1967


Gonnie Michaeloff

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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WILLIAM POEL: HIS THEATRE WORK AND LECTURES IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1916.

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, Ph.D., 1967
Speech-Theater

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan
WILLIAM POEL: HIS THEATRE WORK AND LECTURES
IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1916

A Dissertation

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

by
Gonnie Michaeloff
A.A., William Woods College, 1950
B.S., University of Illinois, 1955
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ABSTRACT

England's William Poel (1852-1934), reformer, critic, director, producer, manager, actor, and playwright, as scholar and man of the theatre, helped to revolutionize the presentation of poetic drama through his readings, recitals, and staged productions of classical drama, particularly Shakespeare's plays.

In 1916, Poel was invited to the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, as visiting professor of drama by Thomas Wood Stevens, head of the newly organized Department of Dramatic Arts. In 1914, Stevens had inaugurated a program of drama at Carnegie Tech which was the first to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in Drama, and as part of the program was inviting guest directors to produce plays with the students of dramatic arts. Poel's work with the Elizabethan Stage Society from 1894-1905 established his reputation as "one of the foremost living authorities of the Elizabethan theatre and the drama of Shakespeare."

This dissertation, a study of Poel in the United States in 1916, primarily using unpublished materials and newspaper accounts available in the United States, presents, as fully as possible, a total description of Poel's two visits, in the late spring and in the fall, which includes
his theatre work at Carnegie Tech and his lecture tour throughout the United States.

At Carnegie Tech, Poel produced two plays, a reading of Calderon's *Life's a Dream* on June 3, and a staged production of Ben Jonson's *The Poetaster* on October 25, 26, and 27. *The Poetaster* production, which was acclaimed as the "first purely Elizabethan production in the United States," was presented at the Detroit Museum of Art for three performances on December 1 and 2, and repeated at Carnegie Tech on December 5 and 6. In November and December, Poel was engaged in a lecture tour throughout the United States. He spoke about Shakespeare, his theatre, his drama, his verse and how to read it, and his costumes; about Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw as the most modern men of their times; and about motion pictures as an art form to audiences in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Madison, and Detroit. His audiences included students and faculty at universities, colleges, and schools of expression and members of amateur little theatre groups and social clubs. Poel advocated a revival of Shakespeare's original staging and methods of stage production, the identical plea he voiced in England and expressed in his lectures during his first visit to America in 1905-1906. During his second visit to the United States in 1916, he applied his theories for the reform of the English theatre through two different productions which demonstrated Poel's belief that the actor speaking the lines
with a well-trained voice can present to the audience, without the aid of visual scenic elements, the true appreciation of the author's words. His theories of the drama were influential at Carnegie Tech with students who continued their work in the professional, educational, and community theatre, for example, Lucy Barton, Anna K. Dice, Frederic McConnell, Carl Benton Reid, Howard Southgate, Theodore Viehman, and Arleigh B. Williamson.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND A GENERAL BACKGROUND OF
WILLIAM POEL'S THEATRICAL
ACTIVITIES TO 1916

When in 1916, William Poel, at 64, accepted the invitation from Thomas Wood Stevens, head of the Department of Dramatic Arts at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, to come to that campus to introduce the students to his directorial style, he was "recognized as a producer of plays and a specialist in the work of the Shakespearian period" for thirty-five years. Stevens' regard of Poel as "one of the greatest living authorities on all details of the theatre of Shakespeare's time, on the tradition of the Elizabethan acting, and on the production methods employed" was the generally accepted estimation of Poel in the United States.

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1 Letter from Thomas Wood Stevens to J. B. Hench, Secretary of the Academy of Science and Arts in Pittsburgh, September 30, 1916 (Xerox from the Thomas Wood Stevens Collection in the University Library Special Collections at the University of Arizona in Tucson).

2 Ibid.

3 Newspaper acclaim in the United States in 1916, consistently referred to Poel as either "the" or "one of the" foremost living authorities on the Elizabethan theatre and drama of Shakespeare.
Although Poel was best known as the founder of the Elizabethan Stage Society, whose productions he directed from 1894 until 1905, he became interested in theatre first as an actor. He could have been initiated into acting with Salvini and his company "in London during the spring of 1875."4 By February, 1876, he had joined the Charles Mathews company in Bristol.5 For the next two and a half years, Poel was occupied with various companies in the "routine of provincial touring; mixing with all manner of people; doing every sort of job behind the curtain; acting a wide variety of parts; and getting paid a guinea a week if he was lucky."6 He worked as a "general utility man in the theatre in Dublin and afterwards in Liverpool, then "went on tour with Osmund Tearle."7 He spent the first half of 1877 in London where he saw as much theatre as he could;8 then after a "short tour in Scotland," he joined "Clifford Cooper's company at the Theatre Royal, Oxford, for the summer vacation," and "in October obtained an engagement with James Scott's company at Rosedale in the North Riding of Yorkshire."9

His decision to take acting lessons in June, 1878, led him to study with Edward Stirling, at Drury Lane, with whom he first worked on the part of Romeo, then Shylock,

5Ibid., p. 31. 6Ibid. 7Ibid. 8Ibid. 9Ibid., p. 32.
whom Poel interpreted not as the sympathetic character as in productions of that time but as "vigorous and implacable, the most impenetrable cur that ever lived," and also the roles of Mercutio and Charles Surface.10

