
building was turned into a school. But whichever be right amongst
the various historians, and whether the remains of pillars and
carved capitals which still exist on and near the stage of the
Arena be those of Annaiena or of Sta. Chiara, they afford tangible
and indisputable evidence that a church or cloister of one or the
other of the two sisterhoods stood upon this site.

The Arena was designed and built by the architect Corazzi who
afterwards went to Varsovie in the service of the Czar of Russia,
and, being his first work, was a remarkable achievement for so
young a man. This architect was a pupil of Del Rosso by whom he
was recommended for his honourable position in the Czar's service,
... a position in which, we are told, he greatly distinguished himself.

Gargioli was certainly justified in his enthusiasm over the architecture of the building. It is beautiful; and it is this beauty, possessed in so extraordinary a degree, which raises it above almost every open air theatre of its kind which exists today. Its proportions are perfect. Though quite large, (it seats 1500 people), one is not conscious of its size; it is well knit together and does not sprawl like so many modern amphitheatres. Although it bears a certain resemblance to the Coliseum of Rome, it has none of the weakness of a copy; it is the strong and original work of an original and gifted mind.

Since the Arena came into the possession of Mr. Gordon Craig there have been no performances. In the large entrance hall stands his model theatre where he experiments with his lights, his wonderful little wooden figures; but the actual stage is empty and unused.

In a large vaulted room, lent by Mr. Craig for the purpose, The Mask has its editorial offices; down in the sunny courtyard the composers ply their peaceful craft; in one of the smaller rooms beyond a printing press is established; but, for the rest, the Arena is waiting, ... waiting for plans to materialise, for ideals to be fulfilled.

Mr. Craig is in no hurry. Men who are occupied with great things seldom are. An ideal so beautiful, a work so imperative, as his, is the guarantee of its own fulfillment. Time and all other forces must, one feels, become subject to so indomitable a purpose, so undeviating an aim.

The man is ready; the place is ready; the idea is ready. All that is now needed is the courageous capitalist who shall come forward with the golden key which shall unlock the door of that future where so much beauty waits.

In the first year, The Mask appeared monthly and printed 10,000 copies a month. In the following year it became a quarterly. Craig wrote enthusiastically about the future of his theatrical journal. He quoted glowing testimonials from leading editors in Europe and England concerning its high quality. In 1915, The Mask appeared as usual, but it had to suspend publication in August. The Mask was not published in 1916
and 1917. The Arena Goldoni was taken over by the Italian army and converted into a barracks in 1916, and the loss of his printing headquarters and the increased cost of paper and printing caused the suspension. In 1918 Craig prepared to resume publication, and he did so in April. Twelve monthly issues followed. However, the journal had shrunk to a four page leaflet. Craig did not reopen his publishing office at the Arena Goldoni because the Arena was destroyed during the war and with it many of Craig's immediate and dearest hopes for the future. The office of The Mask became a Post Office Box, Number 444, Florence, Italy.

In 1918, came the announcement from Craig that he was starting to publish The Marionnette, a Monthly Performance. There were twelve numbers of The Marionnette printed in 1918 and 1919. The purpose of this publication, as stated in the first issue, was to give information from many out-of-the-way sources concerning marionettes and the poets and famous people who had delighted in them. The Marionnette carried many interesting articles on the history of puppets, and their use and construction. Craig wrote a number of original puppet plays for this publication. The Marionette for 1919 was a single leaflet which was inserted and bound with The Mask. The twelve issues of The Mask for 1918 and 1919 were given free to the old subscribers who subscribed to The Marionette. Craig owed the 1915 subscribers to The Mask something, for he had not completed the numbers due them in 1915.
Publication was suspended after these twelve issues until September, 1923, when a single volume of fifty pages appeared. In January, 1924, The Mask reappeared as a quarterly and ran on regularly in that form until December, 1929.

The complete chronology of the volumes and numbers of The Mask is as follows:

Volume I, 12 issues, March 1908 - February, 1909
Volume II, 4 issues, (quarterly) July, 1909 - April, 1910
Volume III, 4 issues, (quarterly) July, 1910 - April, 1911
Volume IV, 4 issues, (quarterly) July, 1911 - April, 1912
Volume V, 4 issues, (quarterly) July, 1912 - April, 1913
Volume VI, 4 issues, (quarterly) July, 1913 - April, 1914
Volume VII, 2 issues, July, 1914 and May, 1915
Volume VIII, 12 issues, April, 1918 - March, 1919
Volume IX, 1 issue, September, 1923
Volume X, 4 issues, (quarterly), January, 1924 - October, 1924
Volume XI, 4 issues, (quarterly), January, 1925 - October, 1925
Volume XII, 4 issues, (quarterly), January, 1926 - October, 1926
Volume XIII, 4 issues, (quarterly), Jan., 1927 - December, 1927
Volume XIV, 4 issues, (quarterly), January, 1928-December, 1928
Volume XV, 4 issues, (quarterly), January, 1929 - December, 1929

Format

The Mask is a distinctive and beautiful magazine. Each of the issues in the first six volumes is bound in a light green cover on which is printed in black ink a boxwood cut of a mask. The mask cut is an original design by Craig. The covers on subsequent issues are yellow on which is printed a boxwood cut of a sea-lion, also done by Craig. The Mask, in appearance, has dignity without formality and fascination
without gawdiness. Craig was an excellent engraver and an expert critic of good printing. These two facts account for the quality of the printing and the illustrations. The printing is in thick black type done on hand-made paper. The print is well spaced and arranged. No page is split to make room for advertising. The advertisements are few and they are confined almost exclusively to announcements of new books on literature and theatre from the leading publishing houses of the Continent, England and America.

The Mask is richly illustrated with beautiful woodcuts, ancient and modern. Since Craig was a perfectionist and an idealist, the illustrations are reproduced with careful excellence. The margins are generous, allowing ample space for Craig's marginal notes indicating the subject matter of the paragraphs. Even the copy in the advertisements was done in excellent taste. The Mask is indeed a fascinating and consistently interesting magazine. As one turns the pages he is immediately impressed with its design and beautiful and remarkable craftsmanship. The format is clean, pleasant and dignified. It is handsome, not pretty; it is artistic, not arty. Craig has printed a liberal number of amusing and whimsical woodcuts and letter press.

The Mask was unique among current theatrical journals in that it was at one and the same time both scholarly and popular. Craig sought to bring to his readers the past, present and future developments
in the theatre. There were essays, extracts from essays and quotations on the theatre of yesterday, today and tomorrow, or of the day after tomorrow.

Sometimes Craig wrote in the first person, but dozens and dozens of pseudonyms mystified the unguarded. Many unwittingly thought they were reading the studied thoughts of European men of wisdom, when actually they were reading the ideas and opinions of one man, Gordon Craig. Craig's use of pseudonyms was not a deliberate attempt to perpetrate a fraud on his readers. Many of them are immediately recognizable as jokes. Edward Edwardovitch, Yoo-No-Hoo, Britannicus, Yorick, A.B.C., and R.J. Broadbent obviously did not confound the reader. However, there are a few pseudonyms such as John Balance, George Banks, Allan Carric, D. Neville Lees, John-Semar and Julius Oliver that are less humorous in their euphony. These names appear frequently in The Mask as some of the most prolific contributors. John Semar is the editor, editorial writer and book reviewer. John Balance and Allan Carric contribute many articles on the contemporary theatre. George Banks and Julius Oliver contribute most of the scene designs.

A characteristic editorial policy of The Mask is to print short, pithy excerpts from essays written by outstanding literary men. Craig uses these terse quotations for two purposes: first, they add substance and authority to his arguments; and second, they inject a scholarly tone
into the journal. Among the authors frequently quoted are Goethe, Nietzsche, Rousseau, Whitman, Pater, Wagner, Lessing, Aristotle, Hugo, Horace, Blake, Wilde, Tolstoi and Chekhov.

The Mask does not contain a single essay or a literary contribution of any kind which was sent directly by an author. It was strictly a one-man publication. The pseudo-editorship was a convenience for Craig, in that it gave him, under his own name, an opportunity to congratulate The Mask on its editorial policies, scholarship, service to the theatre and any other compliment which Craig felt would add to his own prestige and increase the sales of the journal. In III, 10-12, page 147, the editor, Semar, prints a letter from Craig in which he compliments the editor for his editorial policy and the beauty of The Mask. In the same letter Craig also congratulates the Editor for printing articles on the Commedia dell 'Arte. The Mask (VIII, 5, p. 17) carries a letter from Craig to Semar and a comment on the letter by Semar.

Thus

My dear Semar,
I have just been reading the proofs of the second part of my "Plea for Two Theatres" entitled "A Durable Theatre". I see that it is dated 1915. Do you know I would sooner read the nonsense in my favourite journal the "Daily Mail" than read this "Durable Theatre" bit over again.

I hope you will add a note in your journal to say that it is not to be taken at all seriously... Maybe part 3 will be a little better, I hope so.

What an abominable style, too... as commonplace as the ideas.

As for the Idea itself, ... that of a Durable Theatre...
how appalling! Can't you see it? . . . a sort of eternal
earnest of nothing. . . .

Really, . . . and to think that in 1915 that was my state of
mind. What could I have been thinking of?

Well, so long as you publish something to tell the audience
that it's all right and that I'm quite cured of all thought of any
such thing, you can go ahead and print. . . . Otherwise I should
be obliged to ask you to spike the guns.

Yours faithfully,
Gordon Craig

We cannot approve of or agree with the preceding letter, but
we can hardly refuse Mr. Craig's request, so publish it. All
the same we feel, to quote Terence, that, "What comes from
this quarter, set it down as so much gain"; and believe our
readers will echo our opinion.

-Ed.

Again in III, 7-9, p. 141, Craig finds Semar a convenience to
advance Craig and his ideas.

There is a writer upon the Theatre in England whose words
count. He signs himself G. C., at least he so signed himself at
the end of an exceptionally good article in September 1910 in the
Star, . . . . The article was headed "The Dying Theatre" and
those who are interested in the welfare of the Theatre should try to
secure a copy of it.

I should be glad to see it reprinted in The Mask, and hope the
author will disclose his name to the Editor.

It is quite one of the best things about the Theatre which has
appeared in a London journal for many years. . . .

Craig kept the text of The Mask sufficiently varied by including
a wide range of subject matter. He brought in many items of interest--
subjects which usually did not find their way into print in the more popular
books and magazine. A partial list of the literary contents of volume
seven, 1914-1915, will illustrate the range of subject matter. Thus:
A lengthy article on *Puppets in France*, a translation of P. Ferrigni's work.
Excerpts from Padre Pozzo's work on architecture.
A scenario of a Commedia dell'Arte play, *The Betrayed*.
*The Pin and Its Pedigree*.
A Note on a Pageant Stage.
A Note on Words and Their Meanings.

Volume V, 1912-1913, presents a typical plan of organization and subject matter. As usual there is a liberal sprinkling of illustrations, woodcuts and letter press. The sections on Book Reviews, Foreign Notes and Editorial Notes are standard features. It was Craig's practice to include in each number a few succinct quotations from the writing of outstanding literary personages. The quotations served two purposes. First, they added prestige and scholarship, and second, they served to reinforce Craig's ideas, since he selected the quotations with an eye to that purpose. The literary contents and a list of the illustrations in Volume V illustrate:

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The Book Review Section is the most interesting and enlightening of the standard features in each issue of The Mask. This section ordinarily covered several pages. Craig was not only a prodigious reader on all phases of the theatre, ancient and modern, but on ballet, painting, aesthetics, poetry and opera. A list of the books reviewed in Vol. III, 1-3, will illustrate the type and quantity of books reviewed by Craig.

Thus:
On occasions, Craig would finish off a review in less than fifty words. However, most of the reviews consumed several hundred words. Not infrequently he digressed from his critical analysis of the contents of the book to launch into a personal attack on the author, his style of writing, knowledge of the subject, or any of the author's ideas which were discordant with those held by Craig. Craig oftentimes was positively insulting in his book reviews. He incurred animosity and weakened his position by his tactless and satirical criticisms. He hurl s invective after invective and insult after insult. Craig himself could not brook criticism and he found it difficult to argue on a subject or even to present his views without becoming personal. A typical example of a book review by Craig is found in V, 1, p. 81. Here Craig reviews the book, The American Dramatist by Montrose J. Moses. He writes:

Mr. Montrose Moses seems to have studied THE MASK pretty badly. His collection of articles for several American journals show that the author is a careful reader without any single gleam of vision, . . . and seemingly without a point of
view.

The result is a weighty book without value. There are too many books of this kind hurled at an unoffending public, which passes them on to us poor reviewers to read, and we are just sick of them.

This author repeats quite a number of fine-sounding empty statements concerning the stage; we don't like this kind of stuff in a critical work, and the American stage is in no need of any but the most serious criticism. Mr. Moses thinks he makes things all right by saying at the end that "Present day dramatic criticism in America is not an art!", and that "one does not need to be specially trained for the position"; but this is absolutely no excuse. He adds that "the dramatic critic's position is not an easy one." It ought not to be if American critics are all like Mr. Moses.

We like a critic to study his subject first and know it better than anyone else; secondly to take up a distinct point of view; and thirdly to say what he sees and thinks, even if he loses a job through it. Mr. Moses isn't that kind of a critic. Mr. Moses would get nothing out of a rock however much he struck it, for Mr. Moses has as much faith as a door handle, . . . . and to be that article is probably Mr. Moses's ambition.

Craig never withholds his opinion nor speaks with reservation on any subjects relating to any phase of the theatre. In The Mask (III, 7-9, p. 137), in reviewing Henry N. Hudson's edition of Shakespeare, he says, bluntly, that he must side with Coleridge rather than with Hudson in the puzzling porter scene in Macbeth. He says:

Dr. Hudson does not think much of Coleridge, . . . perhaps the most illuminating of all commentators.

Thus, concerning that puzzling yet tremendous creation, The Porter, with his "Knock, knock, knock!" Dr. Hudson writes, "Coleridge and several others think this part of the scene could not have been written by Shakespeare." My thinking is "decidedly different, etc."

Coleridge is obviously right. This stupendous thing which enters with the Porter and which drew from DeQuincy such a noble essay, is nothing less than the entry of another world. The words are obviously improvised, . . . a comedian wants to make the folk laugh. What comedian? . . . One of the family of
"Improvisatori." He it is who tells the stage manager he wants a continual knocking to be kept up, ... "leave the rest to me". Shakespeare is full of such passages.

Wise men were those publishers, (friends of Shakespeare) to leave in all such improvisation when they printed his plays, ... Lucky Shakespeare!

In the section called Foreign Notes, Craig keeps his readers in touch with the activities of the theatre on the Continent, in England and America. The section was written in the same intolerant, opinionated manner as were the book reviews. While there may be virtue in frankness, Craig's frankness oftentimes reached the point of brutality and character assassination. His description of the Russian Ballet (III, 1, p. 40) shows the ruthlessness with which he could deliver a critical attack. These tactics were hardly conducive to winning friends and more particularly to the acquisition of financial support for The Mask. He says:

The Russian Ballet is a queer thing made up of pretty music, very pretty ladies, who are very light on their feet, pretty costumes and compare pretty favourably with the ballet of the last two hundred years. But would we stop to compare with the ballets of the Renaissance and the ballets of the Greeks, then, if report speaks and shows correctly, the Russian ballet can be described as trash.

That it is the first ballet in Europe is nothing in its favour. If it were the last there might be something to think about.

The subject matter of the sections of The Mask devoted to book reviews, foreign notes and editorials was chiefly topical. Here Craig leveled a continuous and relentless attack upon the contemporary theatre. These sections were usually characterized by a harping and
sniping type of criticism which only served to negate Craig's influence. He apparently could not be objective in criticizing that with which he was in disagreement. He held the modern theatre in contempt and he refused to compromise his ideal concept of the theatre by an acceptance of any part of the theatre of his time.

Craig envisioned an art of the theatre built anew upon the principles which underlay the great theatres of the past. The Mask contained not only a prophecy of the theatre to be but it also delved into the past in an attempt to revitalize the great traditions upon which the theatre of the future will be created. In The Mask (XII, 3, p. 115) Craig says:

"The Mask" is nothing if not historical, and its object is to make history live.

Purpose

Craig's interest in the theatre of the past and his faith in the theatre of the future were clearly expressed when he pronounced the purpose of The Mask (I, 1, p. 3). He says:

To bring before an intelligent public many ancient and modern aspects of the Theatre's Art which have too long been disregarded or forgotten. Not to attempt to assist in the so-called reform of the modern Theatre, for reform is now too late; not to announce theories which have not been already tested, but to announce the existence of a vitality which already begins to reveal itself in a beautiful and definite form based upon an ancient and noble tradition.

Again in The Mask (VII, 2, p. 93), he avers that his purpose is to move toward a theatre of the future, founded on the theatre of the past. He writes:
To be "the latest thing" is our dread...

Never did we dream we should be thought to be revolutionary; had no thoughts to deride "the old school" nor to laugh at honest failures...

Because we admire the old Greek Theatres we are not advocates of modern Greek Theatres...

Calling for masked actors, we have, nevertheless, given our enthusiastic praise to the best non-masked actors.

The great actor has called forth our applause, but the little actor has asked for and deserved our criticism.

Each branch of stage art we have been ready to accept...except the amateurish...

We disapprove so much in ourselves and regret so much our shortcomings, that to listen to mild or exaggerated criticism of our mistakes would seem to be only a waste of time.

Faults galore we may have, but we move towards a new theatre...a Theatre of the Future but founded on that of the Past.

Again (IX, p. 5), Craig reminds his readers that The Mask has maintained a single course: the creation of a new theatre on the best traditions of the past. He says:

When in 1907 I began to shape this "Mask" I wanted to cut deeply into it certain lines which would give it a definite and vivid expression.

This I did. ---These lines can today be traced, by anyone sufficiently interested, by re-reading the essays in the first volume, issued in 1908 and 1909.

This expression on the face of "The Mask" cried out very distinctly. "Let us wake up! men of the European Theatre: --- let us shake ourselves, and set about a spring-cleaning of the old house; clear out the bric-a-brac which has accumulated there for centuries; --- start afresh to refurnish; -- and, where the building be at all insecure, break down and rebuild it better. Let us come and learn and understand our house better, so that our best and most ancient traditions shall not be lost but shall be found good again to abide by.

Craig insisted that advancement in the art of the theatre is contingent upon an active interest in historical research. He maintained
that the art of the theatre rested squarely upon a foundation constructed from a knowledge and understanding of the theatrical traditions. He speaks to this point in The Mask (IX, p. 2) when he says:

This New Movement is towards a New Theatre, a downright Theatrical Stage in distinction to a merely Literary Play-house, or a Fashionable thing, or a Mechanic or Realistic substitute for genuine Theatricals.

A large amount of research work has been accomplished in Theatre history, so that we have been strengthened in our knowledge and understanding of the old traditions and laws of the Theatre; information already acquired has been coordinated and edited; curious books and documents have been collected from many sources to enrich the supply of material treating of the Theatre in all ages and lands; and work has been done in connexion with the International Theatre Exhibition.

Now what is the significance of all these Books and Exhibitions? Exhibitions and books are not the be-all and the end-all of the dramatic world: the play, the actor, and production, these are the real things. But exhibitions and books have their uses; they prepare the way, and they only come in such profusion as lately they have done, when there has been need for preparing a new way. . . .

Meantime some of us think that to concern ourselves with Exhibitions and Books, and the preparatory work of which they are both the instruments and the expression, is the best thing to do while waiting the actor's pleasure.

In Volume VIII, 7, Craig prints The Mask creed. This passage is frequently quoted. He writes:

Need THE MASK make any protestations of faith this year? . . . You know its beliefs. Do you think they will change today? . . . Why should they?

Nothing is more easy than that it should remain staunch to its Cause.

It is a Cause which, when it bears fruit, will bring a little benefit to everybody.

But as the Cause is always being misrepresented and belittled by those curious folk who seem to want the world to stand still so that they may make a remark and ten per cent, let us once more rehearse the Creed.
THE MASK believes in The Theatre and in The Drama whether written, acted, sung or spoken.
THE MASK believes in it all.
THE MASK believes in the Actor and in the Actress.
IT believes in Sceneries and Musics and in Dancing, in Dancers, Musicians, Scenographers and Dramatists.
BELIEVES in every blessed or cursed thing that ever was, is or shall be in The Theatre . . . if Theatrical.
BELIEVES in The Theatre of Europe and in the Theatre of America. Not alone in one local Theatrical group.
BELIEVES in, and venerates, the great Asiatic Theatre.
IT loves and Adores all that can be called The Theatre.
IT is entranced by the "Theatrical." Which some day is to become the Theatrical without inverted commas.
IT loves the dust and the rags and the paint and the daub and dirt of the Old Theatre . . . its ancient smell . . . its strange air . . . its queer ways . . . ALL.

Contents

In general, the textual material of The Mask falls into three divisions: one, reprints of historical essays, papers, books and documents embracing acting, theatre architecture, stage machinery, scenery, puppetry, dance, and masks; two, Craig's critical essays and comments on the alleged weaknesses of the theatre in the first three decades of the twentieth century; and three, essays and comments embracing Craig's theory and concept of the art of the theatre.

Samuel J. Hume, in speaking of Craig's contributions to the theatre, pays a high tribute to The Mask in regard to its attainments in historical research. He says:
The Mask which was his own personal organ through which he spoke to the established workers in the theatre and those who were just beginning was an extraordinary periodical which should have opened windows onto new vistas for all those who hoped to make the theatre their vocation or profession. He was passionately devoted to the History of the Theatre, and The Mask contained more serious material in that field than any other periodical before or since.¹

Another estimate of The Mask is cited by Enid Rose when she quotes a passage taken from a statement made in 1928 by Dr. Joseph Gregor, curator of the theatre treasures in the National-bibliothek, Vienna. He says:

The Mask is now twenty years old—just as old as modern scenic art. From that fact it will be seen at once that here is the first History of Modern Scenic Art. ... The Mask was the first journal of theatre art in Europe and it has remained first. It has given its readers historical fact sooner than theatrical historians have produced them either in lectures or in books. ... ²

Evidence abounds to prove that Craig was not exclusively a theatre artist but a theatre historian as well. In his book, Books and Theatres, published in 1925, Craig reveals his passion for precious old books and folios on the art of the theatre. His personal library is reported to have been well stocked with old and curious theatre books, some of which were richly and beautifully bound. In reading The Mask,

¹ Quoted from a letter, January 25, 1954, from Samuel J. Hume to the author.

² Gordon Craig and the Theatre, p. 184.
one is struck with the profound conviction that Craig was not only concerned with the future of the theatre but that he continuously and passionately devoted himself to the history of the theatre. He had more than a mere academic interest in history. In the history of the theatre he sought and found justification and confirmation of his theories of the art of the theatre. In history he sought for evidence to substantiate his conviction that theatre is essentially a pictorial art. Nearly every issue of The Mask contains reprints of three to six critical essays by Craig, abridgements of extraordinary theatre books, curious documents and numerous excerpts from ancient and recent papers on scenic practice, theatre architecture, playwriting, costuming, puppetry, masks, ad infinitum. In the reprinting of original historical items, it was Craig's practice either to divide the work into sections so that one section would follow another in the manner of a series in subsequent issues, or to print a series of essays, all on the same subject, in several consecutive issues. In Volume I, The Mask commenced the publication of E. W. Godwin's famous papers on the architecture and costuming of Shakespeare's plays, which had first appeared in the eighteen seventies in The Architect, an English Architectural Journal. Craig reprinted the text of twenty-one of Godwin's essays setting forth his [Godwin's] recommendations for staging Shakespeare's plays together with the designs for the plays. The essays continued through Volume VI. In Volumes V through VII Craig reprinted a series of essays on the history
of puppetry, beginning in Asia, Greece and Rome and extending to puppetry in modern Italy, Spain, England, Germany and France. In Volume XI, Craig began the reproduction of a series of plans of old cities. The plans are printed on fold-over pages which can be extended to a length of eighteen inches. The first is Nollis' plan of Rome which shows the city as it was in 1748. Old plans of the cities of London, Westminster and Paris follow in subsequent volumes.

The Mask reprinted seventeen historical essays on the Commedia dell'Arte, including essays by Count Carlo Gozzi, Cesare Vecellio and Luigi Riccoboni. Sheldon Cheney, in discussion the Italian theatre in his book, The Theatre, gives an estimate of the value of Craig's historical research on the Commedia. He says:

... The student will find Winifred Smith's The Commedia dell'Arte (New York, 1912) useful. Though elsewhere I have limited my bibliographical notes to works in English I can't refrain from adding two excellent illustrated books in French covering the subject of this chapter: La Commedia dell'Arte by Constant Mic (Paris, 1927), and La Comedie Italiene, by Pierre Louis Duchartre (Paris, 1924). I have consulted all these works; but I am most indebted to the spirited if scrappy treatment in the noted issues of The Mask. 3

The improvised acting of the Commedia was the source of great inspiration to Craig in formulating his theories of acting. He said that the Commedia "helped Shakespeare, suckled Moliere and created

---

Goldoni" (III, 7-9, p. 100). Craig believed that the modern theatre could regain some of its lost vitality, spontaneity and imaginativeness if it were to absorb the characteristics of the Commedia dell' Arte (V, 2, pp. 181-182). He writes:

They [Commedia actors] possess in themselves the spring of life, the secret of youth, they will adapt themselves to any century, and war the livery of any age while yet remaining always vitally, unalterably themselves. . . .

. . . Their spangled jackets and waving skirts are a mere mortal livery, for they are ideas, not material beings; they are mirrors which reflect the life around them and the sunlight above them and the laughter and movement and folly and wisdom and love and gaiety and tears of life as well in the twentieth century as in the sixteenth, but which render no dull photographic reproduction of actuality, but a vision of life all silvered over with laughter and coloured with romance. And those who have so ungracious a welcome for them when they come stealing back after these many centuries, listening, tip-toe, finger to lip, at the theatre door and then bounding with a peal of laughter on to the stage, must err from ignorance or from prejudice. . . .

And what if the old Commedia dell' Arte were what the critics consider so over-frank in its rendering of life? It is true enough that three hundred years ago the players had all kinds of amazing adventures upon the stage with birth and death, doctors and marriages and bridal nights and surgical operations and feeding bottles and other intimate factors of life. But today the very theatre which regards that as a barbarous age gives us seductions and confinements, bathroom scenes and bedroom scenes and hospital scenes, only gives them all with a smug solemnity which has none of the frank merry healthy spirit of an earlier day. Why, even Shakespeare shocks them; they have to "expurgate" his works before presenting them to the modest eyes and ears of the public, although they expect that same public to be gratified by the gloomy spectacle of a naked Salome fooling around with John the Baptist's head.

It is from the Commedia dell' Arte that Craig formulated his theory of the Mimo-drama: the drama of silence. People today, he says, argue that since the Commedia drama depended more upon action
than words it must have been a crude kind of thing. Also, since
the Commedia actors used masks, no self-respecting actor would
ever employ his time in such a kind of drama. People also argue,
says Craig, that improvisation is not a serious thing. It is only
fit for children. Craig reminds his readers that the inventors of
the Commedia were not playwrights and that the drama of the Com-
media held the stage for two centuries without the assistance of the
literary men (V, 2, p. 107). He writes:

An improvised drama can be as sincere and as profound as
a play written by a master of letters: . . . character is not
drawn only by writers in ink nor can passion be patented by
those of the pen. And so we shall have Drama once more in-
stead of plays written by literary men of genius or talent. . . .
Molière shows us that in the Commedia dell' Arte of the
sixteenth century much commonplace talk was needed to lead
up to a "point," and we may be sure that much silence will be
necessary to approach a situation in passionate Drama. Con-
versation, talk of any kind weakens the Dramatic intensity of
passion. It is all the more amazing that Dramatic authors
have traded in the commodity of talk so long . . . amazing
and shameful. The intensity of passion can only be truly sug-
gested by an act . . . an act which dominates the silence, not
one which sinks under it.

The Mask contains twenty-five items on the history of marion-
nettes and masks in the theatre. The majority of the items are reprints
from old papers and essays. However, Craig contributes a number of
original essays in which he discusses the use of marionnettes and
masks in the legitimate theatre.

Among the other historical subjects of the theatre receiving
special treatment are: The ancient English Morris Dance; the
English Folk Dance; reprints of the plans of theatres in antiquity and the Renaissance; stage scenery and machinery of the Renaissance with special attention given to the work of Sebastiano Serlio, Nicola Sabbattini and the Bibienas; and the history of the theatre in Asia, with particular emphasis upon the Japanese theatre.

The range, quality and selectivity of the historical subject matter reprinted in The Mask not only reveals Craig's devotion to the history of the art of the theatre, but also indicates that he was a theatre historian of considerable merit. When reading the historical reprints in The Mask, one is struck with the notion that Craig's interest in theatre history was neither ephemeral nor erudite. It is evident that Craig sought out the historical traditions of the theatre in an effort to restore dignity and beauty to a theatre that had become, in his opinion, commonplace, hackneyed and unimaginative.

Unfortunately, the second division of subject matter in The Mask, comprising Craig's critical essays and comments on the alleged weaknesses of the theatre of his time, tends to minimize the literary stature that had been given The Mask by the historical reprints.

From a literary point of view, The Mask is uneven and reveals striking incongruities. On the one hand, the historical materials are formal and scholarly; on the other, Craig's critical essays are superficial and shallow. The quality of the historical materials suggest that they were selected by a man with keen and penetrating insight,
one who would not stoop to personal insults and abusive language.
It is doubtful that Craig's criticisms of the English theatre of the
early twentieth-century deserve more than a perfunctory and cursory
treatment. Craig presents his subject matter in a quarrelsome and
captious tone. He was extremely opinionated and he pertinaciously
adhered to his opinions with a stubbornness that became monotonously
repetitious and unreasonable. In volume after volume, in the Foreign
Notes, and in the Editorial and Book Review sections of The Mask,
Craig tenaciously held to his conviction that commercialism was
responsible for the major portion of the theatre's ills. He indulged
his complaints against the commercial theatre to the point of ridicu-
rous absurdity. It is undeniably true that some of his grievances
were justified, and had he had the good judgment to temper his criti-
cisms with discretion and forebearance he undoubtedly would have
realized even greater attainments than those ordinarily ascribed to
him. The business man who became a commercial theatre manager
was Craig's natural enemy. It is the business man in the theatre,
says Craig, who is responsible for the pitfalls into which the theatre
is hopelessly mired. There is not even a remote chance of reform
in the theatre as long as the business men rule the theatre for
financial profit. Craig was not opposed to profit making in the
theatre as long as high artistic standards were maintained. He argued
that the business men, in their eagerness for quick and substantial
profits, resorted to vulgarity and gaudy displays to catch the eye.

Craig objected to the sensationalism and spectacular displays used by the commercial managers to attract the public. He was particularly critical of the "undressing scenes" presented on the stage of the commercial theatres (IV, 4, pp. 272-277). He writes:

We have from time to time in this journal spoken, probably with prejudice, in favour of the use of Masks. As veils for the face, hiding its weaknesses and revealing what is in the soul of the poet, masks have always seemed to us a gain. And at the same time we have always regretted (probably with prejudice) the gradual unveiling of the bodies of persons on the stage, which practise we failed to see brought any gain to the Art.

The ladies in pink tights had grown into a convention and suggested the Farce of things, but ladies without them grew objectionable and suggested nothing but the bathroom and "La Vie Parisienne", a charming little journal to be found at the hearth of every cocotte.

And if the ladies and gentlemen who take off their shirts, stockings, trousers, and so on, for us on the stage gave us frankly to understand that a new episode in "La Vie Parisienne" was about to be revealed to us for our amusement we should be better able to accept the performances.

But this is anything but the case. There is much solemnity about these undressings. Gods are evoked, masters of music, painting and sculpture are dragged into to perform the parts of high priest, and then the victim sacrifices herself in all the solemn splendour of the cafe chantant.

And all this is done, it is said, in the cause of Beauty and Art... But this is not Art; this is smart business at the expense of public, artists and art alike.

It cannot be denied that the so-called "undressing scenes" became a very popular form of public entertainment in the commercial theatres of England, France and America at the turn of the twentieth century. In general, this type of entertainment came in two varieties. One was in the form of a short nocturnal bedroom scene in which a
man and usually his wife prepared to retire. The scene was highly suggestive but usually terminated short of indecency. The motif for the scenes was ordinarily French. The second variety was in the form of a slow and calculated "artistic" exhibition of disrobing for the pretended purpose of revealing the beauty of the human body. Obviously this type of amusement presented under the guise of art is fraudulent; it is in bad taste and derives its appeal from gaudy theatricalism. Craig is justified in taking a stand against such a vulgar and tawdry type of entertainment. However, Craig's continuous and passionate attack on this type of sensationalism in the theatre has the tendency to magnify its degrading influence on public taste and morals. The author has not found any evidence in the history of the twentieth century theatre to validate Craig's contention that vulgarity and obscenity in the commercial theatre constituted a serious threat to development of legitimate art in the theatre.

In addition to perpetrating vulgarity and sensationalism, the commercial theatre was, in Craig's opinion, guilty of wasting time, energy and money. Craig argued that millions of dollars were being foolishly spent on spectacular scenic displays and mechanical tricks in order to thrill an audience (IV, 4, p. 342). He writes:

... Imitation flames thirty feet high will thrill idiots because flames are the last things we expect to see on the stage. A crowd of girls with bare backs and legs wriggling sufficiently in half lights will do it equally well because we are used to bare
backs and legs galore on the stage. But turn up the lights, make everything honest, work like an artist and not like a conjurer, and no one will care about it.

In short, unless people are shocked, and deceived, in a theatre they are disappointed.

Oh wonderful Idiots! Oh wonderful Theatre! how honestly you have sold yourself soul and body to every man you have met.

Craig maintained that the commercial theatre with its clever and sensational methods of advertising was selling cheap entertainment at fabulous prices. The so-called "stars" were being paid a salary far in excess of their talents (V, 3, p. 283-285). He says:

... Nowhere does so false a sense of values appear to prevail as in the theatre. The price set upon pretty ladies, willing to show an unlimited amount of "lingerie" and an almost unlimited amount of their own charming persons seems to be perpetually on the increase.

Mlle. Gaby Deslys, after some weeks of laborious dressing and undressing on the London stage, of being extensively photographed for the illustrated papers in the act of powdering her ankles, kicking her heels while perched on her toilet table, and in various other piquant attitudes, enhanced by an elaborate dishabille, has now arrived in America with a long train of chauffeurs, maids, secretaries, pet dogs and ropes of pearls like a second Queen of Sheba, to renew her activities at a salary of about five thousand dollars per week. It is absurd first of all to encourage these young women to think that because they have well-shaped limbs, or less reticence than others in publicly displaying them, or possess a more enticing outfit of petticoats and drawers than their sisters they are worth their weight in gold and are to travel like empresses and be obeyed as if they were goddesses. For the ladies possessed of these physical attributes are, unfortunately, sadly lacking in brains. They develop, under flattery, into incarnations of hysterical conceit, and the managers who have bred them can hardly complain if they have then to suffer by them. In fact they shape these female Frankenstein's, these so-called "artists", to pursue them and harrass them at every turn.

In a review of L.E. Shipman's book, The True Adventures of a
Play, Craig found a wonderful opportunity to attack the waste of time and energy spent in the preparation of a plan for a commercial theatre (VII, p. 82). He writes:

... it is Waste. Waste of time, waste of strength, waste of vitality, waste of everything. People making up their minds and then unmaking them; writing letters today to retract their decisions of yesterday; warming up hopes and then chilling them with cold douches; building up only to knock down. And when one sees this whole volume of correspondence which passed over the production of one little play, and notes the large proportion of it which was mere waste paper and waste time, one carries away some kind of an understanding of why so little work of any consequence ever gets done in the Theatre at all. "A mountain was in labour, and brought forth an absurd mouse." That is a fairly adequate description of a large part of the labours of the theatre today. And it wastes so much labour upon bringing forth anything else; whereas if it would only reserve its forces and practise for a time a little continence it might in due season bring forth... one decent play.

The commercial theatre's practice of touring a large company of actors and great quantities of scenery and stage equipment was looked upon by Craig as a great waste of money and time. He maintained, and rightfully so, that the cost of touring a play is exceedingly great and he advances the thought that the money could be more wisely spent in supporting repertory theatres located in key cities throughout the nation. He speaks to this point in discussing a tour of England and America made by Henry Irving (VIII, p. 8; p. 30). According to Craig, the receipts of the tour were large enough to establish a national theatre. He says:

... I am not quoting these figures in order to suggest that they were more than Henry Irving should have received. For
my part I wish he had received five millions and the National
Theatre into the bargain. . . .
I would only draw attention to the expenditure which, as
you see, exceeded two million, and remark that there is nothing
to show for that two million. There is no Theatre of beautiful
proportions containing a stage equipped for succeeding genera-
tions; there is no museum, no library, nothing. As it is not
to be supposed that an ounce of the great Irving personality
would have been lost had these things been built, collected and
preserved, why was something not done? I will tell you why.
It is not possible because the Public prefers to be made to pay. Had Irving asked England and America, in the course of
twenty years, to supply him with one million pounds sterling in
order that he, as the best actor of his age, might erect for them,
a theatre which could be even as durable as the Comedie Francaise,
(Moliere's theatre), the queer thing is that he would have been
refused that sum.
But see what Irving does. He determines to get that sum
and more, . . . and he gets it. But he gets it under conditions
which make it less easy to establish such a theatre. He makes
the people pay him over two million, you see, and he does it . . .
if we omit his own great great personality and genius . . .
by carrying round train-loads and boat-loads of scenery and
costumes, armour and appliances which, if still in existence,
must cost more to store than their actual value.

Craig was of the opinion that the commercial theatre in its
effort to achieve something new and different in scenic and production
innovations, was causing theatre workers enthusiastically but thought-
lessly to support the latest theatre "fashion" (III, 1, pp. 29-30). He
says:

. . . There is too much haste about all this reform, very
much too much haste.
Each day, week and month we read energetic statements
made or hasty conclusions arrived at by enthusiasts.
The enthusiasts are the only people who count, but the sum
reaches a very low figure when they let their enthusiasm carry
them away.
For example, one enthusiast for the theatre has only to see
the performance in the open air with a background of trees, let us
say by Ben Greet, to believe that the solution of the riddle of
the theatre lies in taking the theatre into the open air.
Another enthusiast believes that the whole thing is to be
solved when the dance is thoroughly understood.
The third believes that it is all a matter of the scenery.
A fourth that it is a question of artificial lighting.
A fifth thinks that it has something to do with socialism
and that if plays dealing with the labour movement are put before
the audience the whole theatre will revive.
The sixth enthusiast thinks the reproduction of actual life
on the stage is the secret.
The seventh is convinced that it has something to do with the
community and that the communal theatre would solve the riddle.
An eighth thinks instead that the reproduction of the ancient
drama, Greek and Elizabethan, in theatres most like to those in
which they originated, would solve the riddle.
The ninth enthusiast, (for the Frohmans and the Schuberts
are enthusiasts in their own way) thinks that the whole thing is a
question of dollars.

Craig criticizes the commercial theatre for its failure to experi-
ment with new scenic and entertainment devices and methods before
being used in a production for which the audience has paid. The pro-
duction schedule and the desire to make money will not permit adequate
time and proper place for experimentation (X, 4, p. 173). He says:

... I cannot say that I very much enjoy myself in a Theatre
which is experimenting in front of me instead of entertaining
me. If Madam Rubenstein, for example, wishes to experiment,
I take it rather ill that she does this after I have paid for a
seat to be entertained. Since in glove-making, furniture manu-
ufacture, biscuit, and even broom making—(Hoover's "It Beats,
as it Sweeps, as it Cleans") experiments have to be made if we
are to come to make gloves fit better and better and brooms
sweep smoother and cleaner, must not experiments also be
made in entertainment?
Where, I ask, can such talents experiment? Not before us,
I beg; not that anyhow; not during Entertainment hours, or
in a place of Entertainment, or the trouble will never cease.
And what of the others who can contribute to our evening's
enjoyment. The producers, the stage managers, the scenery men, and the other craftsmen and craftswomen.

To take the lease and last first: a single craftswoman. A costumier. Who is there wants to see her trial dresses however clever they may be, tried on in front of us on a stage? Yet where else is she to try them on? before whom? and when?

There seems to be no place.

Craig was critical of the large, pretentious and ornate theatres being built by the commercial theatre managers. He abhorred the glitter of the gold leaf and the festoons of brocade so characteristic of the playhouses of his time. Craig maintained that the playhouse attracted more attention than the play (VIII, 8, p. 30). He writes:

...Is there anything more annoying to us all who are working in this New Movement than to see these gilded plaster theatre interiors? If the gilt plaster has something inspiring in its form, then we would perhaps set aside the question of the gilt and the plaster and accept it for its expressive form. But it has not one quality that is good about it. The theatre at present is just a pretentious place and is likely to foster pretension in those who frequent it.

Craig favored a small, inexpensive, intimate theatre (VI, 3, p. 225). He says:

By little stages we reach our destination. An easy and a pleasant way. But where are the little stages of England? ...

We could invent something smaller and simpler, less expensive and far more natural. A Room with a stage at one end. The smallest would not have to be less than thirty feet long and from twelve to fifteen feet wide. And at the end a small stage ...

The scene for such a stage would then be a simple matter and instead of a great cost would be possible for a few pounds.

Craig's ideal theatre would discard the picture frame proscenium, banish the footlights, eliminate the boxes and the orchestra
pit and any other architectural feature which served to draw a line of demarcation between the stage and the auditorium. The audience in his ideal theatre would be put into a new relationship with the players and the play. Craig describes (VI, 3, p. 255) a new Polish theatre which apparently fits his vision of an ideal theatre. He writes:

...What interested me most about this new Polish Theatre was the fact that the building of the structure had been done with brains and imagination. From the ventilating apparatus to the costumes of the attendants everything seemed to be the result of clear thought and inspiration. Light in plenty, but hidden and never striking uncomfortably on the eye. Every seat with an excellent and unobstructed view of the stage. None of the stuffy feeling, ... the wanting to get up and go out for air at the end of an act. The temperature did not perceptibly rise and the whole interior of the theatre felt clean and cool. When one's lungs are kept clear and unsullied the performance gains; for the exhilaration engendered by the play has a much better chance with one's system. The exits and entrances are so cleverly arranged that in less than half a minute the house can be emptied or filled.

There is a revolving stage, and an adjustable proscenium which, if not as good as one the readers of The Mask have heard of, is at all events quite a good thing of its kind. The orchestra is kept out of sight. The pit is well sloped and there is no cadging of extra troubles by placing seats beyond each side of the proscenium. There are no boxes.

Everything is carried out in a thorough manner. Hygienic as a hospital, comfortable as one could possibly wish, it is indubitably a theatre and it gives you the sense of something serene and calm as of a building dedicated to the service of a noble art.

Craig deplored the incessant applause characteristic of the commercial playhouse. He wrote voluminously on this subject, and well he might have, for it was in Craig's time, and unfortunately
still is, a practice which cannot be too severely condemned. A passage from *The Mask* (VII, 2, p. 169) is typical of Craig's reaction to applause. He says:

A protest against applause is very necessary nowadays. . . . these days when, for an actor merely to drop a glass by accident, is to have a ripple of sympathetic applause from the front; and the sight of an actress overcome by fatigue also wins sympathetic applause. Applause should only come when it cannot be helped, like thunder, as we imagine it in Greece; as it was when, in the "Eumenides" the actor, at the end, turned to the audience with "ololeu! sing ololeu!" In fact, not so much applause is necessary as a shout. To relieve the feelings in this way goes well in a great theatre, but condescendingly to patter with the hands is damnable.

Craig continuously pleaded for more art and less noise in the theatre. He argued that applause interrupted the mood and clogged the action of the play. He maintained that the incompetent actors and the overly zealous commercial managers were the worst offenders in encouraging inappropriate applause in the theatre. Craig was of the opinion that in any legitimate play, the actor's personality should be submerged, as far as possible, in the character portrayed and the personal opinions of the audience on the work of the actor during the action should be effaced. Actually, says Craig, the applause with which an audience greets the first appearance of the play's "star" and the subsequent restrained low bow of the "star" constitutes a stupid intrusion upon the play. The audiences' habit of greeting the scenery on the rise of the curtain with a long and loud round of applause will
break the mood and atmosphere which any serious artist of the stage wishes to achieve in his scene.

Craig condemned the commercial theatre manager for insisting that art in the theatre would not pay. The managers, he says, feel that the artist is too expensive and that he isn't practical. Craig contends that the managers have not proved that art in the theatre will not pay (I, 2, p. 23). He writes:

...It has still to be proved that Beauty is less commercially successful than Vulgarity in Art.

Especially in the Art of the Theatre.

Vulgar plays are popular with the managers not because the managers like them but because they are taught by the critics to believe they will bring in more money than the beautiful plays.

Yet we hear daily of the failure of many so-called "popular" plays.

Only this month in England our most celebrated actress has produced a popular play and failed to make it a success. Are we rash in saying that the inference is that the public is not such a fool as some people believe? That to strive for Beauty in Art is really not out of date, ... if the box-office returns for the "popular" failure is any sign ..., and that while spending £2000.0 to produce a popular failure, the cause of our theatre would be advanced by sincere lovers of their art, if the same sum had been spent upon an attempt to coax beauty upon the boards ... No?

Craig believed that the business men had usurped the theatre from the artist. The artist, not the business man, says Craig, can alone raise the standards of the English theatre (VIII, 10, p. 38). He says:

... But it is quite certain that if you are to choose between a business man or artist the artist will, in the course of twenty
years, "raise the tone" of the stage as they say, whereas the business man will lower it. The proof of this can be seen today in the wreck of what was once the English Theatre.

The conditions of the theatre cannot, avers Craig, be traced to the low standards of public taste. The public wish for something else but they are told by the commercial theatre managers that what they are getting is what they want. Craig claims that it is the artisan and not the artist who is perpetrating a fraud on the public (VI, 1, p. 85). He writes:

The reason why in the theatre the artist's work is always spoken of as "so costly" is that it is the artisan in the theatre who speaks. "I draw crowds the artist doesn't" says he, "his work is too fine, poor fellow."

Knave! You know that the public is as fine as vulgar, and that you tempt it to remain vulgar by your assumed pity of the "poor artist." So wake up, artists, wake up for the theatre's sake.

For her sake crush these artisans who pose as "artists" and whose hands squeeze out the blood of the box office into their own pockets.

Quite often in Craig's criticism of the commercial theatre, he chooses (for some unaccountable reason) to develop the theme that women are "a danger to theatre" (IV, 1, p. 71). He says:

The Century Magazine continues to have lots of good things in it. Most interesting of all are Signore Guglielmo Ferrero's "Women of the Caesars" series.

The Mask alone of all journals has said that woman is a danger to the theatre and that before the stage can lay claim once more to its art women will have to leave its boards. Signor Ferrero shows that liberty for woman is a danger to the state; although it is a hard, cruel plainly iniquitous thing to deprive a woman of liberty and subject her to a regime of tyranny in order to constrain her to live for the race and not for herself,
yet when liberty is granted her to live for herself, to satisfy her personal desires, she abuses that liberty more readily than a man does, and more than a man forgets her duties towards the race."

Woman looks upon the theatre in the same selfish spirit as she looks upon the earth; as a means for satisfying her own personal gratification.

This is well known, and being so should be guarded against.

Again, (III, 7-9, p. 143) he says that women are a continual threat to the theatre, as the history of the theatre plainly shows:

It is pitiful to read in the history of the theatre of the wrecks women have made of many good managerial ships which attempted to reach the Fortunate Islands.

The histories of the Restoration stage, of Garricks’ theatrical life, of the Comedie Francaise, of the German stage in the Eighteenth Century and of nearly every Theatre since women first tendered their assistance in the middle part of the Seventeenth century, contain the records of the methods employed by women to harass the different mansagements and the success they achieved...

Craig suggests that at least a part of women’s detriment to the theatre is to be found in their willingness to appear before audiences for a very small fee (III, 4-6, p. 97). He asserts:

The introduction of women upon the stage is held by some to have caused the downfall of the European theatre, and it is to be feared that it is destined to bring the same disaster to Japan since it is announced that Madame Yacco intends not only to use actresses for the female roles but to introduce other occidental customs upon her new stage.

It must not for a moment be supposed that the introduction of women on to the stage proceeds entirely from motives of improving the art. History shows there to have been always motives of economy behind the innovation.

Women are always glad to appear before an audience for next to nothing and managers of all periods have proved themselves glad to avail themselves of this feminine weakness. Whenever the swing of the pendulum brings round an age of increased commercialism it is to be noticed that the wives and daughters are always selected to do the work previously done by men, and that
this, beginning by drawing them out of their own sphere, ends by forcing them out of it, since, while women are working for lower wages than those formerly paid to men, the men, on their part, are without employment and are thus no longer able to support the women. The result is therefore disastrous economically as well as artistically.

Actually Craig advances no reason for his dislike of women in the theatre, other than that they harass the management and will take jobs away from men because they will work more cheaply than the men. Craig says that actresses are a modern addition to the theatre and were not used in the great theatres of the past (II, 7-9, p. 144). He writes:

... In the East until quite recently the actress was unknown. In the West there was the theatre of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes and none but men performed. There was the stage of Shakespeare with men only for all roles.

These two periods cannot be entirely disregarded. The impersonators of the roles of Klytemnestra, Elektra, Alkestis, Cassandra, Medea and Phaldras cannot have been entirely dull since the whole Greek nation, ... a nation not entirely devoid of taste or the power of criticism ... received the impersonations with enthusiasm.

It cannot but be supposed that the Greeks had weighed the advantages and disadvantages of employing women for the female roles and decided against the women only after considerable doubt.

In like manner the poets of the Elizabethan era must have given the question full consideration. Yet these writers came to the same conclusion and decided that it was better for none but men to perform.

Women accompanied the minstrels of the Middle Ages; why did the poets deny them access to the stage? The Elizabethan age was in no way straight-laced. The whole question then must have turned upon the difference between male and female intelligence.

For my part I think that a dull stage is duller without actresses, but that a virile and spontaneous drama has no need of their assistance.
Craig's entire argument against the use of women on the stage is strange and even ridiculous. His interest and knowledge of theatrical history, as evidenced in the bulk of his writings, render his viewpoint of women in the theatre even more strange and unexplainable. The author hazards the conjecture that there was something in the personal life of Craig which turned him against women.

Commercialism lies at the heart of all Craig's criticisms of the theatre of his time. The business man had entered the theatre to make a financial profit, and in order to realize a profit he suffered the delusion that he had to substitute vulgarity in place of art. The panacea offered by Craig to correct the evils that had been heaped upon the theatre by the commercial managers embraced three recommendations: one, an active and effective censor; two, competent dramatic critics; and three, the organization of several national theatres located in the larger cities of England and completely subsidized by the government.

At the heart of Craig's plea to eliminate the evils in the theatre lies the fundamental concept that the theatre is a branch of public service. It is as vital to the culture of the nation as the army and navy are to its safety. Craig believed that the theatre, in order to serve the public welfare by protecting and strengthening the noblest ideals of a people, must be controlled and regimented in a manner similar to that of the army (VII, p. 67). He writes:
The State realising, (never having forgotten since earliest times) that the Army is a serious institution established for serious work, allows no trifling in its members.

They have to be obedient to discipline, loyal to their country and cause. Should they be disloyal, desert the ranks or show insubordination certain punishments await them.

These men are not children, yet certain punishments await them? . . . Why?

Because discipline and loyalty, where serious issues are at stake, must sometimes be enforced by examples being made of the disloyal and evil natures.

For desertion in time of war a man if caught is shot. . So much for the Army.

And in the Theatre?

No discipline, no punishment for offending and disloyal members or for deserters. . .

It was Craig's opinion that the theatre was a serious menace to the state unless well and seriously governed (II, 4-6, pp. 92-93).

He says:

. . . This matter of the degeneration of the Theatre is one so serious that it calls for the gravest consideration on the part of all those who have at heart the welfare of the nation and Mr. Mackaye justly reminds us, that "night after night, year after year, our theatres are educating our people by the millions and tens of millions. The question is, shall the theatre educate those millions right or wrong?" "The status of a playhouse in society", he claims, "is as vital as the status of the university of society. The dignity and efficiency of the one demand the same safeguarding against inward deterioration as the dignity and efficiency of the other. The functions of both are educative. The safeguard of each is endowment."

For the public is really a child, which may be educated to take pleasure in what is gaudy and vulgar or in what is beautiful and simple, according to the influence brought to bear upon it; but these influences must be brought to bear steadily and must be long sustained.

Of course the argument is always advanced that the public demand must be supplied and that it is this demand which the present managers are supplying. But does the public ever really make any demand on the theatre, . . . or on anything? We
hear of a "demand" at one time for sheath dresses and at another for crinolines, but there is no initiative or inborn desire in the public for either of these things. Fashion dictates what they are to demand, . . . and they demand it. So at present the leaders of the theatre dictate to the public what they are to want, . . . and they want it.

It is Craig's opinion that a rigid and more effective censorship is needed in order to protect the public against the vulgarities of the commercial theatre. Since the theatre is a serious and useful institution, it must not remain the property of the mob (II, 4-6, p. 49).

He says:

It is not less, but more. Censor, that the theater needs. The present Censor permits what I hope no other Censor will permit again, . . . he allows London to be flooded by vulgarity. The shows at the music halls do not count. We expect, vulgarity there; and the Censor tolerates more than vulgarity there for he knows that the Music Hall is the property of the mob and he also remembers that it was once much worse and that even the Emperors of Constantinople, Rome and Alexandria were unable to censor such exhibitions.

But the Theatre is not the property of the mob and is not a place for exhibitions, animal or human. . . .

Again (IV, 1, p. 44) Craig affirms his conviction that the censor needs more power. He says:

Again and again I give praise that the Censor rules over the London stage preventing further vulgarities in the name of Art. My only regret is that he is not ten times as strict as he is; that he passes these exhibitions of the nude on the stage; that he lets much that is vulgar pass on the Music Hall stage.

We all know perfectly well that eccentric comedians can keep the house in a roar of laughter without resorting to vulgarities. Dan Leno was the most successful English comedian of his day, and avoided all vulgarity. We also know that perfect dancing is possible without a display of naked or semi-naked limbs. Sada Yacco was perhaps the most perfect dancer of her day, and she avoided all such display.
All these liberties taken upon the stage are ruining the stage. Let the Censor act twice as stringently as before. Let his office be invested with new powers.

Craig argued that a state censor, with power delegated by the government to suppress vulgarity, obscenity, and any other aspect of theatrical production harmful to the morality of the audience would be effective in eliminating the evils of the commercial theatre. However, the censor's work must be supplemented by another governmental agency responsible for evaluating and interpreting the plays and work of the other artists in the theatre. The people working in this branch of public service are the drama critics. Craig reserved a high place in the theatre for the drama critic (VII, 1, p. 86). He says:

"Why help critics? . . . they don't interest me", is the usual answer of those in a position to encourage our Drama and our Theatres; it is, alas, often the reply of those who are keen about the Theatre and see its value to our national life. But does it need a sermon to push home to their minds the fact that critics have always been and are just as important to the modern Theatre as are the other members of the profession? I would even go so far as to say they are the most important group.

Loose criticism can damn a century of theatrical art, . . . good criticism can encourage it . . . . great criticism can positively create it.

And more than this: Loose criticism can over-turn a dynasty; can eat its way into the grandest institution in the realm . . . . and has done so.

Before the evil spreads any further provide handsomely for good criticism and for your critics . . . . or take the consequences.

Craig believed that the chief function of the drama critic is to
elevate the theatrical standards and tastes of the audience by a continuous reference to basic theatrical principles which would enhance the audience's critical judgments. The function of Craig's censor and dramatic critic can be stated thus: the censor is to protect the morals of the audience and the critic is to tell the audience what they should enjoy and why they should enjoy it. Craig argued that the Drama critics must be employed by the government, and that they must maintain a standard of excellence in order to practice their profession.

While there is some merit in Craig's recommendations for censorship and dramatic criticism, he leaves a great many questions unanswered. For example: would not his recommendations, when carried into practice, establish a kind of theatre dictatorship and regimentation which would create problems more detrimental to the theatre than those evils allegedly created by the commercial theatre manager? Who is to determine the criteria by which the Drama Critics are to be selected and who is to decide whether they have maintained a standard of excellence? Would not a publisher of a newspaper insist on the right to employ those writers who contributed to his paper?

Actually, Craig was proposing in his recommendations a very drastic course of action which the government should take: in
order to rid the theatre of certain fundamental weaknesses. What is important is that he magnified these weaknesses and spoke of them as if they permeated every single aspect of the theatre in England. In reality his criticism were applicable to only a very small segment of the English theatre. Unfortunately he was damning the whole of the theatre. He never distinguished between those few commercial managers who were presenting sensational and spectacular scenes on their stages in order to attract a gullible public, and that distinguished group of English dramatists and producers who were seriously engaged in writing and presenting decent and artistic plays. Craig takes no notice of John Galsworthy, J. M. Barrie, Granville Barker, G. B. Shaw, A. W. Pinero and many other English playwrights and producers who were as devoted as Craig to the art of the theatre. Their plays are truly dramatic, rather than theatrical; they are natural but not slavishly photographic; they incorporate only detail that is organic to the dramatic design; they interpret rather than imitate and they deal with inner spiritual forces, rather than outward dramatic events. What these men were trying to do lies at the very center of Craig's concept of the theatre and why he could not give them credit for sharing his viewpoints, or he theirs, is a complete mystery. The quality of the collective literary output of these men does not indicate, in any way, that a censor was needed to safeguard the public against the
morality of their plays. Neither was a government sponsored drama critic needed to interpret the plays of Galsworthy and to explain his methods of handling plot and dialogue. From beginning to end, these men were sincere. Certainly they were as honest and devoted to the theatre as was Craig. Craig seldom mentions these. He spends his time, in his critical comments and essays, talking about the evils of the commercial theatre. Craig's service to the English Theatre certainly does not lie in his critical essays and comments on the theatre of his time.

In Craig's third proposal to combat the evils of the commercial theatre, he makes a recommendation that has considerable merit. He believed that the state should organize and establish a number of National Theatres located in the large cities of England. These theatres, according to him, should be completely and abundantly subsidized by the government. The government should leave the management of the theatres in the hands of a group of well-trained theatre artists. Craig believed that the law-makers have a responsibility for the development of the art of the theatre, just as they have a responsibility for the maintenance of an army and navy for the safety of the nation (III, 1, p. 16). He says:

PLAYGOER. Then you want the State to be responsible for your theatre?
STAGE DIRECTOR. [Craig] Not for one theatre but for
every theatre in the land. As it is for its navy. If the State is responsible for one theatre it will not take any trouble to study the whole question of the relationship of theatre to Nation, but if it has the responsibility of every theatre it will take great care to do so. And it would be an easier thing to manage all the theatres of England than it would be to manage one National Theatre in London. Conceive the idea of having one Man-of-War which belonged to the Nation, while all the others were the product of private enterprise. If you are going to change the order of things as the National Theatre sets out to do, then you must have sufficient power to enforce that change, and one National Theatre against all the theatres of private enterprise will have no chance whatever.

Craig was opposed to a national theatre supported by subscriptions from private sources. In speaking of Sir Johnston Forbes- Robertson's efforts to collect funds for a national theatre in London (III, 1, p. 40), he says:

... It is not a new idea this of going round with the hat for national enterprises, but this kind of thing strikes us as rather a pity even when it is only practised at home in England.

But when one goes abroad confessing that one's nation, ... the richest nation on earth ... has not got enough money to spare (or to waste) for a National Theatre, only two impressions can be forthcoming; ... Either that the nation is uncommonly ignorant of what is good for itself, or that the idea of a National Theatre strikes the nation as tomfoolery.

Therefore it seems hardly a sensible thing to do to go round the world advertising either of these two facts as Mr. Robertson is doing.

At this point, Craig's viewpoints toward a National Theatre are thoroughly reasonable. Certainly the State should not go begging for funds with which to establish a national theatre. Neither should the State attempt to manage the theatre with politicians. No one would argue with his contention that the management should be in the hands
of trained theatre workers. Indeed, a number of national theatres scattered throughout the nation would be more effective than one national theatre located in one city. However, as we move forward and read Craig's proposals and plans for the organization of a National Theatre, we are immediately confronted, as we are in nearly all of Craig's essays on the contemporary theatre, with ill-defined objectives, irrelevancies, intense personal prejudices, and extravagant statements. Oftentimes his essays and comments reach the point of sheer gibberish and outlandish jargon. Illustrations of Craig's obscurity and confusion in presenting his ideas on the contemporary theatre could be drawn from nearly any issue of The Mask. However, as we are, at this moment, considering his ideas on a National Theatre, we will quote Craig's statements made in reply to four questions which he himself used in conducting an international symposium on the subject of a National Theatre (II, 4-6, pp. 82-87). The author has bracketed those statements which tend to bewilder the reader and confound the fundamental issues.

THE QUESTIONS

1. Do you believe a National Theatre, directed by a committee, is advantageous to the development of our Artists?
2. Has your experience shown you that the greatest talent is to be found in the National Theatres of Europe, or in the Theatres of private enterprise?
3. Do you think greater advantage would accrue to the State if it supported the independent efforts of individual artists of great talent, rather than a collective and less talented body of artists under the control of a Committee?

4. If you had been asked the question thirty years ago would you have voted in favour of the State supporting Madame Bernhardt, Madame Duse, Tommaso Salvini and Henry Irving, or would you have been in favour of the Nation supporting the National Theatre of France, and proposed National Theatres in England and Italy.

GORDON CRAIG    FLORENCE

1. Do I believe a National Theatre, directed by a Committee, is advantageous to the development of our Artist? I do not. [A Committee is often less capable of keeping its temper than an individual.]

[To me there seems to be but one way to save the Theatre from itself; it is to remove the Art out of the Theatre; to transfer it to a place of safety for a certain period; to a university or to a church, and there to await developments.]

[Our "artists" are never going to be developed,] therefore a Committee cannot force them to it. ["Our artists" are persons to whom it gives quite exceptional delight to sneer at the word "culture".] ["Our artists" are those actors, actresses, stage managers, scene painters, etc., whose very existence is dependent upon the Theatre remaining un-developed.]

[The actors have for centuries had it in their power to preserve noble instead of base art traditions in the Theatre; they have chosen to preserve the base and thereby they have abdicated all right to act as the real guardians of the institution although they still masquerade as such.]

"The greatest talent?" Well, I suppose the Private Theatres have the best of it. [But for my part, though I have searched in Europe, I have found but little talent at all, for the standard is so low.] In one particular theatre of private enterprise I have found more talent than in all the other theatres of Europe put together. But it is a result of long training under perfect masters. And the same thing would be the case if the stage director of this theatre were to obtain control of, let us say, the Royal Opera in Paris. But he would have to be given a free hand for fifteen years. These things cannot be done in a hurry at the twelfth hour. England is sometimes inclined to forget this.
[In order to establish a serious theatre in London it will take ten years hard up-hill work and then success will only come if some great talent or genius can be found to undertake the task unhampered by intrigue, and loyally assisted by ten or fifteen men of very exceptional ability.]

The State, like everything else, has itself to support. It rests with itself to decide whether a noble and non-commercial Theatre is more beneficial to its health than degraded and money-making Theatre; and the difficult task it sets itself is to discern the difference between a noble Theatre and a claptrap Theatre. The latter class of Theatre can be observed any day from the comfortable seat of a handsome cab if the driver is directed to go down Shaftesbury Avenue, the Haymarket, turn down to St. James' Palace, back through Pall Mall into St. Martin's Lane and turn down the Strand. The non-commercial Theatre must be imagined. This is not so difficult . . . with practise, and when once it has been imagined by the artist the State has the power to assist in the realisation of the Dream.

[If the State decides to interest itself in such matters it seems to me that its representatives should first carefully consider the conclusions arrived at by the most single-minded professors of the Art of the Theatres.] And it is in selecting advisers . . . these most single-minded professors . . . from the Theatrical Profession that their greatest difficulty lies. [Should they choose as adviser one who has worked all his life for popularity they will be courting a danger which must be obvious to all who have studied the Rise and Fall of the Theatre of the Roman Empire.] If they decide to accept the advice of an actor or actress they run even greater risks. [Neither can an enthusiastic student of the antique theatre be of assistance to them for he confuses yesterday with today]. And a Theatrical Business Director would be unthinkable as an adviser. Those who could give the best advice are often the last to be consulted. They are the few independent thinkers in the European Théâtre.

In my opinion it is these men who if possible should be invited to tell the State the result of their experience, for they look towards the future of the Theatre with grave eyes, neither hopeless of its present unstable condition, nor indifferent as to its mighty past. There are such men in Moscow; there is one in Budapest; one in Holland, one in America, and possibly one or more in England. Most of these men are the stage managers of the first Theatres of their country, and it is due to the fact of their having served for many years in the position of stage manager which in my opinion they might be less provided with the necessary
experience; if they were great actors they would be prejudiced; but being stage directors as well as men of considerable culture, they look upon the stage and its poets, actors and other crafts-men as a Father may do upon his Home with its Family. The Stage-manager, provided he is an artist and a serious thinker, is the only man of the Theatre who is unable to find a preference for any member of this family. He regards all alike. He anticipates the future; he is far sighted; he knows that the Theatre cannot continue long masquerading as the poor relation of the other arts; [he knows that sooner or later the Theatre must cease from depending for its support on the poet, the painter and the musician;]

This is the thought that stirs the imagination of the stage manager whose eyes are gravely fixed on the future of the Stage, and though there are only a handful of such men they have their followers and there are amongst them the most serious men of today.

This Art is as important as any other Fine Art; it is as important as Music, as Architecture, and it is the complement of the two. But the coloured Christmas card culture which in the teeth of common sense and conventional good taste displays its impertinence night after night, year after year upon our English Stage and claims the right to be held as artistic, for this to be judged as a work of art and to receive the distinctions due to a work of art, this the State should attempt to estimate at its true value as quickly as possible. The State, if it decides to consider the desirability of aiding the Theatre, should not refuse to accept the evidence of that portion of the population which possesses that innate if conventional good taste that despises what is termed the "THEATRICAL", otherwise the State might live to realise and regret that it had subsidised not a great art but a glaring vulgarity. This is my answer then to your fourth question: . . . That it is desirable that the State support none but the most gifted stage managers if the State decides to support the Theatre at all; and that the stage managers I allude to must be artists; and that in order to select these Englishmen they should if possible first consult a collective International Committee of such artists in order to understand entirely what are the qualifications of an ideal Stage Director.

Throughout The Mask, Craig insisted that a National Theatre is essential, if the art of the theatre is to be saved from the money-
changers who are usurping the theatre for financial profit. He envisions an idealized National Theatre in which the theatre artists can work, unharrassed by financial problems and production dead lines. The theatres would be small, beautifully furnished and well equipped with technical devices. Large rooms equipped with model stages would provide the artists opportunities to test their work before it is taken to the main stage. Workshop facilities would permit the artists to study and conduct experiments in color and fabric media, lighting instruments, acoustical materials and all the many other technical problems associated with a theatrical production. At the head of each theatre in the National "chain" would be from thirty to forty theatre artists all working under the direction of a supreme theatre artist who would be capable of directing, designing scenery and costumes, writing plays and composing music, taking his turn at the switchboard, constructing scenery and costumes, or acting. This person would be called the Artist-Director and his every wish and command would be obeyed. Craig believed that the maximum in artistic achievement in a theatre could be achieved only if there is a body of artists disposed organically in rank and order, each subordinate to the one above him. In short, Craig recommended a theatre organized along the lines of a hierarchy. The subsidy, to be supplied by the government, says Craig, must be unlimited. The artist, if he is to
create to the limit of his talent, must not be thwarted by parsimony. Craig hazards the guess that after fifteen to twenty-five years, the government could be less generous, for the public would have become oriented to the art of the theatre and therefore willing to pay admission.

Craig's plan for a National Theatre is indeed idealistic and somewhat superficial in that he is concerned only with the apparent results. He never comes to grips with the material difficulties and problems that would be inevitably present in turning his vision of a National Theatre into a reality. He is inclined to pursue his dreams by blithely overlooking the cold facts of an every day world. However, one of the material problems associated with his plan for a National Theatre does occur to Craig. This is the problem of maintaining a steady flow of trained theatre artists into the National Theatre. Since he has no faith in the Commercial Theatre's ability to train theatre artists, Craig proposes a Theatre School or College of the Theatre, also State supported, whose job it would be to train a vast corp of theatre artists. Anticipating the query that could not the drama departments in the college and universities, as they are already being supported by appropriations from the government, furnish the trained theatre workers, Craig has a ready answer. There is a difference between the art of the theatre and drama, says Craig, and while the drama departments may do a reasonably good
job of teaching drama and perhaps some of the rudiments of acting such as platform deportment, they should not be permitted to teach the art of the theatre (XI, 3, p. 149). He writes:

When we read of Universities and Colleges including the study of the Drama in their curriculum we fancy we can understand the drift of the idea. But when we read of these same seats of learning undertaking the practice of the Theatre, we are puzzled. For we see no use whatever in any but craftsmen becoming skilled in the Theatric game.

Once upon a time many of the great colleges of Italy, Spain and France, did have theatres built for their students. And on these stages the young gentlemen rounded off some of their sharp corners; their manners became more elegant. This was a very good use to put the stage to—but none of these young gentlemen ever took up the work of the Theatre afterwards.

That again was right as rain. Young gentlemen should be preserved for different tasks.

The Theatres in the Collegio dei Nobili seem to have been three to four; when one was found out of date a new one was put in. The Jesuits' pupil teachers I think enjoyed playing at theatres--and the heads of the College found it really was of use to the final turned-out article...the young gentleman...which the College turned out finally.

To walk easily, to know how to carry the head and the hands, how not to fidget or shuffle, how to be easy and always ready with a touch of Bravura, this was what was taught and learned on those college stages. In those days Princes and young Lords had to really look like what they were, besides being what they were. And speech, exact and fine, was much liked in noble lords, so speaking had to be learnt, ... and how acquire that better than by acting the part of Belesarius king of Ethiopia or Calerathmus Prince of Barrabara.

The Academies always did what common sense could do to preserve the fine Italian speech.

But beyond deportment and the grace of speech there is surely nothing else that can be taught to gentlemen in a college theatre? Nowadays even these two things do seem to be taught.

If anything, slouching and slurred speech is looked on as properer. Gorki's "Nachazil" or Tolstoi's "Domain of Darkness" or some other piece calling for an imitation of low life, that's the order of the day in colleges.--That, and a thorough training
as a scene painter, stage manager, carpenter, property maker, costumier and so forth.

We see no use whatever in teaching these things to young gentlemen in colleges . . . and presumably none but young gentlemen of the upper circles are sent to college.

For if young Grande or young Nonsuch wish to capitulate and go in for the crafts which we artists favour, they must sink to the third class. Knowledge in these crafts they can acquire in specializing studios. Even wig-making can be learned in a wig-maker’s shop. So we wonder what queer kink of the brain has brought these College and University Dramatic Theatric branches into existence.

In the following issue of The Mask, Craig continues his indictment of the College Theatre professors by accusing them of usurping the rights which belong to the men of the theatre (XI, 4, 1. 165.)

He says:

. . . The second point in my letter in which Professor Nicoll finds "some sort of confusion" is that wherein I maintained that the study of the Theatre and the Drama were not quite of an equal value to a University man; that, while a little drama was most valuable, theatricals were not particularly so; were, in fact, something of a waste of time and money. And I added that it was perhaps the Theatres more than the Colleges which needed the millions to endow them with the power to study Theatricals; in fact that if they were financially endowed with such power it would be rendered unnecessary for Colleges to step in; . . . dare I even say, butt in.

Professor Nicoll mentions Mr. Gordon Craig, and by so doing strengthens my argument.

Mr. Craig, says Professor Nicoll, has persuaded the Editor of "The Mask" to publish "valuable plans of Rome and Paris and present its readers with engravings and drawings of bygone Theatres and he is to be praised".

But praise is cheap, and soft words butter no parsnips. Is Mr. Craig merely to be 'praised' for his services, . . . a little sweet to receive solid support to play at Theatricals, usurp a position not their own? Because Mr. Craig is an
artist, not a collegiate body, (not even a professor like Herr Max Reinhardt) is he to set aside—be side-stepped--; passed over and denied support while that support is given to Universities and Colleges for the very work he initiated and was born to do?

He it is who wishes to reestablish his "School for the Art of the Theatre", and is entitled to do so since the whole idea for such Schools originated with him. It seems however that Professor Nicoll would prefer to do it for him and is laying his plans to do so.

Now Professor Nicoll is a most able professor, and he cannot be blamed because he is not an artist. . . .

But for all this it is, I think, the artist and not the professor who can be relied on best, to give to the theatre all its needs. And, so long as college professors put themselves forward to usurp the offices which ought by every right to be filled by artists and theatre men, they continue to do the theatre, regarding which they profess to be solicitous, serious harm. . . .

Craig continues his diatribe on the subject of the college theatre, as he compliments Harvard University on its good judgment in giving up the job of teaching theatre (XI, 3, p. 143). He says:

. . . . Yale then came in for a one million dollar gift to urge forward what Harvard had come to learn was best to curb. Now what is the truth of all this? I will not beat about the bush but will come to the point. Theatricals are not Drama. Theatricals are not strictly a fine art. Neither do they offer men of intellect (for whom Universities are supposedly founded) anything to which they can apply their brains. Theatricals, as at present understood, are an easy sort of refined slap-stickery. Very much the best thing in them is go-as-you-please, though to do that to the extent of improvising a good play is not easy.

Now to teach that one would suppose very thorough actors were required. Yet we see that professors attempt it. Not even artists of the Theatre are called in;—these the Professor proposes to turn out. If you could turn out, fabricate, artists of the Theatre by the dozen as assuredly you can turn out educated men—men who will later on become doctors, engineers, barristers, historians, architects and musicians, all would be much happier. But it is a miserable fact that at present there are no worthwhile
laws of Theatricals, and so strictly speaking no one can be taught since there is nothing to teach.

The laws of Architecture have all been clearly stated, written down and printed;—they may not make a genius but they certainly must be studied for a course of years by any one who proposes becoming an architect. The laws of Music are in existence, and after years of studying these from books and in practise a man can come to compose sound. Whether it be music and great music or fine music is another matter.

Not so have laws been written down for theatricals, and so it seems we are far from the point when it can become a serious study. It is still essentially an improvised thing. A pretty weed but a weed. And to develop this, to let it grow and spread to any great extent in a university is, I consider, an error. It's hearty enough, this strange plant, this wild herb which (bless its heart) is forever springing where it is not wanted, yet which many a human being in extremity has known how to apply to his bruised head or heel. And being what it is, and such a hearty wild thing, surely it needs no university training. Even like a breath of fresh air, a little of it can do no harm now and again in a place which has uncharitably been held to be a bit stuffy. But to allow it to grow apace to the tune of 1,000,000 dollars inside the temples of learning—surely this is over-doing it for the universities and under-cooking it for the public.

Suppose that in time these old Theatricals develop to a finer condition; suppose that they are able to formulate some simple but well founded laws. That would be surely the day on which the honour of a place in the universities would be fitting. At present all is premature.

It is not a good enough precedent. I see the day shortly coming when boat-racing will be no longer a sport but will have a new College built for the study of it in Oxford, Yale and Cambridge; and a while later on, the pretty game, having become an art or a science, will be played on a table; rivers will no longer be necessary to it.

No, Sir, if I may for a moment be dogmatic,—keep your Theatricals to your Theatres; let the Theatre be a little world by itself. We like it best that way—it thrives best so.

And if you want to be advancing your theatricals, if you aim to bring them into the condition of a fine art, if you must do this, do it off your own bats . . . and with your own team. . . .
The above passages reveal Craig at his very worst. His logic is faulty; he is inconsistent and he speaks authoritatively on an academic subject which is beyond the scope of his training and background.

Craig maintained that only a professional school of the theatre could train artists for the theatre (II, 7-9, p. 114). He says:

... We shall build and equip a college, furnishing it with what is necessary.
It will have to contain two theatres, one open air and one roofed in. These two stages, closed and open, are necessary for our experiments, and on one or on the other, sometimes on both, every theory shall be tested and records made of the results.

These records will be written, drawn, photographed or registered on the cinematograph or gramophone for future reference, but they will not be made public and will be only for the use of members of the college.

Other instruments for the study of natural sound and light will be purchased together with the instruments for producing these artificially, and will lead us to the better knowledge of both sound and light, and also to the invention of yet better instruments through which the purer beauty of both sound and light may be passed.

In addition, instruments will be purchased for the study of motion and some will be especially invented for this purpose.

To this equipment we shall add a printing press, all kinds of carpenters tools, a well stocked library and all things pertaining to modern theatres. With these materials and instruments we shall pursue the study of the stage as it is today with the intention of finding out those weaknesses which have brought it to its present unfortunate condition. We shall, in short, experiment upon the body of the modern theatre in our roofed-in theatre, (for you will remember we have two) exactly in the same way as surgeons and their pupils experiment upon the bodies of dead men and animals.
In selecting its method of administration the college will follow the ancient precedent of nature. It will consist of a head, a body and its members, the leader being selected by Election. Those who are to compose the Executive body are less difficult to decide on, as their task is undoubtedly less difficult.

In all there will not be more than thirty men in the college. There will be no women.

So now are you clear as to these two points? ... First, that we shall have a college of experiment in which to study the three natural sources of the art, Sound, Light and Motion, or, as I have spoken of them elsewhere, voice, scene, and action.

Secondly, that we shall number in all thirty working men who shall singly and together pursue the study of the three subjects named and the other experiments to test the principles of the modern theatre.

The expenses of our first five years, would be as, I said before, £25,000. Now £25,000 possibly seems to you a great deal of money. Let us see, however, what it really represents.

It represents F. Nansen's expenses for his Polar expedition 1893-96.

It represents the cost of one picture in the National Gallery.

It represents the cost of about three to five productions at His Majesty's Theatre or Drury Lane.

It represents about the cost of a single Pageant in England, 1908. ...

You see then that the College, with its eyes fixed on the Future and its Ideal firmly established, would keep its hands and fingers busy with the present, ... The search for the lost Art of the Theatre must be made only after passing through the regions in which the modern Theatre is situated. In passing we shall re-establish its order; do you understand?