In 1878, his winter tour of recitals in the provinces included "giving recitals from plays of Shakespeare, Sheridan, and other authors, and readings of The Merchant of Venice."11 Then in June, 1879, Poel organized his first group of actors, "The Elizabethans," who toured the provinces playing in schools and small halls in costumed scenes from Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, The Merchant of Venice, The Hunchback, The Iron Chest, The Rivals, and Eugene Adams.12 The company "cannot have been a very large one"; the circular read: "'with the assistance of a gentleman and a lady, Mr. Poel can give, in appropriate Costume, the following Dramatic entertainment.'"13 The efforts of the company were directed "towards creating a more general taste for the study of Shakespeare."14

Poel's "first public appearance as a producer" was June 29, 1880, when his two one-act plays Don Quixote and The Man of Forty with Cut Off With a Shilling, a commedietta by S. Theyre Smith were presented in London at King's Cross Theatre.15

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10Ibid., p. 41.  
11Ibid., p. 279.  
12Ibid., pp. 46-47.  
13Ibid., p. 47.  
14Ibid., p. 279.  
15Ibid.
On April 16, 1881, Poel produced his first Elizabethan production, the First Quarto Hamlet, on a "bare, draped platform" in St. George's Hall, playing the part of Hamlet himself.16

Selected in October, 1881, by Miss Emma Cons as manager of the Royal Victoria Coffee House (the Old Vic Theatre), he stayed until Christmas 1883; he "reduced the expenses of the management, raised the tone of the entertainments, and attracted larger audiences to the Hall."17 Then in 1884, he worked as stage manager with Frank R. Benson for six months.18

He formed, in 1885, a company called the "Little Comedies," which gave recitals and performances at private "At Homes" and "Charities."19 The repertoire comprised a large number of one-act plays, some of which were written or adapted by Poel.20 "From April 1888 to 1891 the company was run in partnership with Mr. Frederick Berlyn, and was known as 'Poel and Berlyn's Drawing Room Comedy Company.'"21 Invited in 1887 to become an instructor for the Shakespeare Reading Society, he directed readings and costumed recitals for them until 1897.22 "At first the actors sat around on a platform and read the plays without act or scene divisions with a minimum of cuts."23 Poel "adopted

16Ibid., p. 50.
17Ibid., p. 58.
18Ibid., p. 59.
19Ibid., p. 60.
20Ibid., p. 279.
21Ibid.
22Ibid., p. 72.
23Ibid.
many of the principles which he was to illustrate more fully with the Elizabethan Stage Society."24

Founded in 1894, "as a protest against the modern method of representing Shakespeare's plays,"25 the Elizabethan Stage Society26 gave productions from 1895 to 1905, and "was born naturally out of the recitals he had organized for the Shakespeare Reading Society."27 By this time, Poel "had made the acquaintance of Arnold Dolmetsch, who superintended the music for the Society's revivals."28 Among the "early list of subscribers" were Dr. Hall Caine, Dr. F. J. Furnivall, Sir Isreal Gollancz, Sir Lawrence Gomme, Sir Edmund Gosse, Henry Holiday, Holman Hunt, George Moore, Sir Walter Raleigh, Mrs. Thackeray Richie, John J. Sargent, R. A., and Bernard Shaw.29 Although there was no production in 1894, "Poel

24Ibid.

25"The Elizabethan Stage Circle." A circular given to the writer by Oliver D. Savage of London, Literary Executor of Mrs. William Pole's estate, having the notation: "This small document is important, and useful. It presents briefly and concisely the main features of Poel's case for Reform in the English Theatre. O.D.S."

26A circular entitled "The Elizabethan Stage Society" is located in the William Poel Collection in the Watson Library Special Collections at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Because of a special restricted reserve on the Poel Collection, the writer was not allowed to take notes on any material in this collection.

27Speaight, op. cit., p. 90.

28Ibid., p. 102.

29"The Elizabethan Stage Circle," loc. cit. These names were underscored in this circular.
organized a recital of Richard II in April, and another of
Romeo and Juliet in March 1895.\textsuperscript{30} The first production was
Twelfth Night, given first at Burlington Hall, Savile Row,
on June 21 and 22, 1895, and repeated on June 29 at St.
George's Hall;\textsuperscript{31} the last production was Romeo and Juliet,
given at the Royalty Theatre on May 5, 6, 9, and 11, 1905.\textsuperscript{32}
Two months later, there was a

... sale by auction of the collection of antique,
historical, and allegorical, theatrical costumes, armour,
swords and other weapons and furniture, used for the
Elizabethan Stage Society's productions, including the
full-size model of the platform-stage of the old Fortune
Playhouse, with its working equipment, balcony, curtains,
etc., as used in the Society's performances.\textsuperscript{33}

Those productions, with place and date of performance, which
Poel directed for the Elizabethan Stage Society, unless other­
wise noted, were as follows:\textsuperscript{34}

Shakespeare—

Twelfth Night
- Burlington Hall, Savile Row, June 21 and 22, 1895 (First
  production of the Elizabethan State Society
- St. George's Hall, June 21, 1895
- The Hall of the Middle Temple, February 12, 1897
- Lecture Hall, Burlington Gardens, April 23, 1903 (For
  the Elizabethan Stage Society and the London
  Shakespeare League)
- Court Theatre, June 16–June 20, 1903

Comedy of Errors
- Gray's Inn Hall, December 6, 1895
- St. George's Hall, December 21, 1895
- The production was taken on tour October 31 to December
  10, 1904, with Doctor Faustus, the two plays being
  acted alternately; winding up at Terry's Theatre,
  Strand.