Here again is another neat package offered to the government for the sum of £25,000. In his customary manner, Craig neglects to present an itemized budget, which certainly should be the source of the estimated cost of establishing and operating a college for five years.

With the sweep of a hand and the turn of many phrases, Craig concocted three remedies with which to cure the ills of the theatre:
an effective censor, a competent corp of drama critics and a govern-
ment subsidized National Theatre supplemented by a subsidized
Professional School of the Theatre.

The Mask would not have become the most important theatrical
journal of its time had its reputation had to stand on Craig's critical
essays and comments on the ills of the theatre and his recommendations for their cure.

The third division of subject matter in The Mask, which em-
braces Craig's essays on his concepts and theories of the art of the
theatre and his prophecy for the theatre of the future, shares with
the historical reprints the honor of constituting the momentous
contribution The Mask made to the modern theatre. Although
Craig's style of writing on this subject is intensely personal, even
cryptic, his essays, through which his theories and concepts are
chiefly known, are stimulating, provocative, illuminating and pro-
phetic. His expressions are often confusing and his arguments
are never summed up as a whole. However, if one is interested
in the theatre as an art and sets out to study Craig's essays on
the theory of the art of the theatre sympathetically and without
prejudice, he cannot fail to take Craig seriously. His style of
writing is extremely varied but it is never choked, dull or labored.
His style of writing seems to seek the dignity and importance
Craig attached to the subject matter. When writing about the con-
temporary theatre he used colloquialisms, current slang expressions,
and bare and unadorned phrases. Here, his writing is often charac-
terized by half-articulate phrases, deviations from standardized
spelling and split infinitives. One is inclined to believe that Craig
sought to stigmatize the modern theatre by describing it in a style that is,
more often than not, illiterate. When describing his theory of the
art of the theatre and his prophecy for the future of the theatre,
Craig writes in an elevated, literary and poetic tone, rich in
imagery and discreet in choice of words. Here, his style is graceful,
delicate, and refined, and imparts tremendous aesthetic charm.
Craig's essays on the art of the theatre are usually short, but they
are impregnated with revolutionary ideas, opening up to the reader
unimagined realms of thought and beauty. Craig's essays, reveal-
ing his conceptions of the theatre of the future, were a source of
inspiration to the other leaders of the New Art Theatre Movement.
Men such as Hevesi in Hungary, Stanislavsky in Russia, Copeau
in France, Reinhardt in Germany and Robert Edmond Jones in
America put into practice the principles which Craig had stated in
theory. Craig is the prophet and they are the followers. In esti-
mating Craig's service to the theatre, Cheney says:
... The new race of artists of the Theatre, those men who will build this art anew upon the principles which underlie all the true arts, for all time to come will acknowledge him as the Master.  

Craig's theory of the theatre as revealed in his essays in The Mask falls into two divisions. They are: one, The Theory of Acting; and two, The Theory of the Stage Scene.

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CHAPTER III

GRAIG'S THEORY AND PRACTICE
OF SCENE DESIGN

Training and Experience

Gordon Craig's work in scene design covered the period from 1900 to 1928. During this time his theories and designs became known throughout America and Europe through his numerous books, essays, and pamphlets and through exhibitions of his designs held in the leading theatre centers of Europe and America.

Craig came to his work in scene design abundantly endowed with natural ability and sixteen years of acting and production experience. The major portion of his experience was in Sir Henry Irving's company at the Lyceum Theatre. Here Craig had the opportunity to see the brilliant and revolutionary staging methods used in Irving's Shakespearean productions. While with Irving's company, Craig traveled intermittently with provincial touring companies, produced a number of plays, and for a short while had his own acting company. In 1894, he toured the provinces, playing Hamlet and Romeo. In 1895, he toured with Evelyn and Leigh's Company playing the role of Cavaradossi in La Tosca. He joined Sarah Thorne's Company at the Opera House in
London for a part of 1896, where he played, among other roles, Macbeth, Hamlet and Petruchio. From January 18 to 23, 1897, he had his own company at the Croydon Theatre. In May, 1897, he played Hamlet in Ben Greet's Company at the Olympic Theatre for eight performances, having been invited to play the part when Nutcombe Gould was taken ill. In July, 1897, Craig made his last appearance on the stage as an actor when he played Young Marlow in *She Stoops to Conquer*, with Granville Barker as Hastings, at Kingston-on-Thames. Dame Ellen Terry held high hopes for her son's acting career and was saddened when Craig left the stage. She said:

> It is because of Teddy that "Eugene Aram" is associated in my mind with one of the most beautiful sights upon the stage that I ever saw in my life. He was about ten or eleven at the time, and as he tied up the stage roses, his cheeks, untouched by rouge, put the reddest of them to shame! He was so graceful and natural; he spoke his lines with ease, and smiled all over his face! "A born actor!" I said, although Joey was my son. Whenever I think of him in that stage garden, I weep for pride, and for sorrow, too, because before he was thirty my son had left the stage—he who had it all in him. I have good reason to be proud of what he has done since, but I regret the lost actor always.¹

There is very little evidence, other than a few scanty reports, on which to judge Craig's acting ability. He was said to have been a very competent and hard working performer. The author does not know the source for Janet Leeper's evaluation of Craig's acting ability. She

¹ *The Story of My Life*, p. 179.
He [Craig] had all the gifts: voice, presence, intelligence, something of his mother's radiance and grace of movement, and the inherited talent for acting natural to one born in the theatrical purple who had been perfectly at home on the stage since early boyhood.²

Craig made his first appearance on the stage when he walked on with his mother in Olivia at the Court Theatre in London. The second notice of Craig's appearance on the stage, this time as a performer, was as Joey, the Gardener's Boy in Eugene Aram. This was in his mother's American touring company when she was playing in Chicago in 1885. Craig was thirteen years old.

During his first two years in Irving's company, 1889-1890, Dame Ellen Terry and Sir Henry Irving provided Craig with excellent instruction in the art of acting. He had lessons in elocution with Walter Lacy; fencing at Jim Mace's Academy; military drill at the Knightbridge Barracks and lessons in Stage Department from Signor Leon Espinosa.

In considering Craig's work in the Theatre as a scene designer and the allegations accusing him of wanting to substitute the Über-maronnette for the living actor, it is well to remember that Craig had nine years' experience as an actor in the leading stock companies of England and it is from the actor's viewpoint that he approaches his theory

and practice of scene design.

In 1893 Craig married and went to live at Uxbridge, England. There he produced and adapted his first play. The play was *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* by Alfred de Musset, and Craig played Perdicon, the chief role. While at Uxbridge he experimented with a number of other plays by de Musset, produced Benjamin Buckstone's *A Rough Diamond*, and did some scenes from *The Taming of the Shrew*. The author has been unable to find any press notices or criticism of the quality of Craig's productions at Uxbridge. It is fair to assume they were not exceptional and have only a historical importance in the chronology of Craig's career as a scene designer. At Uxbridge Craig met William Nickolson, the painter and designer, with whom he first studied the art of wood carving and design.

In 1897, Craig began to draw and sketch for journals and to design book plates for his friends, and during the next three years he became known as a designer of exceptional ability. His work as a free lance designer paid wretchedly but it was his principal source of income after he left Irving's Company. Craig's work in sketching, drawing and wood carving is characterized by an exquisite and delicate handling of the elements of composition. There is in particular a strong feeling in balance and rhythm in the treatment of mass, form and line. Craig's work as a scene designer has completely over-shadowed his excellent work in sketching, drawing and wood carving, but there is much of the
same quality in these designs as in his designs for stage scenes.

He began publishing The Page in January, 1898. There were twelve numbers in Volume I, four numbers in Volume II, a Christmas number in Volume III and two numbers in Volume IV. It appears that the chief motive behind the publication of this Journal was to advertise Craig's bookplates and woodcuts. At this time there was a great interest in individualized bookplates and undoubtedly Craig saw what appeared to him to be an opportunity to earn some money.

There is very little in The Page to indicate that Craig was the least bit interested in the Theatre. However, it does have some minor historical significance in tracing Craig's work in scene design. It contains one of his first published designs for a stage scene (IV. 4). It also carries an announcement (II. 4) of the forthcoming production of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas by the Purcell Operatic Society. Craig and Martin Shaw, the musician and composer, had organized the Purcell Operatic Society in 1899. The announcement reads:

... This Society has been formed with the initial purpose of reviving the works of Purcell, Orne, Handel, Gluck, etc. The first production will be Purcell's 'Dido and Aeneas,' to be given on three consecutive evenings in the Spring, 1900. No pains will be spared to make these performances complete in every way.

The Purcell Operatic Society is limited to 250 Members, and the annual subscription is One Guinea, entitling members to three seats. 300 seats will be reserved for members
at each performance, and will be allotted in order of application. Musical Director, Martin Fallas Shaw. Stage Director, Edward Gordon Craig.

For further particulars apply to the Editor "The Page".

The same issue of The Page announced the beginning of Miss Edith Craig's work in costume design. In 1903, Edith and Gordon Craig collaborated with Ellen Terry to produce The Vikings and Much Ado About Nothing at the Imperial Theatre in London. Edith Craig designed the costumes for the productions.

Miss Edith Craig has the pleasure to announce that she has made arrangements for undertaking the designing and execution of Theatrical Costumes. The making of each particular Dress will be personally superintended by Miss Craig, and no detail, however trifling, will be overlooked. Miss Craig believes that it is only in this way that an entirely correct and perfect result can be obtained.

This had been practically demonstrated in the recent production of "Robespierre" at the Lyceum Theatre, nearly all the costumes having been designed by Miss Craig and carried out by her special staff of skilled work-women.

Correct designs of any period for capes, cloaks, skirts, muffa, gloves, headgear, collars, and every particular, can be submitted and the very lowest estimates given. Miss Edith Craig, 15, Barton Street, Westminster, London.

In 1899, Craig published Gordon Craig's Book of Penny Toys. The book contains twenty large woodcuts and twenty-three colored drawings of animals and fowls as well as some original verse for children. The woodcuts and drawings have a fascinating whimsical
quality about them. They are drawn with a childlike concept without the crudeness of the untrained hand. Craig reveals his ability to capture the essence of an object without copying all the details of its structure. This quality is later seen in his scene designs.

In 1900, Craig published a booklet called **Bookplates** containing twenty-four select prints. Numbered among the bookplates are those he designed for his mother and his sister, Edy Craig.

By 1900, Craig had not yet published any of his views and theories of the art of the theatre, nor had he attracted any significant attention as a designer of scenery. He was known only as the son of Ellen Terry; as an actor who had shown considerable promise, and as an excellent designer of woodcuts and bookplates. The fact that he had not yet written on the theatre, nor had designed any scenery does not indicate a lack of interest or deep concern over the commercial theatre's methods of staging plays.

On May 17, 1900, Craig launched a new phase of his career. On this date he and Martin Shaw produced Purcell's opera, **Dido and Aeneas**, at Hampstead Theatre in London. The Opera ran for three performances and the production established Craig as a designer whose work was diametrically opposed to that of any of his contemporaries. Later in 1900, Craig and Shaw produced **The Masque of Love** from Purcell's **Dioclesian** at the Coronet Theatre. The Opera ran for
six performances. In 1902, they produced Handel's *Acis and Galatea* at the Great Queen Street Theatre. In the same year, Craig set out alone and produced Lawrence Housman's *Bethlehem* at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington.

Those who saw these productions remember them with wonder. W. B. Yeats writes in his *Ideas of Good and Evil* of 'Gordon Craig's purple backcloth that made Dido and Aeneas seem wandering on the edge of eternity!', and Henry Nevinson, who was present at the Coronet Theatre, wrote in his notebook: 'Both Dido (which the people would call Dodo) and *The Masque* went gloriously. Great beauty of the purples and greys and greens in the Dido against the vast background of purple eternity. The music was lovely throughout but richer and fuller of possibility in *The Masque*. Daring colours and arrangements. White figures and greys and greens, with but rare touches of red, the more brilliant for their variety'.

In collaboration with his mother and sister, Craig produced Ibsen's *The Vikings* and Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Imperial Theatre in 1903. *The Vikings* opened in April and *Much Ado* closed in June. Even with Dame Ellen Terry playing the leads, the productions were a financial failure. However, Craig's designs in the productions were an artistic success.

Count Kessler . . . writing long after described his impressions of the plays at the Imperial Theatre thus:

It must have been about 1900 (1903) when the first stage scenes that he created for his mother, Ellen Terry, astounded London by their almost fanatical

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simplification and their turning away from realism.
While the Meiningen Company and, in England,
Beerbohm Tree were making the stage into a branch
of the Arts and Crafts Museum, piling up accurate
historical detail, people found that Craig had used
for Ibsen's *The Vikings* only curtains as background,
and only such properties as were indispensable to the
action; and in the church scene in *Much Ado About
Nothing*, except for the curtains there was only one
strong ray of sunlight, falling on the stage in a thousand
colours through an invisible stained glass window.

What Count Kessler saw was a single shaft of light falling
on a huge cross hanging from above, lighting up its many colours
little by little. Gradually the beam widened so that more and
more light filled the stage, the figures in the foreground re-
main ing shrouded in darkness. The curtains on either side
were painted with pillars and hung in folds. It was all very
simple and severe—an antithesis to the gorgeous setting
Irving had used not long before. In point of fact, *The Vikings*
had a great deal more to it than curtains. There was a most
solid structure of rocks and cliffs down which the actors had
to clamber and in one scene a great platform. But gone were
the flies and wings and borders with a painted backcloth up-
stage; footlights were reduced to a minimum and the light
fell from above; and the costumes were planned as an artist
would plan them—as part of his picture, and not for their
individual effect. This, in itself alone, was a tremendous
innovation. Colour was used in combination with the move-
ment on the stage, and we already see here—in 1900—3—the
beginning of what was to lead to Diaghilev's Russian Ballet.
For Craig's theatre was always most musical most poetic.
To achieve a certain effect he used dresses, in *The Vikings*,
of eight shades of grey—he has always loved greys and
browns, very low in tone; besides these, great semi-cir-
cular cloaks, all of clear colour—a blaze of it. There were
also golden ornaments of delicate intricacy, trimmings in
rope, and studded shields of bold and simple design, some of
which, being beautiful and serviceable, have survived to this
day. *The Times* wrote that the scenic simplicity and severity
were impressive, "Harmonious in colouring, broad and
massive in design".  

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4 *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9
It is little wonder that the commercial theatre did not accept Craig's concept and practice of scene design. His method of handling the movements and groupings of the actors, illuminating the scene with light and shadow, designing the costumes, and use of color was entirely unlike anything known in the theatre of the day. The stock scenic sets of kitchen, palace, business office, etc.; the large apron rimmed with glaring footlights; the flapping canvas wings; the backdrops and leaf borders of the commercial theatre were completely incompatible with the artistic productions which were put on the stage by Craig at the Imperial Theatre. Notwithstanding the fact that Craig's productions were unacceptable to the commercial theatre, his designs were impressive and he attracted the attention of those who were interested in the theatre as an art rather than a business. Even though his productions were financial failures, his designs aroused considerable interest when exhibited in London in 1902 and in Edinburg, Glasgow and Liverpool in 1903.

The few favorable reviews of his productions and the enthusiasm shown at the exhibitions of his designs may have been of some solace to Craig, but they were not, in any sense, financially rewarding.

Craig at this time had no theories of stage production, nor had he as yet any great historical knowledge of stage-craft. However, from these early productions he began to realize that there were possibilities
of an art of the theatre which had not yet been imagined. His experience to date revealed to him that the commercial theatre was not the proper place for experimentation in the art of theatre production.

Craig was disappointed and somewhat embittered that the English theatre had not looked with more favor on his designs and productions.

On this point he says:

Meantime, my work had been heard of in Germany and Germans had come over to London to see it. So when it became obvious to me that E. T. [Ellen Terry] could only carry on with one of her children, I decided to get along to Germany and to Russia and other lands where my notions were regarded without prejudice, and progress was preferred to argumentative retrogression.

But before leaving London I looked around to see if I could note any sign which I could rely on as indicating a desire on someone's part that I should continue to produce more plays. I waited and listened and looked around - no one made any sign whatever - so off I went.  

Enid Rose, Craig's chief biographer, gives an account of his last days in England and his decision to go to the continent. She writes:

In 1903, after his experience of working in a London theatre, under existing conditions, Gordon Craig came to the conclusion that this was not the proper place for experiment. He asked for the foundation of a School for the Art of the Theatre.

Such a school, he believed, could feed the commercial theatre with tested productions and ideas. He had faith in his own instinctive powers to discover the right method for the conduct of such an innovation in educational establishments.

Gordon Craig issued a formal prospectus for his school, a copy of which, has been preserved in the British Museum.

Response to the idea of the school was not immediately forthcoming. . . .

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5 Ellen Terry and Her Secret Self, p. 139
It was only when the short season at the Imperial Theatre proved to be a small financial loss, that a carping criticism began to be heard from people who had not been present. They knew that the performances were different from the accepted run and therefore decided that they were "precious" or "freakish!" or any other term likely to prejudice the fortunes of their creator in the English theatre. The "legend" of Craig began to grow. He was "unpractical", he was "impossible", "extravagant", "mad", he was feared as a "rebel".

As England offered him no prospect of finding exercise for powers which could not be denied, he was compelled to look abroad. He wanted to learn what might be happening in the theatres of other lands and he heard that in Germany he would find at least enthusiasm and energy, if no very great art.6

The year 1904 has considerable historical importance in Craig's career in the theatre. In the first place, it marks the end of his work as a designer and producer in the English Theatre, for in July, 1904, Gordon Craig turned his back on England and took up a self-imposed life-time exile on the Continent. What was England's loss was the Continent's gain and the English Theatre has been severely criticized for its failure to recognize and support the work of Gordon Craig. On this subject, Thomas H. Dickinson writes:

Politically it has been the role of the British Isles to play the part of isolation. The theatre of England is likewise isolated. It is unnecessary to comment upon this isolation further than to say that, aside from the Irish National Theater of the nineties, the Elizabethan Stage Society, and the repertory and municipal theater movement of the second decade of the century, the theater of Great Britain has largely failed to respond to the more radical impulses that have moved the theater of the continent. The decision to exclude England from the volume was not invalidated

by the heroic and enigmatic figure of Gordon Craig. No one can today study the European theater without paying tribute to Gordon Craig. No one can study Craig without recognizing that his influence has not been British. Great Britain has failed to recognize him, to employ him, or to understand him. He is essentially a continental figure.7

George Sheringham, in reviewing Craig's contributions to the theater, reprimands England for her failure to recognize Craig. He says:

Gordon Craig is an Englishman of genius, and we should have been the first, not the last, country to recognize the fact. Ever since the public was made conscious that it had been and still is neglecting him, its great mouth has been frothing with excuses: more wordy than convincing, these excuses do nothing to mitigate the neglect of such a prophet; a neglect that is a smirch on the honour of our national theatre. The question of what should be done for the realization of Gordon Craig's ideals irks the public conscience like a wound that will not heal.8

The year 1904 has a second historical importance in tracing Craig's career as a scene designer. It marks the end of what could be called his Workshop Period. From the time he entered Irving's Company in 1889 down to 1904, Craig served a long apprenticeship in the theatre as an actor, producer, director and designer. He had had excellent instruction in acting in Irving's company. He had produced opera, ballet, and drama. He had established himself as an artist in design, sketching and wood


carving. He had demonstrated his ability to write with a style characterized by intellectual abundance and aesthetic charm. Craig had the experience and the equipment to establish himself as a leader in the "New Theatre Movement" which was then taking root in the theatre centers of Europe. In July, 1904, Craig was invited to Berlin by Otto Brahm, who was then the managing-director at the Lessing Theatre. Craig was to produce Hofmannsthal's version of Thomas Otway's Venice Preserved. Brahm's invitation had been encouraged by Count Harry Kessler of Weimar. Kessler had been impressed with Craig's productions at the Imperial Theatre in London in 1903.

The year 1904 has a third historical importance in the career of Gordon Craig. It is the year in which his theory of production ran head-on into the so-called literary tradition of the theatre. This is the tradition which says that the dramatic performance is something different from the playscript which it contains. Those who are within the literary tradition hold to the belief that the purpose of the scene, costumes, lighting, scenery and movement must serve to illustrate the script. Those who follow the literary tradition maintain that the theatre began with the Word and the salvation of the theatre can come only through the dramatic poet. They say that the progress of the theatre must wait upon the dramatist and that the theatre's achievements are measured in terms of the quality of the dramatic literature. The literary tradition
came to the English theatre in the Restoration period and with it came
the scene painter to decorate the stage for the story of the play. By
1904, the literary tradition had become so entrenched that the audience
no longer went to the theatre to see a theatrical production; instead
they went to hear a social proposition debated by the characters in the
play. Craig first encountered the literary tradition when he produced
Venice Preserved with Otto Brahm in Berlin. One of the characteristic
features of Craig's work in the theatre from 1904 onwards is his con-
tinuous fight against the literary tradition. Rose touches the center of
Craig's conflict with Brahm when she says:

Craig, in working with him (Otto Brahm) in the production
of Venice Preserved, found himself struggling with the literary
tradition, the conviction that the words were the "spiritual"
part of the drama, and the visible realisation the "material"
part. Brahm was not prepared to understand Craig's insis-
tence that words are physical signs no less than any others and
that visible signs may have a spiritual significance and may be
used with as great a play of fancy as language. When he pro-
saically asked of one scene which Craig designed, "Where is
the door?" he received the reply, "There is no door. There
is a way in and out". But he could not see that this was more
to the dramatic purpose than an unmistakable door with a handle
and all complete. He was only reconciled when assured that the
scene had been copied by line from an old Italian manuscript.
With this experience, Craig found that his ideas could not grow
in that theatre. Again he was out of work. 9

Craig was out of work but this did not lessen his enthusiasm for
his belief in himself and his ideas of theatre production. He leveled
his sights and began his vigorous and relentless attack upon: one, the literary tradition of the theatre; two, the naturalistic drama; and three, the contemporary method of staging a play. From 1904 onward for the next twenty-five years Craig pursued his fight against these three evils in the theatre. Between 1904 and 1913, Craig's scene designs were exhibited in Berlin, Weimar, Dresden, Rotterdam, London, Vienna, Munich, Manchester, Zurich, Warsaw, Budapest, and Florence. The designs aroused great interest and were the source of much controversy wherever they were exhibited. To a theatre whose scenery had fallen deep into the pitfall of realistic detail, Craig's designs, characterized by massive walls, vast areas of light and shadow, three-dimensional objects in the form of steps and cubes suggesting an endless variety of levels and planes and giving to the scene a non-representative plasticity and a dramatic effectiveness, clearly pointed the way to a new concept of the stage scene, and a few of the leaders of Europe's theatre began to utilize Craig's methods and techniques.

If people in England had been slow to receive Craig's ideas, those abroad were not so slow. The actor Max Reinhardt, who had been working under Brahm at the Deutsches Theater, and had been producing plays on his own account since 1902 at the Kleines Theatre in Berlin, seized on them with avidity. When Craig's book appeared, he had just taken over the direction of the Deutsches Theater from Brahm, and a significant change now came over the productions there. He began to make use of the gold-mine of Craig's original theories and to exploit them to the full. His so-called realistic presentation of poetic drama now gave way to symbolic and decorative treatment such as we associate with the modern theatre in Germany, with beautiful lighting such as
Craig had already shown in his London productions. Led by the enthusiasm and practical energy of Count Kessler, the public flocked to Reinhardt's theatre and the success of the new movement was assured. From Reinhardt it was ultimately to spread to the whole German-speaking stage, so that a 'Craigische Vorstellung' became an accepted expression for a performance on the lines advocated by Craig, and added an adjective to the German Language.  

The author believes that Leeper is correct in using the word 'exploit' in describing the manner in which Max Reinhardt capitalized on Craig's ideas and turned them into capital gain. Craig's ideas became the essence of the Art Theatre Movement in Europe and America, and between 1904 and 1928 Craig was universally recognized as the leader and chief spokesman of the Art Theatre Movement. Craig himself during this period staged only two plays, *Venice Preserved* in Berlin and *Hamlet* in Moscow. One of the very regrettable facts in the history of the modern theatre is that Craig never had a theatre, at least in the sense that Reinhardt, Appia, Brahms, Grein, Copeau and many others had theatres, in which he himself could test and experiment with the methods he so strongly advocated. Whatever the reason for this fact, whether it was his unwillingness to compromise, his idealism, his insistence on controlling all the facets of the production, his bitter denunciation and scorn of the scenic practice in the theatre, his aestheticism, his extravagant demands—whatever the reasons might have been, the modern theatre suffered an irreparable loss. If Craig could not realize

10 *Edward Gordon Craig*, p. 15
his methods and theories in an actual stage production, others took them up and by so doing achieved artistic and financial success. Stark Young, in a review of Douglas Ross' production of Macbeth at the Knickerbocker Theatre in New York on November 29, 1928, for which Craig contributed some designs, writes:

Mr. Gordon Craig's ideas have spread into the very texture of the theatre and even into the realm of the moving pictures, which from anywhere and anybody, Russia, Germany, designers, painters, authors, have made use of his conceptions.....That Mr. Gordon Craig is one of the outstanding geniuses in the history of the world of the theatre is obvious.....He has been a seed, an upheaval, a light and power in the Art of the Theatre, not only on its visual side but with regard to the whole production. His influence is evident in the Modern Russians, in Reinhardt, in Granville-Barker and lesser men in England, in Mr. Robert Edmond Jones, and Mr. Norman-Bel Geddes and other designers in America, in Spain, in Italy, in the whole modern theatre. Some have fed their talents with his substance, some have turned it into paying enterprise. 11

Dr. Alexander Hevesi, in a letter to the editor of The Mask (IV, 2, p. 88) refers to the Hungarian Theatre's indebtedness to Craig. He says:

He has his admirers and followers in our little Hungary, the whole of the new generation being under his influence, and without any disparagement to the great merit and good luck of Professor Reinhardt, we Hungarians, as close neighbours and good observers dare say, that almost all that has been done in Berlin or Dusseldorf, in Munich or in Mannheim for the last ten years is to be called the success of Mr. Craig.

Several American designers are indebted to Craig. Numbered

among them are Lee Simonson and Robert Edmond Jones. Sheldon Cheney speaks of their debt to Craig:

Lee Simonson has tied together several Theatre Guild productions with the extraordinary visual continuity of his [Craig's] settings, and Robert Edmond Jones has often achieved a sustained outward beauty that added immeasurably to the impressiveness of the production. 12

While Craig was making his designs for the Berlin production of *Venice Preserved* he received a commission from Eleonora Duse in Italy to design her production of Hoffmannsthal's adaptation of *Electra*. Craig sent his designs to Duse, but they were never used, since Duse did not produce the play. A year later, Duse met Craig in Berlin, and invited him to Florence to design the scene for her production of Ibsen's Rosmersholm. When Duse decided to produce the play in Nice, Craig's scene proved to be too big for the stage of the theatre, and the stage manager futilely cut it down, completely destroying the proportion in which its magic largely resided. Gordon Craig sent a letter of protest to the actress at her hotel, to which she replied with the brief note, "What they have done to your scenes, they have been doing for years to my art." The legend of Craig began to crystallize. He was assailed as a vague idealist who could 'dream-up' pretty sketches of stage scenes, none of which could be realized on the stage.

In 1905, Craig issued his first formal protests and theoretical statements on the theatre. This was a booklet called *The Art of the Theatre*. The booklet was first published in German, then in English and finally in Russian. The booklet is written in the form of a dialogue between a Director and a Playgoer. Craig favored the dialogue form of writing and he used it frequently in *The Mask*. *In The Art of the Theatre*, Craig argued for the first time, his protest against the contemporary theatre's practice of departmentalizing the production elements of a play. He argued that in order to produce a supreme theatrical effect, the production must be unified under one man. Visual unity in a production can be realized only when there is a synthesized blending of movement, light and color, speech and music. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the transitory standards of the theatre. He argued that literature, painting, and music had well established standards that prevailed from year to year, writer to writer and nation to nation. The theatre, on the other hand, relies on ephemeral standards developed one day and cast aside the next, all at the whim of a theatrical promoter. The theatre is art and as such must have a body of laws which directs its course. He reaffirmed his conviction that the salvation of the theatre as an art lay in a school where the art of the theatre might be studied in all its aspects. Craig's plea for unity in production, for an art of the theatre and for a school where the art could be studied became a part of the Cragian dogma. Craig never
wavered from these first concepts of the theatre.

In 1907, Craig's ideas for his screens began to take shape. Craig had been, up to then, using draperies with which he suggested the massive vertical walls of his designs. The draperies presented several problems. They were cumbersome to handle in quick scene changes and they required elaborate over-head rigging. They were incapable of providing the large variety of shapes and forms required by Craig's designs. Since the expense of providing different sets of colored drapes was excessive, Craig was limited in the use of a variety of color in the scene. Craig conceived of a set of folding screens [flats] to take the place of the draperies. He incorporated the use of the screens in his designs in 1908, and from that time onward the screens gained wide attention and precipitated lively controversy throughout Europe and America. The first successful use of Craig's screens took place at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, in 1911, in a production of William Butler Yeat's Deidre and The Hour Glass.

In 1908, Max Reinhardt invited Craig to Berlin to produce King Lear. Craig made designs for the production, but again as in Duse's production of Rosmersholm, the management of the Theatre attempted to force Craig into a compromise in the use of his screens. Craig did not regard the compromise as necessary and the production was called off. It was another of the various projects into which Craig entered that did not materialize.
In 1909, Craig made one of his infrequent trips to England, this time to consider the production of *Macbeth*. A report on this trip is given by Enid Rose. She says:

In 1909, there came a sign from the English theatre in the form of a proposal to Craig that he should design the scenes for a production of "Macbeth!" at His Majesty's Theatre, under the management of Herbert Beerbohm Tree. . . . . In inviting him to co-operate, Tree was perhaps actuated more by his regard for Ellen Terry than by trust in the genius of her son. . . . . It was not Craig who broke the contract but the hesitant theatre manager. This was the last serious proposal that Gordon Craig received from any London management. . . . .

In November of 1908, Craig received an invitation from Constantin Stanislavsky to come to Moscow and visit the Moscow Art Theatre. After staying a month, he was asked to select a play that he would like to produce, and he selected *Hamlet*. He worked on the designs for the production during 1909 and 1910 at his studio-workshop in the Arena Goldoni at Florence, Italy. (Craig had gone to Italy in 1906 to work on the designs for the ill-fated Duse production of *Rosmersholm*. He had secured the Arena Goldoni in September of 1908.) Craig made two trips to Moscow in 1909 and 1910 to supervise the preparation of the production. The illness of Stanislavsky in 1910 caused some delay in the preparation. In a letter to the pseudo-editor of *The Mask* (III, 1, p. 35), John Semar, Craig indicated that he was going

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13 *Gordon Craig and the Theatre*, pp. 91-92
to use his screens in the production, in place of draperies, and that he
was removing the foot-lights.

I have got past the time when it is amusing for me to paint
scenery for some manager who wants to make a show, or
when I feel flattered that one or two of my ideas shall be
seen on the stage and spoken of in one or two morning papers.
Why, years ago, I remember, when I said that the foot-
lights must be removed he looked at me as if he would die.
Yet we have removed the footlights at Moscow so what is
there to be said? Either I was right or I was wrong; at
Moscow they find that I am right.

Of course I have had time to demonstrate the value of
using one scene instead of using a lot of painted scenery.
And when I say that I am going to have only one scene in
"Hamlet" you must not imagine that I am reverting to that
old idea of mine (which I have now put aside), of using a
set of curtains suspended from a great height.

While in Moscow preparing the production of Hamlet, Craig filled
a large room with a model of the Moscow Art Theatre Stage. On the
model stage Craig arranged scaled down copies of his Screens and
carved wooden figures to represent the actors. There were daily re-
hearsals of scene by scene with Craig explaining, through interpreters,
the movement, business and characterization to the actors. Two steno-
graphers, one English and one Russian took down all that was said. The
long awaited production took place on January 8, 1912. The production
had a run of more than four hundred performances. The most reliable
account of the production comes from Stanislavsky. He says:

The production of "Hamlet" met with great success. Some
people were enthusiastic, others criticized, but everybody was
excited, and debated, read reports, wrote articles, while the
other theatres in the country quietly appropriated the ideas of
Craig, publishing them as their own.
Appareently we could not expect a greater success. But I was not happy within myself. Firstly, because I had not been able to show Craig as I wanted to show him, secondly because this important production had brought new doubts into my work and my researches. We had wanted to make the production as simple and as modest as possible. Of course this modesty was to be a result of rich imagination. There was very much imagination and simplicity, but the production seemed unusually luxurious, grandiose, affected to such an extent that its beauty attacked the eye and hid the actors in its pomp. This new quality of the stage was a surprise to me. The more we tried to make the production simple the stronger it reminded us of itself, the more it seemed pretentious and displayed its showy naivete.

I suffered even greater confusion from the viewpoint of the acting in the production. The actors of the Art Theatre who had learned to a certain extent the methods of the new inner technique used them with some degree of success in the plays of our modern repertoire which were near to their own lives. Apparently it still lay before us to go through the same work and to find analogical methods and means for plays in the heroic and the grand style. When 'Hamlet' was first produced by us, our Theatre had not yet begun its quest in that direction.  

It is interesting to note that during the Moscow rehearsals of Hamlet, Craig developed his technique for transferring his slender wooden figures, used on the model stage, to paper. They became known as his Black Figures. Leeper describes their appearance. She says:

A by-product of this presentation of Hamlet were the figures carved in thin wood which were used by Craig in his model theatre to explain the many movements of the actors in Hamlet to the Russians. Beginning as white figures in a model theatre, they ended up as Black Figures on paper. How to describe their metamorphosis? Look at the Poet and his

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Thought, or Hamlet and his Daemon (Plate 28). He lived in Craig's pocket during rehearsals in Moscow, taking his place in the model theatre when needed. Then one day he was inked and pressed on thin paper, in the same way as woodcuts are inked and impressed on fine papers. Thus were the Black Figures created -- half-woodcut, half-marionette, strange creatures of practical use and imagination. A whole series of characters appeared, some belonging to other plays -- The Merchant of Venice (Plates 26 and 27), On Baile's Strand, Macbeth, Beauty and the Beast -- while others took on immortality in Count Kessler's hand-printed edition of Hamlet, prepared by the Cranach Press. There you will find (if you can find a copy) the Second Gravedigger with his long spade (Plate 29), the spectral Ghost (Plate 30), the Actor in "a forest of feathers" with the attributes of his craft (Plate 31), Hamlet greeting the actors (Plates 32 and 33), the Player-King asleep in the orchard (Plate 34) -- while the Poisoner approaches from the opposite page across the intervening letter-press to pour poison in his ear, --the Court in confusion and the King calling for lights, as it was not seen even in Moscow (Plate 35). Not all walked abroad in the Russian model theatre, many took shape only as illustrations to the printed book: but from 1912 to 1929, when the German edition appeared, Craig was on and off at work, carving, cutting and printing, so that more than sixty figurines and wood-blocks were added to the dozen or so of the experimental theatre. 15

After the Moscow Art Theatre production of Hamlet, Craig returned to Florence. He was at work on a large model for a projected production of Bach's St. Matthew Passion when World War I was declared. The project was scrapped and the model torn down. The outbreak of World War I and the termination of the Bach project marks the end of Craig's career as an active producer. In 1946, he said:

15 Edward Gordon Craig, pp. 24-25.
1915 to 1946 is a long game of patience—and for almost every artist on earth. Thirty years of breaking things up—has this been realised? Patience or impatience—laughing or fury, had to be the tune we played.  

After 1914, Craig's own designs had a part in only two productions. In '1926, he was invited to Copenhagen by Johannes and Adam Paulson to assist them in the production of Ibsen's The Crown Pretenders at the Royal State Theatre. Craig describes the event and prints his designs for the play in a work called, A Production: 1926, published by the Oxford University Press in 1930. After Craig's visit to Copenhagen, Johannes Paulson said:

I have known the work of Gordon Craig for many years, but Gordon Craig himself I have only known for a few years. I find him one of the most charming and genial men that I have known. He is good and kind, like Hans Andersen; he is quite unselfish, like Tolstoy. He does not care a bit for money. His mind is that of a great philosopher. He can work himself to death for an idea; he can get out of his mind with rage, worse than any Italian nobleman, and after a moment he is as gentle as the blue sea on a summer's day... He has a sixth sense for that which is true, genuine and beautiful in art which is given to only a few persons in each century. As every judge of character will understand from this, the fate of such a man is as always to be utilised by others to their profit and not his...but while others have filled their own pockets, Gordon Craig has written his name in ineffaceable letters on the sky of the European mind.  

The author has already referred to the designs Craig submitted.

16 Ibid., p. 39.
17 Ibid.; p. 30
for the New York production of *Macbeth* in 1928. Stark Young did not like the production. He thought the execution and painting of the scenery was inferior. However, he complimented Craig's designs when he said:

> It is only too easy to imagine that in the whole sheaf of designs that Mr. Gordon Craig created there were many beautiful motives and elements that are not even suggested in this production as we see it.

Craig's designs had not lost their power to create a dramatic effect.

Craig's Criticism of the Natural and Pictorial Methods of Scene Design

Craig's criticism of the contemporary stage setting is leveled on the one hand at the ridiculous artificiality and spectacular vulgarity of the painted perspective of the back drop and winged pictorial setting and on the other, at the photographic perfection and meticulous detail of the naturalistic setting. The reader will recall that in 1900, when Craig was beginning to formulate his theory of theatre, there were two diametrically opposed styles of stage settings, both of which had staunch advocates in the American, English and European Theatres. The pictorial framed setting composed of wing and back drop had had its origin with the Italian Renaissance scene painters, had been transplanted to England by Inigo Jones for use in the Court Masque, and continued as background for the artificial comedy of the Restoration. It served the
opera, melodrama and sentimental drama of the eighteenth century and, with the addition of foliage borders and tree wings for exteriors, continued to the last quarter of the 19th century to be, with minor exceptions, the only method used in setting the scene for a play.

The first major revolt against the pictorial setting came in the closing years of the nineteenth century when the naturalistic setting began to appear in the 'Free Theatres' of Europe. Naturalism in the theatre appeared in France, Germany and Russia in the late 1880's. In the next ten to fifteen years the movement had entered the theatres of England and America. The Naturalistic method of setting the scene for a play did not spell the demise of the pictorial setting. The two methods continued to have a hearty existence and often appeared together not only in alternate scenes in a play but within the same scene.

A part of the naturalistic manifesto was to set a stage so realistically that artistic detachment in the theatre would be completely destroyed and the audience would live vicariously, a real life experience in the theatre. In this respect the naturalists followed the theories of Denis Diderot. In theory, Diderot would have placed the "fourth-wall" behind the last person in the theatre. The audience was invisible but was on the stage and intrinsically involved in the action of the play. Frank W. Chandler comes to the heart of the Naturalistic manifesto when he says:

Realistic art, to use the convenient, distinction drawn.
by Professor W. A. Neilson, is that in which the sense of
fact prevails over reason and imagination. The realistic
artist observes actuality, and is engaged in the attempt
to convey his impression of it, rather than to interpret
it by the reason or to supplement it by the imagination.
The naturalistic artist simply carries this process to
extremes.... He refuses, so far as he can, to allow his
reason to reshape or interpret experience. He offers no
theory of life; he professes, instead, to present life
itself. 18

Naturalism was enthusiastically supported by Andre Antoine
in his Theatre Libre in Paris (1887), Otto Brahm in his Freie Buhne
in Berlin (1889), J. T. Grein in his Independent Theatre in London
(1893), Constantin Stanislavsky in the Moscow Art Theatre (1897)
and by David Belasco in New York in the first decade of the Twentieth
Century.

The chief objective of the naturalistic setting was to convince
the audience that what they saw on the stage was not scenery at all but
the real thing. The naturalist bent every effort to create an illusion
of a particular place or period. He used all the mechanical devices of
the stage to imitate nature and represent it photographically. The
naturalist used the stage as a magic box in which he could, by his
clever and shrewd handling of sound and lighting devices, deceive the
senses of the audience. The naturalist believed that the very essence of
theatre was illusion of reality and that he must obliterate the stage and

18 Frank W. Chandler, Aspects of Modern Drama (New York:
The Macmillan Company, 1924) p. 31-40
then try to enchant the audience into the belief that they were not in a theatre at all. The naturalists conceived the setting as an environment before which the character moved and spoke.

The naturalistic setting is the background, the vital statistics, of the character's life. It in no way explains or deals with him. A setting that has been supplied with a fountain with real running water, to the delight of the audience, in no way explains or deals with the actor. In life, on the other hand, the environment has an influence on human behavior. Darwin had expressed this idea in his *Origin of Species* many years before the Naturalists in the theatre unwittingly thought that the idea should apply to the stage setting. The naturalists seemed to think that a vivid and realistic representation of life was an explanation of it. For all their devotion to authenticity, the naturalistic setting was no more real on the stage than a stuffed owl or a mannequin in a shop window.

The pictorial method of setting the stage for a play had its beginning in the Italian Renaissance. Mordecai Gorelik in his book, *New Theatres For Old*, gives an account of how the pictorial method of preparing the stage for a play was in essence an attempt to achieve illusion of reality. He says:

..... The discovery of the laws of perspective by the Italian Renaissance provided a new instrument for grasping reality and bringing it to the stage. Using the science of perspective, Baldassare Peruzzi designed Cardinal Bibiena's play *Calandre* at Urbino in 1513. Vasari described the streets, palaces and
other buildings in the scene as being "so perfectly presented that they did not look like things feigned, but are as the living reality." (Nicoll: The Development of the Theatre).

It is evident that the ability to create an illusion was a great merit in the eyes of Renaissance audiences. This is an excellent example of the beginnings of the illusory system of stage production... 19

The pictorial method of scene painting during the Renaissance was characterized by formal architectural designs painted on huge canvasses hung on the stage to give the effect of massive columns and arches setting off vistas receding into the background in startling perspective. The stage floor was raked from front to back to give additional convincingness to the perspective. During the English Restoration, the massive architectural painting of the Renaissance gave way in part to the side wings and backdrops upon which were painted chairs, windows, tables, gardens, and forest scenes. The perspective was still a factor but the principle effort was directed toward the achievement of real rooms and gardens. The center of the stage was left reasonably bare and the actors did most of their work on the stage apron. The third innovation in the chronology of the pictorial setting was in the last half of the nineteenth century when the wings and backdrops begin to give way to scene flats arranged in the shape of side and back walls to represent interiors. A part of the furniture of the room continued to be painted on the canvas walls. The

19 New Theatres For Old, p. 116
chronology of the pictorial setting was complete when the naturalist brought real chairs, stoves, windows, fireplaces, fountains and any other object to the stage that might be necessary to provide the proper environment for the characters in the play. The history of the pictorial method and of the naturalistic method of setting a stage for a play travel in the same direction and meet in the same place. Their methods were different but the result they wished to achieve was the same. Each method sought to achieve the illusion of reality. One painted the object and the other used the object itself.

Craig's attack on the Pictorial and Naturalistic methods of setting the scene for a play centered on the matter of illusion. Craig did not believe the technique of the illusion of reality is the theatre's eternal form. The heart of the New Theatre Movement, of the early twentieth century was to alert the established and young theatre workers to a new and vastly different form of theatre art. Edward Gordon Craig was the chief prophet and spokesman of the New Movement which brought to the theatre a new concept of the stage. Craig sought to substitute suggestion for imitation, simplicity for elaboration, and expressiveness for showiness. Craig's aim was to take the audience beyond nature in order to reveal the meaning of nature rather than to represent nature itself. The naturalist wanted to show the object itself; Craig wished to reveal the idea suggested by the object. The Naturalists were non-selective in gathering objects to provide the proper environmental
background for the characters. Craig was selective in gathering and arranging objects to create an atmosphere related to the action of the characters. He insisted on a definite spiritual and emotional relationship between the scene and the action of the play. He sought to interpret drama in terms of the scene. The Naturalists sought to provide an actual and detailed environment for the action of the drama. The Pictorialists sought to provide an attractive and decorative background for the play. The Pictorialists merely fabricate settings externally suggested by the dramas they adorn. Craig thought of drama and the scene at one and the same time. He aimed to make his designs come out of the body and texture of the play. The scene should whisper the text as it is being spoken by the actors and the text and the scene must flow smoothly together as one. The scene echoes, in a minor key, the heart and the soul of the play (I, 3-4, p. 61). To this point, Craig writes:

> It is idle to talk about the distraction of scenery because the question here is not how to create some distracting scenery but rather how to create a place which will harmonize with the thoughts of the poet. Indeed, the designer himself is a poet, in that he seeks to give expression to the essential quality of the play rather than to its outward characteristics. The scene should be evocative rather than descriptive. It should be a revelation in the sense that it should reveal to the audience what was before unknown to them.

Craig believed that the scene should serve to lift the play into an atmosphere loftier than that in which we generally reside. The scene should transcend everyday life (III, 4-6, pp. 64-65). He says:
We must open this play high up in an atmosphere loftier than that in which we generally grope and which is a matter-of-fact, put-on-your-boots atmosphere; for this is a matter of fancy, a matter of that strangely despised thing... the imagination; that which we call the spiritual.

When the scene designer uses actuality alone he will project only the prose of nature and not the spirit and splendor of nature. The art of scene design seeks its true level in a simplification of selection, suggestion and arrangement of actuality in order that a représentation of place will be superseded by an evocation of the sense of place. The art of the theatre, says Craig, stands above mere accuracy to fact. Craig attempted to simplify and suggest actuality on the stage to the point where objects became transformed into abstract entities. In this way he combined abstractions on the stage with the sense of actuality in the audience and thus he blended the abstraction and the actuality into one whole in the audience's vision so that the audience sensed a fragmentary world of spiritual realities.

Craig quotes a passage (III, 4 - 6, p. 35) from Tolstoi's essay, _What Is Art_, in which Tolstoi draws a distinction between art and reality.

...Equally little can imitation, realism, serve, as many people think, as a measure of the quality of art. Imitation cannot be such a measure, for the chief characteristic of art is the infection of others with the feelings the artist has experienced, and infection with a feeling is not only identical with description of the accessories of what is transmitted, but is usually hindered by superfluous details. The attention of the receiver of the artistic impression is diverted by all these well-observed details, and they hinder the transmission of feeling even when it exists.
To value a work of art by the degree of its realism, by the accuracy of the details reproduced, is as strange as to judge of the nutritive quality of food by its external appearance. When we praise a work according to its realism, we only show that we are talking, not of a work of art; but of its counterfeit.

Craig quotes a passage (X, 1, p. 30-31) written by Jan Klaassen on the uselessness of realism in art.

Realism is one of the Patent Medicines of Art. Realism, for which no sound artists have ever had any use until these later morbid days, and which these artists rejected almost as soon as they had touched it, ... Realism still creeps up and down the boards of the Theatre.

The best of Realism is that anyone can practice it. Being easiest it appeals to the laziest of thinkers and workers in the arts.

The worst of Realism is in its appearance. It looks and sounds badly. It has always the look of having been very difficult. While a play by Tolstoi seems an appalling series of difficulties overcome, a play by Molière looks and sounds as easy as a romp.

The evidence of difficulty and effort is ever present in a novel by Zola or Tolstoi, a play by Ibsen or Strindberg, an opera by Debussy. "They grunt and sweat under a weary life"; they surmount obstacles before our very eyes, whereas the first rule of art is anyhow to avoid that. You will not find Moliere, Sheridan, Rossini, Bizet, pretending to have just overcome stupendous difficulties--taking their own style and method with that awful solemnity which belongs by sole right to the quiet prig.

Realism is mean--it is the short measure of those who were born to serve behind counters, who study the "Kodak", and who rarely go in for charades on winter evenings.

Realism is a setting sun--and is as sad.

Realism is the happy thought of the nouveau riche; It aims to seem like its betters, to assume a profound air it might have been born with--with other parents.

And you either like it or you don't.

Stage Realism is a strange form of exaggeration, carefully avoided by the ancients, who employed other means for holding the attention of the spectators.
One of the perfections lacking to Realism is ease. There is ever something jerky, husky and agitated in its hushed nonsense....

Craig criticizes the realist and stage mechanic for the manner in which they have degraded the art of the theatre (IV, 2, p. 87-88). He says:

For more than a hundred years there have been two men working on the stage, spoiling almost all that is to be called theatrical art. These two men are: the Realist and the Machinist.

The Realist offers imitation for life, and the Machinist tricks in place of marvels. So we have lost the truth and the marvel of life, that is, we have lost the main thing possessed by the art. The Art of the Theatre as pure imitation is nothing but an alarming demonstration of the abundance of life and the narrowness of Art.

It is like the ancient example of the child who was trying to empty the sea with a shell, and as for the wonderful tricks of the machinist, they can be marvellous but they can never be a marvel. A flying machine is marvellous but a bird is a marvel. To the true Artist common life is a marvel and Art more abundant, more intense and more living than life itself.

Craig believed that the Pictorial method of painting the scene best belonged to opera rather than to drama. He quotes a passage (II, 7-9, p. 104) from A. W. Schlegel's *Dramatic Art and Literature* which anticipates, by a hundred years, his (Craig's) reaction to scene painting.

....Our system of decoration was properly invented for the opera, to which it is also in reality best adapted. It has several unavoidable defect; others which certainly may be, but seldom are avoided.

Among the inevitable defects I reckon the breaking of the lines in the side scenes from every point of view except one; the disproportion between the size of the player when
he appears in the background, and the objects as diminished in the perspective; the unfavourable lighting from below and behind; the contrast between the painted and the actual lights and shades; the impossibility of narrowing the stage at pleasure, so that the inside of a palace and a hut have the same length and breadth, etc.

The errors which may be avoided are, want of simplicity and of great and reposing masses; overloading the scenery with superfluous and distracting objects, either from the painter being desirous of showing his strength in perspective, or not knowing how otherwise to fill up the space; an architecture full of mannerism, often altogether unconnected, nay, even at variance with possibility, coloured in a motley manner which resembles no species of stone in the world.

Most scene-painters owe their success entirely to the spectator's ignorance of the arts of design; I have often seen a whole pit enchanted with a decoration from which the eye of skill must have turned away with disgust, and in whose place a plain green wall would have been infinitely better. A vitiated taste for splendour of decoration and magnificence of dress, has rendered the arrangement of the theatre a complicated and expensive business, whence it frequently happens as secondary matters; but this is an inconvenience which it is here unnecessary to mention ....

Craig complained of the interior decorator's and salon-painter's encroachment on the stage. He believed that scene painting was an autonomous art and not a branch of portrait or mural painting.

Stage painting and design should not suffer the indignity of being lowered to a branch of interior decoration (V, 1, page 41-43). He writes:

......I have written elsewhere about the futility of us welcoming the co-operation of the Salon-painter, for though in the House or the Salon he be ever so good, as Theatre collaborator he is useless for he brings new complications to an already too-complicated problem.

Added to this he is poaching on our preserves and it will not do to break down the old hedges which divide our different properties. Monsieur A. or Monsieur B. may be very good
fellows, but they reveal a surprising lack of good
taste by such inroads upon our property.

I remember meeting the Russian painter Somoff in
Moscow a few years ago and asking him if he had ever
designed for the Theatre and his reply was just what it
should have been: "When I can spare fifteen years to the
study of the theatre I may feel that I could venture to work
in the theatre" he said. We talked further about this
question and I found out that he respected the Theatre
sufficiently to abstain from turning it to the pecuniary
advantage he certainly could have derived from it. A
few more men of like character amongst the Russian,
French and German painters would spread a nicer feeling
around the studios and create in the more serious men of
the theatre more confidence,

I am very happy to be able to state that the painters of
England understand and respect our labours thoroughly and
begin altogether to realize that the Theatre must settle its
own difficulties for itself. These painters who continue to
study the Theatre are giving up their study of painting for the
House, Church or Salon. Mr. Norman Wilkinson is one of
these and his assurance to me on this point gave me much
happiness. Mr. Hugo Rumbold is another painter who is
going whole-heartedly into the Theatre and away from the
studio.

People so often exclaim "but fancy what James Pryde or
Augustus John could do in the theatre", believing that the
Art of the Theatre or the Art of Drama is a pictorial art.
It is not; and therefore our two friends would not be able to
help us. They haven't offered, it's true, but that shows the
fine old feeling which in England teaches the Squire to respect
his neighbours' hedges. There are fewer hedges in France,
Russia and Germany, hence the appalling lack of restraint
which the Salon painters exhibit and which, alas, Mr. Banks
applauds so enthusiastically.

The experience of the past failure of the outsider to
influence the Theatre for good seems to count for nothing
with these intrepid gentlemen who have not remarked even the
catastrophe which followed the Poet's invasion of our territory.
These brought us balm in the shape of the word,... the perfect
word, perfect in sound if not in sense,... and where is that word
now? Where the Poets? If perhaps we read them today in
the study we do not speak their verse on the stage save in
as disastrous a way as we can achieve. In short, we never
liked their perfect word nor do we like the painter's perfect
design in the theatre...and history shows the way we have behaved towards both.

I hold no brief for the man of the Theatre as positive demonstrator for he demonstrates dreadfully; but I am with him heart and soul as defender of his own property and of the right to say what shall not be in his art. One of the reasons why of late he has not been able to develop his own plot of land is that his time and force have been taken up in defending it against the inroads of all the kind friends bringing fully armed "suggestions for improvement".

What would the painters say, do you suppose, if we others should go into their studios and attempt to demonstrate there the value of the theories we hold upon the art of painting? Should we even get admitted to the studios? Supposing we were able to show that our theories would, if put into practise, help to increase their income, should we get a hearing? I very much doubt it.

Why then do these same painters, with an impertinence which I hardly recognise in them, behave in this manner towards us and our art?

Craig believed that the easel painter and the mural painter were out of their element in scene painting and each should keep to his knitting, as it were. Craig draws a distinction between easel and scene painting (III, 4-6 pp. 80-81). He says:

"...But train our players and our mechanists as we will and if we have not thought out the art of stage decoration afresh every brush stroke of our scene painters will mix into the reverie the monotonous or the irrelevant. We will hire some journeyman to accompany the poet's description with a painted landscape which, because it must give all to the first glance and yet copy nature, will alone copy what is obvious, and which even if it could keep the attention and give it pleasure could but keep it to the poet's loss:--

'A vapour, sometime, like a bear, or lion,  
'A tower'd citadel, a pendant rock,  
'A forked mountain, or blue promontory  
With trees upon't that nod unto the world,  
And mock our eyes with air.'"
I have heard Antony speak those lines before a painted cloth that, though it could not make them nothing, left in the memory the sensation of something childish, theatrical as we say, Words as solemn, and having more for the mind's eye than those of the Book of Common Prayer must be spoken where no reformer has cast out the idolatrous mummary and no tradition sanctified.....

In no art can we do well unless we keep to those effects that are peculiar to it or that it can show better than the other arts. We no longer paint wood with a grain that is not its own, but are content that it should display itself or be covered with paint that pretends to be but paint, and if we paint a design upon a vase or a plate, we are careful not to attempt something that can be better done in easel painting. But in the art of the theatre we imitate easel painting, even though we ignore or mar for its sake the elements we should have worked in, the characteristics of the stage, light and shadow, speech, the movement of the players. Our tree-wings....let us say....can only be given mass and detail by painted light and shadow and these will contradict, or be in no relation to the real light, and this real light will be so cut up and cut off by wings and borders arranged for effects of painting that we shall be content to use it in but a few obvious ways. Then too our background will be full of forms and colours, instead of showing an even or almost even surface whereon the players are outlined clearly that we may see their movements and feel their importance; and all the while the background, even if it were fine painting and had no false light and shadow and did not reduce the players to a picturesque group in the foreground of a water colour painting by my grandmother, could but insist on the unreality we are anxious to forget, for every time a player stood close to that garden scene we would but feel over again on how flat a surface they had painted that long garden walk dwindling away into the distance.

Craig's sense of beauty and good taste was outraged with the excessive theatricalism displayed by the painters who used the stage as a medium on which to demonstrate their virtuosity and skill in handling perspective. The pictorial settings are sometimes pretty in
a cheap, tawdry way, but all are superficial rather than aesthetically
effective. The pictorial setting caused the actor to be disproportioned
when he appeared against objectives diminished in perspective and
the contrast in the actual lights and shadows and the painted lights
and shadows was incongruous and often grotesque.

Craig's principal objection to the pictorial and naturalistic
methods of setting the stage was that neither method admitted the
natural limitations of the stage space. The stage space can, in
Craig's opinion yield no more than its natural properties will allow.
The effect is bound to be false, says Craig, when an art medium is
forced to express that which it cannot encompass.

The pictorial and naturalistic scenes strain the resources of
the stage beyond its natural limits. The stage, in Craig's opinion,
is not a "magic box" in which the scene designer paints a picture
framed by the proscenium arch. The scene is not a picture and
scene design is not a pictorial art. Craig says that the most vividly
counterfeited reality, even reality itself, is unconvincingly real on
the stage. Craig, like any astute observer, had occasion to see more
than once that realism is not only false but unattainable on the stage.
Robert Edmond Jones echoes the Cragian concept of the function of
the stage scene when he writes:

Plato says somewhere, "It is beauty I seek, not beautiful
things." This is what I mean. A setting is not just a beautiful
thing, a collection of beautiful things. It is a presence, a mood, a warm wind fanning the drama to flame. It echoes, it enhances, it animates. It is an expectancy, a foreboding, a tension. It says nothing, but it gives everything. 20

Craig cautions the scene designer that while remembering the limitations of his medium he must not forget the essential and inherent strength of the medium in which he works. Imagery is the most powerful and simple way of transcending realism in the theatre. A strong emotional experience can be stored in the brief space of an image. Imagery enables a stage scene to extend its scope by implicit thought and feeling. A stage scene lacking imagery will have little suggestive comment and no significant emotional appeal. Imagery can reveal the underlying mood of the play and can, as Craig many times suggested, foreshadow and create anticipation. Imagery in the stage scene will increase the emotional appeal of the play, for it is through or by imagery that an audience identifies itself with the feelings of the characters. Imagery, therefore, like poetry uses metaphor. Craig has said that the scene must be poetic. Imagery serves the scene designer in the same manner as it serves the poet. The strength of imagery is in its brevity, concentration, compression, rapidity and immediacy. Both the pictorial and naturalistic

methods of scene design decrease the imaginative significance of
the play because neither method can use imagery. The purpose of
the scene, according to Craig, is to strengthen the imaginative
significance of the play, by saying something of the emotion and
feeling that exists in the minds of the characters. In other words,
the scene does not merely surround the actors but it constitutes a
part of their thoughts and feelings. In a review (VI, 3, p. 253) of
a play he has seen, Craig says:

"...not realism this, but most excellent suggestion. The
spectators were made to feel and see as the characters
were supposed to be feeling and seeing."

Craig's Theory of the
Function of the Stage Scene

Gordon Craig was the leader and chief spokesman of a new
movement in the theatre which sought a completely revised conception
of the scenic accompaniments of drama. This new concept of the
function of the stage scene carried with it a revised concept of the
purpose and objective of theatre. Craig envisions a theatre that seeks
to ennoble and enrich life; a theatre of creation rather than imitation.
Craig's concept of the theatre was based upon a kind of idealistic
philosophy which denied that any meaningful deductions of life can be
made from "brute facts". The theatre must seek for inner truth,
for the truth of feeling and experience. Craig was a subjective idealist
and insisted that the objective of the theatre is to reveal poetic truth
and not reality. To understand Craig's concept of the purpose of the scenic accompaniment of drama, we must meet him on his own ground and judge his concept, not by the theatre of his time but by the high purpose he assigns to the art of the theatre and by the vision he holds of the theatre of the future. Speaking through one of the pseudo-

contributors of The Mask [VI. 4, pp. 313-315], Craig points to the degeneration of the contemporary theatre and gives his idea of the function of the theatre. He says:

The theatre has suffered most from the depredations of naturalistic art. The very character of theatrical art has rendered it susceptible of nearly all the unhealthy forces operating singly in the other arts. It has become the most impure, the most complex, of all creative forms. A conglomeration of other arts, it has lost its own soul.

This revolutionary [Craig] has set himself the task of disentangling the dramatic art from the other arts with which it has become involved through the centuries, and of its restoration to the purity of its native essence, which is Movement. He sees the modern theatre as a tawdry woman strutting the boards, over-apparelled with garments presented by various admirers, who admire her for their own good. He wishes to rescue her from the hands of the literary man, from the hands of the studio painter, from the hands of the social and political reformer, and finally, from the hands of the commercial manager.

Mr. Craig sees the need of restoring the theatre to its rightful heritage. The function of the theatre, as he comprehends it, is not to present the superficial semblances of life, but the soul of life; not Naturalism, but suggestion; not representation, but interpretation; not dialogue, but action; not scenery, but atmosphere, not ideas, but visions. . . .

It is a commentary upon the times that London should flock to a play which had been decreed by the dramatic critics, though not in so many words, as the finest. . . . that is, the most realistic. . . . domestic squabble ever put on the stage. Its saving feature was a "problem!"; but, as far as may be gathered, the only thing all were agreed upon was that
never had a poor factory girl lost her virtue under more auspicious circumstances....

"The duty of the Theatre," exclaims Mr. Craig, in one of his manifestoes, "is to awaken more calmness and more wisdom by the inspiration exhaling from its beauty. Photographic and Phonographic Realism injure the minds of the people. They thrust upon them a grotesque and inaccurate representation of the outward and visible life, with the divine essence, the spirit, the beauty of life left out...."

Naturalism can represent beautifully a drawing-room, or a ladies' boudoir. It cannot even show a realistic street, because of the actual area limitations of the stage; nor a realistic moon, because there is only one moon, and that, thank God, is well out of the managers' reach; much less the top of a mountain, a storm at sea, the vastness of space, the magnitude of nature.

Yet all these could be suggested. There is no alternative to suggestion.

Where Naturalism stops, there the real art of the stage begins, an art not bound by limitations, on a stage not encompassed by three walls and a roof, and permitting an outlook upon life and all the urging and restraining forces behind life.

Man is small, the forces arrayed against him are various and large. Man is finite, Nature is infinite. Man strives towards one goal, the Fates lash him on towards another. Yet how heroic is man's striving; how magnificent he looks against that background of sombre, palpitating shadows, or against the freedom of the sky on a high mountain-top! Not only is man in action, but the elements arrayed with him or against him are also charged with the same active spirit, and so the air is filled with a portentous something: it is an atmosphere suggesting perhaps a coming clash, an impending catastrophe, and creating a mood of moving tragedy...and all in all a fit setting for a drama.

There are critics who object to this "dwarfing of the actor." They would dwarf life instead.

Craig assigned to the theatre an infinitely higher function than that advocated by the commercial theatre managers. The purpose of the theatre was not to reproduce the commonplaces of life: the theatre is not a mirror in which man can behold his own image; nor is its function
to reflect nature back on itself. Again (IV, 4, pp. 174-177), Craig eloquently pronounces his views of the high purpose of the theatre.

He declares:

The theatre acts upon the entire human being; sense, soul, mind; and it acts by an example, by an eloquent action, as real as, and more intense than, life itself. Its influence is supreme in good as in evil. If it be not a school of beauty, of truth, and of rebirth, it becomes inevitably a school of ugliness, of falsehood and of death.

It it be the salve of luxury, of frivolity and of commercial speculation as in our deluded society, and the theatre will hardly be other than the changing and delusive reflection of the vices, the ignorance and the basenesses of an epoch. But place in its centre the conscious soul with all its powers, make the divine Psyche radiate at its glowing hearth, unfurl her wings... and the theatre will be the mirror of the better life, the educator of the people, the initiator which leads man across the forest of life and the mirages of dream to the summits of the highest truths.

The existing theatre is the docile and passive image of surrounding society. The theatre of the future will remould man and society to its own image. For it will be the temple of the ideal.

This Theatre of Dreams, this Theatre which will relate the supreme work of the Soul in the legend of Humanity, will, I dare say, be boldly and profoundly religious.... For the theatre is another world, apart from our own...

Craig asserted that the lofty purpose assigned to the theatre of the future could be attained by a stage scene characterized by Symbolism and Theatricalism. The scenic philosophy of Craig's symbolism describes the belief that there is no objective reality made up of material things; that ideas alone are real. The chief axiom of Craig's symbolist manifesto was that theatre is theatre; not a slice of life and not a picture.
Symbolism is the ideal method by which the scene designer can take the audience beyond the appearance of the object and create within the imagination of the audience, a feeling of the object (I, 1, p. 2).

He says:

We will surround the people with symbols in silence; in silence we will reveal the movement of things.... This is the nature of our art....Symbolism knows no confusion. It has the perfect balance. It remains true once and forever. It needs no proof. It can reveal itself without words or arguments.

In Craig's opinion, symbolism is the perfect method of the stage scene. It supplies the designer the means by which he can bring forward only some significant detail of the whole environment by using a part as the symbol of the whole. Real objects on the stage, says Craig, do not tell the real nature of an environment. Forget the object; give the audience the idea. Craig maintains that symbolism is the root of all art (III, 7-9, p. 130). He says:

Symbolism is really quite proper;...it is sane, orderly and it is universally employed...it cannot be called theatrical if by theatrical we mean something flashy, yet it is the very essence of the theatre if we are to include its art among the fine arts.

Symbolism is nothing to be afraid of...it is delicacy itself; it is understood as easily by the ploughman or sailor as by kings and other men in high places. Some there are who are afraid of Symbolism but it is difficult to discover why, and these persons sometimes grow very indignant and insinuate that the reason why they dislike Symbolism is because there is something unhealthy and harmful about it. "We live in a realistic age!" is the excuse they put forward. But they cannot explain how it is that they make use of symbols to tell us this, nor how it is that all their lives they have made use of this same thing which they find so incomprehensible.
For not only is Symbolism at the roots of all art; it is at the roots of all life; it is only by means of symbols that life becomes possible for us. We employ them all the time.

The letters of the alphabet are symbols, used daily by sociable races. The numerals are symbols and chemistry and mathematics employ them. All the coins of the world are symbols and business men rely upon them. The crown and the sceptre of the kings and the tiara of the popes are symbols. The works of Poets and Painters, of Architects and Sculptors are full of symbolism; Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and the modern artists since the time of Constantine have understood and valued the symbol. Music only became intelligible through the employment of symbols and is symbolic in its essence. All forms of salutation and leave-taking are symbolic and employ symbols, and the last act of affection rendered to the dead is to erect a symbol over them.

In discussing symbolism and its function in the stage scene, Craig does not advise the scene designer to do away with actual objects. He certainly recognizes that there is no such thing as a symbolic table. A table is a table and there is no symbolism that can render it otherwise. It is in the placement of the table and its line, form and mass in relation to the actor that the symbolism lies. Molière, said Craig, knew how to place the chairs on his stage so they almost seem to speak. A setting is not a collection of things distributed about the stage. Rather, it is a mood, a feeling, a presence which echoes and animates the action of the play. Craig cautions the designer against confusing signs with symbols. Signs, he says, only represent facts but symbols permit us to perceive their significance (III, 7-9, p. 89). He says:
Signs and symbols are the indispensable instruments of art, and the means of all expressions of human valuations. The poetic and religious symbols of art embody practical signs, but unlike practical signs they do not merely represent and refer to things as they appear to the physical senses. They relate to the psychic experience which caused them, and in which, through them, we may participate. But there is an important distinction to be drawn between the language of signs and that of symbols, which Dr. Jung has explained as follows: "If we use blue pigment to 'represent' blue eyes or blue sky, it is as a sign; but if we make the Virgin's robe blue, then 'blue' becomes the symbol of an idea, and the reference is no longer to the thing 'sky' but to certain abstract qualities such as 'infinity' which we have imputed to the 'things' we see overhead.... if we take the sign for a symbol, we shall be sentimentalizing our notion of blue eyes, and if we take the symbol for a sign, we are reducing 'thought' to 'recognition'."

In the interpretation of the dramatist's work we must see to it that the signs and symbols of the theatrical language are not confused; for those who transform the silent words of the written play into the visible and audible signs and symbols of action, speech, and stage architecture are alone responsible for effecting a communication between author and audience. When this communication takes place, the instruments of art become the music.

---music heard so deeply

That it is not heard at all, but you are the music

While the music lasts.

The spell of the fiction only breaks when we are made aware of the facts: that the stage house is not a house, that stage murder is not lethal, that a yellow spot is not the sun--when we are made to see the sign but not to perceive its significance....

"We remember", writes Sean O'Casey, "the fine effect that the first sound of the first fall of rain had as it fell in the first act of Obey's Noah; and this fall of rain was a mere trick of mechanical realism as it was also the opening of the floodgates of Heaven, swelling into a flood that destroyed all life that was in the world save only those who found safe shelter in the faith of Noah; or the sudden change in the wind in Saint Joan that set the pennon streaming eastward, and sent Dunois and Saint Joan hurrying out to make for the flash of the guns, and drive the English out of France. You see the artist in the theatre never despises a mere trick of mechanical realism; but he knows how to keep it in its proper place.
Craig's concept of the function of symbolism in the stage scene was challenged by W. R. Fuerst and S. J. Hume in their book, *Twentieth Century Stage Decoration*. They maintained that, if on the one hand, the pictorial, two-dimensional scene could not attain to the world of the actor, the symbolist's setting, on the other hand, overreached it.

They argue:

The symbolic setting aims at giving us only the soul of events. It tends to environ the actor with a reflection of the drama in a four-dimensional world. But try as the actor will to stylize, to make rhythmic his gestures and his words, he remains always three-dimensional. He does not act only with his soul, his unconscious mind, or whatever we choose to call it, but with his body as well. No effort to symbolize gesture and movement will be able to attain the degree of abstraction reached by setting. Under these conditions we see the actor, a real being, a physical being, moving among symbols which belong to another world than his. In opening this gulf between the actor - the three-dimensional being - and his dematerialized environment, the symbolist destroys the very scenic unity to which it aspired. And there it falls into the same error as the painted setting does. If, on the one hand, the painted setting with or without trompe l'oeil - that is, the two-dimensional setting - failed to attain to the world of the actor, the symbolist setting, on the other hand, overreaches it. And for the creation of complete scenic unity the one is as dangerous as the other.

But, says some one, the symbolist setting only employs elements which are altogether plastic. The curtains and pylons of Craig are as palpable as the ribbons and battens of Pitoeff. It is the way in which they are used which disengages their symbolic value. That may be true. It is none the less true, however, that the use which is made of these same elements often enough renders them valueless.

Let us explain. The letters of the alphabet - leaving their symbolic genesis apart - have a significance which is determined and fixed. But these same letters, when they are employed in an algebraic equation, are instantly denuded of their real signification and become pure algebraic signs. In the same way
the plastic elements which make up the ensemble of the
symbolic stage decoration are seen to be denuded of their
real value - of their plastic value - by the symbolic use
made of them, and by consequence become mere de-
materialized, abstract algebraic signs. As such they no
longer belong to the same world as the actor. Craig felt
this dilemma very clearly, and it explains quite simply
his resentment against the actor - this irreducible, plastic
element; and we see at once how he arrives logically at his
primordial concept of the theatre without the actor. Never-
theless, in imposing a rhythmic unity on the entire stage,
which included the actor, he forces the actor into his
ensemble.

Certain producers in the modern theatre, profiting by
the teaching of Craig, have pushed this symbolization of
the setting to its extreme limits. A simple line traced in
the void by means of a ribbon, a couple of battens or a
block of wood has at times been all that has been offered us
in lieu of setting. With these last vestiges of an expressive
ambience we were to create a world.

Such an impoverishment of the stage as this can perhaps
be explained on the ground that it corresponds to certain
aesthetic tendencies of the day, but it seems to us that there
is at bottom a reason much more banal and by consequence
much stronger. Under present-day conditions the man of
the theatre makes much of material considerations, such
as cost and facility of execution. From this point of view,
the ideal stage decoration is the one which is nonexistent.
Thus the commercial side of the theatre accepts with joy
the technical benefits and the cost reduction which this
dematerialization of the setting brings with it. We are
modern in being poor; we create the impression of being
extreme when in reality we are only saving money.

But the exaggerations which decorative symbolism has
engendered must not be laid at Craig's door. With Craig, we
remain still within the domain of the "stage setting,"
within the realm of beautiful things, sometimes perhaps a
little too precious and attenuated, but always on a high plane
of dignity and purity. 21

21 W. R. Fuerst and S. J. Hume, Twentieth Century Stage
Fuerst and Hume's argument against the symbolic scene can be reduced to two simple summations. First, they assert that the symbolists, in attempting to reveal the meaning of an object, are adding a fourth-dimension to the stage scene, and since the actor must remain a three-dimensional object, the symbolist is creating "a gulf between the actor" and the scene in which he moves. Consequently, the symbolists are destroying the very thing which they set out to achieve, the harmony and balance between the actor and the scene. Second, they maintain that the symbolic line, form and mass of the symbolistic scene tend to impoverish the theatre and are characterized by parsimony rather than art. In refutation, Craig would answer that the symbol, when recognized, is no longer a symbol but a sign. He has urged the scene designer to be aware of the difference between a symbol and a sign. Craig would argue that the actor's movements and gestures referred to by Fuerst and Hume as three-dimensional, are also abstractions and therefore there is no conflict between the actor and the symbolic setting. Craig would agree that there is a limit to the abstraction to which the symbolistic setting could be extended and he would warn the designer that symbolism in scene design, unless carefully calculated, can very quickly reach a point of absurdity. Craig would be opposed to the modern so-called "suggestive" setting, in which a single column is supposed to suggest a Cathedral, a corner formed by two flats to do duty for a living room,
or a frame with a few strips of black cloth stretched tightly across it is intended to represent a prison door. These are not the kind of symbolic suggestive settings advocated by Craig. Many of the modern "suggestive" settings are nothing more than clever, falsely economical contraptions. The designers of this type of setting unwittingly try to reproduce the whole by showing only a part of it or they try to suggest the feeling of the thing by giving the audience a distorted reproduction of it. This is not Craig's idea of symbolism. Craig believed that the scene must suggest the mood of the environment rather than the environment itself. If a church is needed, the artist does not paint a picture of a church on a back drop, neither does he design and build an exact replica of some part of a church on the stage; rather he sets up a single pillar or archway, which in its architecture and its arrangement of aspiring lines suggests the calm dignity and heavy solemnity of a church. It is the atmosphere of the church and not the church itself that is important to the action of the scene. If a forest scene is called for, Craig would not paint "wings" and "backdrops" with a multitude of trees, each branch and leaf accurately drawn; he would more likely arrange a series of black cloths above and at the sides of the acting space, and then attempt to light the stage so subtly that the mystery and depth of a forest are atmospherically suggested. Craig believed that the designer must not attempt to create an illusion of a forest, but instead the illusion of a man in the atmosphere of a forest. The scene must
project the idea of the object and not the object itself. This is the symbolist's approach to scene design and it is expressed by Craig (IV, 1, pp. 35-36) when he says:

Not the thing itself, but the idea of the thing evokes the idea. Schopenhauer was right; we do not want the thing, but the idea of the thing. The thing itself is worthless; and the moral writers who embellish it with pious ornamentation are just as reprehensible as Zola, who embellishes it with erotic arabesques. You want the idea drawn out of obscuring matter, and this can best be done by the symbol. The symbol or the thing itself, that is the great artistic question. In earlier ages it was the symbol; a name, a plume, sufficed to evoke the idea, now we evoke nothing, for we give everything, the imagination of the spectator is no longer called into play....

In Shakespeare's days to create wealth in a theatre it was only necessary to write upon a board, "A magnificent apartment in a palace." This was no doubt primitive and not a little barbarous, but it was better by far than by dint of anxious archaeology to construct the Doge's palace upon the stage. By one rich pillar, by some projecting balustrade taken in conjunction with a moored gondola, we should strive to evoke the soul of the city of Veronese: by the magical and unequalled selection of a subtle and unexpected feature of a thought or aspect of a landscape, and not by the up-piling of extraneous detail, are all great poetic effects achieved.

The thoughts about symbolism expressed in the foregoing essay written by Craig in July, 1911, was the source of inspiration to a number of young men, "a new race of artists of the theatre," as Craig calls them. Among these men were Robert Edmond Jones. Jones was in Europe in 1913. He had applied for admission to the Gordon Craig School of the Theatre at the Arena Goldoni in Florence, but his application was denied. This did not dampen his enthusiasm and admiration
for the work of Gordon Craig. In Jones' designs for The Man Who Married A Dumb Wife in 1915 and those for Macbeth in 1926, the influence of Craig's concept of the symbolic setting is clearly seen.

In the hands of an artist, Craig's symbolism would work. That Jones understood and could apply Craig's symbolism to the stage is obvious when we read a passage from Jones' book, Dramatic Imagination. In this passage Jones is recommending the Craigian method in using symbolism in design. He says:

Some time ago one of the younger stage designers was working with me on the scenes for a historical play. In the course of the production we had to design a tapestry, which was to be decorated with figures of heraldic lions. I sent him to the library to hunt up old documents. He came back presently with many sketches, copies of originals. They were all interesting enough, but somehow they were not right. They lacked something that professionals call 'good theatre'. They were not theatrical. They were accurate and--lifeless. I said as much to the designer. 'Well, what shall we do about it?' he asked me. 'We have got to stop copying,' I said. 'We must try something else. We must put our imaginations to work. Let us think now. Not about what this heraldic lion ought to look like, but what the design meant in the past, in the Middle Ages.

'Perhaps Richard, the Lion-Heart, carried this very device emblazoned on his banner as he marched across Europe on his way to the Holy Land. Richard, the Lion-Heart, Coeur de Lion... what memories of childhood this name conjures up, what images of chivalry! Knights in armor, enchanted castles, magic casements, perilous seas, oriflammes, and gonfalons. Hear the great battle-cries! See the banners floating through the smoke! Coeur de Lion, the Crusader, with his singing page Blondel...Do you remember Blondel's song, the song he sang for three long years while he sought his master in prison? 'Oh Richard, O mon Roi! L'Univers t'abandonne!...'