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 283. \textsuperscript{33}\textit{Ibid.} \textsuperscript{34}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 281-83.
Two Gentlemen of Verona
Merchant Taylor's Hall, November 28 and 30, 1896
The Great Hall, The Charterhouse, January 18, 1897

The Tempest
Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House, November 5, 1897
Goldsmiths' Hall, November 13, 1897
Matinée Theatre (St. George's Hall), November 20, 1897

The Merchant of Venice
St. George's Hall, November 29, December 3 and 10, 1898

Richard the Second
Lecture Theatre of the University of London, Burlington Gardens, November 11, 1899

Hamlet (First Quarto)
Carpenters' Hall, February 21, 1900

King Henry the Fifth
Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, October 23, 1901
Lecture Theatre, Burlington Gardens, November 21, 1901

Much Ado about Nothing
For London School Board's Evening Continuation Schools, in Town Halls of Shoreditch, February 23; Bow and Bromley, February 25; New Cross, February 26; Hammersmith, March 1; St. Pancras, March 2; Battersea, March 3; and Bermondsey, March 4, 1904
The Court Theatre, March 19, 1904
Lecture Theatre, Burlington Gardens, April 22, 1904
(For the London Shakespeare League)

Romeo and Juliet
Royalty Theatre, May 5, 6, 9, and 11, 1905 (For the Elizabethan Stage Society and the London Shakespeare League. This was the last production of the Elizabethan Stage Society as an organized body.)

Jonson—
The Sad Shepherd
The Courtyard of Fulham Palace, July 23, 1898

The Alchemist
Apothecaries' Hall, February 24 and 25, 1899
The Imperial Theatre, Westminster, July 11 and 12, 1902
The New Theatre, Cambridge, August 4, 1902 (For the University Extension Students)
Marlowe--

**Doctor Faustus**
St. George's Hall, July 2 and 4, 1896 (A prologue was specially written for the occasion by Algernon Charles Swinburne and was read at the performance by Edmund Gosse.)

Court Theatre, October 29, 1904
The production was taken on tour October 31 to December 10, 1904, with *The Comedy of Errors*, the two plays being acted alternately; winding up at Terry's Theatre, Strand.

**King Edward the Second**
New Theatre, Oxford, August, 1903 (For the Elizabethan Stage Society and the University Extension Delegacy)

Beaumont and Fletcher--

**The Coxcomb**
The Hall of the Inner Temple, February 11, 1898

Middleton and Rowley--

**The Spanish Gipsy**
St. George's Hall, April 5, 1898 (A prologue, specially written for the occasion by Algernon Charles Swinburne and read at the performance by Edmund Gosse, was printed in full in the programme.)

Ford--

**The Broken Heart**
St. George's Hall, June 11, 1898

Anonymous--

**Arden of Faversham** and **The King and the Countess**, an episode from the play *The Raigne of King Edward III*
Matinée Theatre (St. George's Hall), July 9, 1897

Swinburne--

**Locrine**
St. George's Hall, March 20, 1899

Calderon--

**Life's a Dream**, Edward Fitzgerald's translation, **Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of**
St. George's Hall, May 15, 1899

Káliďásá--

**Šakuntalá**
The Conservatory of the Royal Botanic Society, Regent's Park, July 3, 1899

Molière--

**Don Juan**
Lincoln's Inn Hall, December 15, 1899
Milton——

**Samson Agonistes**
Lecture Theatre of the Victoria and Albert Museum, April 7, 1900
St. George's Hall, April 11, 1900

Schiller——

**The Death of Wallenstein**, Coleridge's translation, and scenes from **The Piccolomini**
Lecture Theatre, Burlington Gardens, June 22, 1900

Sir Walter Scott——

**Marmion**, poem dramatised in four acts by Alick Bayley
Lecture Theatre, Burlington Gardens, December 1, 1900

Anonymous——

**Everyman** and the Chester Plays version of **The Sacrifice of Isaac**
The Master's Court of the Charterhouse, July 13 and 20, 1901
The play was given again in the Quadrangle of University College, Oxford, August 9, 1901; in the Dome, Royal Pavilion, Brighton, October 30, 1901; at St. George's Hall, May 26, 1902; and for a short run at the Imperial Theatre, Westminster, July, 1902; and was frequently revived in partnership with Philip Ben Greet.