'And now your imagination is free to wander, if you will allow it do so, among the great names of romance. Richard,
the Lion-Heart, King Arthur, Sir Percival and the mystery of the Holy Grail, the Song of Roland, the magic sword, Durandal, Tristan and Isolde, the love-potion, the chant of the Cornish sailors, the ship with the black sail; the Lady Nicolette of whom Aucassin said Beau venir et bel aller, lovely when you come, lovely when you go; the demoiselle Aude, who died for love; the Lady Christabel; and Ancient Mariner with the Albatross hung about his neck; the Cid, Charlemagne, Barbarossa, the Tartar, Kubla Khan, who decreed the pleasure-dome in Xanadu, in the poem Coleridge heard in a dream, . . . And there are the legendary cities, too, Carcassonne, Granada, Torcello; Samarkand, the Blue City, with its facades of turquoise and lapis lazuli; Carthage, Isfahan, Trebizond; and there are the places which have never existed outside a poet's imagination—Hy Brasil, Broceliande, the Land of Luthany, the region Elenore, the Isle of Avalon, where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow, where ever King Arthur lyeth sleeping as in peace . . . And there is the winged Lion of St. Mark in Venice with the device set forth fairly beneath it, Pax Tibi, Marce, Evangelista Meus; and there are the mounted knights in the windows of Chartres, riding on, riding on toward Our Lady as she bends above the high altar in her glory of rose.

"These images of romance have come to our minds—all of them—out of this one little symbol of the heraldic lion. They are dear to us. They can never face from our hearts.

"Let your fancy dwell and move among them in a kind of reverie. Now, in this mood, with these images bright in your mind, draw your figure of the lion once more.

"This new drawing is different. Instead of imitating, describing what the artists of the Middle Ages thought a lion looked like, it summons up an image of medieval romance."

The author quotes the above passage for the reason that it seems to be what Craig himself would have advised. In this passage the difference between the sign and the symbol, as Craig understood them, is clearly delineated.

22 The Dramatic Imagination, pp. 79-81.
In Craig's opinion the symbolistic setting must be reinforced by Theatricalism. One of the chief spokesmen for Symbolism and Theatricalism in the stage scene; although he anticipated the symbolists and theatricalists by a hundred and fifty years, was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Goethe, in his essay On Dramatic Form, 1775, declared:

He who would work for the stage should, moreover, study the stage, the effects of scenography, of lights and rouge and other coloring matter, of glazed linen and spangles. He should leave nature in her proper place, and take careful heed not to have recourse to anything but what may be performed by children with puppets upon boards and lathes, together with sheets of cardboard and linen.  

Leaving the living room and the formal garden in its proper place, says Goethe, for these are not the materials for theatre. Goethe advocated less realism and more imagination in the theatre. He would have the theatre become theatrical in the manner suggested by George Fuchs, the German architect and theatrical producer. Fuchs produced Goethe's Faust, Part I at the Munich Art Theatre in 1908. In 1909, Fuchs sounded the note of theatricalism. He said:

"...drama must be understood in terms of the materials in which it is made manifest. The term "theatre" consists of the totality of these materials. This is what we mean when we demand that the drama become once more theatrical."  

Although Craig would have looked with disdain upon Goethe's

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23 New Theatres For Old, p. 185

24 George Fuchs, Die Revolution des Theaters (George Muller: Munich and Leipzig, 1909) p. 77
tinseled spangles and glazed linen, calling them cheap artificiality, he would have applauded Goethe's desire to restore a theatrical quality to stage production. Craig spoke for a noble artificiality in the theatre (III, 2, p. 33). He advised:

Avoid the so-called "naturalistic" in movement as well as in scene and costume. The naturalistic stepped in on the Stage because the artificial had grown finicking, insipid; but do not forget that there is such a thing as noble artificiality.

Craig looked with disfavor upon the philosophical intellectualism of the theatre. He believed that the theatre could be noble, dignified, and artistic and, at the same time preserve its theatricality (III, 4-6, p. 100). He declares:

They (the English) dread that something "artistic" might be let loose and they prefer the "theatrical". So do we all. But what a strange place is England where the good words "artistic" and "theatrical" have become terms of derision used by artist and theatrical people.

Again (VIII, 3, p. 16) he defends the Theatrical when he says:

There is nothing unpractical, if you will consider for a moment, in hoping that one day a great President or a great Churchman, wishing to pay a high compliment, may allude to something national as being "theatrical". Nowadays these highly placed dignitaries employ the word "theatrical" when they wish to point to some blemish.

Again in The Mask (IX, p. 47), he derides Stanislavsky for warning his players against any suggestion of the Theatrical in their playing. He says:

"Above all, there must be no suggestion of the Theatrical".
This is one of Stanislavsky's orders to his players when about to begin rehearsing "The Blue Bird" in Moscow.

His whole discourse, a very charming one, has been reprinted in an American journal, from which we take the above line.

And that line reveals the mind of Stanislavsky better than a ten years enquiry could do.

"No suggestion of the Theatrical". ---The Deuce!

I will give another toast at this table. "Gentlemen, nothing but the Theatrical".

If I have not carried my hearers with me, then they are not of the Theatre.

In "The Blue Bird," in "Yellow Dwarf", in "The Young Person in Pink!", in the plays of Tchekov, Gorki, Gogol, Shakespeare, Sheridan, Moliere, and Conrad, be Theatrical and again Theatrical and nothing but Theatrical.

Craig maintained that Theatricalism could not be restored to the theatre, until scene designers reoriented their thinking in regard to, first the stage and its relationship to the auditorium and second, the use of the stage itself. The designers of picture scenery recognized the stage as a clearly staked out platform in the theatre. The orchestra pit, the proscenium, the footlights and the elimination of the apron or forestage divided the physical theatre into two parts. The stage was a brilliantly illuminated magic box and the proscenium, a frame through which the audience peered. This was the "peep-hole" stage and it had the tendency to "pull" the scene away from the audience. The physical features of this type of theatre were in contradiction to the spirit of theatricalism. Theatricalism demanded a type of playing space that would thrust the players and their action into the far corners of the auditorium. This would call for an emphasized forestage, a lowering of
the stage itself, an elimination of the orchestra pit, increased pitch of the auditorium floor and the removal of the footlights. These changes in the physical theatre would eliminate the physical barriers between the audience and the actors. Increasing the pitch of the auditorium floor and lowering the stage floor would enable the audience to look down rather than up to the floor of the stage. This architectural feature was of particular importance to the Theatricalist designer.

He, unlike the picture scene designer, treated the setting as a component part of the action and thus the floor plan of the setting becomes very important. To the designer of picture scenery, the setting is a realistic picture which surrounds the actor and thus the floor plan is a relatively unimportant feature of the design. In the picture setting, there is ordinarily a line across the back of the stage, parallel with the footlights and there are lines perpendicular to the back line at the corners of the proscenium, stage left and right. These are the lines of the conventional box-set seen in most realistic dramas. The theatricalist designer recognized the stage as a space in which the scenery functions throughout the same areas in which the actor moves and speaks. The actors' movements are broken up by means of cubes, steps, ramps, pylons and furniture deliberately arranged in the acting space to define the actor's movements. In the theatricalistic stage scene, there must be a deliberate and calculated collaboration between the actor and the scene designer. The collaboration between the actor
and designer explains why Craig asserted that the scene is not complete until the actor appears. The theatricalist averred that the movement in the scene can be neither slavish imitation of life nor accidental. Instead, the actors' movements must be designed and calculated on the principle of rhythm. Alexander Tairov, the Russian designer, in his book *Das Entfesselte Theater*, gives an illustration of the rhythmical relation of the play, the scene and the actor in the theatricalistic setting. He says:

Suppose we are given the task of depicting on the stage the descent to earth of the Madonna. How must the stage be arranged in order to give an intense impression of this descent? Obviously such an impression is not possible on the even level of the stage floor. This level must be broken up and made to consist of a number of levels of varying height; these, taken together, must form something like an endless stairway down which the Madonna steps toward earth.

But how shall this stairway be constructed, how shall we create the relationship that must exist among these levels?

The solution depends entirely upon the rhythmic intention of the director.

If the spectator is to receive the impression that she is drifting down, scarcely touching the ground with her feet; if the descent is to have a solemnly liturgical quality, the steps and platforms must be so constructed that their dimensions will have a constant relationship throughout; their rhythmic relationship should be expressed in terms of 1 to 4 or 1 to 8, so that the movements of the actress may in turn acquire a regular and flowing rhythm.

On the other hand let us imagine that we wish to impart to the stage the quality of a stormy, passionate Bacchanal in honor of Dionysus. We must then break up the stage level in such a manner that the steps and platforms are united by manifold and varied rhythms. By this means the Bacchic gestures and satyr-like leaps on the stage acquire
a complex rhythmic extravaganza which evokes from
the spectator the proper impression of a Bacchic
action.\textsuperscript{25}

Tairoff suggests that the floor plan of the objects placed in the
acting space is an expression of the characters themselves. Used in
such a manner the scene becomes dynamic, not static; active not
passive. The theatrical scene will reveal the dramatic function of the
characters. Its rhythm and patterns are those of the actors themselves.
The theatrical scene is thoroughly functional but its functional quality
does not preclude the scene's responsibility to reveal aesthetic qualities
as well. Craig attached a dual function to the scene. The scene must
be concerned with beauty and the play at one and the same time. (XII,
2, p. 42). He writes:

I let my scene grow out of not merely the play, but
from broad sweeps of thought which the play has con-
jured up in me.... We are concerned with the heart of
this thing, and with loving and understanding it. There-
fore, approach it from all sides, surround it, and do not
let yourself be attracted away by the ideal of scene as an
end in itself, of costume as an end in itself, or of stage
management or any of these things, and never lose hold
of your determination to win through to the secret--the
secret which lies in the creation of another beauty, and
then all will be well.

\textsuperscript{25} Alexander Tairof, \textit{Das Entfesselte Theater} (Potsdam:
Gustar Kiepenheuer, 1927) p. 165
Misconceptions of Craig's Theory and Practice in Scene Design

Although Craig participated in the preparation of the designs for only two plays after 1914, he continued to design and write. The quantity of his prose output from 1898 when he first published *The Page* to his biography of Henry Irving published in 1930 was nothing short of incredible. The most startling fact and certainly one that is immediately recognizable after looking into the chronology of the principal events in Craig's career in design and production is that he himself participated in the production of not more than twelve plays and operas in a period of thirty-six years. A play every three years could hardly be called a busy production schedule. In spite of this small number of productions in which Craig himself participated as a designer and/or producer, he became the greatest controversial figure in the modern theatre since Ibsen. The greatest theatrical producers in Ireland, England, Germany, Russia and America called him into their theatres to prepare designs for productions. Despite this recognition and keen interest in his theories and scene designs, he was never able to realize his desire to have a theatre in which he could establish continuity in testing his views and experimenting with his theories concerning the function and use of the stage scene. This fact makes it necessary for us to judge his work from the ideas he holds and from his
designs and sketches of scenery. As a theatre theorist and a designer of stage scenes, Craig was in a strangely abnormal position. His position would be comparable to that of a composer who had no symphony to play his music or the mural painter who had no wall on which to translate his sketch. The value and quality of the work of a theatre artist whether he be playwright, actor, designer or director should be evaluated in terms of an actual production in a theatre. The fact that Craig's designs and views of scene design had to be interpreted and evaluated from his drawings and the text of his publications rather than from actual production, partly explains the numerous and false allegations leveled at his views and the functional qualities of his designs. Since an intelligent interpretation of Craig's views and an analysis of the quality of his designs can be made only in the light of these allegations, it is necessary to clarify Craig's position in regard to the allegations.

Numerous critics have declared Craig's designs to be impossible of realization on the stage. Peter Goffin, the English critic, echoes a popular misconception of Craig's designs and models for stage scenes.

.....His art is that of the Miniature theatre, not conceived as a model for actual stage production, but as an end in itself. The distinction is one of purpose. For example, a doll's house is a miniature house, and though it might bear some resemblance to the model which an architect makes when he is going to build a house, it has a different purpose. The toy house is made only for our delight. It is not a means to any other end. If we enjoy playing with it, our pleasure will be the complete
fulfilment of its purpose, and we shall not mind in the least if it is quite unlike any real house we have ever seen outside our dreams. On the other hand, the model house is a pattern from which a real house may be constructed; and the architect's pleasure in making this pattern, however great, is not wholly its purpose. The model is made to serve another end, for it is only part of the preparation for the actual building, as are the scale plans and working drawings made for the masons, carpenters, and engineers.

Many of Craig's designs, often those which are most effective as drawings, could not be projected in the medium of theatre as practical stage settings for the plays concerned without being destroyed in the process. Indeed, when we come to study these works with a view to their theatrical interpretation, we find little or nothing to suggest that the designer had taken the practical aspect of his subject into account. Such designs could be carried out effectively only in miniature, in dimensions not intended to bear any relation to those of any actual playhouse, on a stage whose boards no actor need ever tread.  

Goffin makes the mistake of trying to interpret Craig's designs as miniature stage scenes. He apparently believes that the design must be a replica of the actual stage scene. The stage designer is not in the position of the mural painter who scores his design so that it can be, in all detail, transferred to the wall space. Craig did not conceive of his designs as being blueprints for a stage setting.

In a dialogue in The Mask (III, 4-6, p. 57) spoken by a Stage Manager and an artist, Craig discusses the difference between a scene design and the same scene on the stage. The dialogue reads:

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Manager. That is the finest scene I ever saw. But can you realise it upon the stage.

Artist. You are right: I cannot.

Manager. Then why if you cannot reproduce it do you show it to me?

Artist. To make an impression on you. Why ask me absurd questions?

Manager. Because I wish to be practical; I wish to protect my interests.

Artist. But you are not protecting them; you are utterly at my mercy and seem to be trying to ruin them.

Manager. Really you look at things in a strange way. Now come down to earth and tell me how we can realize that design upon the stage.

Artist. We cannot; we cannot. I have told you so repeatedly but you were so quick with your questions you would not let me tell you something which saves the situation. That design, as I have just said, is made to give you a certain impression. When I make the same scene on the stage it is sure to be quite different in form and colour but it will create the same impression on you as this design in front of you now.

Manager. Two things quite different will create the same impression? Are you joking?

Artist. No, I am not joking, but I will do so if you insist upon it.

Manager. No, no, proceed! tell me more; explain what you mean.

Artist. Well, a design for a scene on paper is one work of art, a scene on the stage is another. The two have no connection with each other. Each depends on a hundred different ways and means of creating the same impression. Try to adapt the one to the other and you get at best only a good translation. You do not understand: I know it; but what would you have? You ought to be content not to understand, never to understand; if you could comprehend you would have no need to consult me.

Lee Simonson considered Craig's designs for Macbeth totally
impractical and impossible of realization on a stage. He says:

*I had several of the designs in Towards a New Theatre analyzed to scale and a model built of one—the setting for Macbeth, Act I, Scene 5—using as the basis of measurement either the treads of a stairway or the human figures indicated. Unless the use of painted perspective is resorted to—an old-fashioned practice that Craig repudiates—the setting for Macbeth, Act II, in order to have the scale and depth indicated by the drawing, would require a stage opening a hundred feet wide and ninety feet high—as high, that is, as the average eight-story building. In Act I, Scene 5, of Macbeth, the castle walls prove to be more than fifty-three feet high—the height of a five-story building—and extend back for another fifty-three feet. And these are only two scenes for a play that has many more. How the walls of stage palaces are to be built five stories high, of the lightest stage material known that can simulate solid forms, namely, canvas, and how, once set, they are to be shifted, are problems that Craig obviously never thought of. It is of course possible to translate these designs to the stage by reducing their proportions. But it is precisely this grandiose scale which makes them as drawings distinctive and impressive.*

Simonson wrote this statement in 1932, several years after Craig had discussed the apparent magnitude of his designs and the difficulty anyone would have should he attempt to translate the designs literally into a stage scene.

The critics of Craig’s designs and views of stage scenery charged him with the desire to obliterate the actor and the playwright and in their place substitute his scenes. A critic on the Sheffield Daily Telegraph,

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in reviewing Craig's book, *The Theatre Advancing*, 1919, said that Craig placed the "scene" above everything else in the theatre. Craig disagrees (IX, p. 50). He quotes the reviewer and then answers his charges. He says:

"Mr. Craig maintains that . . . the play is not the main thing, nor the acting; the scene is the main thing." 

And in the same article, seven lines further down:

"According to Mr. Craig's gospel the business of the play is to live up to the scenery, not for the scenery to afford atmosphere for the play!"

So incorrect, as our readers know, are these two statements that they may be dubbed falsehoods.

Neither in his last book, nor in any book, does Mr. Craig maintain any such rubbish. The "Sheffield Daily Telegraph!" should be above such perversion of the truth.

In describing a play he has recently seen (VI, 3, p. 255), Craig again discounts his critics. He says:

Certainly it was a beautiful and costly performance. It was magnificently and astonishingly complete. But in spite of its dazzling opulence it was never gaudy, garish nor in any way ugly. It was delusion and not illusion and, as was to be expected, it utterly swamped the play and the players. The drama struggled to keep its head up as a swimmer would struggle in a lily-clogged lake. Only one scene escaped drowning, and by some means arrived at real simplicity. In this scene the drama took its last breath and then went under. It was particularly interesting to see such a production as it showed that the great theatre could be ideal, if it liked, as well as real, or rather unreal.

Craig firmly asserts that it is a lie that he wants no drama, despises the actor and wants nothing but scenery (VIII, 12, p. 4). He writes:
"YOU, OUR READERS AND ENCOURAGERS, nail the lies
to the doors of the liars....

The Lie that we want no Drama.
The Lie that we want nothing but Scenery.
The Lie that we despise the Actor... that we
wish to glorify the Producer only... that our theories
are rash innovations, are not based upon the oldest
and best traditions. And that special fib of the fib-
mongers, that we are exclusive, that we want a precious
Theatre de Luxe,... nail it up!

We exclude nothing except the non-Dramatic...the
non-Theatrical.

We include all and every good form of Theatre in
our Programme, we do not exclude the worst: already
we have changed some of the worst theatres into good
ones.

So trace the lies up and down the cities to the
house-doors of the liars and nail them there. Do that
part of the work for us and we will do the rest.

And say besides that it was I who asked you to
do so on behalf of THE MASK and the Dramatic Genius of
the world.

Craig asserts again and again in The Mask that the actor is

essential to the completion of the stage scene and the scene is to be
designed and constructed for the actor. In IX, p. 6, he says:

the "scene" is not there until the actors are there....
and that is the whole point.

What do we see in the design for what we may call
the 'Scenery'? If you ask one of this throng what is the scene of a
play in a Theatre they will tell you it is the scenery.

And when you ask them if plain severe scenery or
gaudy scenery is best for an inspiring gay situation in
Drama they will scout the idea that the plain scenery is
enough. They will even be contemptuous or crack jokes
about it.

This suggests that it may be a mistake to ask spectators
anything--more especially when they have not analyzed their
experience in a theatre; and that is as it should be. They are
not expected to analyze a scene and we should not ask them...
Again, Craig (IV, 2, p. 165) in referring to the reviews in
The London Times and The Daily Observer of an exhibit featuring
Craig's stage designs and models for stage scenery at the Leicester
Galleries, states his position in regard to the relationship of scenery
and the actor. He writes:

There has been an important exhibition of designs
and models for stage scenery here this last month and
the London press has honoured the exhibitor, Mr. Gordon
Craig, with a serious and enthusiastic reception.

In a leading article THE TIMES draws attention to
the difference between scenery in the modern theatre
and the scenery Mr. Craig has given us. "One may take
it as an axiom" says the TIMES "that any stage scene
which satisfies the eye without the actors will dis-
tract both eye and mind when the actors are present.
This is an axiom upon which Mr. Craig's designs are
based; but it is ignored in nearly all theatres, especially
in poetic drama".

In the OBSERVER Mr. Konody, mentions the PRACTICAL-
ITY of Mr. Craig's work. "What is truly extraordinary
is that Mr. Craig's opponents persist in condemning his
work as unpractical, his effects of light and spaciousness
as impossible of realisation on the stage. But Mr. Craig
has his answer ready for them, and the hammer blows of
his logic are the more telling as the force behind them is... practical achievement".

He then quotes from Mr. Craig's notes to his Catalogue:
"The obvious thing that the London critic may say is
that you cannot get such a height on the actual stage, and
the surprising answer is that you cannot... in London.
Somehow or other, a sense of space is a thing seldom
attempted in London. Those who have visited Italy, for
instance, notice how we dwarf our triumphal arches and our
castle walls, (1) It is all rather neat here in London.
You may say that would in no way prevent a stage carpenter
from being able to realise the immensity of the wall before
him. But I am afraid I must suggest that you are wrong,
for stage carpenters are as impressionable as yourself,
and they have at last been convinced that space is a thing which does not exist!

In some of the theatres on the Continent they have got past this difficulty, and yet without robbing the actor, the stage manager and the call boy of their employments.

Several of the newspapers draw attention to Sir Herbert Tree's imitation of certain of the "Macbeth" designs..... made for Sir Herbert at his request and withdrawn by the designer from the theatre.

Again in The Mask (IV, p. 48) Craig clarifies his position in regard to the function of the scene in relation to the actor and the play.

He says:

But, whatever the subject, the leading characteristic of all these engravings [Italian woodcuts of the sixteenth Century] is the same,.... that simplicity of idea which is the first great need of scenery. So obvious a need is it that it is strange how continually it is overlooked by those who design stage scenes. Yet consider for a moment. If you want to tell someone a story you tell it as simply as possible. If you want to state a fact in a letter you make it as direct as possible. You confine yourself, in fact, to the history you are about to tell or to the fact you have to relate. If while telling this fact or relating this story you begin to drag in other stories or other facts you fail in your intention which is to make an impression upon your hearer. And so it is with the scenery of a theatre. The scenery is not put there to tell the story but perhaps to fill up the gaps, for it is the poet who tells the story and the actors who interpret that story. Therefore the scene must not interrupt. And as perfect examples of this I can suggest nothing better than the scenes of these old Italian engravers, which are certainly not bare uninteresting places but which yet act to perfection the part of listener to the tale.

If something of the simplicity which characterises all these designs could be regained in the theatre the favourite boast of the Managers that they are going to produce "with great simplicity" would no longer be as empty as it is pathetic; but the change will have to be an internal not an external one, be fundamental and not only superficial; for
these old designers did not sit down saying 'I will produce a simple design' they merely gave expression to the spirit which was in themselves.

Throughout The Mask, Craig makes his views unmistakably clear concerning the function and appearance of the stage. He avers that the scenery must not interfere, nor detract from the actor and the play. He elaborates on this point (III, p. 15) when he says:

If scenery must be used when performing plays it is better to employ a single background rather than an elaborate one, and to create this you do better to employ a few lines than many broken ones. Thus the simplest background is the unclouded sky and a plain wall is almost as simple.

For a perfect drama, should it be possible some day to write one, the sky must be used as the only worthy background. The manager or producer reveals his estimate of the value of Shakespeare by the elaboration or simplicity of his background.

The above design [a wood engraving of a stage setting from the 16th century] is an example of a simple background. The lines are but little broken. In no way do they frustrate the dramatic intention.

Scenery has to speak as well as the actors, but it is better when it says only that which is necessary.

Here we see that we need to have it explained that it is an interior, a prison. It is a gentleman's prison, says the floor, but except for slightly emphatic floor, window and stone bench the scene says nothing; it leaves the stage to the Dramatist and the Actors.

Learn the essentials of stage scenery, and you will in time learn the essentials of Drama.

Evidence is abundant in The Mask to dispel any contention that Craig considered the scene more important than the actors and the play. As far as the author can ascertain, Craig did not rank any of
the elements of a stage production - scenery, lighting, script, costume, acting, or movement, in the order of their importance.

He did not, as has been pointed out, consider scenery to be of first importance in theatre. He constantly reminds his readers that all of the elements of a stage production must be blended and unified in such a way that no one element will attract attention to itself. Craig maintained that several independent arts do not constitute the art of the theatre (V, 3, p. 217). He says:

The theatre of today is split up into departments; it has imprisoned all the arts each in its own cell. The lighting is one business, the scenery another, the dresses another, the stage-management another; and how often the non possimus of the man of specialized experience, and no ideas but what he has learnt from others, blocks the way to bold experiment! To vitalize the Art of the Theatre, we need to realize the proud, sufficient sentence of Alfred Stevens, 'I know of but one art'.

Another allegation often made of Craig's scene designs was that they were limited to the staging of aesthetic drama, i.e. plays of fantasy and poetic plays. The critics asserted that Craig's designs were incompatible with the psychological and thesis plays of modern drama. Craig, in the Editorial Notes (II, 1-3, page 48) comments on an article in the Saturday Review of Literature which avers the unfitness of his designs for the psychological drama. Craig says:

Mr. Anthony Scarlett, writing lately to the "Saturday Review" calls upon the committee of the
proposed National Theatre to make sure of securing Mr. Gordon Craig as their stage director. Mr. Max Beerbohm, writing the week after on the same subject, calls upon Mr. Herbert Trench to secure Mr. Craig for some experiments.

He then goes on to scout another idea, that is to say, that Mr. Craig can do anything else except arrange scenery, lighting and costumes for a poetic or fantastic play.

He says, "It is obvious that Mr. Craig, arranging the scenery and lighting and costumes of a realistic tragedy or comedy, would either have to forswear his methods, and thus waste his time, or would wreck the play, and thus waste his time and ours."

This is a very puzzling sentence. One does not know whether to be amused, or whether to be suspicious of Mr. Beerbohm in his attitude towards Mr. Craig, for, as Mr. Craig has never yet produced a realistic tragedy or comedy it is by no means 'obvious' that he would wreck either by his arrangement of the scenery, lighting and costume.

As we have said above, up to the present time Mr. Craig has not produced a modern realistic tragedy or comedy, although Mr. Arthur Symons is one of those who have wished to see Mr. Craig's production of Ibsen's 'Ghosts.' In his 'Studies in Seven Arts' he writes as follows:

"Then I would like to see Mr. Craig go further still; I would like to see him deal with a purely modern play, a play which takes place indoors, in the house of middleclass people. He should mount the typical modern play, Ibsen's 'Ghosts.' Think of that room in Mrs. Alving's country-house, beside one of the large fjords in Western Norway. Do you remember the stage directions? In the first act the glimpse, though the glass windows of the conservatory, of 'a gloomy fjord landscape, veiled by steady rain;' in the third the lamp burning on the table, the darkness outside, the 'faint glow from the conflagration.' And always 'the room as before.' What might not Mr. Craig do with that room! What precisely, I do not know; but I am sure that his method is capable of an
extension which will take in that room, and, if
it can take in that room, it can take in all of
modern life which is of importance to the playwright."

Sheldon Cheney argues that, although many of Craig's designs
are not applicable in toto to the modern thesis play, they do offer
the scene designer principles which would be of considerable value
to him in designing scenes for the thesis play. He says:

Invariably when a student of Gordon Craig's work
has become half convinced of the soundness and truth
of his theories of stage setting, and of their fit-
ness for psychologic as well as aesthetic drama, the
comment comes: "All this is well enough for the set-
ting of imaginative plays, but what about those that
call for scenes in modern interiors?" It is the most
searching of all questions that must be faced by those
who believe in Craig's fight against naturalism and at
the same time believe in the psychologic drama. It
is worth while to face it squarely. How are Craig's
theories to be reconciled to the plays of Ibsen, of
Pinero, of Galsworthy? Craig does not care to recon-
cile them. He is concerned only with the imaginative
drama, with his back turned squarely upon the "realis-
tic" drama, and especially upon those modern plays
which call for "up-to-date" settings. But the principles
he has evolved apply to that sort of play none the less,
and there is in his work a salutary lesson for the
setting of modern scenes.

There can be no objection to a setting being
natural, if its naturalness is not one of haphazard
or strained detail and out of key with the spirit of
the play. But the natural setting should be expressive
of tasteful everyday life, with the accidentals left
out—not of a stage director's tastelessness. In the
modern room on the stage simplicity should be the first
concern of the designer. The wall spaces should be
kept as unbroken as possible, for just as in the
aesthetic drama, the attention should be concentrated
on the actors; they should stand out clearly against
a background divided into a very few large masses. The room should be cleared, moreover, of two-thirds of the usual clutter of furniture and naturalistic properties; the average stage parlor suggests simple domesticity less than the crowded aspect of a second-hand furniture store or old curiosity shop.

With a few chairs, a table, and a picture, a designer with perfect taste can create by suggestion an atmosphere that the tasteless average stage "artist" cannot achieve with either three times or a hundred times the same number of objects. By the shape of the rooms, the height of the ceiling, the combination of lines, the placing of the openings, and by the disposition of the furnishings, and by the lighting, a modern room can be made to suggest the spiritual mood of any scene: cheeriness, severity, majesty, intimacy, depression. But it can be done only by simplicity, economy of means, reticence of touch, suggestion, concentration. These average overcrowded interiors, these depressingly accurate revelations of the stage director's lack of taste, make one pray indeed for Craig's ideal artist of the theatre. 

Restraint, simplicity and appropriateness cannot find their place in stage decoration until there is a generation of directors who know the value of these things in real life.

Craig's teaching is quite as applicable to the lighting of the regular production as to the scenery. Unlike the "Wizard of the Switchboard", [David Belasco] he seeks only that the light shall be appropriate to the mood, or beautiful, not that it shall be natural or imitative. One of the first things he decided in his experiments was that footlights, casting ugly shadows, must be abolished. It is difficult to see why they have persisted so long, since they are not only unbeautiful but unnatural.28

A third allegation often directed at Craig's designs was that they were excessively elaborate. To regard Craig as a designer who went

28 The New Movement in The Theatre, pp. 291-293.
in for elaborate scenery is absurd. Simplicity in design was nearly an obsession with Craig. There are endless references in *The Mask* to his plea for unobtrusive scenery freed from wearisome detail and over-decoration. His aim was to get away from the extravagant staging of his time. Very early in Craig's career he advanced his belief that effective stage scenery is characterized first and foremost by simplicity. Craig advised the scene designer to eliminate superfluous detail and elaboration in his designs and recommended the Italian woodcuts of the fifteenth century as models from which the designer could learn the technique of realizing simplicity in design. (IV, 1, pp. 47-48). He says:

I think it was Mr. Allen Carric who was the first to bring before readers of *The Mask* the Italian woodcut and to point out its value to the modern scene designer.

I offer eight wood engravings of the fifteenth century for your consideration.

My reason for selecting these particular cuts is not that they do not contain a line too much or a line too little, for that would be to judge them as the things they obviously are, ... that is to say, as wood cuts for illustrating some stories. But it may be easily admitted that good things serve more than one purpose, and the settings or backgrounds of these wood cuts are good enough to act for me as ideal examples of stage scenery, scenery without a thing too much or too little in it.

I suggest that nowhere else are such good lessons to be found; and the fact that they do not contain features to be found in modern stage scenery in no wise weakens my suggestion.

The first thing which strikes one as absent is detail....
Craig condemns the modern stage manager for wanting elaborately decorated scenery. (I, 2, p. 10). He says:

The modern theatre manager thinks the stage should have its plays gorgeously decorated. He will say that no pains should be spared to bring every assistance towards cheating the audience into a sense of reality; he will never cease telling us how important all these decorations are; he urges all this for several reasons and the following reason is not the least... He scents a grave danger in simple and good work.

The critics who maintained that Craig wished to remove the actor and the author from the theatre and to reserve the stage exclusively for scenery have only to study Craig's method of scene design to discover how wrong they are. Even a casual study of The Mask will reveal that Craig's theory of the Theatre did not preclude any one element of the theatre; nor did it emphasize any one element over any other (VII, 3, p. 33). He says:

The art of the theatre is to be neither acting nor the play, it is not scene nor dance, but consists of all the elements of which these things are composed: action, which is the very spirit of acting; words, which are the body of the play; line and color, which are the very heart of the scene; rhythm, which is the very essence of the dance. The art of the theatre is addressed to the eyes, and the first dramatist spoke through poetic action, which is dance, or prose action, which is gesture. In the modern theatre a play is no longer a balance of actions, words, dance and scene, but it is either all words or all scene.

However, Craig made it unmistakably clear that he considered the large and sweeping impressions created by the scene, scenery,
costumes, lighting and the movement of the actors as being of very special value to the stage director in the interpretation of the play. He again reaffirms his stand in regard to the relation of the play and the scene (I, 3-4, p. 61). He advises:

Let me tell you then at the commencement that it is the large and sweeping impression produced by means of scene and the movement of the figures, which is undoubtedly the most valuable means at your disposal. I say this only after very many doubts and after much experience; and you must always bear in mind that it is from my experience that I speak, and that the best I can do is but to offer you that experience. Although you know that I have parted company with the popular belief that the written play is of any deep value to the art of the theatre, we are not going so far as that here. We are to accept it that the play still retains some value to us and we are not going to waste that; our aim is to increase it. Therefore it is, as I say, the production of general and broad effects appealing to the eye which will add a value to that which has already been made valuable by the great poet.

In this passage Craig makes his position clear concerning the functional relationship of the play and the scene. It is not a question of whether the play or the scene is of first importance in the theatre but rather what are the elements of production available to the designer that will give him the best opportunity to increase the values of the play. They are, according to Craig, the broad, sweeping impressions created by the scene and the movements of the actors. Bear in mind, Craig does not say that the play, itself, has no value in the theatre. He does say that the play has no value to the art of the theatre. Here is a distinction
and to understand it we must first understand Craig's position. The art of the theatre is a fine art and as such has autonomy. It has an existence, independent of the script. The art of the theatre is composed of scenery, lighting, costumes and movement. These are the elements which constitute the scene and they have, when blended into an artistic unity, the power to increase the value of the play. Craig contended that the script with its words and plot can be removed from the theatre and there will still remain an art of the theatre.
Craig's Method and Approach to Scene Design

Craig's definition of the scene embraced not only that which is commonly called scenery but also lighting, costuming and the movement of the actors. Craig's scenic artist was far more than a mere designer of scenery. He was the supreme artist in the theatre and his work included all the visual elements of the production as well as the music and all other sound background. Craig would abhor the practice now followed in our professional theatre and in a few of our so-called Educational Theatres of departmentalizing the elements of the scene and allowing the head of each department to do his work with little regard to the others or to the unity of the whole. However, fifty years ago, there was even less production unity in the Professional Theatre and the Educational Theatre did not exist. Not only was there very little unity in the professional theatre at the turn of the twentieth century but there actually was competition between the various production departments. The scene painter cared only to make his scene attractive in itself; the actor's chief concern was that the play be a good vehicle for the exhibition of his histrionic powers; the electrician cared less for the beauty and appropriateness of the lighting that that it should be effective and allied closely to natural phenomena; the costumer cared less for the suitability of the costumes in enhancing the mood.
and atmosphere of the play than that of dressing the actors to suggest a fashion parade, and finally there was the manager whose chief concern was box office receipts and not the artistic unity of the production. So, according to Craig, the production lacked the essential unity and sense of design that are at the root of all art.

Within Craig's concept of the theatre, even deeper than the ideal purpose he assigns to the stage scene, lies a great idealism. The theatre is a unity and it needs an artist-director who can mould and blend its every craft to achieve that unity. Craig's concept was based on the assumption that art and collaboration are two absolutely incompatible ideas. The terms "group art" and "co-operative art" are, to Craig, incomprehensible. Craig phrased his ideal unity of the theatre in his little book, *The Art of the Theatre*, 1905. He said: "It is impossible for a work of art ever to be produced where more than one brain is permitted to direct; and if works of art are not seen in the theatre, this one reason is a sufficient one, though there are plenty more". The reader can detect excessiveness in this statement but it is an excessiveness born of the ideal. Craig wrote of the disunity in the theatre frequently in *The Mask*. In an oft-quoted passage, he has indicated the need for an artist-director in the theatre (III, 2, p. 36). He writes:

I have many times written that there is only one way to obtain unity in the art of the theatre. I suppose it is unnecessary
to explain why unity should be there as in other great arts;
I suppose it offends no one to admit that unless unity reigns
'chaos is come again.' . . . And now I wish to make clear by
what process unity is lost.

Let me make a list (an incomplete one, but it will serve)
of the different workers in the theater. When I have made
this list I will tell you how many are head-cooks and how they
assist in the spoiling of the broth.

First and foremost, there is the proprietor of the theater.
Secondly, there is the business manager who rents the theater.
Thirdly, there is the stage-director, sometimes three or four
of these. There are also three or four business men. Then
we come to the chief actor and the chief actress. Then we have
the actor and the actress who are next to the chief; that is to
say, who are ready to step into their places if required. Then
there are from twenty to sixty other actors and actresses.
Besides this, there is a gentleman who designs scenes. . . .An-
other who designs costumes. A third who devotes his time
to arranging lights. A fourth who attends to the machinery
(generally the hardest worker in the theater). And then we have
from twenty to a hundred under-workers, scene-painters, cos-
tume-makers, limelight manipulators, dressers, scene-shifters,
under-machinists, extra ladies and gentlemen, cleaners,
program sellers; and there we have the bunch.

Now look carefully at this list. We see seven heads and two
very influential members. Seven directors instead of one, and
nine opinions instead of one. . . .

Do you wish to know why there are seven masters instead of
one? It is because there is no one man in the theater who is a
master of himself, that is to say, there is no man capable of
inventing and rehearsing a play; capable of designing and super-
intending the construction of both scenery and costume; of
writing the necessary music; of inventing such machinery as is
needed and the lighting that is to be used.

No manager of a theater has made these things his study; and
it is a disgrace to the Western theater that this statement can be
made.

In order to achieve artistic unity in a theatre production, Craig
wanted an artist-director who is a master at one and the same time
of playwriting, directing, music composition, costume and scene
design and lighting. This artist-director would conceive the designs of the entire production and execute the designs with the help of a group of skilled artists and craftsmen. Craig's ideal artist-director could be nothing less than a super-artist. We must not dismiss Craig's ideal artist-director as a figment invented by an impractical visionary. On the contrary, we must recognize Craig's artist-director as a distinct possibility if we are to follow through Craig's total concept of the art of the theatre. We urge the reader not to approach Craig's concept of the theatre within the boundary of the existing theatre but to share the minimum of Craig's faith and inspiration for an idealized art theatre of the future. Craig never once, in The Mask, foretold the immediate appearance of this "new race" of artist-directors to which he so often refers. Perhaps Craig would not have accused Sheldon Cheney of an understatement when he [Cheney] said:

... that one such genius in a century is a generous estimate of the probable world output. ... 29

Recognizing the inability of the commercial theatre to develop a "race" of artist-directors, Craig in 1903 began to formulate plans for a school of the art of the theatre. He tried but without success to

enlist financial aid for such a school in England. When he took over
the Arena Goldoni in Florence in 1908, he saw that, at last, he had
the physical accommodations for a school of the theatre. In an elo-
quent passage (II, 3, pp. 36-38) he describes his plans for the school.

He says:

He intends to found a school there, a school of the Art of
the Theatre such as has never before existed. It will be an
dead society organised for the accomplishment of an ideal
work. All over Europe are men scattered here and there,
working in the different theatres, but waiting; ready on the
moment when that little miracle of the capitalist shall have
been worked, to leave what they are doing and come and group
themselves around the man in whom the hopes of the European
theatre find at once their centre and their guarantee.

Here, for several years, they will study to perfect them-
selves in the crafts pertaining to that which, in his writings,
Mr. Craig has told us what he means by the Art of the Theatre.
Then, when the preparation time is over, their means per-
fected, they will begin their public work.