Poel——

**The First Franciscans**
St. George's Hall, April 6, 7, 13, and 14, 1905

Poel's Shakespeare productions for the Elizabethan Stage Society, which were presented on a platform stage simulating the conditions which Shakespeare employed, had an "enormous influence on the staging and production of Shakespeare in the following century." However, his most famous single production was **Everyman**, which was eventually taken on tour in America in 1905-1906 by Philip Ben Greet. George

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Bernard Shaw, who acclaimed Poel's methods of producing Shakespeare, wrote to Poel about his *Everyman* production and his work with the Elizabethan Stage Society:

> That affair yesterday [Everyman on July 13, 1901] is the best thing you have done yet. It is the medieval play, and not Renaissance-Elizabethan broken-backed balder-dash like the Spanish Tragedy, that will really germinate nowadays. I regard your E.S.S. [Elizabethan Stage Society] exploits, remarkable as they were, as only your apprenticeship for this pre-Raphaelite movement. After Everyman, you will never be able to go back to inane filth like the Duchess of Malfi &c. You have now come to your own; so let's have plenty of it. 36

In 1902, Poel founded the London Shakespeare (Commemoration) League with T. F. Ordish; the League had for its objectives: "the public recognition of Shakespeare's work in London" and "the erection of a platform stage theatre for the presentation of Shakespeare's plays." 37

Poel made his first trip to America in 1905-1906, where he was "to launch the tours of Everyman which were being undertaken by Philip Ben Greet" 38 and to lecture at colleges and universities in the United States 39 and Canada 40

36 Letter from George Bernard Shaw to William Poel, July 14, 1901 (Manuscript material in the Academic Center Library at the University of Texas in Austin).

37 Speaight, op. cit., p. 282.

38 Ibid., p. 183.

39 Research material concerning Poel's 1905-1906 visit to America is located in the William Poel Collection in the Watson Library Special Collections at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.

40 James Mavor, "The Shakespeare Play-house," *University of Toronto Monthly* (January, 1906), 75-78 (Xerox from the University of Toronto Library in Toronto, Canada).
on "The Shakespeare Play-house."

In 1908, B. Iden Payne, stage manager of Miss A. E. Horniman's Gaiety Theatre repertory company in Manchester, invited Poel to direct *Measure for Measure* at the Gaiety.41 Payne recalls:

> The first time I met Poel was in connection with *Measure for Measure*. I was director of the theatre there and I wanted to do unusual things in Manchester. I had heard about Poel and the things he was doing. *Measure for Measure* was the closest he came to Elizabethan production. Of course, earlier, he had done some Elizabethan productions.42

Payne played Lucio for Poel in *Measure for Measure* and relates about his role: "I certainly had no pumping, as is said, from Poel with Lucio. That was comedy. He didn't like comedy. So I could do anything I wanted with a part like Lucio."43 About the production, Payne states: "Poel stressed the flow of one scene to another, the flow of the movement. This is Poel's most important contribution. Before Poel, the flow of play from scene to scene was destroyed."44 Eight years after this *Measure for Measure* production, Payne was instrumental in bringing Poel to America. Payne suggested to Thomas Wood Stevens that Poel be invited to be guest director at Carnegie Tech: "I suggested it to Stevens. It was mutual. I thought it would be a good thing for Poel to come and give a production at Carnegie."45

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41 Interview with B. Iden Payne, Professor in the Department of Drama at the University of Texas in Austin, April 28, 1966.

42 Ibid. 43 Ibid. 44 Ibid. 45 Ibid.
During the eight years before his trip to the United States in 1916, Poel was engaged in producing many plays, in lecturing, and in writing. His lecturing and writing began as early as June, 1880, when his offer to deliver a paper on the Acting Editions of Shakespeare was accepted by Dr. F. J. Furnivall, the President of the New Shakespeare Society.46

In 1913, some of Poel's writings were summarized in his book *Shakespeare in the Theatre*. In addition, "in the years immediately preceding and following the World War, Poel had travelled in Germany and Austria, Holland and France, to observe theatrical conditions."47

When the serious business of Elizabethan reform was in question, Poel never lacked a pulpit. He assisted regularly at the discussions of the New Shakspere [sic] Society, sometimes reading a paper himself. He wrote to newspapers. He lectured wherever anyone would offer him a platform. Nothing escaped his criticism or his comment. Slowly, in the face of mounting incredulity, his views became known. . . . These never changed throughout his working lifetime, . . .48

Poel was invited to Carnegie Tech in 1916 to produce a play.49 He came in the late spring to appraise the conditions; he returned in the fall to produce a play and to lecture throughout the United States about Shakespeare's


48Ibid., p. 61.

49Seven letters, dated from 1915-1918, from William Poel to administrators of the Carnegie Institute of Technology are located in the William Poel Collection in the Watson Library Special Collection at the University of Kansas in Lawrence: to Thomas Wood Stevens, January 25, 1915, July 10, 1915, March 31, 1917; to Arthur A. Hamerschlag, November 25, 1915, December [?], 1916, April 23, 1918; to E. Raymond Bossange (undated).
When Poel arrived in the United States, he was described as "one of the greatest authorities of the day on Shakespeare and one who has contended—against what has been termed a 'theatrical system'—for a true appreciation and a correct interpretation of Shakespearean art." He expressed these specific views in an interview: that an Elizabethan stage should be used for Shakespeare productions for

... if Shakespeare's true effects are to be reached and his plays to be given justice, they must be divorced from the 'grand opera settings,' with which they have been embellished by those 'persons who have produced Shakespeare, with modifications to fit their own tastes --modifications which have been anything but just to the poet';

that the speech of a Shakespeare play should be

... smooth, soft and as nearly as possible like a conversation—a conversation of Shakespeare's time. ... The 'redundancy of emphasis,' is in a large measure responsible for the slowness and heaviness that has been brought into Shakespeare in modern productions, ... [and] ran lightly over some lines chosen at random from the plays, to illustrate the necessity of care in the use of emphasis, and to prove that 'the plays can thus be made more natural and more easily audible than by the modern manner in which, by varying accent, the verse is literally run into prose';

that if he produced a play at Carnegie Tech, he "shouldn't dream' of putting on Hamlet or Macbeth or other star plays," and in addition, "in no wise would it be planned as an elaborate production of the pageant order, but rather that the

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50"Famous Authority On Shakespeare Here To Coach Tech Players," The Pittsburgh Dispatch, May 15, 1916, p. 3.

51Ibid.

52Ibid.
effort would be to produce the real Shakespeare, with true Shakespearean spirit, in the true Shakespearean [sic] environment of the Elizabethan stage;\textsuperscript{53} that he preferred private presentations to public productions:

I always dislike to undertake public productions . . . because I do not like to be considered as coming into active competition with the theatre at large, and with those who have undertaken the spectacular Shakespearean productions that do not reflect Shakespeare at all. I much prefer private presentations;\textsuperscript{54}

that it was "impossible to stage good plays in London" and that

... this condition arises in large measure from the exorbitant rents charged for the theaters in London, which make it necessary for the actor managers to stage plays which will draw large audience and draw them quickly so that expenses may be met. ... The whole great theatrical system, ... [is] arrayed against any effort to bring good plays to the public. For they fear . . . that this would help build up among the people a criterion of artistic values that would force sweeping changes in present systems;\textsuperscript{55}

that the tercentenary celebration in England was "all a humbug" for

... they plan elaborately to celebrate the three hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's death, and yet in all those years they have done not a thing to aid Shakespeare, to bring his works to the people. Rather, they have fought any effort to reveal the real Shakespears. And, worst of all, is that they neither plan nor promise an alteration of these things; there is not a word of regret at the neglect of the past; no word to resolve to change these things. And they have even refused to contribute any portion of the proceeds to the erection and endowment of some great national theater so that something definite might be done to perpetuate the fame and the knowledge of Shakespeare. The Red Cross is doing admirable work, of course, but if we merely wish to raise money for that work, why need

\textsuperscript{53}ibid. \quad \textsuperscript{54}ibid. \quad \textsuperscript{55}ibid.
we mask it in an hypocritical show of reverence for Shakespeare's memory? Why do we not decide that we have enough to do, with the war on our hands, and let the matter rest entirely?  

that in America "the greater number of small players' societies devoted to repertoire, with no effort or intent to compete with the theater... must be of inestimable value in educating the people to see and to appreciate better things in the theater" and "this is very praiseworthy work"; and that America, not England,  

... will ultimately lead in reviving Shakespeare if such a revival comes about, for yours is a young country that is meeting problems, threshing them out and seeking that which is good. Of course, America has always been prominent in appreciation of Shakespeare:... with Edwin Booth and others, though, no doubt, the poet's works have been somewhat crowded from the stage since the days of Booth, to make way for other things.  

What Poel was expressing were his theories of the drama which in essence called for a reform in the English theatre. In the United States in 1916, he was to express his ideas in practice, through two different productions at Carnegie Tech and in theory, through lectures about Shakespeare's theatre and drama.  

Sources for Poel's theatre work and lectures in the United States during his two visits in 1916 are primarily those materials available in the United States which include Poel's prompt-books, newspaper accounts, manuscript materials, scrapbook materials, letters, programs, articles and books,  

56Ibid.  
57Ibid.  
58Ibid.
unpublished theses, interviews and conversations, and special collections. Additional source materials were secured from London: the Victoria and Albert Museum and Oliver D. Savage, the late Mrs. William Pole's literary executor, and from Canada: the University of Toronto Library and the Paris Public Library in Paris.

Many details about Poel's two productions at Carnegie Tech are unknown. Not all his lecture engagements in the United States could be traced; some of his lectures were announced in newspapers but not reviewed. All information located, chronologically arranged, presents, as fully as possible, a total description of Poel's theatre work and lecturing in the United States in 1916.

This dissertation includes a general background of

59 For a detailed listing of research materials, consult the bibliography, footnotes, and acknowledgments.

60 Mrs. William Pole retained the spelling "Pole," as did all other members of the Pole family. The writer found two references which explain why William Poel changed the spelling of his name from "Pole" to "Poel."

When Poel joined Charles Mathews' company as an actor in 1876, "by a printing mistake in the programme Pole became Poel overnight. It has been suggested that he kept this change of name in order to spare the feelings of his father who had been so strongly opposed to his going on stage." (Speaight, op. cit., p. 30.)