From those we may gather that here, under his rule, realism
and artificiality will find no place; that redundant and petty detail
will be excluded, obtrusive personality subdued; that we shall
witness symbolism rather than imitation, suggestion rather than
statement, that the intention will be to insist more upon the ideal
than the actual, and, by poetry and significant action, to convey
impressions rather than chronicle facts. We know that here
will be dispelled the illusion that the artist of the theatre must be
the actor or the poet or the painter, for instead of these being
called in to give their assistance; the work done will be entirely
independent, created for the Theatre by Artists of the Theatre,
and thus possessing a harmony impossible where that which is set
before us is a patchwork of the productions of many minds ... .

Mr. Craig's idea of an artist of the Theatre is, as he has told
us repeatedly, a man who contains in himself all those gifts
possessed by stage manager, actor, scene painter, costumier,
and electrician, and who adds to all these the gifts of a poet; a
man who can use and control, for the expression of his own idea,
sounds, colours, gestures, lights, figures just as the musician
makes use of alternating notes and silences, the poet of words, the painter of line and colour, light and shade.

It is with the intention of training such artists as these that Mr. Craig has taken the Arena and intends to found his school.

What will be the result upon the public when the time comes for their first representations it is not hard to surmise. A part of their work will certainly amaze and a part it will probably amuse; but there will be a certain number scattered here and there over Europe who will understand, and who, owing to these artists, may find Florence become in a new sense, the home of Beauty. The centre from which a new revelation of it shall be given to the world.

And is not the Arena, of all others, by its history as well as by its architectural qualities, the ideal place for this renaissance of the Art of the Theatre? For is not Mr. Craig's ideal for the Theatre of the Future that it shall be a place no less sacred in its character, no less uplifting in its influence on the national life, than a church? so is there not, therefore, something peculiarly fitting in the fact that this home of the Theatre of the Future should have been formerly a church?

Here, those women of a past day sought sanctuary from the sorrows and discords of the world. Here, we shall seek sanctuary from the blatant realism and commercialism of the modern stage. Here, sick of artificiality, we shall find the simplicity and sincerity which are the attributes of Beauty; the symbolism which satisfies our imagination instead of the realism which bruises and the superfluity of detail which stifles it; here, through our eyes, we shall receive that sacrament of Beauty which shall refresh and purify our hearts.

As I sit upon the stage and write this the shadows are deepening about the lofty pillars and the arches. So strong is the spell of the past that almost they seem the black figures of Annalena and her nuns lingering in the cloisters where, at this hour, they must have so often passed to vespers. The sudden cry of a child cuts the silence. It might be that of little Giovanni of the Black Bands, turbulent and passionate even in his baby days.

The brief twilight fades, the luminous green of the sky has turned to sapphire, in which a few great stars are throbbing like jewels on the breast of the night. The rising moon sharpens the shadows in the loggia opposite and transfigures the stained plaster of the walls and columns until they seem as if built of pearl. In a cypress in the gardens beyond a nightingale is singing.
Tranquility and loveliness dominate the scene. It is a place shut in from the ugly, the restless, the noisy and vulgar; full of silence; open only to the wind and rain, to the sun and moon and stars.

Here, watching the encroaching shadows, one may dream undisturbed, peopling these quiet spaces with the creatures of imagination, the figures of a long past day; with Annalena the young widow who founded here her convent, and Corazzi, the young architect who achieved here his first work, and many many more. They are all gone now, as today's shadows will be gone tomorrow, but their work remains; that which they touched and looked upon yet survives.

Perhaps it is some trace of the cloistered spirit of those many nuns which yet lingers here and which gives such charm, so peaceful an atmosphere, to the place.

Indeed, there can be few more beautiful theatres in the world than this! It is ideal and stirs ideal emotions; and, since it is the prerogative of the artist not merely to create beauty but to increase and develop that already existent, the degree of his power being measured by his capacity for so doing, of what will this place not prove capable in the hands of so supreme an artist as Mr. Gordon Craig?

At that thought the illusion of the past fades a little; it is, instead, the spell of the future which dominates and holds. The place, for all its tranquility, seems to be awaiting something. It is the destined beauty; and, since destiny is strong, the issue leaves little room for doubt. It seems almost as inevitable as the past is sure.

Mr. Craig's purposes are the outcome of long practice and profound research. He has studied well the details of his organisation; he has foreseen contingencies, he has balanced possibilities. The scheme is ready; it awaits, like a ship in dock, the hand which shall eat its cable and launch it upon the seas.

And who shall do this?

Well, there are many rich men, and some of them are courageous and ready to support courageous enterprises, and there are even some who understand that Beauty is as worthy an investment, and, in a profound sense, as profitable a one, as railway shares or mines.

Of course such men are rare; but the world has not grown so old yet that courage and generosity and large interests and noble enthusiasms are dead, or that all these qualities may not at times be found united in the person of a millionaire.
One of these days such a capitalist will pass by the Arena, and pause, and give the necessary magical touch with his golden wand, and, so at length work the last little miracle needed to bring realisation to hopes, fulfilment to purposes and actuality to dreams.

Four years later, 1913, Craig announced in the February number of The Mask, the founding of The Gordon Craig School. The date was February 27, the birthday of Dame Ellen Terry. The school was made possible by a committee headed by the English poet and dramatist, Laurence Binyon. The committee had agreed to raise five thousand pounds a year by subscription in England. Soon thirty students were enrolled and work begun. When World War I broke out a year later the funds from England ceased, the students left and the school was closed and never reopened.

Of course it is idle conjecture, but had the school run for a number of years, would Craig have been successful in developing the ideal artist-director about whom there has been so much speculation?

Although Craig's school did not exist long enough to give him an opportunity to test the effectiveness of his instructional techniques in teaching the art of scene design, The Mask abounds with instructions to the young scene designer. The manner in which Craig presents his own methods and approach to the art of scene design is in itself a salutary lesson to the designer. Craig's ability as a teacher remains unknown, but it is indeed certain that he possessed
and understood the subject matter of the theatre. One of the virtues of Gordon Craig is that he was a man of the theatre. He practiced the art of acting before he published a theory about it; he practiced the art of design before he published a theory about it and he practiced the art of production before he published a theory about it.

Time and time again, in The Mask, he says, "after the practice the theory."

Craig is insistent that the young designer learn the construction and mechanical operation of the stage before he sets about designing a scene for a play. Although he has many references in The Mask to the subject of stage mechanics, his introduction to the book edited by Holme, Design In The Theatre, is an excellent resume of Craig's recommendations to the designer. He writes:

The first thing you will have to do is to learn the construction of the modern stage. At present you seem to be rather ignorant of this. Never mind about inventing new stages, stick to the old one and learn its shape and its uses. It's a good stage and it will do. Avoid all innovating as you study; put a curb on your imaginations or fancies and settle down, one and all, to master the comparative sizes, shapes, proportions, fittings and what are called practical possibilities of the modern stage; its floor, its under stages, flies, upperfloors, and side galleries, scene docks, and every part and corner of all the stages you can possibly come to know about. After this turn to the fittings, electrical and hydraulic, hand worked and every other kind of machine elaborate or simple which is in use in the modern theatre and by which the scenes are manipulated. Then occupy yourselves entirely with the lighting plant and all its machines, beginning with a single electric lamp and working up until you have mastered the switchboard. Then
learn the technique of costume; how to design costumes you may already know; learn how to cut them, to make them, to wear them. Learn the whole thing, the whole technical theatre.

The above passage strongly suggests that Craig was a practical man of the theatre who created his designs from the actual materials of the stage and not from a place in the clouds, as many of his critics suggest.

Craig insisted that the designer must know the emotional value of light. The mood of the scene will be suggested by the lighting, both in coloring and in the placing and movement of lights and shadows. Light must be used for its suggestiveness and not to imitate nature.

The designer should strive to reproduce the beauty of moonlight, its essential spirit but he should not be guilty of trying to show a rising moon. In the matter of costumes, too, imaginative beauty instead of realism will dictate the designer's choice. The costumes will be simple and decorative, and like blocks of color in a great pattern—part of the color scheme and part of the decorative scheme. They will be true enough to the spirit of the time of the play not to be conspicuously unnatural, but not so painfully accurate that they will excite comment on their historical accuracy. Craig recommended simplified costumes free from elaboration in detail and ornament.

The lines of the costume are to be graceful and the tailoring must allow the actor freedom of movement. Craig was particularly
emphatic in asserting that the actor's costume must allow freedom of movement. It is the movement of the actor out of which Craig fashions the fundamental material of his scene designs. Craig relies upon movement for the greater part of the appeal to the audience. The movement and gestures of the actor must be simple, deliberate and infinitely expressive. However, the scene designer must not permit the actors to add spontaneous or accidental movement in an attempt to achieve a semblance of naturalism. The individual movement like the group must be carefully calculated and designed; not left to chance. Craig instructs the scene designer to place great emphasis upon the aesthetic value of the massing, grouping and interweaving of the actors in the scene. Craig suggests that through harmony and rhythm of the shifting and moving bodies of the actors, the scene designer can achieve a kaleidoscopic pattern of line and color. The movement of the actors is continuously under the control of the designer. With movement, the designer can achieve the effect of a continuous decorative pattern. Craig discounted the value of so-called natural and individual movement on the stage. He recommended mass group movement (I, 3-4, pp. 64-65). He writes:

It is the same when they come to consider movements, the movements of masses on the stage. You must be careful not to follow the custom. We often hear it said that each member
of the Meinigen Company, composing the great crowd in
Julius Caesar was acting a special part of his own. This
may be very exciting as a curiosity, and attractive to a
rather foolish audience, who would naturally say, "Oh, how
interesting to go and look at one particular man in a corner
who is acting a little part of his own! How wonderful! It is
exactly like life!", . . . And if that is the standard and if
that is our aim, well and good.

But we know that it is not. Masses must be treated as
masses, as Rembrandt treats a mass, as Bach, as Beethoven
treats a mass, and detail has nothing to do with the mass.
Detail is very well in itself and in its place. You do not make
an impression of mass by crowding a quantity of details to-
gether. Detail is made to form mass only by those people who
love the elaborate, and it is a much easier thing to crowd a
quantity of details together, than it is to create a mass which
shall possess beauty and interest. . . .

In the design of the scenery, Craig warns the designer
against the use of realistic detail. It is the spirit of the object and
not the object itself that is the all important consideration in design-
ing the scene. The designer, says Craig, must take us beyond
reality; he must replace the pattern of the thing itself by the pattern
which that thing evokes in his mind, the symbol of the thing (VIII,
5, p. 18). He says:

Or, if you wish for another example we can think of a ship.
You cannot in designing a ship dispense with, or get away from,
the general form of the keel; it is impossible; but you may
have as many different keels as there are different leaves to
different trees.

In what we call the Decoration of our theatre, I mean the
stage decoration together with the lighting and the costumes,
all would be just as durable and as precious as the building
itself. There would be no attempt to produce what we call
"theatrical illusion". For instance, we should not paint a
a tree, or put up an imitation tree so as best to copy in
colour and texture a real tree. No more than in a cathedral
they put up a wooden copy of the original cross. Doubtless
the cross on which the Saviour was crucified was an ordinary
and rough wooden structure, but when it reaches the cathedral
it becomes a precious work of art, in no way realistic.

Why do they make this transformation? Because it is too
good a thing ever to be able to be imitated; because it would
be said they were pretending to put the real cross. Everyone
realized this in relation to an object made holy by thought.

What is to prevent us from treating a tree, than which, as
part of Divine nature, there is nothing more holy, . . . and,
what is more, more joyous, . . . in a like manner? Not that
we should allow even the symbol of a tree to appear on our stage
merely as something to look at; unless the drama demanded
the presence of such a symbol no tree should be put there.
But if there is to be a tree, or a fountain, or a fire, we shall
have to be made aware by the majesty of each that each one is
of paramount importance, and this can only be done by fashioning symbols - in each case something suggesting and standing
for the real thing.

The scene designer, asserted Craig, must create an atmos-
phere and not a locality. The scene should be suggestive and symbolic
rather than historically accurate. Each needless thing, each unnecessary
detail, no matter how appealing in itself, will interrupt the main action
and disturb the mood of the play. The scene is not designed for the
purpose of illustrating or representing the script, rather the scene is
designed to create a place which will echo the spiritual meaning of
the script and at the same time provide the actors a space in which
they can create a mood and atmosphere which will be through group
movements commensurate with that of the play.

Craig continuously emphasizes his contention that at the
heart of the scene is the play. Working from the concept that the script is embedded in the scene, Craig advised a thorough and painstaking analysis of the play, so that a scene could be devised which would harmonize with the thoughts and feelings of the dramatist. At this point, Craig would warn the designer not to lose sight of the fact that he is an artist who seeks expression through the art of scene design: and since his art seeks its appeal through the sense of sight, the scenic artist must be alert to the means of expression available to him. They are line, form, mass, rhythm, balance, color, light, shadow, and movements and groupings of the figures in the stage space. These are the means by which the scene designer can convey, in plastic form, the thoughts and feelings of the play. Here Craig would alert the designer to a pitfall into which he could descend if he allows his scene to stand above the play. The scene designer must not attempt to make the scene an end in itself. The scene is the scene designer's imaginative vision of the play. Craig would urge the scene designer to dismiss the traditional axiom that dramatic art is the realization through the living player of the conceptions of a dramatic poet. This axiom, according to Craig, omits all but one, the actor, of the means of expression available to the scene designer. Craig believed that the play and the fine art of production are not one and the same thing. However, he would not
extend this assertion to the point of denying, as John Lesslie Palmer has done in his book, *The Future of the Theatre*, that they cannot exist simultaneously in the theatre. Palmer says:

*The producer coming in with conceptions of his own, the producer as an artist with something of his own to visualize and express, is an interloper. He can only grow to his full stature by the destruction of the parties whose intermediary he is supposed to be. Either the fine art of production, the producer in his most modern shape, will disappear, or dramatic art will disappear.*

The scene designer must have a conception of his own. He must create an image of the scene in his mind. The image must be framed by that that lies in the structure of the play. Craig urges the designer to first study the play as a whole, calling from it a general and abstract idea which can be applied to the entire production (III. 4-6, pp. 61-62). He advised:

... thus if a man of the theatre shall produce "Macbeth", "Hamlet", "Richard III", "Julius Caesar", "Antony and Cleopatra", "The Tempest" or "A Midsummer Night's Dream" as they should be produced, he must first of all woo the spirits in those plays; for unless he understands them with his whole being he shall but produce a thing of rags and tatters. The moment, however, that he is at one with these spirits, the moment he has seen their proportion and moved to their rhythm, in that moment is he a master of the art of producing a play by Shakespeare. But this the stage manager never seems to realize, for did he do so he would adopt a very different method for the interpretation of those scenes in which the ghosts appear. . . .

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When studying the play, Craig urges the designer to keep his mind free of the temporal things which attempt to create the illusion of reality. He urges the designer to give his imagination full reign (III, 4-6, pp. 61-62). He writes:

... For when Shakespeare wrote, "enter the ghost of Banquo" he did not have in his mind merely a player clothed in a piece of gauze. Nor had he done so, had he been preoccupied with gauze and limelight, would he ever have created the ghost in Hamlet; for that ghost of Hamlet's father, who moves aside the veils at the beginning of the great play, is not a joke; he is not a theatrical gentleman in armour, is not a farce of a figure. He is a momentary visualisation of the unseen forces which dominate the action and is a clear command from Shakespeare that the men of the theatre shall rouse their imagination and let their reasonable logic slumber.

For the appearances of all these spirits in the plays are not the inventions of a pantomime manager; they are the loftiest achievements of a lofty poet, and carry to us the clearest statements we can ever receive as to Shakespeare's thoughts about the stage. . . .

When the scene designer has gained a concept of the play as a whole, he is then ready to formulate, within his mind, an image of the place in which the actors move and speak. Here, again he urges the designer to think first of abstractions framed in color, line, form and mass (I, 3-4, p. 61). He says:

Come now, we take "Macbeth". We know the play well. In what kind of place is that play laid? How does it look, first of all to our mind's eye, secondly to our eye?

I see two things. I see a lofty and steep rock, and I see the moist cloud which envelops the head of the rock. That is to say, a place for fierce and warlike men to inhabit, a place for phantoms to nest in. Ultimately this moisture will destroy the rock; ultimately these spirits will destroy the men. Now then,
you are quick in your question as to what actually to create for the eye. I answer as swiftly... place there a rock! Let it mount up high. Swiftly I tell you... convey the idea of a mist which hugs the head of this rock. Now, have I departed at all for one eighth of an inch from the vision which I saw in the mind's eye?

But you ask me what form this rock shall take and what colour? What are the lines which are the lofty lines, and which are to be seen in any lofty cliff?... Go to them, glance but a moment at them; now quickly set them down on your paper; the lines and their direction, never mind the cliff. Do not be afraid to let them go high; they cannot go high enough;... and remember that on a sheet of paper which is but two inches square, you can make a line which seems to tower miles in the air, and you can do the same on your stage for it is all a matter of proportion and nothing to do with actuality.

You ask about the colours?... What are the colours that Shakespeare has indicated for us? Do not first look at nature, but look in the play of the poet. Two; one for the rock, the man; one for the mist, the spirit. Now quickly, take and accept this statement from me. Touch not a single other colour, but only these two colours through your whole progress of designing your scene and your costumes, yet forget not that each colour contains many variations. If you are timid for a moment and mistrust yourself or what I tell, when the scene is finished you will not see with your eye the effect you have seen with your mind's eye, when looking at the picture which Shakespeare has indicated...

Craig reminds the scene designer that he is not to think exclusively of the appearance of the place in which the actors move and speak but he is to consider the scenery in regard to the actors' movements, individually and in ensemble. Continuing with Macbeth, (I, 3-4, p. 63) he says:

But the rock and its cloud of mist is not all that you have to consider. You have to consider that at the base of this rock swarm the clans of strange earthly forces, and that in the mist hover the spirits innumerable;... to speak more technically
you have to think of the 60 or 70 actors whose movements have to be made at the base of the scene, and of the other figures which obviously may not be suspended on wires, and yet must be seen to be clearly separate from the human and more material beings.

It is obvious then that some curious sense of a dividing line must be created somewhere upon the stage so that the beholder, even if he look but with his corporal eye, shall be convinced that the two things are separate things. I will tell you how to do this. Line and proportion having suggested the material rock-like substance, tone and colour (one colour) will have given the ethereal to the mist-like vacuum. Now then, you bring this tone and colour downwards until it reaches nearly to the level of the floor; but you must be careful to bring this colour and this tone down in some place which is removed from the material rock-like substance.

You ask me to explain technically what I mean. Let your rock possess but half the width of the stage, let it be the side of a cliff round which many paths twist, and let these paths mingle in one flat space taking up half or perhaps three quarters of the stage. You have room enough there for all your men and women. Now then, open your stage and all other parts. Let there be a void below as well as above, and in this void let your mist fall and fade; and from that bring the figures which you have fashioned and which are to stand for the spirits. I know you are yet not quite comfortable in your mind about this rock and this mist; I know that you have got in the back of your head the recollection that a little later on in the play come several 'interiors' as they are called. But, bless your heart, don't bother about that! call to mind that the interior of a castle is made from the stuff which is taken from the quarries. Is it not precisely the same colour to begin with? . . .

Craig's advice to the scene designer carries with it the implication that an effective scene can be created only after long, painstaking and detailed study of the play. There are no short cuts in effective scene design. He urged the scene designer to experiment with a variety of different arrangements of the scenic elements before forming a fixed concept (I, 3-4, p. 64). He says:
In preparing a play, while your mind is thinking of scene, let it instantly leap round and consider the acting, movement and voice. Decide nothing yet, ... instantly leap back to another thought about another part of this unit. Consider the movement robbed of all scene, all costume, merely as movement. Somehow mix the movement of the person with the movement which you see in your mind's eye in the scene. Now pour all your colour upon this. Now wash away all the colour. Now begin over again. Consider only the words. Wind them in and out of some vast and impossible picture, and now make that picture possible through the words.

Craig recommended that the designer use a model stage equipped with lights, miniature scenery and figures to check and test the designs. The model stage was a vital part of Craig's own method of scene design. Filiberto Scarpelli, the Florentine artist, after watching Craig use his model stage at the Arena Goldoni, writes his impressions to a friend. He says:

He sets upon the stage of his little theatre (no bigger than a marionette theatre) his small screens, and, while you look on, with a rapid movement of the hand arranges them in a certain way; a ray of electric light comes to strike between those simple rectangles of cardboard, and the miracle is accomplished; you behold a majestic scene; the sense of the small disappears absolutely; you forget the dimensions of the theatre, because of the harmonious relationship which Craig knows how to bring about 'twixt the lights and the lines. Another slight movement of the screens (always before your eyes) and the scene changes and then changes again without the lines and the light effects ever recalling to you that which you have already seen. And thus one passes from the vision of a piazza, a street, an imposing partico, to that of a sala, a prison, a subterranean dungeon. Craig is a great painter, a great architect, a great poet. He paints with light, he constructs with a few rectangles of cardboard, and with the harmony of his colours and of his lines he creates profound sensations, as only the fathers of poetry knew how to create. I do not exaggerate, dear Giovanni. The
sight of some screens for 'Othello' gave me the thrill which only the reading of Shakespeare had been able to give me! We are far, very far, from the usual scenographic resources, be they even the best which can be remembered. If one does not see Craig's theatre one cannot imagine what this man knows how to do. . . . You have lost a sight which is among the finest which I have witnessed since I was born, not excluding the majestic spectacles of Nature itself. 32

One of Craig's principal lines of attack against the contemporary theatre was that its commercialism and production schedule would not permit experimentation in designing a scene for a play. Since the designer was obligated to hurry through his work to meet arbitrary production deadlines, he was given very little opportunity to test and experiment with his concepts of a scene on a scaled model of the stage which was to accommodate the scene. Craig repeatedly makes the point in The Mask that good results in scene design cannot be expected without proper time and adequate physical facilities in which to make sufficient experiments and to digest tentative results. Like the scientist, the scene designer needs a laboratory in which to test the effectiveness of his concepts (IV, 4, p. 353). He says: . . . and our art we shall try to make as scientific as possible. We shall move slowly; never shall immediate effect be sought for nor immediate failure shunned. We shall be in no hurry, . . . why should we? Our happiness like that of every normal artist consists in doing our work not in results; the day there are no more experiments to test, no more byepaths to adventure on; when nothing but the goal is there before

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us to claim and proclaim, . . . . on that day we and the other artists on earth can go to sleep; there'll be no more use for us.

For all we are crazy about is the limitless. What kind of fool is it who only desires that which is limited by his perceptions? What kind of Art would that be which had an edge?
Craig's Screens

The conventional scenery used on the stage at the turn of the twentieth century was not in accord with Craig's concept of the function of the stage scene. Consequently, Craig needed a new kind of scenery, a different method for handling and arranging scenery, if his designs were to be translated into scenes for plays. His search for a new method of mounting and arranging scenery was further motivated by his desire to decrease the cost of constructing scenery. Craig pointed out that hundreds of thousands of dollars were wasted annually for scenery that not only lacked artistic value but lost all of its value when the play's run was over. Craig envisioned a type of scenery that could be used from one play to another and would be adaptable to any type of poetic production. In order to realize his own designs, he needed a type of scenery that could be moved silently, quickly and unobtrusively. His method of production required a scenic arrangement which would permit him to go from one scene to the next without interrupting the continuity of the action of the play. His designs demanded a type of flexible scenery in which the line, form and mass could be quickly altered to create the proper mood and atmosphere for each succeeding scene.

In 1904, the idea for a simple, economical, flexible and expressive type of scenery began to take shape in Craig's mind.
In 1907, he originated his idea of "The Thousand Scenes in One."
This was to be scenery made from a system of folding screens.
Nothing that Craig has ever said or done has provoked as much contro­
versy as his screens. The screens were patented in England, 
France, Italy, Germany and the United States. The United States 
patent is number 1022020. Craig describes the mechanics and 
advantages of his screens in an article called "The Scene and The 
Poetic Drama" (VII, 2, pp. 147-155). He says:

The Scene is made up usually of four, six, eight, ten or 
twelve screens, and although sometimes of more than twelve, 
seldom of less than four. Each part or leaf of a screen is 
alike in every particular except breadth, and these parts to­
gether form a Screen, composed of two, four, six, eight or 
ten leaves. These leaves fold either way and are monochrome 
in tint.

The height of all these screens is alike.
These screens are self-supporting and are made either of 
a wooden frame covered with canvas, or of solid wood.
With screens of narrow dimensions curved forms are pro­
duced, for large rectangular spaces broader leaved screens 
are used, and for varied and broken forms all sizes are em­
ployed.

Sometimes a flat roof is used with these screens, at other 
times the space above the top line is shown.

The Scene being monochrome, the minimum of light is re­
quired to illuminate it, as there is much reflection from each 
leaf. Ordinary light battens that are used in the theatre, and 
also daylight, can be used for its illumination.

The screens can be so arranged that by moving three leaves 
a great change in effect is produced. . .

Sometimes certain additions may be made to this Scene, 
such as a flight of steps, a window, a bridge, a balcony, and 
of course the necessary furniture, though great care and 
reserve must be exercised in making these additions so as to 
avoid the ridiculous.

This Scene is a living thing.
In the hands of an Artist it is capable of all varieties of 
expression, even as a living voice and a living face are capable
of every expression. The Scene remains always the same, while incessantly changing.

Some may ask how such a thing can possibly be, and one can only ask such questioners to study the human face.

Every human face is shaped more or less the same, and is made up of two eyes, a brow, a nose, a mouth, a chin and so forth; move any one of these parts ever so little, and we note a different expression.

This Scene resembles the human face.

It is obvious that the advantage of such a Scene will be best understood and felt by those who see it; but its uses can at any rate be recorded to some advantage. . . .

We pass from one scene to another without a break of any kind, and when the change has come we are not conscious of any disharmony between it and that which is past. . . .

Now one of the advantages of this invention is that, should the actor feel after a few nights that he could play the scenes better in a different arrangement, and have a clear idea as to his wishes and how to obtain them, he can test his ideas in the morning on the model and make his changes that same evening. . . .

If the actor feels that he cannot play his part in a certain scene he has only to go to the stage manager, and together, with the model on the table, they can work out a new arrangement.

The advantages which the use of this Model offers to the Stage Manager are exceptional.

To begin with, the model with which he works is always ready to his hand. He keeps it in his study and is thus able continually to test ideas which come into his head as to the Poetic Drama which he has to produce. He has not to wait for the scene painter to bring him a model which, if he does not like, he has to have changed and rechanged; but he has at his disposal a model scene which he can be always changing and arranging, and from which he can derive ideas for the movement of his figures.

Possessing the model, he is not saddled with a cumbersome and elaborate "model stage" of the usual pattern; he need not fear to touch the thing lest it fall to pieces, or the strings and wires get tangled. He has a workman-like model to use, . . . no litter, no strings, no paper; no longer a toy but clean and solid wood.

He is often at a loss how to fashion scenes for these old plays which have held the boards for so long. In his study he fancies a passage here, a long wall somewhere there, pillars here; but he is unable to put these down on paper, and if he
could do so it would still be unsatisfactory. He could not see the thing, he could not measure his distances, he could not tell whether there is enough space for a man to come on there, whether there will be room enough on the stage for this passage to go back in that direction, and in his helplessness he is obliged to tell the scene painter to make the design. But with the Scene which is here offered him, and with this small model stage all this preliminary work will be made many times easier.

Finally, in connection with this Scene the inventor has planned several additional inventions by means of which doors, windows, cornices, staircases, trees, hills, clouds, stars, sun, moon and all can be placed before the audience, and that without calling in a single extra man to assist the usual staff.

To save unnecessary waste of money and time is the aim in the organization of every enterprise. It is more often than not that this idea of true economy is forgotten in the theatre, and is substituted for waste.

Mr. Fitzroy Gardner, a keen theatrical manager, writing in the "Strand Magazine", says, "I have no hesitation in saying that in the West End theatres of London at least forty thousand pounds a year are frittered away, apart from what is lost by putting on plays with a four-to-one chance against their success". . . . "Scenery and dresses are often ordered without proper deliberation, or negotiation as to cost."

Much power of all kinds is wasted in the theatre, and in no department is there greater waste than in the scenic department. The scenery has always wasted the time of the theatre, of the actors, of everyone, more especially in productions of the Popular drama. Scenery has also wasted the receipts of the theatre. Scenery has always wasted space. Large warehouses are costly and the space on the stage is valuable.

So we see clearly that time, force, space and money are wasted by modern scenery, whereas all four are economized by the use of this Scene. . . .

Craig's screens were put to their first practical test at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Craig went to Dublin in January of 1911 at the invitation of William Butler Yeats. Yeats was, at that time, preparing his plays The Hour Glass and The Deliverer for production and he had solicited the aid of Craig to prepare working models incorporating the use of Craig's screens. Craig worked with Yeats
several weeks before going to the Moscow Art Theatre to begin the final preparations for the production of *Hamlet*. After Craig's departure for Moscow, Yeats continued to experiment with the stage model and screens Craig had devised for him. During the summer and fall of 1911 Yeats wrote and spoke enthusiastically about the practical and artistic values of the screens. Craig printed a number of Yeats' reports in *The Mask* (VII, 2, pp. 139-141).

From the "Preface" to "Plays for an Irish Theatre,"

All summer I have been playing with a little model, where there is a scene capable of endless transformation, of the expression of every mood that does not require a photographic reality. Mr. Craig . . . who has invented all this . . . has permitted me to set up upon the stage of the Abbey another scene that corresponds to this, on the scale of a foot for an inch, and henceforth I shall be able, by means so simple that one laughs, to lay the events of my plays amid a grandeur like that of Babylon; and where there is neither complexity nor compromise nothing need go wrong, no lamps become suddenly unmasked, no ill-painted corners come suddenly into sight. Henceforth I can all but "produce" my play while I write it, moving hither and thither little figures of cardboard through gay or solemn light and shade, allowing the scene to give the words and the words of the scene.

I am very grateful for he has banished a whole world that wearied me and was undignified, and given me forms and lights upon which I can play as upon some stringed instrument. From an "Interview" in the "Evening Telegraph".

The scenery differs entirely from the old style of scenery, and consists chiefly of portable screens, by means of which beautiful decorative effects can be obtained, the working of the screens being based on certain mathematical proportions by which the stage manager can make walls, pillars, etc. . . . a palace almost in a moment, a place of great cyclopean proportions, and which can be changed again almost in a moment into a room with long corridors, and be changed again into a third and very different scene just as quickly.

The primary value of Mr. Craig's invention is that it enables one to use light in a more natural and more beautiful way than ever before. We get rid of all the top hamper of the stage . . .
all the hanging ropes and scenes which prevent the free play of light. It is now possible to substitute in the shading of a scene real light and shadow for painted light and shadow. Continually, in the contemporary theatre, the painted shadow is out of relation to the direction of the light, and what is more to the point, one loses the extraordinary beauty of delicate light and shade. This means, however, an abolition of realism, for it makes scene-painting, which is, of course, a matter of painted light and shade, impossible. One enters into a world of decorative effects which give the actor a renewed importance. There is less to compete against him, for there is less detail, though there is more beauty."

From the Programme of The Abbey Theatre, Dublin.

The method of decorating in "The Deliverer" and "The Hour Glass" was invented by Mr. Gordon Craig and will be used by the Art Theatre of Moscow, where it will make possible a performance of the full Hamlet, with a different decoration for every little scene, so rapidly can the scenes be changed, Thursday night will, however, be its first public use. It does not aim at effects of realism, but at a decoration of the stage almost infinite in the variety of its expression and suggestion, and for the first time makes possible effects of lights and shadows various, powerful and delicate. Mr. Craig has given us the right to make use of his patent in Ireland, with the generosity of a great artist, and because he respects our work and ambition.

From an interview given to "Hearth and Home".

At present we are busy producing "The Hour Glass" at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, I have had great trouble with this play for in its original form the treatment made it seem platitudinous. A music-hall singer who saw it was converted; that was very distressing. Had it not been for Gordon Craig's designs, I should not have troubled to rewrite it. But they helped me wonderfully, and I think I have banished platitude from the "Hour Glass" in its present form. Gordon Craig is the greatest producer living, greater than Reinhardt, or any other.

Obviously Yeats believed that the screens would do all that Craig had claimed for them and one is not inclined to question Yeats' evaluation. It would seem that the success of the screens at the Abbey Theatre would have dispelled considerable skepticism being
leveled at Craig's new invention and well it might have, had Craig been more successful with the mechanical operation of the screens at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1912.

As far as the author has been able to ascertain, Craig himself used his screens in only one production, which was the production of Hamlet at the Moscow Art Theatre on January 8, 1912. The production was the source of considerable controversy over the practicality of the screens. Stanislavsky admitted that the screens presented many problems in construction and shifting during scene changes. The stage carpenters experimented with different materials in the construction of the screens in attempts to achieve stability and rigidity and at the same time reduce the weight so that the screens could be moved easily and quickly from one scene to the next. After much experimenting with wood, cork and metal, all of which was a very great expense to the Moscow Art Theatre, the screens were constructed from wood frames and canvas. The problem of constructing screens that could be handled easily was made more difficult by the fact that Craig insisted that the scene changes be done without lowering the act curtain. At the last moment, Craig's plan had to be abandoned and the act curtain was used to cover scene changes. The story of how the screens fell during dress rehearsals like dominoes standing on end--when one fell all the others followed--has become a legend in modern theatre history. Craig however denies that the screens ever fell in the Hamlet rehearsals. Enid Rose
quotes a statement Craig gave to the Morning Post, September 17, 1926. "My screens did not fall over and anyone who says they did is inventing merely to give me pleasure. . . ."

Actually the first and only account of the screens' failure to remain upright was reported by Stanislavsky in his book, My Life in Art, published in 1924. This was fourteen years after the alleged incident. It seems likely that if the screens had presented this difficulty, Stanislavsky would have chronicled the incident some years before. However, be that as it may, the Moscow Art Theatre did have some difficulty in constructing and handling the screens and this fact was seized upon by the critics, who said that Craig was an impractical producer and his designs were incapable of realization on the stage. Whether or not the so-called fiasco of his screens in Hamlet contributed to his untimely retirement from theatre production in the theatres of Europe is a matter of conjecture. However, the fact remains that the Moscow production of Hamlet was Craig's final appearance in the theatre as a producer. Craig was thirty-nine years old, an early age to retire from theatre production.

Although the Moscow production of Hamlet may have revealed a number of mechanical defects in Craig's screens, there was on the other hand much testimony pointing to the artistic value

33 Gordon Craig and the Theatre, p. 102
of the screens. Craig quotes (VII, 2, p. 156) a passage from a re-
view of the production by the Moscow correspondent of the London
Times for January 12, 1912.

Every scene in the Hamlet has for its foundation an arrange-
ment of screens which rise to the full height of the proscenium,
and consist of plain panels devoid of any decoration. Only two
colours are used . . . , a neutral cream shade and gold. A
complete change of scene is created simply by the rearrange-
ment of these screens, whose value lies, of course, not so
much in themselves as in their formation and the lighting.

Mr. Craig has the singular power of carrying the spiritual
significance of words and dramatic situations beyond the actor
to the scene in which he moves. By the simplest of means he is
able, in some mysterious way, to evoke almost any sensation
of time or space, the scenes even in themselves suggesting
variations of human emotion.

Take, for example, the Queen's chamber in the Castle of
Elsinore. Like all the other scenes, it is simply an arrange-
ment of the screens already mentioned. There is nothing
which definitely represents a castle, still less the locality or
period; and yet no one would hesitate as to its significance . . .
and why? Because it is the spiritual symbol of such a room.
A symbol, moreover, whose form is wholly dependent upon the
action which it surrounds; every line, every space of light and
shadow going to directly heighten and amplify the significance
of that action, and becoming thereby something more than its
mere setting . . . a vital and component part no longer separ-
able from the whole. Whatever Mr. Craig has done he has
obviously done it not only with the touch of an artist, but also
with all the care and reverence of a true lover of Shakespeare.

To judge from his work he is not so much a revolutionary as
a reformer. Far from being an enemy to theatrical tradition,
he seems to realize better than any one how much valuable
material for his art lies buried in that limbo of things forgotten.
He has gone back over a field whose fertility so many have
ignored, and drawn from it all that is best and most useful to
him.

A. E. Krows, in discussing the Moscow Art Theatre's Hamlet,
points to the artistic value of the screens. He writes:

Indeed, Craig's earlier drawings--and he studied draftsman-
ship for the specific purpose of making these—provided great

curtains for almost everything.

In the Moscow "Hamlet", occupying three years of prepara-
tion, which Craig publicly wished had been twenty, the scenes
were shown as successive arrangements of a few curtains with
some most particular folds, a gray, hinged screen, devoid of
decoration, rising to the full height of the proscenium arch,
a blue background glimpsed now and then, and some supplemen-
tary cubes, squares, and cylinders. The masses of shadow
that Mr. Craig loves so well to play with, were shown con-
trasted in the deep recesses of the partially folded screen, with
high-lights projected by a number of flood lamps. Where
possible, but a single ray of light was employed, in confor-
tion with Craig's plea for simplicity.

Even the skeptics confessed that one really could tell the
locality intended in each scene. Whether this recognition came
from textual earmarks or not, one cannot say. 34

These reports, coupled with those that came from the Abbey
Theatre, unmistakably point to the fact that Craig's screens, exclud-
ing the alleged mechanical faults, were an artistic success. The
success or failure of the screens, per se, is actually of very little
consequence. What is important is that with his screens, Craig
began a movement in the theatre that was to revolutionize completely
the manner and method of setting the scene for a play. Herein lies the
historical importance of Craig's screens. The underlying theory of
the screens is based upon an entirely new conception of the nature of
the art of the theatre. It is doubtful that either Stanislavsky, or
Craig, or any of those who saw the production of Hamlet on January 8,
1912, at the Moscow Art Theatre realized that a new trend in scene

34 A. E. Krows, Play Production in America (New York:
design and theatre production was actually under way. The author wants to say, at this point, that if the popular legend which says that Gordon Craig was an impractical dreamer who designed a "set of flats" which fell down in the dress rehearsals for Hamlet at the Moscow Art Theatre can be once and for all obliterated, he will have realized a personal satisfaction far in excess of that for which the study has been undertaken. Craig's screens are a vital part of his total concept of the theatre and his concept of theatre was a complete departure from the accepted theatre of his time.

Here is the occasion for another legend about Craig. It is stated often and loudly that Craig was contradictory, evasive, vague and confusing in describing his concept of the art of the theatre. In The Mask, Craig's concept of the theatre is revealed in a logically evolved pattern of thought. It is, indeed, true that Craig does not state the whole of his concept in the form of a numerical sequence in any one issue or volume of The Mask. The center of Craig's concept of the art of the theatre is the belief that action is the essence of theatre. Craig goes directly to Aristotle to support his contention. In The Poetics, Aristotle says:

每... Every tragedy, therefore, must have six constituents, according to which we estimate its quality: plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and music.