The Carnegie Tech campus newspaper reported the following: "In order that his father's name might not be confused with his own on theatrical programs, Mr. Poel, when he took up the actor's life, changed his name to its original spelling of several hundred years ago, "Poehl," but later removed the "h" and this has been his name ever since." Poel's father William Pole was a celebrated engineer, a member of the Royal Society, a lover of music and writer of musical criticisms, and an authority before "Cavendish" on the game of whist. ("William Poel Restores Old Play to Stage," The Tartan, October 18, 1916, p. 4.)
Poel's theatrical activities, as actor, producer, author, writer, and lecturer, to 1916; an examination of the newly organized Department of Dramatic Arts at Carnegie Tech, its aims and goals and its academic position in 1916 when Poel is visiting professor; an explanation of Poel's work at Carnegie Tech, first during his late spring visit and then during his fall visit; and the details of Poel's lecture tour in November and December. Two listings in the appendix include a calendar of events of Poel's two visits and an index of those available pictures of Poel's Carnegie Tech production of Ben Jonson's *The Poetaster.*
CHAPTER II

EARLY DAYS, 1914-1916, OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DRAMATIC ARTS
AT THE CARNEGIE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

The Department of Dramatic Arts in the School of Applied Design at the Carnegie Institute of Technology was a new experiment in education when, as a guest director, William Poel arrived on the Carnegie Tech campus in the late spring of 1916.

Carnegie Tech officially opened in 1905, under the patronage of Andrew Carnegie, with four separate schools: School of Applied Science, School of Applied Design, Margaret Morrison Carnegie School for Women, and School of Applied Industries. Each school, having its own buildings, faculty, and students, offered a program of study for both regular day students and night students and required a four-year curriculum, with the exception of the School of Applied Industries which offered a three-year course.¹ The Carnegie Tech yearbook, The Thistle, in its first year of publication, 1916, outlined each of these four schools. The School of

Applied Science granted the degree of Bachelor of Science with courses in "chemical, civil, commercial, electrical, mechanical, metallurgical, mining and sanitary engineering"; the School of Applied Design granted the Bachelor of Arts with courses in "architecture, decoration, illustration, painting, music, dramatic arts, and sculpture, open to both men and women"; the Margaret Morrison Carnegie School for Women offered courses leading to the Bachelor of Science degree in "household economics, secretarial work, costume economics, home arts and crafts, social work, and general science"; and the School of Applied Industries offered both a "three-year industrial course" and "short courses of eight months in various trades" which included "machine construction, building construction, general equipment and installation, and printing."^2

In February, 1914, under the leadership of Thomas Wood Stevens, the Department of Dramatic Arts became the third department to be organized in the School of Applied Design. First organized was the Architecture Department; then, in 1912, the Department of Music under the leadership of J. Vick O'Brien.³ What initially started as a program plan for a school of stagecraft in scenery and lighting, as envisioned by Arthur A. Hamerschlag, Director of Carnegie Tech and

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²Ibid.

Russell Hewlett, Dean of the School of Applied Design, was developed by Thomas Wood Stevens into a program for a school of dramatic arts. Stevens' concern in this early planning stage was based upon the problem of "the combination of a technical training with related work in the humanities." We were to give a Bachelor of Arts degree in Drama, which was revolutionary enough in itself. . . . We talked a good deal about educational theory, and for months I carried a paper curriculum in my pocket, and tried it on actors, playwrights and dramatic critics. Otis Skinner spent hours over it, and his verdict was fairly typical--'It's all right, laddie, if you can make it work.' In the main, it is still working, and the modest collegiate bulletin in which it was finally announced has found its way, with various modifications, into a good many University catalogues.

Stevens' aim at Carnegie Tech was "to combine a college course with the technical training of a repertory theatre"; he wanted for the dramatic artist a "general education with the interpretive activities of the stage." In the fields of theatre and art, Stevens' academic and professional experience included a background as writer and artist, lecturer and teacher, and producer and director. He graduated in 1897 from the Armour Scientific College (Armour Institute of Technology) in Chicago with a degree

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5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., p. 492.

7 Thomas Wood Stevens, "A Non-Commercial Theatre" (Xerox of a [1917-1918] bulletin in the Lucy Barton Scrapbook in the Hoblitzelle Theatre Arts Library at the University of Texas in Austin).

8 "T. W. Stevens, Stage Director, Dies in Arizona," The Chicago Sun, January 30, 1942, p. 10.
in mechanical engineering. During the next four years, he acquired "printing, publishing and advertising experience," and, in 1901, he "went to work for the Santa Fe railroad, writing travel booklets, printing and engraving." At this time he also "began writing articles and poems that were to appear in magazines and books." In 1903, because of his interest in drawing and painting, "he left Santa Fe to teach illustration and later mural painting at the Chicago Art Institute for nine years." He made "four trips abroad to study art"; studying painting and etching under "Frank Brangwyn in 1906, and with the great Spanish painter, Sorolla in 1912." In 1911, Stevens "etched the American universities series for Century magazine with Mrs. Stevens

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9 "Drama Leader Dies Suddenly," Arizona Daily Star, January 29, 1942 (Xerox from a Scrapbook in the Thomas Wood Stevens Collection in the University Library Special Collections at the University of Arizona in Tucson).

10 "T. W. Stevens of University Staff Is Dead," Tucson Daily Citizen, January 29, 1942 (Xerox from a Scrapbook in the Thomas Wood Stevens Collection in the University Library Special Collections at the University of Arizona in Tucson).


12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 "T. W. Stevens of University Staff Is Dead," loc. cit.

who did the women's colleges." He was on the faculty at the University of Wisconsin in 1912-1913. He became the head of the Department of Dramatic Arts at Carnegie Tech in 1913-1914. Stevens' "first theatrical production was 'The Chaplet of Pan' which was produced by Donald Robertson in 1908, for whom he became stage manager and 'learned the theatre.'" The next year, Stevens produced his work, *A Pageant of the Italian Renaissance* at the Chicago Art Institute under the auspices of the Institute's Antiquarian Society; Robertson played *The Herald* of the pageant. In 1912, Stevens "began collaboration on plays with Kenneth Sawyer Goodman." When he assumed his duties as head of the Department of Dramatic Arts at Carnegie Tech in 1914, Stevens was also engaged in writing and producing an historical pageant in collaboration with a civic masque by Percy MacKaye for the May celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of St. Louis.

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17 "Stevens Will Replace Davis At University," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, July 12, 1941 (Xerox from a Scrapbook in the Thomas Wood Stevens Collection in the University Library Special Collections at the University of Arizona in Tucson).


21 Thomas Wood Stevens, *The Book of Words of the Pageant*
The work of the Department of Dramatic Arts was initially outlined in the Carnegie Tech General Catalogue, 1915-1916. A student of dramatic arts was to be trained in "a general knowledge of the technique of the drama, approaching it by literary and historical courses as well as through a severe training in direct technical work"; the intended plan was "to provide a full knowledge rather than a highly specialized practice." 22

The subjects of instruction as first listed in the General Catalogue, 1915-1916 numbered fourteen, but by the next year as listed in the General Catalogue, 1916-1917 were increased to twenty-six. These courses encompassed both the theory and practice of dramatic arts. Some courses were lecture courses dealing directly with the theatre and play production. History of the Theatre was a "lecture course covering the development of the theatre as an institution, together with the evolution of its architectural forms"; Routine Business of the Theatre, a "series of talks on the business side of the theatre"; History of Costume, a course of "illustrated lectures and assigned readings to familiarize the student with historic styles and to give him facility in costuming figures in period, illustration or painting";

and Masque of St. Louis (St. Louis: St. Louis Pageant Drama Association, Book Committee, 1914), preface.

Historic Styles of Furniture, a "course of lectures and study on period furniture and interiors"; and Legendary Art, a "course of lectures and readings covering the ancient and mediæval myths and legends especially adapted to the needs of the illustrator, decorator and painter."23

Practical courses in play production included specialized areas. Elementary Technic covered "preliminary work in the use of the speaking voice, in correct diction, in gesture and pantomime."24 Technical Work, Acting and Rehearsal, as the major course in the curriculum, placed the emphasis on acting and established the plan of study and practice followed by the students during the four-year program.

Acting must be a major subject with all students of the department, though in the fourth year of the course other thesis work may be elected. Credits are by mentions, not by the number of hours rehearsal per week. During the first year simple parts and one act plays will be studied; during the second year the acting of certain classical plays; during the third year modern dramas.25

Practical experience in oral interpretation was gained in the European and English drama survey course, Dramatic Literature, in which the students studied drama through "readings and rehearsals."26

The technical aspects of the theatre included various practical courses in stagecraft, such as Pictorial Art

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24Ibid., p. 216. 25Ibid. 26Ibid.
(Drawing and Composition): "to give the student an elementary knowledge of drawing and design . . . for an ability in graphic expression, . . . for its direct application to scene painting, color work in production, and to composition as applied to stage effects"; Electricity and Lighting: "practical talks with laboratory work in the theatre"; and Scene Painting: "two courses, the first dealing with the handling of materials and practical work of a simple nature; the second, following the course of Scene Design and Model Making, taking up the more difficult problems of illusive scenery and stage decoration."27 Advanced students could substitute for Scene Painting the practical work in costume design and costume making included in the Costume Making course which also consisted of a "series of lectures on the History of Costume."28

Providing practical experience to the student playwright, the Dramatic Composition course consisted of "exercises in dramatization and play writing, with laboratory work in the rehearsal of such plays."29

Twelve remaining courses completed the subjects of instruction for the Carnegie Tech student of dramatic arts. In French and German, the student worked for "good pronunciation and reading; and in one of them . . . to the reading and translation of plays"; Fencing was "given to the men students,

27Ibid., pp. 216-17.  
28Ibid., p. 217.  
29Ibid., p. 216.
together, with special work in the use and handling of various historical weapons; Theme Writing helped the student "to develop the powers of imagination, observation and analysis" and included "weekly themes and a certain amount of outside writing"; Psychology included "special chosen" lectures and laboratory work "with reference to their applicability to dramatic study"; Sociology included "introductory courses in Sociology, recreation and community work"; Music dealt with "sight singing . . . , piano, and the History and Aesthetics of Music"; Aesthetics was "a course in general aesthetics," with psychology a prerequisite; in Dancing, folk dancing was studied and practiced in the first year, "followed by training in Aesthetic Dancing and the dances of various periods"; Maintenance of Health emphasized hygiene, gymnastics and dancing; and History of Architecture and History of Painting and Sculpture were lecture courses.  

By 1916, the curriculum of dramatic arts included twenty-nine courses for a total one hundred and forty-four hours of credit earned for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Drama. The greatest number of hours, thirty-eight, was earned in Technical Work, Acting and Rehearsal. For every one hour of credit earned in technical work, the student would be required to do two hours of rehearsing.