The greatest of these is the plan of the actions (the plot); for tragedy is an imitation not of men, but of action and life... and the end.(for which we live) is a certain form of action, not a quality. By their characters men are what they are; but by their actions they are happy or the reverse. (In a play) there-
fore they do not act in order to imitate character; they include character for the sake of the actions. Hence the actions and their plot are the end of tragedy; and the end is greatest of all. Furthermore, without action there may not be tragedy; without character there may be . . . By stringing together speeches expressive of character and well made as to diction and thought you will not achieve the tragic function. 35

George Pierce Baker in his book, Dramatic Technique, continues the Aristotelian concept of action. Baker says:

. . . Today we hear much discussion whether it is what is done, i.e. action, or characterization, or dialogue which most interests a public. Which is the chief essential in good drama? History shows indisputably that the drama in its beginnings, no matter where we look, depended most on action. The earliest extant specimen of drama in England, circa 967, shows clearly the essential relations of action, characterization, and dialogue in drama at its outset. . . . Historically studied, the English drama shows that characterization appeared as an added interest when the interest of action was already well established. The value of dialogue for its own sake was recognized even later. 36

Craig interpreted action as meaning physical movement. The realists of the twentieth century interpreted action as the dramatic action of the play itself. Ibsen, Galsworthy, Pinero, Jones, et al interpreted dramatic action as that element of the play that arouses interest in the emotional and intellectual relationships of the characters. Therefore the essence of drama was character and the characters are delineated chiefly by the dialogue. It follows that to the realist the essence of theatre was the word, not physical movement.


Craig argued that the theatre was a place for seeing and the primary appeal in the theatre was to the eye. On the basis of this concept, Craig asserted that the so-called psychological drama which appealed to the emotions and the intellect and compelled the audience to live vicariously through the situations the dramatist had chosen for them was traveling away from the true art of the theatre. A summary, at this point, of Craig's concept of the art of the theatre would read as follows: The essence of theatre is physical movement, not the dramatic action of the script; the appeal of the theatre is essentially visual, not auditory and the effect is sensuous rather than that of deep emotional experience and intellectual stimulus. This concept embraces the belief that theatre is an aesthetic experience stimulated by a recognition of the beautiful through artistic form. This is the essence of the new theatre movement of the early twentieth century in which Craig breathed the breath of life when he invented his screens and used them at the Moscow Art Theatre production of Hamlet in 1912. Whether his screens were mechanically sound or unsound need not worry the historian and critic of the theatre. What is important is the basic ideals and principles upon which Craig conceived his screens. The screens brought to the modern theatre the first hint of a concrete method of creating a scene on the stage by which the aesthetic concept of the theatre could be realized. The aesthetic theatre demanded a type of scene by which artistic form could be created by a subtle blending of movement, light, color, line, form, mass and sound. Craig's screens and the steps, cubes, pylons and ramps he used
with them were capable of creating a "sculptured" scene characterized by simplicity, suggestion and concentration. His screens did not interfere with lighting from the top and the sides, consequently the flat, hard and inartistic light from the footlights could be eliminated. Since the spotlights and floodlights could be angled in to the scene from side and top positions, the moving figures of the actors could be accentuated in a manner similar to statues on a bas-relief panel. Here was a type of scene that thrust the actor forward, instead of enmeshing him in a maze of realistic detail.

Invariably the question arises as to how Craig's screens and method of staging can be used in staging realistic plays of the modern social dramatist. Of course Craig himself was not concerned with this problem, for he had dismissed the realistic play as not belonging to the art of the theatre. He limited the use of the screens to poetic drama (VII, 2, p. 144). He said:

The highest form of modern theatrical art is the poetic drama. It is for this poetic drama that the scene [screens] was created.

Notwithstanding the fact that Craig had implied a limitation in the use of his screens, there were a number of critics who conjectured that theatre artists of deep artistic perception and delicate vision could use Craig's screens successfully in the staging of a realistic play. But what is important and certainly more than a conjecture is that the principle upon which Craig conceived his screens constitutes a very real influence on the staging of realistic plays. Soon after 1914, the trend
of realistic staging turned to a suggestive realism rather than photographic detail in setting. Realistic interiors were cleared of the clutter of furniture and realistic properties. The overcrowded interiors suggesting a second-hand furniture store or an old antique shop gave way to interiors characterized by simplicity, restraint, economy, suggestion and concentration. These were the same principles upon which Craig had conceived his screens.

Craig's screens are the manifestation of his revolt against the scenic practice in the modern theatre. Kenneth Macgowan, in his essay, The Living Scene, has given a concise summation of the salient features of the kind of staging that precipitated Craig's vigorous dissent. He writes:

Craig saw a stage filled with flat and banal artificiality. There was neither beauty nor truth to life in the jaundiced meadows and mildewed mountains and splayed rooms which the hack scene-painters spread over back drops and wings in very, very false perspective. The thing was a palpable fraud, and also a hideous one. The meadows, the mountains, and the rooms were obviously not the real thing, and neither were they beautiful or vigorous or expressive. They were just an ugly cheat. 37

Sheldon Cheney gives Craig credit for initiating the New Theatre Movement. He says:

[It was]. .... Gordon Craig, who rediscovered that the theatre is by exact definition first of all "a place for seeing";

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who has reaffirmed on a thousand occasions the fundamental importance of what can be understood by the spectator through the eye; the art of the theatre has sprung from action - movement - dance"... It is generally agreed that this rediscovery of Craig's marks a turning-point in the history of the modern theatre. Only by a complete understanding of the multiple nature of theatre art, and its dependence upon movement and visual design as an integral part of its "form", can anyone gauge truly the importance of the modern movement. Before Craig (and there are only too many of our theatres still existing in the pre-Craig milieu) stage art was made up of play-texts, acting, and something ordered in from the scenic studios. The best play-texts (the Greeks and Shakespeare) had nothing to say about movement and scene; it was only the rarest of actors who conceived of the action or movement beyond his own little physical orbit; and the scenic studios "supplied the art" in accordance with tradition, and in diluted imitation of the grand manner of a century or two earlier - without the faintest notion of harmony of play and setting, of rhythm, of unity of impression, of creative use of line, mass, and color.38

Janet Leeper comes to the point of Craig's influence when she writes:

Denied a theatre, even a small one, and a troupe, even a limited one, to carry out his projects, Craig has shown them to us in another medium and on surfaces sometimes 'but two inches square'. It is all rather tragic, if it were not so comic, for ideas once let loose in the world run their course, following their own volition --nothing can stop them, and the theatre that Craig created for us was soon flourishing in Russia and Scandinavia, in Vienna, Berlin, Munich and Mannheim, in Budapest, Warsaw, Prague, Amsterdam and Tel Aviv, and today, with Jean-Louis Barrault, Decroux and others, in Paris.

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His friends are legion and of every nationality, but he is feared and reviled by those who have failed to exploit him whom he calls 'the retro-aggressives, the thunder-stealers'. To these he shows his darker side. 'It's the joke I am enjoying more than a little,' he wrote to a friend not long ago when alluding to them; 'I've brought off the trick they dreaded and they don't even know how much they helped it.'

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39Edward Gordon Craig, p. 29.
Craig's Scene Designs

Craig's scene designs were unlike anything the modern theatre had seen and they were completely incompatible with the scenic practice of the early twentieth century. Craig printed many of his scene designs in The Mask and the author believes that it is within the scope of a study of Craig's theory of scene design to present what appears to be the characteristic qualities of Craig's designs.

Unmistakably, Craig's scene designs reveal an artist of remarkable individuality. The salient feature of his artistry lies in the use of abstract form, graceful line, rhythm in the recurrence of heavy and light accent, and the balance of weight and force in mass and form. His designs express a mood of dignity and repose and at the same time reveal a vigorous and dynamic sense of movement. It is certain that Craig has a genius for the use of line in design. His work strongly suggests that he works in squares and straight lines, hardly ever in curves. This severe treatment of line gives breath and dignity to the scene, as well as a motion which keeps the eye moving rather than fixed upon a focal point. It is difficult to discover a focal point in any of Craig's designs. This undoubtedly was intentional with Craig for he considered dramatic action and movement the very essence of the art of the theatre. Craig's line, although severe, is never static; it expresses action and feeling. He seemed to know the appropriate line for joy, strength, of despair, of hope, and so on. It is largely through the
use of lines that Craig achieves the symbolistic effect of his designs.

A study of Craig's scene designs indicates that he reduced the symbolic lines almost exclusively to the vertical. The long, straight, vertical lines used in his designs create a feeling of height and grace. The author believes that Craig's use of the vertical line in place of the horizontal line was not accidental but calculated to harmonize with the upright form of the actor. This deduction is reasonable since the suggestive force of the vertical is found almost altogether in its proportion to the actor on the stage. This unique feature of Craig's designs accounts, the author believes, for much of the controversy as to whether Craig's designs can be realized on a stage of average size. We recognize in Craig's designs, vertical lines which, in proportion to the actual size of an average man, ascend to the height of fifty feet or more. When we try to envision these designs on a stage with a proscenium width of thirty feet and a height of twenty feet, we are immediately confronted with the apparent impracticality of the designs. However, Craig did not intend that his designs be transferred literally to the stage. In fact, he argued that there is a very real difference between a design on paper and the realization of the same design on a stage (XI, 2, p. 18). He speaks to this point when he writes:

Do not be afraid to let them (lines) go high; they cannot go high enough; and remember that on a sheet of paper which is but two inches square you can make a line which seems to tower a mile in the air, and you can do the same on the stage, for it is all a matter of proportion and has nothing to do with actuality.
Craig's constant application of the vertical line and the placement of the actor in the same proportion relative to the design has the effect of reducing the expressive force of this proportion in plays which demand an atmosphere created only by the horizontal line. Through his exclusive use of the vertical proportion, Craig has, it seems to the author, deprived himself of the possibility of expressing an atmosphere of oppression, confinement, and evil conscience so necessary in many tragedies.

A second characteristic of Craig's designs is found in their massive undecorated simplicity. There is a noticeable absence of superfluous and realistic detail. The designs are undecorated and unembellished. Each line and shape appears to be an inherent and positive part of the total design. The impression of the designs is like what we receive from the writer who, knowing exactly what he wants to say, comes directly to the point and expresses himself with a crystal-like clearness. Craig's designs would not be popular with those who like their stage setting to be supplied with little touches of decoration here and there.

The simplicity so obvious in Craig's designs is not the simplicity born of sterility of imagination; rather it is a simplicity of tremendous vigor which permits the purpose of the design to come forth without the confusion and distraction of senseless detail.

A third characteristic of Craig's designs is to be found in the use of simple abstract forms, stairways, rostrums, blocks, cubes and
ramps. By throwing different colored lights on the surfaces of these objects, and arranging the light to come from different directions, Craig was able to achieve an appearance of change and movement in the scene, although the actual setting remained static. Craig's aim was to give to the scene a dynamic quality which would enhance the emotional values of the scene by adding strength and vitality to the actor's movements. Craig sought to bring to the stage scenery a three-dimensional quality that would be in complete harmony with the three-dimensional figure of the actor. The pictorial setting, in its attempt to represent a three-dimensional effect in two dimensions, was rejected by Craig as an anachronism.

The chiaroscuro quality of Craig's scene designs reveals his sensitivity to the use of light and shadow in the stage scene. He was particularly critical of the brightly illuminated stages of his day with their rows of border lights and footlights producing flat and expressionless light on the scene. Craig realized the emotional value of light. He taught that the mood of the scene could be suggested by the lighting, both in coloring and in the placing and movement of lights and shadows. All of his experiments in lighting have been purely for the beauty and the suggestiveness of light and not to search for a lighting instrument which would more effectively imitate a rising moon or a setting sun. Craig understood the tremendous value of shadows in producing dramatic effect and in sustaining the mood of the scene. He asserted that dramatic light
is the light that casts shadows.

St. John Irvine, the English critic, reported that Craig, while privately showing a model for a scene to W. B. Yeats, made a statement, which, if taken seriously, would indicate that Craig entertained an excessive devotion to shadows. "What a pity," exclaimed Craig, "we can't abolish the seats from the theatre so the audience can move about and see my shadows."^40

The author suggests that if Craig actually made this statement he was engaging in a bit of levity. Craig's devotion to all the arts of the theatre and his insistence upon unity in production render it unlikely that he had such an ardent affection for shadows that he would interrupt the production to permit the audience to walk about the auditorium.

Craig taught that lighting a scene in a play consists of infinitely more than illuminating the objects in the scene for visibility. Light and shadow, according to Craig, can reveal the thoughts and feelings of the characters. Light has the potential power to elucidate ideas and emotions. Craig advanced the idea that light was a tool, an instrument of expression, and the scene designer could paint with light more effectively than he could with scene paint and a brush. Craig's scenery was painted in a neutral tone so as to permit him to "paint" with light.

What is important to note in Craig's designs is the general tendency of his work and the basic ideal on which it was founded. Expressed simply

^40 Play Production in America, p. 45.
it may be described as a revolt against the ugliness and trivialities of
the realistic method and the ornateness and elaboration of the pictorial
method of scene design. Craig's ideal draws close to those few artists
who conceived the theatre as a temple, a place of beauty and veneration
from which an audience derives inspiration. In his designs there is an
implication of a new physical playhouse and a new way of looking at the
problems of production. Realism is discounted; the conventions of the
fourth wall are discarded; the picture frame proscenium is ignored;
footlights are eliminated. The audience is put into a new relationship
with the actors and the play. The stage becomes a three-dimensional
dynamic space on which masses of light and shade are substituted for
realistic detail. Abstract shapes and non-representative objects express
a mood and atmosphere. He sought to bring the audience and the actor
into a truly theatrical and intimate relation. Still another characteristic
of Craig's design is that they have a theatrical quality about them which
might be described as an expectancy, an excitement or anticipation. In
his design for Electra by Sophocles, he fills the stage with plain walls
and vast and forbidding doorways against which the actors stand out like
lonely monuments. Looking upon the design, Craig's intentions are
clearly conveyed. He sought to make the scene carry the spiritual sig-
nificance of the dramatic situations beyond the actor and into the space
in which the actor moves and speaks.
CHAPTER IV

CRAIG'S THEORY OF ACTING

Since Craig relies upon movement for the greater part of the theatre's appeal to the audience, his theory of acting stresses the aesthetic value of the massing, grouping and interweaving of the actors on the stage. The individual movements of the actors, says Craig, are less important than the group movements. However, the individual movements of the actors must be calculated and designed; they must be deliberate and infinitely expressive, but first and foremost they must be simple and free of realistic detail. For example, there will be no accidental tripping on a rug or falling over a chair in order to add a semblance of naturalness to the scene. Craig attached a new value to the emotional effectiveness of figures moving in design, of shifting light and shadow, of changing patterns of rhythm and color. In effect, his stage movement is a continuous decorative pattern: a living mural in bas-relief. Through harmony, balance and rhythm of shifting figures, he sought to achieve a kaleidoscopic pattern of line and color. The art of the theatre, says Craig, is neither the actor, the costume, the light, the scene; rather it is a synthesis of all these elements into harmonious and aesthetic patterns of movement. We gather that a theatrical production, in Craig's opinion, was to resemble a ballet or a dance-drama rather than what one ordinarily thinks of as a play. Movement is at the heart of Craig's theory of acting (VI, 3, p.257). He says:
... "Movement," I stated, was at the roots of this art, and when movement was no longer needed, the art or the essence of movement would be no longer needed ... the life of the world would end.

By movement I stated that I neither meant the dance nor the pantomime, but something far more wonderful, far more mysterious ... in fact something divine, loveable, worshipful ... and incomprehensible.

I urged the Family of actors to turn its thoughts in the direction of Movement, it being their inheritance, their lawful means of creating the most blessed art in the world.

The two styles of acting, the traditional and the natural, popular in the theatre at the turn of the twentieth century, were completely incompatible with Craig's idea of a synthetic art of the theatre, an art based on decorative movement derived from figures moving in calculated patterns of light, shadow, color and rhythm. A brief review of the salient features of the natural and traditional styles of acting will reveal the extent of their incompatibility with Craig's idea of the function of the actor. The traditional style of acting has had a long and illustrious reign in English theatrical history. It began with Richard Tarelton in 1575, continued through the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, and ended with the death of Craig's mother, Ellen Terry, in 1928. The traditional actor always brought his brilliant individuality to the playing of the part. He developed his own interpretation of the great roles in his classical repertory and his interpretation was based upon his own individual strengths and weaknesses. For example, William Charles Macready's Macbeth was dignified and gentlemanly. Samuel Phelps played Macbeth as a fierce and resolute warrior. Edwin Booth's Macbeth was pathetic and imaginative. Throughout its history, the traditional style has moved from one extreme to another. For example, during the first half of the eighteenth century,
the traditional actor was characterized by a bombastic and rhetorical manner of delivery and his action was marked by ponderous and strutting movements. By the end of the eighteenth century, the traditional style was characterized by the maintenance of an even pathos, an uninterrupted, penetrating seriousness and a mastery of feeling. Despite the deviations in manner and methods, the traditional actor's program of training followed the same general pattern from one generation to the next. Always there was the emphasis upon bodily and vocal techniques in order to achieve precision and pictorial power in line reading, energy and emotional force in passionate scenes, perfection in detail of emphasis and phrasing and mastery of the "elevated" style. The traditional style centered the emphasis upon the individual performer.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century the classical repertory of the traditional actor gave way to a new type of drama and with it came the naturalistic style of acting. The "cup and saucer" plays of T. W. Robertson and the realistic problem plays of Ibsen and Galsworthy demanded an actor who could create the illusion of reality on the stage. Fidelity to the realities of life became the focal point around which the naturalistic actor formed his techniques. He sought to create a character not on the basis of his own strengths and weaknesses, but by realistic delineation of the idiosyncrasies of the character he was playing. The naturalistic actor was a character actor and he sought to build characterization from realistic by-play, mimicry of realistic detail and minute and unconventional reproduction of observed mannerisms. The naturalistic actor stood within the play and regurgitated
the personality of the character he selected or was assigned to portray.
The traditional actor stood beyond the play and interpreted the person-
ality of the character he selected to play. What is important is that
while the approach to characterization differed, both the traditional
actor and the naturalistic actor looked to the character in the play for
the motivation of his playing. In spite of the fact that they insisted on
being billed above the play, they were nevertheless subservient to the
play. Craig would insist that an absolute preciseness would neces-
sitate calling their art the art of drama rather than the art of theatre.
The traditional and naturalistic actor performed a literary drama in
which the basic appeal was to the emotions and intellect of the audience
and the emphasis in playing was placed on story and character develop-
ment. The essence of the classical and realistic literary drama is
dramatic action, not in the sense of stage movement, but in the sense
of plot development. The literary drama relies upon the spoken word
to reveal the inner-significance of the play and the chief interest is in
character relationships. The leaders of the Art Theatre Movement of
the twentieth century - a movement of which Craig was chief prophet
and spokesman, felt that the literary drama had usurped the theatre
of its basic function - sensuous appeal - in order to provide the
audience with vicarious emotional experiences and to parade any
number of social themes before the audience for their intellectual
consideration. Craig looked upon theatre as a visual art and its ap-
peal was to the outward senses of the audience. Speaking for the Art
Theatre Movement, he argued that the art of the drama has nothing to
do with the art of the theatre (I, 2, p. 21). He writes:
The Art of Literature has nothing to do with the Art of the Theatre; that any invasion by one of the territory of the other only ends in the mutilation, if not destruction, of them both.

Again (II, 10-12, p.189), Craig argues that the literary man and the theatre artist do not work in the same medium. He says:

... The literary artist expresses himself through one medium, the theatrical through another. Each has his own material and his own technique. The atmosphere, the sense of mystery, of strange, dim, beautiful and subtle things which the poet can create by his loving and joyous use of the words which are his instrument cannot be translated on to the stage by limelight, canvas and paint. Some day the literary men will realise this and will keep out of the theatre, content to wander in their own ample fields; at present it is for them a kind of Tom Tiddler's ground where they are all hustling for halfpence.

The whole emphasis in the Art Theatre Movement was on outward form, which was addressed to the eye and not to the emotions or intellect. Theatre art is a visual art and the method of expression counts for more than what is expressed. Beauty of form is lifted above beauty of content. Words and realistic stage business are essentially unimportant in the art of the theatre. The emphasis is on the decorative value of movement, of line and mass and color.

Craig argued that the English actor as far back as Richard Tarleton had become a slave to the play-wright. His every word, gesture and movement is controlled by the script. The actor repeats only those words that have been set down for him. The manner in which he intones the words of the script and the stage business he uses to delineate his character are dictated by the playwright. His mimicry of the temperament and disposition of the character he is playing is driven from the descriptions given by the playwright.
Remove the author from the theatre, says Craig, divest him of the insignia in which he is wrapped, and then there will be some hope for the Artists of the Theatre. The dramatist is the autocrat of the theatre and his greatest sin has been in his effort to bend the actor to a faithful interpretation of his will. Since "the whole nature of man tends toward freedom." says Craig, neither the naturalistic or the traditional actor can endure the subserviency he has been subjected to by the dramatist. Therefore, the actor, in his efforts to escape from this enforced subjugation, has tried to elevate his own personality or that of the character he is portraying above the level of the script. The dramatist, says Craig, has inadvertently forced the actors to resort to all manner of tricks and devices in order to withstand a total eclipse by the play. The actors, asserts Craig, have refused to subordinate their personalities by becoming a marionette for the playwright. It is in his effort to retain his personality that the actor renders art impossible in the theatre. (The artist, says Craig, does not bring himself into his work) and the actor who parades his personality before the audience is not an artist. For this reason, Craig denies that Eleanora Duse was a great actress (I, 1, p.12). He says:

No one can call Eleanora Duse an actress; yet in spite of this many people have tried to write about the "acting" of Eleanora Duse. Frenchmen and Dutchmen, Englishmen and Italians, Americans of the North and of the South have vied with each other to praise her extraordinary genius for "acting." Some, amazed by a certain natural impression which she creates as she steps before us, dazzled by the extraordinary naturalness of her speech, set out to praise this in her. Some will linger upon a particular detail; upon the ease with which
she is able to summon up the gradual overwhelming blush as in "Magda." Others will cry out that it is astonishing that this actress is able at will to become pale as only those who are faining become pale. Others will write of the unfalling taste which controls every thought and every action of this actress.

She has nothing of art in her composition. She abhors all that goes to make up great art... that is to say, the obedience to laws which are impersonal and immortal. She is personal love, personal courage, personal hope, and personal beauty, and these all whirl her.

Although one cannot be sure that Duse fully agreed with Craig when he asserted that it was her personality and not art that had won for her wide acclaim in the theatre, it is doubtful that she thought him altogether in error, since she herself had declared that the actor makes art impossible in the theatre. Craig has quoted Duse often and with much gusto (IV, 1, p. 39). He says:

... I believe with Madame Duse that "To save the theatre, the theatre must be destroyed: The actors and actresses must all die of the plague" for..."they poison the air, they make art impossible."

Wide publicity has been given to this statement and Craig's critics have taken the idea and turned it into woeful abundance. He was accused of wanting to sweep all the actors out of the theatre. The statement is unfortunate, since it is quite clear that Craig did not desire a complete annihilation of the theatre and the actors. Although the statement is excessive in its connotations, it is hardly more than a protest against the actor who was continually flaunting his idiosyncrasies and parading ostentatiously before the audience. Actually, the statement was a plea for the actor to surrender his individual personality to the art of the theatre. Craig maintained that the traditional and naturalistic schools trained the personalities of stage "stars" and not actors. He asserted that the stage "stars" were too concerned
about their personal appearance on the stage (VI, 1, p. 9). He says:

I am not a believer in the fluttering, bubbling personality of the stage "Stars"; . . . I am against the emphasis which is laid on the Body in the Theatre . . .

Craig was particularly critical of the schools of elocution, physical culture and Eurythmics which sought to prepare young ladies and gentlemen for the stage by teaching them how to speak prettily and move daintly. Francois Delsarte's system of elocution and Jacques Dalcroze's school of Eurythmics were the chief targets for Craig's attack (V, 1, p. 33). He writes:

.. . . . (Jacques) Dalcroze advances to instruct his many promising pupils in the art of Rhythm. Gymnastics, Dancing and Dramatic Gesture are practised in doors, . . . or out doors . . . for Dalcroze has a delightful and vast open air courtyard designed by the architect Heinrich Tessenow who doesn't seem to have wasted an ounce of his material or an inch of his space.

I can't speak too highly of this whole building. It is made for the purpose to which it is to be applied, and it is a real working place. And what energy and enthusiasm the subscribers to the whole affair have shown!

Into the building Dr. Dalcroze dumps his girls, and sets them swinging their arms and legs and bodies. Outwardly all is perfect, for the girls are just the perfectest girls that ever girls could be. Inwardly there is nothing . . .

I mean, of course, comparatively nothing. For inwardly there are hearts, beating awfully prettily, and emotions chasing one another, and beliefs all butterfly-like playing easily at Bo-Peep: . . . and there are very pretty little dances, and such a nice feeling of good breeding and pleasant hours spent. And there's just the prettiest of houses near the school where the girls are kept and fed and where they exchange those lovely confidences which girls alone know how to exchange without having given anything.

The head mistresses of the school are most intelligent ladies of much refinement and thoroughly capable, and no one could desire a more perfect directress than Frau Mabel-Riees.

And yet the net result of the whole effort is nothing.

Individuality is lost in this school. And that is rather a grave matter, because they employ the individual even as the carpenter employs wood or the goldsmith gold.
Herein lies the root-evil of the whole matter. Girls are employed like so much marble or gold . . . and Dalcroze, like Michaelangelo, hacks away at them, turns them, bends them . . . and of course they like it.

Excellent! excellent that any and all girls should like being bent and turned by a man; . . . it is an old virtue of theirs, but it has the disadvantage of in no way conducting towards the production of a work of art.

M. Dalcroze is not exactly a theatrical person; he is a musician. He comes promising to release us; he only binds us all more selfishly and more cunningly than his predecessors. As master of gymnastics and director of a well-ordered establishment for young ladies we are all in favour of M. Dalcroze. As a teacher of art we consider him entirely lacking in conscience, bringing false counsel of a very dangerous kind, . . . that ancient advice of the serpent with its lithe and sinuous gestures.

Craig is of the opinion that the body and vocal training offered by Dalcroze and Delsarte tends to stereotype the students and hence destroys invididual expression (VIII, 12, p. 54). He asserts:

However we must admit that for servant girls or programme girls it should be an admirable school to go to: . . . can't you see Fanny entering with a tray tip-toe like Mercury and realising something which M. Charles Blasis aimed at in 1829? . . . I suppose you know his book? . . . quite interesting. "The Mask" should really reprint it with the pictures . . .

And now that one comes to think it over a moment longer, why should not a school or two be started in England taking M. Charles Blasis and Delsarte as guides? They wrote such good books, too. Did you never hear of the books of Delsarte? . . . America has. Americans in some of the States were brought up on Delsarte.

The effect was, I believe, that it made young ladies walk better than before . . . which is most deceptive. Tell me, don't you like a rat of a woman to walk like a rat, so that we shall not mistake her for a lady or a blessing when we meet her? The worst of these 'systems' is that they baulk expression. No longer shall we say "here comes such and such a nature," . . . but we shall be aware that here comes a trained Dalcrozan. That ultimately . . . I admit only ultimately . . . will tell against the lady who adopts his systematic beauty at so much a lesson . . .

I am one of those who think that individual expression in life is what we must preserve: therefore I think Dalcroze is a nuisance.

Except, as I said, for servant girls, programme sellers,
waitresses and all and any who are or want to be in uniform pattern.

If Monsieur would guarantee to train none but the servants of the public, then might not we hope to see governments and local bodies taking up this system and stereotyping hundreds of females per day? ... Democratic anyhow.

I have turned once more to the book to see if I am not doing injustice to Monsieur Dalcroze ... I am not.

No ... no ... the results achieved are insipid ... he may be right in his theory ... but not right as rain ... and the artisticness of the whole thing would be right enough for those groups in America or even England or Germany where groups of ladies thrill, gush or squirm over things they take to be uplifting, "perfectly lovely" or reizend: but for any place not befogged by doubts, or at any period when people are at least trying to awaken to realities it is out of place and it is out of date. And And Isadora Duncan is still a living influence.

Craigs objected to the Elocutionary and Eurythmical schools on the grounds that they taught a standardized form of bodily and vocal expression which tended toward artificiality and had the effect of causing the student to become overly-conscious of the manner in which he was moving and speaking. At least, Craig's criticism is consistent with his contention that the actor gives far too much attention to his own personality. Craig was opposed to cataloging techniques and rules into a formula or system, on the assumption that a fixed or conventional method of codification would stifle the artist's imagination. He quotes a passage from Lord Byron to emphasize his dislike for art principles classified into a system (VIII, 12, p. 52).

A more amiable man in society than Mr. Hunt I do not know: nor (when he will allow his sense to prevail over his sectarian principles) a better writer. When he was writing his "Rimini" I was not the last to discover its beauties, long before it was published. Even then I remonstrated against the vulgarisms; which are the more extraordinary because the author is anything but a vulgar man. Mr. Hunt's answer was, that he wrote them upon principle; they made part of his 'system'!! I then said no more. When a man
talks of his system it is like a woman talking of her virtue.

In a jocular and somewhat facetious tone, Craig criticises (VII, 12, p. 52) a book, *Mirror of Gesture*, for its pronouncement of a system of gestures. The book was translated by Ananda Coomaraswany. He writes:

Dear Mr. Coomaraswany, It is a Marvellous interesting book and all that which you have translated, but here I sit in a palace in Pisa in the room where Lord Byron wrote the greatest European poem of the last century, which has not yet been understood by Europe, let alone read, and you ask me seriously to recommend this trifle from the East to Europeans; this "Mirror of Gesture," this book of system, this receipt for enslaving men, making 'actors' of them . . . you ask too much. We are not up to it yet.

I admire you; . . . I am ravished by your gestures without understanding one of them, or caring a rap for any systems . . . Eastern or western.

I am fascinated beyond description by the way you begin the seance.

Following this, your text-book, you shake your head up and down. You mean doubtless Indignation, Enquiry, Summoning, Threatening, and all sorts of other things. But who's to guess it over here? For we frown, loosen the brows, shake the head sideways when we mean some of those things, and when we mean the rest of them we make other gestures.

So you see you ask too much from the commencement. And when later, to recompense me, you assert that your waist is one of your limbs and your armpits another of them, then you show me (and I'm no seer), that your whole system is based on the principle "heads I win, tails you lose."

No, dear and gentle Indian; I'll not play that game with you. I too want a chance to sin.

Craig criticised the actor for his use of vocal and bodily tricks in order to achieve theatrical effects. While Craig admits that it is necessary that the actor be made aware of the fact that he must be heard and seen, he should not be left with the impression that his only obligation on the stage is to project his voice to the back of the house (I, 2-4, p. 65). He says:
. . . When we speak about the effective, we in the theatre mean something which will reach across the footlights. The old actor tells the young actor to raise his voice, to "Spit it out;" . . . "Spit it out, laddie, fling it at the back of the gallery" . . . Not bad advice either; but to think that this has not been learnt in the last five or six hundred years, and that we have not got further; that is what is so distressing about the whole business. Obviously all stage actions and all stage words must first of all be clearly seen, must be clearly heard. Naturally all pointed actions and all pointed speeches must have a clear and distinct form so that they may be clearly understood. We grant all this. It is the same in all art, and as with the other arts it goes without saying; but it is not the one and only essential thing which the elders must be continually drumming into the ears of the younger generation when it steps upon the stage. It teaches the young actor soon to become a master of tricks. He takes the short cut instinctively to these tricks, and this playing of tricks has been the cause of the invention of a word, --"Theatrical," and I can put my finger on the reason why the young actor labours under this disadvantage the moment he begins his stage experience . . .

Craig objected to the rhetorical actor who substituted noise for intensity of feeling. In his criticism of the bombastic vocal displays so prevalent on the stage, Craig often quoted Shakespeare's condemnation of the "noisy" actor. Craig also asserted that loud applause from the audience is not necessary to the actor's understanding of the success of his interpretation. Craig maintained that the actor can feel instinctively when the audience is with him. The breathless attention, the subtle sense of hush that takes possession of the stage and auditorium alike, is more flattering evidence that the actor has played his part well than the noisiest bursts of clapping. Craig often voiced his protest against the noisy actor and the noisy audience (IV, 1, p.37). He says:

May I suggest that the noisy actors tell us exactly how shallow is their emotion, and the noisy audience exactly how little they have felt or understood it; that both are noisy because they need encouragement.
As an actor it was Sir Henry Irving who felt deeply although I have seen it stated that he was not capable of emotion. He was never noisy.

Again, the success or failure of a performance in London depends today upon applause. If the audience are silent the critics, most of the critics assert that the play has been a failure. It is no excuse to say that it is the western way to applaud and the eastern way to remain silent.

This state of things is to be regretted. The remedy is to get out of the minds of the critic, the actors, and the general deadhead public that applause and noise indicate that the deep emotions have been touched; and it should be clearly shown that on the contrary only the shallow emotions have been touched.

That I believe is the first step towards improving all things in the modern theatre, though I by no means imagine for one moment that such a step, small though it be, will commend itself to anyone in the theatre.

Craig condemned the actor for attempting to display the skillful use of the voice. Such an actor, he says, obscures the poetry of the dialogue while seeking to demonstrate his vocal powers (I, 3-4, p. 57). He writes:

... For instance, he has learned that the sudden drop in the voice from forte to piano has the power of accentuating and thrilling the audience as much as the crescendo from the piano into the forte ...

Craig also maintained that skill in vocal technique should not be used to astonish the audience (VI, 3, p. 238).

... Some artists are skillful and some are entirely without skill. Art is not a matter of skill, although the skillful artist is a Godsend.

Skill astonishes. Art does not do that. A man can astound us whose flow of language cascades from point to point with a rapidity too great for us to follow, but he may not be speaking truth; whereas the few words of a man of truth may easily be uttered, unheeded by us, a thousand times in a year ....

The beastly preparation for death ... the horrible sticking of the knife in the throat ... the mouth first filled with torn-up paper ... and the loathsome gush of scarlet blood half covering the white chemise ... saw her take her "call" at the end, and, while many applauded, I noticed one man with his hands raised and laid back on
each side of him, making a significant gesture to the performer which seemed to ask . . . "Well! and what then have you done? Is that what you truly believe to be good for us . . . for yourself . . . for the Theatre?"
I think he was a member of the European Theatre . . .

While Craig was critical of the actor who tried to startle his audience by histrionic displays of artificial fury and passion, he was equally as critical of the actor who lacked strength, vitality, and inspiration. He suggested that the great tragic roles in English drama have become "character role". He asserted that the actors in tragedy speak in "little voices"; they are courteous and well-bred and apparently are averse to do anything that might not be done in a well-mannered drawing-room (IX, p. 21). He writes:

. . . . I appeal for more and more appreciation, and less disdain for emphasis and fury in the actor, so that our Theatrical Art become stronger where it now lacks strength, . . . in tragedy . . . in our immense and priceless English drama.

I would not ask our perfect actor Sir Charles Hawtry to exaggerate or to let his fury loose, --nor his critics to abate a word of their praise for this very lack of exaggeration, this suave power of suggestion which, by raising an eyelid, he is able to employ. I would not look to see Sir Gerald du Maurier be anything or do anything more than he is and does; and the many other actors who belong to this eye-lid school, I for my part would not miss one of them. The faultlessness of their miniature method must not be disturbed--nor undervalued.

But this method is only one of the methods. The Theatre knows it and should recognize it more.

To be suave, to drawl, lisp and act the oracle in a "natural" way when performing Falstaff, Charles Surface, Mercutio, Gratiano, Beatrice, Portia, the Merry Wives of Windsor or any of the larger comic master-roles of the 17th or 18th centuries would be futile. These, like the great tragic roles, need swing, fire, attack, and exaggeration--The Theatrical . . .

The great actor is "a man inspired," says Craig. The realistic dramas confine and narrow the actors' imagination by forcing him into a realistic delineation of an individual personality (XII, 2, p. 66). He says:
The art of acting is greater than the actor; it lifts him above the level of amateurism to which our realists would reduce him. Among all the feeble impulses of the stage we are conscious, here and there, of the swift intake of the breath of inspiration. There is no other acting but inspired acting, whether it be tragic or comic or farcical; the rest is vanity of vanities.

The uninspired actor (otherwise the amateur) does not play his part; he represents it with the help of an academic and superficial technique. At the best he gives the mask of caricature to a figure that he fails inwardly to comprehend, a figure that may even be unworthy of comprehension. He seeks for a fashionable type into which he can mould his own personality. He goes from manager to manager and from comedy to comedy with his type ready-made; and each finds a use for him since the audience must have style at all costs, and caricature is a form of style. His mannerisms, which should be the legitimate byplay of his art, become in time his entire stock-in-trade. The sound middle actor, without the gift of caricature or the instinct for original portraiture, chooses a sound middle performance from his wardrobe of experience as a man chooses a jacket. Authors and producers do not bother him; the part fits him and that suffices. He is closely akin to the "character actor," whose aim is to portray everything but character—accent, appearance, gesture, habit, manner, all that is easy and unessential. For these performers the art of acting is akin to the painter's art in the academic or story-telling picture. The author tells his story and they assist him faithfully by telling theirs; her the matter begins and ends. Of a conception of drama larger than that of the "dramatic" scene, of an inner technique of acting deeper than the outer technique of tone and gesture and facial play, they do not begin to think. Theirs is the small change of acting, convenient in the pocket, eloquent on the counter, readily given, readily accepted. But the capital of the actor is inspiration, . . .

Craig was censorious of the actor who, in his attempt to portray emotion, resorts to facial grimaces and body contortions. To illustrate his contempt for the actor who attempts to show physical emotions by "ear-wiggling" and "eye-brow lifting," Craig quotes (IX, p. 15) a passage from George Jean Nathan's book,
Mr. Nathan Presents.

For a study of contemporaneous mummering, would that an evening before this stage had been yours! You would have been fetched, I promise you. You would have seen artist and artiste act the play almost entirely with the eyebrows. You would have seen the leading lady interpret deep nervous emotion with the upper portion of her corset. You would have heard allusions to the Pont Noof and you would have seen the actor who played the thief adjust his hat to his hip and, with feet akimbo, defy the hero who was standing beside him by addressing his remarks hotly to the head usher. You would have seen the leading lady, grief stricken, sink into a chair, clasp 'kerchief to mouth and move her head slowly from side to side like Mr. Montague Glass' Mozart Rabiner. You would have seen the actor playing the husband halt long enough at the door on his exit to give the audience an eye; thus registering suspicion. You would have seen the actor playing the lover halt long enough at the door on his exit to give the audience the same eye: thus registering alarm. You would have heard an allusion to the cohaneerage and you would have seen the actor playing the husband indicate doubt by biting the right corner of his lower lip and the actor playing the lover indicate defiance by taking his hands out of his pockets.

In no other profession in the world, of course, is there so much incompetence as in acting. . . .

Craig argued that the actor's insistence on demonstrating his ability to portray emotion and his desire to exhibit his vocal powers obscures the meaning of the dramatic dialogue. He maintained that actors all too often intrude their own personalities into the play and thereby establish a barrier between the play and the audience.

Craig refers to this point in his review of Haldane Macfall's book, 

Ibsen, The Man, His Art and Significance (I, 1, p. 20).

. . . Referring to his shrinking from witnessing the representation of his own pieces Mr. Macfall writes, "He detested to see his own plays on the stage. The actors came between him and his conception of the characters, often distorting them forever."
And how could this be otherwise? For, from the moment when the last word was written, and the play, going forth to the world, left the poet 'Lonely, as though he had been robbed of the intimate friends', it was complete, perfectly rounded as a work of art. Further addition was more than superfluous, it was encumbering; in that it blurred the conception of the author and confused the minds of those to whom he spoke, since for one actor who could interpret so subtle and elusive a thing as the spirit of a play, five hundred would only obtrude their own personality as a barrier between the audience and the poet.

The theatre, contends Craig, is something more than a tour de force for the actor. Its true function is more than a mere platform from which the actor can exhibit his own personality and present his own individual interpretation of a role in a play. The actor's responsibility in the theatre goes far beyond the mere interpretation of dramatic literature. The actor who pretends to show an imitation of life and attempts to trick the audience into believing that what it is seeing and hearing on the stage is a factual representation of life is not an actor; he is an impostor and is desecrating the art of the theatre. As an individual performer the actor must abdicate the stage and he must win his distinction by becoming one of the members of the ensemble which is composed of movement, rhythm, color and light. Due to the long subjugation of the actor by the dramatists, and the actor's desire to free himself from the dominance of the play, the actor has sought to avoid ensemble and to compromise with the stage by asserting himself and his art to the point of what is called "personality" performance. Two masters hold the actor in enslavement; his personality and the dramatist.
Craig sees a loophole by which the actor can escape from the bondage they are in. The use of symbolism in movement and gesture will free the actor from the consciousness of realistic character portrayal through his own individual personality and the creation of his own drama will release him from the control of the dramatist (I, 2, p. 3). Craig writes:

... They (actors) must create for themselves a new form of acting, consisting for the main part of symbolic gestures. Today they impersonate and interpret; tomorrow they must represent and interpret; and the third day they must create.

Craig asserts that the actor of today tries to create an illusion of reality through imitation and impersonation. The main point of his argument is that the art of acting is not a photographic reproduction of nature. The actor who impersonates confuses the audience into connecting actuality and art (I, 2, p. 5). He writes:

... Today the actor impersonates a certain being. He cries to the audience "Watch me; I am now pretending to so and so; and I am now pretending to do so and so;" and then he proceeds to imitate as exactly as possible, that which he has announced he will indicate. For instance, he is Romeo. He tells the audience that he is in love, and he proceeds to show it, by kissing Juliet. This, it is claimed is a work of Art: it is claimed for this that it is an intelligent way of suggesting thought.

Why ... Why, that is just as if a painter were to draw upon the wall a picture of an animal with long ears, and then write under it 'This is a donkey.' The long ears made it plain enough one would think, without the inscription, and any child of ten does as much. The difference between the child of ten and the artist is, that the artist is he who by drawing certain signs and shapes creates the impression of a donkey; and the greater artist is he who creates the impression of the whole genus of donkey; the spirit of the thing.
The actor looks upon the life as a photo-machine looks upon life; and he attempts to make a picture to rival a photograph. He never dreams of his art as being an art such for instance as music. He tries to reproduce nature; he seldom thinks to invent with the aid of nature, and he never dreams of creating. As I have said, the best he can do when he wants to catch and convey the poetry of a kiss . . . the heat of a fight, or the calm of death, is to copy slavishly, photographically . . . he kisses . . . he fights . . . he lies back and mimics death . . . and when you think of it, is not all this dreadfully stupid spirit and essence of an idea to an audience, but can only show an artless copy, a facsimile of the thing itself. This is to be an imitator not an Artist. This is to claim kinship with the Ventriloquist. . . .

"To morrow", says Craig, "the actor must represent and interpret". At this point we suggest that Craig should have used the word present in place of represent. Representational theatrical art speaks by copying the voice of other materials and this is precisely the forte of the stage impersonator. He imitates the manner of others. Surely Craig did not intend in the second phase of his chronological trinity to leave the actor exactly where he had found him in the first phase. He he used the word "present," he would have taken the actor another step toward creation, which he feels is the ultimate goal of the actor. Presentational theatrical art, by standard definition, speaks by the voice of its own material. It is highly selective, suggestive, and non-illusionistic. Presentational theatrical art does not seek to impersonate and imitate objects; instead, it presents life at a distance by means of theatrical symbols.

On the third day, says Craig, the actor must create his own drama. He insists that it is the actor who creates drama and not
the literary man (IX, pp. 10-14). He writes:

. . . . It is not the literary man who creates drama. It is the actor and the fury of the actor. He creates it by taking a story and inventing what dialogue is necessary as he goes along. You cry out, "It is impossible!" But, ladies and gentlemen, it is not impossible because you will not study the subject and inquire into the past. If you did so you would find that this creating of dramas by actors was done for some two to three hundred years, with immense success. The actor would take a story, such a story as that of the Jew who lent monies to the Christian, and he would create a drama from it. As it was done in the past it can be done again; it rests with the actor to do it . . . Real actors create. . . .

Ricconboni the Italian actor, in 1728 wrote: "The actor who improvises, acts with more animation and in a more natural way than he who performs a part he has learned by heart. People feel better, and consequently say better, what they invent than what they borrow from others by means of the memory. But these advantages are purchased at the price of many difficulties; clever actors are required, moreover actors of equal talent; for the drawback of improvisation is, that the art of even the best actor absolutely depends on his fellow performer; if he has to act with a colleague who does not reply exactly at the right moment, or who interrupts him in the wrong place, his words miss part of their effect, or his spirit is gone. To an actor who depends on improvisation, it is not sufficient to have face, memory, voice, even sentiment: if he is to distinguish himself, he must possess a lively and fertile imagination, a great facility of expression, he must master all the subtleties of language, possess all the knowledge which is required for the different situations in which his part places him."

To discover the true creative actor, says Craig, we must return to the Italian institution, the Commedia dell' Arte. Here the actor was an independent and self-sufficient artist, free from the bonds of the playwright.

Craig advised the actor to go to the Commedia actor for salutary lessons in spontaneous, inspirational, imaginative, and
pantomimic acting. Since Craig aimed to subordinate word to gesture in acting, he particularly urged the actor to study the pantomimic art of the Commedia actor. Craig argued that it was an error to believe that pantomime is merely a way of acting without words, that it is merely the equivalent of words. Pantomime, he says, is thinking overheard. It begins and ends before words have formed themselves. Pantomime resides in a deeper consciousness than that of speech. Pantomime is no mere imitation of nature. It observes nature so that it may create a new form itself—a form which in its inexplicable silence appeals through the eye straight to the intellect for its comprehension. In pantomime, continues Craig, there is a gracious expressive silence, beauty of gesture, a perfectly discreet appeal to the emotions. Pantomimic art, like great poetry, excludes all that should not be there, for there is choice, selection, and combination. Pantomimic art says all that is worth saying. It does not use gestures and movements for their mere utility, but for their beauty in a form of art. At the heart of all that Craig wrote on the theatre lies his fundamental concept that movement is the essence of theatre art (IV, 3, p. 189). He says:

All great Drama moves in silence. Events of the greatest magnitude and significance pass in silence; there is nothing to be said. All nature is silent when it acts, and speech cannot take the place of action. How it is that speech has usurped the place of action in Stage-Drama is for the present age to discover, and then it is possible that the present age will replace action on its stage-throne and that throne will be remade and replaced in its temple.
A mistake is made when it is supposed that action is unable to be significant unless words (and beautiful words) are added to it.

Action by itself is so capable of hinting at the profoundest acts even as words are capable of stating them.

Craig felt that pantomimic art in the theatre had been superseded by realistic, detailed mannerisms in order to delineate idiosyncracies of character. Consequently the actor no longer understood the method nor the nature of pantomime. Craig maintained that the actor did not appreciate the potential qualities of the body as an instrument for expression (V, 3, p. 214.) He says:

... Strange though it may be, the movements of the human face and body, its mimicry, express so little and so badly the infinite variety of the movements and states of our soul that our face can be compared, without much exaggeration, to the glove, which hides all the most delicate and most expressive lines and curves of the hand. And between the human face as it can be and certainly one day will the difference between the face of a black savage and the face of Dante, of Shelley or of Carlyle.

The movements of the face, of the body, our gestures, are the powerful means by which we can express ourselves, our will, our soul. And only when those means and methods of expression shall be developed . . . and only when all the faculties and forces latent in them shall be revealed, will the theatre become a perfect art in all its visible Beauty and in all its internal unity.

We gather that when the actor has learned to improvise his own play and to perform it with pantomimic movement and gesture, he has attained the position of a creative artist. Not yet, Craig would argue, not until the actor has learned to divorce his own personality and his emotions from his portrayal. Since all art is the result of calculated design, the creative actor, says Craig, is one
who creates from his mind rather than from his emotion. At this point, we come to one of the most controversial essays Craig ever wrote. Storms rage around his pronouncement that "Acting is not an art," and that man "as material for the theatre is useless." He is accused of wanting to sweep aside the living actor and in his place put an inanimate figure called a puppet (I, 2, pp. 3-11). He says:

Acting is not an art. It is therefore incorrect to speak of the actor as an artist. For accident is an enemy of the artist. Art is the exact antithesis of Pandimonium, and Pandimonium is created by the tumbling together of many accidents; Art arrives only by design. Therefore in order to make any work of art it is clear we may only work in those materials with which we can calculate. Man is not one of these materials.

The whole nature of man tends towards freedom; he therefore carries the proof in his own person, that as material for the theatre he is useless. . . . emotion possesses him; it seizes upon his limbs moving them whither it will. He is at its beck and call, he moves as one in a frantic dream or as one distraught, swaying here and there; his head, his arms, his feet, if not utterly beyond control, are so weak to stand against the torrent of his passions, that they are ready to play him false at any moment. . . . His limbs refuse, and refuse again, to obey his mind the instant emotion warms, while the mind is all the time creating the heat which shall set these emotions afire. As with his movement, so is it with the expression of his face. The mind struggling and succeeding for a moment, in moving the eyes, or the muscles of the face whither it will; . . . the mind bringing the face for a few moments into thorough subjection, is suddenly swept aside by the emotion which has grown hot through the action of the mind . . . It is the same with his voice as it is with his movements. Emotion cracks the voice of the actor. It sways his voice to join in the conspiracy against his mind. Emotion works upon the voice of the actor, and he produces . . . the impression of discordant emotion . . . Therefore the mind of the actor, we see, is less powerful than his emotion, for emotion is able to win over the mind to assist in the destruction of that which the mind would produce; and as the mind becomes the slave of the emotion it follows that accident upon
accident must be continually occurring. . . . In instructing
the craftsman who is the actor of today I should say by no
means to identify himself with the part he wishes to portray.
If an art form is to be developed, such identification would be
similar to the artist appearing on his canvass, or the composer
being seen in his music. The really competent actor of today
must have not only the rich nature from which to draw his
wealth, but must also have the imagination to know what to bring
forth, and the brain to know how to put it before us. Therefore
the ideal actor is the man who possesses both a rich nature and
a powerful brain. The brain would bring both itself and the
emotions to so fine a sense of reason that the work would never
boil to the bubbling point with its restless exhibition of activity,
but would create that perfect moderate heat which it would know
how to keep temperate. Therefore, identification with the role
is impossible. Always, the actor must keep the brain in
command and not allow his emotions to hinder its intellectual
messages to the body.

An actor whose personality can be seen in the part he plays
is a detriment to the theatre. While there are those who rely
on their bubbling personalities to carry them through their
roles and who are popular in the modern idiom and successful
from a financial point of view; these men and women are not
actors. The applause that they receive is for their personality,
not for the acting they have done.

We can easily detect a certain extravagance in Craig's statements.

However, it is the extravagance of the ideal. It holds to the essen-
tial truth that the art of acting, like all art, does not spring from
the inspiration of the moment; rather it is created from planned and
calculated design. In effect, Craig is saying that if acting is to
become an art, the actor must create from the mind and not give
way to uncontrolled outbursts of passion.

Craig heartily detested what he called "life" in art and he
asserted that the painter and the musician meant something far
different from what the actor means when he speaks of putting life
into his work (I, 2, p. 8). He writes:

The painter means something rather different to actuality when he speaks of Life in art, and the other artists generally mean something essentially spiritual; it is only the actor the ventril-oquist or the animal-stuffer who, when they speak of putting life into their work, mean some actual and lifelike reproduction, something blatant in its appeal, that it is for this reason I say that it would be better if the actor should get out of the skin of the part altogether. If there is any actor who is reading this, is there not someway by which I can make him realize the preposterous absurdity of this delusion of his, this belief that he should aim to make an actual copy, a reproduction?

"Tell us," asks the painter, "is it true that before; you can act a part properly you must feel the emotions of the character you are representing?" Oh well, yes and no; it depends what you mean," answers the actor. "We have first to be able to feel and sympathise and also criticise the emotions of a character; we look at it from a distance before we close with it: we gather as much as we can from the text and we call to mind all the emotions suitable for this character to exhibit.

. . . With a gesture of genial impatience, the artist rises to his feet and paces to and fro. He had expected his friend to say that it had nothing whatever to do with emotions and that he could control his face, features, voice and all, just as if his body were an instrument. The musician sinks down deeper into his chair.

"But has there never been an actor," asks the artist, "who has so trained his body from head to foot that it would answer to the workings of his mind without permitting the emotions even so much as to awaken? Surely there must have been one actor, say one out of ten million, who has done this?" "No," says the actor exphatically, "never, never; there never has been an actor who reached such a state of mechanical perfection that his body was absolutely the slave of his mind.

Then you admit that it would be a state of perfection?"

"Why of course! But it is impossible; will always be impossible."

But has there been ever a painting, or a piece of architecture, or a piece of music which may be called perfect?"

"Undoubtedly," they reply, "The laws which control our arts make such a thing possible."

"A picture for instance," continues the artist, "May consist of four lines, or four hundred lines, placed in certain positions; it may be as simple as possible, but it is possible to make it
perfect. That is to say, I can first choose that which is to make
the lines; I can choose that on which I am to place the lines: I
can consider this as long as I like; I can alter it; then in a state
which is both free from excitement, haste, trouble, nervousness,
in fact in any state I choose, (and of course I prepare, wait and
select that also) I can put these lines together . . . so . . . now
they are in their place. Having my material nothing except my
own will can move or alter these; and as I have said, my own
will is entirely under my control. The line can be straight or
it can wave; it can be round if I choose, and there is no fear
that when I wish to make a straight line I shall make a curved
one, or that when I wish to make a curved there will be square
parts about it. And when it is ready . . . finished . . . it
undergoes no change but that which Time, who finally destroys
it, wills."

And therefore I have always held, though I may be mistaken,
that your work has not the nature of an art. That is to say (and
you have said it yourself) each statement that you make in your
work is subject to every conceivable change which emotion
chooses to bring about. That which you conceive in your mind,
your body is not permitted by nature to complete. In fact, your
body, gaining the better of your intelligence, has in many
instances on the stage driven out the intelligence altogether.
Some actors seem to say, "What value lies in having beautiful
ideas. To what end shall my mind conceive a fine idea, a fine
thought, for my body which is so entirely beyond my control to
spoil? I will throw my mind overboard, let my body pull me
and the play through;" and there seems to me to be some wis­
dom in the standpoint of such an actor. He does not dilly dally
between the two things which are contending in him, the one
against the other. He is not a bit afraid of the result. He goes
at it like a man, sometimes a trifle too like a centaur; he
flings away all science, all caution . . . all reason and the
result is good spirits in the audience, . . . and for that they
pay willingly. But we are here talking about other things than
excellent spirits, and though we applaud the actor who exhibits
such a personality as this, I feel that we must not forget that
we are applauding his personality . . . he it is we applaud,
not what he is doing or how he is doing it; nothing to do with
art at all, absolutely nothing to do with art, with calculation,
or design, . . .

The personality of the actor makes art impossible in the
theatre, asserts Craig. Let the audience know that theatre is some-
thing better than a revelation of personality—that it is an insight into life, says Craig. No longer must the audience watch costumed actors parading their idiosyncrasies inside a gilt picture-frame. No longer must the part be a transparent screen for the projection of the "star". No longer must the actor restrict his movements to labels and signs in order to tell the audience that he is reacting to an event in the play. The actors' movements and gestures must be pure symbols which evoke idea and sensation, which is all that an audience need ever know of an event. The movements of the actor must express only what is implicit in the event (XII, 2, p. 68). He says:

. . . . He (the actor) borrows from the world of reality in order to create a world of appearance; there is the essence of his art. He seeks for enduring symbols that shall express the relation of appearance to reality—for style and gesture, tone and presence that shall maintain a just proportion between the actual and the imaginary. He is confronted by a whole property room of conventional symbols that are long ago worn threadbare, like the phrases of the novelette. For every emotional emergency, for every situation, for every turn and twist of character, the histrionic cliches hang in readiness. There is a fitting for every figure. The spectator, aware of the emptiness and banality of these symbols that he has seen a hundred times, calls them "theatrical" and thus lays the blame upon the theatre for what is in fact the player's want of imagination.

But the symbols of the theatre cannot be other than theatrical. Every endeavour to make them "real" reverses the actor's natural process by re-creating a world of sham reality from that of appearance. The presence of real donkeys or real water on the stage gives pleasure to large audiences, but it can scarcely be held to diminish the "theatricality" of a performance. The actors of the Grand Guignol smear themselves with red ochre to represent a bleeding wound, but the
convention does not bring them one step nearer to naturalism. Our quarrel should be, not with the theatrical spirit that is proper to the theatre, but with the pretentious realism that marks a lack of any spirit at all. The enduring symbols of the actor's art are artificial, like the enduring monuments of the sculptor. To cover them with everyday rags and tatters is to mistake their whole significance . . .

Craig advised the young actor go to the master painters for instruction in physical expression (III, 4-6, pp. 68). He says:

... And what, you ask, can we learn from these masters? I will tell you.

You can derive many wonderful things and learn many useful things; though surely no one who looks at these works needs to be told what can be derived by studying them. As for learning from them, you can do so by studying them in movement, dramatic movement, facial expression, the values of light and shadow, historical and fanciful costume, and some of the significance of a pictorial scene. . . . Henry Irving very often betook himself to them although, possibly owing to his early training, he was fond of selecting as guide the more flamboyant rather than the more restful masters: he preferred Rubens and Vandyke to Giotto and Masolino, yet, strange to say, his movements were the movements which Giotto teaches and not those of Rubens.

But be careful to select for your study none but the best masters. The best masters of Dramatic movement are Giotto, Masolino, Michel Angelo and Rembrandt, though the two first are finer than the two last, . . . finer because more restful, having brought movement down to a state of repose. The other two may be said to "work it up" more, although at times Rembrandt is very restrained, while he can be the most poignant of all.

For facial expression also these four will still serve you as very noble tutors, though Fra Angelico, Franz Hals, Teniers and Hogarth enter more into this subject, and Giotto even here is the finest master of all, but very, very difficult to understand. You must not think, however, that facial expression is "making faces." You probably do not think so, but do not forget it.

... Wide publicity was given to Craig's statements that actors should wear dramatic masks (I, 1, p. 10). He writes:
Human facial expression is for the most part valueless. Masks carry conviction when he who creates them is an artist, for the artist limits the statements which he places upon these masks. The face of the actor carries no such conviction: it is over-full of fleeting expression, . . . frail, restless; disturbed and disturbing, and, on this account, not material with which to make a work of art. . . . No! the Mask must return to the Stage to restore expression, . . . the visible expression of the mind, . . . if the face of the actor is, by means of paste, powder and colour, to be altered out of all recognition, used only as a foundation upon which to model the desired features, why not simply cover the original features with the image of the personality which it is wished to represent? Why paint the face until it resembles a mask for a few hours when a mask can be made of ivory or wood which will last for ever?

Many of Craig's critics have held him up to public ridicule as the man who would cover the actor's face with a grotesque mask. However, one has the key to Craig's thought when one reads his statement that Henry Irving's face was the most perfect mask he had ever seen (IX, p. 32). He writes:

. . . Look at him (Irving), look at his face. Can you not see the mouth being made to move by the brain, and that same movement which is called expression creating a thought as definite as the line of a draftsman does on a piece of paper or as a chord does in music? I should say that the face of Irving was the connecting link between that spasmodic and ridiculous expression of the human face as used by the theaters of the last few centuries, and the masks which will be used in place of the human face in the near future. . . .

The mask Craig had in mind was an artificial one for the actor who continually distorted his face in order to project emotion; but for the actor who understands the value of symbolic gesture and whose every movement is a part of a preconceived design, the human face
is the mask; behind it is hidden the actor's personality and upon it are expressed only the emotions of the role. The face of the actor, says Craig, must suggest more than it says, to embody dreams in its flesh, and to become at once a living thing and a symbol. The infinitesimal number of facial expressions made by an actor during a performance are, thought Craig, sheer waste and excess. What the actor tries to express in his face, he has not realized in his imagination. The facial expressions are an end in themselves in that they are statements of fact rather than evocations. They are studied and worked out in complicated details and have only moral values. The face of the actor, says Craig, must do more than imitate the features of the character he is portraying; it must show the man as well as his features. Craig was fond of pronouncing excessive and extravagant declarations, which if taken literally, appeared to be nonsense. His declaration for the return of the use of the dramatic masks disturbed the equanimity of the professional actor; however, Craig's assertion is scarcely more than an appeal to the actor to desist from his practice of mimicry and imitation.

Perhaps the most unfortunate sentence that Craig ever wrote was the one in which he said that "the actor must go and in his place comes the inanimate figure—the 'Uber-Marionette as we may call him, until he has won for himself a better name." The statement caused the actors of the modern theatre to suppose that
Craig was proposing to annihilate them (I, 2, p.12). Craig says:

Do away with the real tree, do away with the reality of delivery, do away with the reality of action, and you tend toward doing away with the actor. This is what must come to pass in time, and I like to see the stage managers supporting the idea already. Do away with the actor, and you do away with the means by which a debased stage realism is produced and flourishes. No longer would there be a living figure to confuse us into connecting actuality and art; no longer a living figure in which the weaknesses and tremors of the flesh were perceptible.

The actor must go, and in his place comes the inanimate figure—the Uber-Marionette we may call him, until he has won for himself a better name. . . . I pray earnestly for the return of the image, . . . the Uber-Marionette, to the theatre. . . .

This statement is as close as Craig ever came to substituting an inanimate figure for the living actor on the stage. There is no evidence that he ever did a stroke of sustained experimental work on an Uber-Marionette. Craig grew up in the practical theatre and his concepts of theatre grew from theatre practice rather than theatre theory. It is extremely difficult to believe that Craig ever thought for a moment that wooden or cardboard figures manipulated from a maze of string and wire by dozens of trained operators should or even could replace the "live" actor. Craig knew that his statement on the Uber-Marionette would arrest attention and invite controversy. He was sincere in his belief that natural emotion must not be confounded with the expression of art and the ideal actor is one in which personal emotion is controlled. Actually, the Uber-Marionette is a symbol of the idea of perfection in acting.
Although Craig admired the marionette, it is noticeable that in his designs and actual productions, the living body of the actor has a very important place. However, Craig's theory of play production grew from the premise that all the elements of the production must be controlled. He believed that the expressive elements of theatre art must be pure and constant. The constant and controllable elements in the theatre are form, color, movement and sound. The impure and inconstant element in the theatre is the actor. Every actor brings to his interpretation of the author's conception that complex of qualities known as personality. This personality may, but usually does not, adapt itself to the interpretation of the author's conception. Therefore, the actor introduces into the art of the theatre the element of chance, of accident. Craig simply wanted to depersonalize the actor in order that the artist-director could calculate and control the total design. Art, says Craig, arrives only by design. It was not the genus actor whom Craig would obliterate from the theatre, but it is the actor in his average modern embodiment that Craig has in mind (IX, p. 32). He says:

There are some rather dull individuals who, when Mr. Gordon Craig's work is under discussion, seem unable to do anything but screech without ceasing that cat-call, "Craig wants to destroy the actor."

We therefore reprint these words of his from "The Mask:"
"I announced the return of the Uber-Marionette or Idol, and the exodus of the actor from the Theatre, and I repeat it . . . the Uber-Marionette is inevitable. The actor of sense will understand me. He knows. He is of my family. No particular
of my programme excludes him, even if it reorganized many of his present duties and provides for all accidents waiting to scare him. When the time comes his place is secure."

If there be one of the said individuals who has recovered his wits, let him, then try a new cry:
"Craig wants to awaken the actor."

Although there is less than a grain of truth in the popular allegation that Craig desired to replace the actor with a marionette, there is considerable truth in the assertion that to Craig must go the credit for rejuvenating an interest in the ancient and honorable art of puppetry. When Craig turned to a study of marionettes, he discovered that the art of the puppet theatre had degenerated into a slap-stick kind of carnival entertainment of the Punch and Judy variety. Craig speaks to this point (I, 2, pp. 11-15) when he says:

"Today in his least happy period many people have come to regard him as rather a superior doll--and to think he has developed from the doll. . . . There is something in him more than the flashiness of displayed personality. But as with all art which has passed into fat or vulgar hands, the Puppet has become a reproach. All puppets are now but low comedians.

They imitate the comedians of the larger and fuller blooded stage. They enter only to fall on their back. They drink only to reel, and make love only to raise a laugh. They have forgotten the counsel of their Mother, the Sphinx. Their bodies have lost their grave grace, they have become stiff. Their eyes have lost that infinite subtlety of seeming to see; now they only stare. They display the jingle of their wires and are cock-sure in their wooden wisdom. . . .

To speak of a Puppet with most men and women is to cause them to giggle. They think at once of the wires; they think of the stiff hands and the jerky movements; they tell me it is "a funny little doll." But let me tell them a few things about these Puppets. Let me again repeat that they are the descendants of a great and noble family of Images, Images which were made in the likeness of God; and that many centuries ago these figures had a rhythmical movement and not a jerky one; had no
need for wires to support them, nor did they speak through the nose of the hidden manipulator. (Poor Punch, I mean no slight to you! You stand alone, dignified in your despair, as you look back across the centuries with painted tears still wet upon your ancient cheeks, and you seem to cry out appealingly to your dog, "Sister Anne, sister Anne, is nobody coming?". And then with that superb bravado of yours, you turn the force of our laughter (and my tears) upon yourself with the heartrending shriek of "Oh my nose! Oh, my nose! Oh, my nose!") Did you think, ladies and gentlemen, that these puppets were always little things of but a foot high? Indeed, no! The Puppet had once a more generous form than yourselves, . . .

Actually Craig envisioned a rejuvenation of the puppet theatre in accordance with his conception of a visual theatre art under the complete control of the theatre artists. He argued that the artist can do everything in the theatre—write the play, design the costumes and scenery, manipulate the sound and lighting—but he cannot take the place of the actors. The actors, with wills and temperaments of their own, cannot be brought under the dominance of the artist-director and since he cannot control their every impulse, he must work with an inanimate object. It is important to note that it is a marionette theatre and not the legitimate theatre that Craig has in mind. Nevertheless, Craig looked forward to the time when there would be developed in the legitimate theatre a "live" actor whose every movement and impulse would pass under the complete control of the artist-director.

It appears that Craig wished the actor free from the servitude imposed upon him by the dramatist only to put him into the
hands of another task master - the artist-director. Craig had defined the art of theatre as "neither acting nor the play . . . not scene nor the dance, but . . . all the elements of which these things are composed: action, which is the very spirit of acting; words, which are the body of the play; line and color, which are the very heart of the scene; rhythm, which is the very essence of dance . . . one is no more important than the other, no more than one color is more important to a painter than the other, or one note more important than another to a musician." In Craig's concept of the theatre, the actor becomes a depersonalized body subject to the absolute control of the artist-director. Thus we can conclude that the actor is no longer a marionette of the playwright, but a marionette nevertheless. Thus, we have a new artist in the theatre whose duty it will be to regulate the movements of the actors, design his costumes and choose the colors which will harmonize with the tone of the play. He will arrange the actors on the stage, illuminate and regulate the play of light upon them. He will direct the delivery of their speeches and control every gesture. The actor will be moved as a part, a fragment of the whole composition. He is presented to us in a manner prearranged, passes such and such at a point on the stage in a certain light, the head turned at a pre-determined angle, all the body in harmony with the drama and uninfluenced by his own ideas. Apparently the actor's body is the
only interest Craig has in the actor. Craig has told us that the actor
must become a creative artist. How, we ask, can this come to pass
when the actor's means of creative expression - his body, features,
voice, and even his will is bent to the desires of the artist-director?
Actually this gloriously facile instrument flexible and graceful be-
yond our conception of the actor is a mere fragment of Craig's
concept of the ideal theatre of the future. When Craig's ideal actor
is brought to earth he is simply an intelligent individual whose
emotions are immediately and directly controlled by the mond. His
movements and gestures are carefully planned and calculated. None
of his actions are left to the inspiration of the moment. He is an
impersonal and dependable tool of the artist-director. In his book
_Stanislavsky, A Life_, David Magarshack reports Craig's production
of _Hamlet_ in Moscow, and in the report he refers to Craig's
reaction to the "live" actor on the stage. He writes:

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\ldots \text{Craig seemed to abominate most of all (and there}
\text{Stanislavsky fully agreed with him) was the actor's and}
\text{particularly the actress's love of limelight. "Women,"
Stanislavsky quotes Craig as saying, "ruin the theatre. They}
\text{don't know how to wield their power over us men. They}
\text{simply abuse their powers." Craig, therefore, dreamed}
\text{of a theatre without actors. He would have liked to replace}
\text{them with puppets and marionettes which, he contended, would}
\text{have cleansed the atmosphere of the theatre and lent a more}
\text{serious tone to the whole business of the stage, while with}
\text{the dead material out of which they were made one could have}
\text{attempted to create the Actor with a capital A who lived in}
\text{Craig's imagination. But Craig's extreme views did not}
\text{apparently prevent him from showing his delight at the slightest}
\text{manifestation of true talent in an actor or an actress. The}
\text{moment he became aware of it, Craig became transformed}
\]
into a child, jumped up from his chair and rushed to the footlights, brushing away the wisps of long, greying hair that fell from his forehead. But the sight of a thirdrater on the stage made him furious and he would again start dreaming of his marionettes.  

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Edward Gordon Craig lives today in Paris, France. He is 82 years old. John Saracool, after visiting Craig in 1950, reports (Theatre Arts, June, 1950) that while Craig is no longer the spirited insurgent who advocated radical changes in the theatre of the twentieth century, he has lost none of his fire and enthusiasm for the art of the theatre. He is now engaged in writing his autobiography, which, according to reports, will embrace four volumes. Although Mr. Saracool reports that Craig regards his theories as misunderstood and his ideas pilfered by men of far less talent who have turned them into financial abundance, he is far from being an embittered old man. There is no truth, whatsoever, in the hermit and bitten-feeling myth that has grown up around Craig's last years. He is still very much alive and in touch with the latest events in the world theatre. His tall, once erect figure is bent, but he is still picturesquely clean-cut. His wide brimmed black hat, not wholly concealing his long white hair, is still the salient feature of his appearance.

The facts of Craig's life and talent prove that many roads in art were open to him. He excelled brilliantly in many arts and there were many more in which he could have excelled had he chosen to apply his genius. He was a good actor and undoubtedly had the qualities for greatness had he chosen to follow the profession. He
could have been a great director had he been willing to compromise his ideal of the art of the theatre with the banality and tawdriness of the theatre of his day. His instinctive feeling for line, form and mass in design strongly suggests that he had predilections for architectural art. His boxwood engravings are widely recognized for their excellent craftsmanship and beauty of design. His stage scene designs inflamed the imagination of the scene designers of the European and American theatres. He edited three magazines, wrote two books on the art of the theatre, and two biographies. The list of his writings could be extended through several dozens of items. Craig rejected all of the avenues of success which lay immediately before him and easily within his grasp and went in search of an art of the theatre. He scorned the popular belief that the theatre was an amalgamation of the arts of painting, architecture, acting, dance, and music. He held steadfastly to the belief that sometime in the future there would emerge an art of the theatre - autonomous and self-sufficient - and divested of any reliance on the other arts. His quest for an undiscovered art was carried on, not in the theatre of his time, but in his dream of what the theatre ought to be. He held a vision of the art of the theatre that would be true to the underlying principles of all art, imaginative, creative, and unified, and at the same time, true to the visual elements implied in the word "theatre."

The influence of Craig's theories on the world theatre of the twentieth century is so varied and points in so many different directions that a summary is difficult. A review of the methods and techniques employed on the stages of the world since 1900 will clearly reveal the
fact that the twentieth century is witnessing the beginnings of a
different theatrical form: not unconnected with the Greek, the
Elizabethan and the Oriental Theatres, but vastly different from the
cluttered claptrap that plagued the stage for centuries. In effect,
the theatrical revolution of the twentieth century is less a matter
of performance than an awakened consciousness to the fact that
theatre is the least respected of all the arts and it needs, so to
speak, a shot in the arm. One of Craig's major contributions to
the theatre has been that he provided a stimulus which motivated an
investigation of methods and techniques. Craig continually, in The
Mask, urged and pleaded with the theatre workers to realize that
something was wrong with the theatre (VII, 8, p. 31). He wrote:

... One last word on the Present Theatre.

Although it is but the lees of the wine of our old Theatre,
still in that old Theatre I was cradled - and I am helping
to nurse a New Theatre. If the New Movement does not
regard affectionately... that old theatre, I shall be sorry
that I ever nursed the new one. What was good in the old
Theatre must be preserved, and those of the New Movement
must try to learn what those dear remains signify. There
is something good in every Theatre - something, not every-
thing. By accepting as gospel all that the old Theatre said
and did, (and all it omitted to say and do), we have reached
the present unfortunate situation.

If the "Motion Picture," as it is called, is closing our
theatres and taking away performers from the theatres
and you have only to study the American theatrical journals
to note this slow but steady leakage... it is due to some
weakness in the theatre. Good then that our old stage should
pass away. Our new stage is alive even if very young... Let us realize what is wrong and that we have not another
minute to lose in putting it right.

Craig's vague, half-articulated and often contradictory theories
have served to incite the curiosity of the workers of the contemporary
theatre. This curiosity has manifested itself in experimentation and
exploration with new methods in theatrical production. Craig's plea for the elimination of the footlights and the convention of the fourth wall and the restoration of the forestage has carried with it an implication for a new physical playhouse in which the audience is put into a new relation with the actors and the play, an intimate and a truly theatrical relation. The small, intimate theatres built in the past fifteen years in the Colleges of America and the Art Centers of Europe without footlights, with an apron instead of an orchestra pit, and designed to achieve architectural unity between the stage and the auditorium are strangely similar to Craig's concept of the ideal theatre. The feeling of communion realized between the actor and the audience in the popular but experimental arena theatre of today was a part of Craig's conception of audience-player relationship. Although the increased interest in "projected scenery" in the theatre today cannot be traced directly to Craig's influence, it is interesting to note that Craig conducted experimentations in the use of lighting equipment to project patterns of light and shade on a backdrop. He was the first to experiment with draperies to replace painted scenery. The popular practice in the theatre today of combining draperies with three-dimensional set pieces can be traced to Craig's influence. Craig's insistence that the mood of the play dictates the choice of colors for costumes and setting and that the color is an integral part of the action of the play has been accepted without question by contemporary theatrical designers. Craig's influences upon the architecture of the theatre and the technical methods of production are uncountable, but of more value is the influence he has
exerted upon the aesthetics of the theatre. In short, Craig awakened the twentieth century to the very simple fact: Theatre is an art and reality has very little to do with it. Out of Craig's incomplete theories on the aesthetics of the theatre it is possible to trace two definite and important influences. First, the movement toward expressionism found its motivation in Craig's revolt against the falsity of the realistic method in theatrical production. Craig was determined to dismiss the realistic trivialities which only too often pass for art on the stage. For these trivialities, Craig would substitute symbolic form. Mass of light and shade he would substitute for naturalistic detail; suggestive shapes of a statuesque kind, he brings in place of illusionistic interiors; and different planes and levels he provides for the more adequate display of the actors. The expressionistic scene designers of the last twenty-five years with their emphasis toward a use of abstract shapes and non-representative objects and design to express mood and atmosphere are heavily indebted to Craig. The simple, three-dimensional masses so common in Craig's designs did more than merely suggest subjects for imitation. From them sprung still further styles, some so far removed that at first glance we should hardly dream of seeing any connection between them and the efforts of Craig. Craig's use of unadorned masses of light and shade and his elimination of detail in the scene has exerted tremendous influence upon the staging of realistic drama. In recent years there is a very noticeable tendency to apply Craig's principles of simplicity, suggestion and decorative beauty to the setting of a realistic drama. It is a peculiar stroke of irony when we consider that the
very drama which Craig carefully ignored is now using the ideas of staging that Craig had reserved for the poetic drama.

The second influence which Craig exerted on the theatre derived from his concept of movement on the stage. In his definition of the art of the theatre (I, 2, p. 32), Craig says, "Architecture is the purest form of the art of space. Music, in which I include poetry, is the art of sound. The theatre must be the art of movement . . . . but that is as far as I go. I can see no further." Craig conceived of theatre as an art that would be typically theatrical - that is, visually effective - with its primary appeal that of decorative movement. As he studied the periods and places in theatrical history when men had approached such an art, in certain forms of dancing, in pageantry, and in pantomime, Craig saw gleams of a new and radiant beauty that might be brought into the theatre. When a new art of the theatre comes, as certainly it must and will, it may not be the wordless theatre as envisioned by Craig, but there is considerable evidence in the work of playwrights today to indicate that the dramatist of the future will think more in terms of line, color, design, movement, music and less in words. The plays of Maxwell Anderson, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Christopher Fry, to name a few, reveal the fact that the playwrights are restless and are searching for a dramatic form which will increase the theatrical effectiveness of their dialogue. The dialogue is becoming more condensed. It does not seek to imitate the rambling uncertainties of natural speech. The points of the play are scored sharply and briefly. The soliloquy is returning as a natural and proper revelation of the mind of a character.
The aside is being redeveloped as a deliberate device of theatricalism. The playwrights are incorporating background music as an integral part of the dialogue. Multiple settings are being used in order to achieve an unbroken dramatic movement throughout the play. Shifting patterns of light accompany the movements of the actors. Rhythmed prose and varying verse meters are employed to reveal changes in mood and dramatic tension. The stage settings are often free from photographic detail and materialistic illusion. The leaven is working, and it is chiefly a leaven of Craig's ideas. The theatre is putting into practice the ideas which Gordon Craig stated in theory.
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VITA

Dallas Stephen Williams was born in Pawnee Rock, Kansas, on October 15, 1911. He received his early education in the public schools of Pawnee Rock and entered Hutchinson Junior College in the fall of 1929. He entered Louisiana State Normal College at Natchitoches, Louisiana, in the fall of 1933 and was graduated with the Bachelor of Science degree in 1935. In the fall of 1935, he entered the graduate school at Louisiana State University and received the Master of Arts degree in the summer of 1937. In September, 1937, he accepted a position at Southwest Texas State College at San Marcos as instructor of Speech and Director of the College Theatre. He became Speech Supervisor in the University High School at Louisiana State University in 1942. From 1942 to 1944 he studied toward the doctorate in the Department of Speech. In September, 1944, he accepted a position at the University of Nebraska as instructor in the Department of Speech and Director of the University Theatre. He returned to Louisiana State University for graduate study in 1953.