The specific number of hours earned in each of the subject courses in the curriculum and the faculty

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members teaching these courses in 1916 were

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Courses and Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Technical Work, Acting and Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas Wood Stevens—Professor of Dramatic Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Poel—Visiting Professor of the Drama Department (new appointee for 1916-1917)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Iden Payne—Visiting Professor of Dramatic Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas B. Beatty—Assistant Professor of Dramatic Art and Stage Management (new appointee for 1916-1917)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Elementary Technic (Voice Diction, Gesture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas Wood Stevens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas B. Beatty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dramatic Composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas Wood Stevens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>History of the Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas Wood Stevens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Stage Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas B. Beatty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Scene Design and Model Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. Woodman Thompson—Instructor in Scene Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Scene Painting I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. Woodman Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Scene Painting II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J. Woodman Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Costume Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[No name listed]</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dramatic Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harold Goeghegan—Professor of the History of Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Harold Goeghegan</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>History of Painting and Sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harold Goeghegan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Legendary Art
   Harold Geoghegan

4 Theme Writing
   Haniel C. Long--Assistant Professor of English

8 French
   Frederic P. Colette--Professor of Modern Languages

4 German
   Frederic P. Colette

2 Dancing
   Karl Heinrich--Instructor in Dancing (new appointee for 1916-1917)

2 Fencing
   George W. Postgage--Instructor in Fencing

1 Historic Styles of Furniture and Decoration
   Rene T. de Quelin--Acting Associate Professor of Decoration (new appointee for 1916-1917)

4 History of Architecture
   W. Frank Hitchens--Instructor in Architecture

8 Music
   Harry Archer--Instructor in Sight Singing (new appointee for 1916-1917)

6 Pictorial Art (Drawing and Composition)
   Ralph Holmes--Associate Professor of Painting and Decoration

6 Optional Advanced Courses (Specialized Technical Area)
   [Members of the Faculty of the School of Applied Design]

1 Business Routine of the Theatre
   [No name listed]

4 Aesthetics
   Dr. Gordon--[not included in the listing of the School of Applied Design]

1 Electricity and Lighting
   Mr. Walker--[not included in the listing of the School of Applied Design]
8 Health (Hygiene, Gymnastics and Dancing)  
   Mr. Esquerre—[not included in the listing of the School of Applied Design]

4 Psychology  
   Dr. Bingham—[not included in the listing of the School of Applied Design]

3 Sociology  
   Mr. Hopkins—[not included in the listing of the School of Applied Design]

144 Total

The curriculum as divided into the four year program scheduled Technical Work, Acting and Rehearsal throughout, with its heaviest emphasis in the fourth year. Sight Singing was studied the first three years; Elementary Technic (Voice Diction, Gesture) and French, the first two years; Music, the second and third years; and German, the third year. By 1916, the curriculum by years was divided as follows:

First Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Courses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Technical Work, Acting and Rehearsal</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>History of Architecture</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>French</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Pictorial Art (Drawing and Composition)</td>
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<td>Theme Writing</td>
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<td>Elementary Technic (Voice Diction, Gesture)</td>
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<td>Sight Singing</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Dancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Health (Hygiene, Gymnastics and Dancing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 35    | Total                                             |

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34 General Catalogue. 1916-1917, pp. 215-16.
The second year courses included some of the basic theatre technical work and also studies directly related to the theatre.

**Second Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Courses</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Technical Work, Acting and Rehearsal</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Scene Design and Model Making</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Dramatic Literature</td>
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<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elementary Technic (Voice Diction, Gesture)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>History of the Theatre</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Music</td>
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<td>Fencing</td>
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<td>Sight Singing</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Health (Hygiene, Gymnastics and Dancing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Historic Styles of Furniture and Decoration</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>History of Costume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Electricity and Lighting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**

36

In the third year, work in **Technical Work, Acting and Rehearsal** was increased, and the student began a practical program in **Scene Painting** and **Costume Making**.

**Third Year**

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Technical Work, Acting and Rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Scene Painting and Costume Making</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>German</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Health (Hygiene, Gymnastics and Dancing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**

32
In the fourth year, the student carried the heaviest total hour load. Technical Work, Acting and Rehearsal increased again. The student was introduced to Dramatic Composition, Business Routine of the Theatre, and Stage Management. Optional course work was scheduled, allowing a specialization "in acting, in stage decoration and scene design, in dramatic literature, in composition or criticism, in costume, or in the general work of the production."35

**Fourth Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Technical Work, Acting and Directing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Health (Hygiene, Gymnastics and Dancing)</td>
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<td>Business Routine of the Theatre</td>
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</table>

43 Total

The four year curriculum of dramatic arts at Carnegie Tech as devised in 1913, put into practice in February, 1914, and extended by 1916, was aimed at providing for the student a "full knowledge rather than a highly specialized practice" in the theatre.36


36General Catalogue, 1915-1916, p. 213.
The student of dramatic arts observed a schedule of "general studies" courses in the morning and rehearsal and performance running late in the evening. According to Stevens, the student was "very fortunate" in the faculty. As illustration, Stevens quoted several courses from the 1916 curriculum: Dramatic Literature with Haniel Long, History of Costume with Harold Geoghegan, French with Colette, and English diction with a "succession of patient and devoted English actresses."

When the students took Dramatic Literature with Haniel Long, they straightway began to experiment with poetry, dramatic or lyric as the individual temperament suggested. Harold Geoghegan could teach History of Costume with such precision as to make costume construction on authentic lines inevitable, and at the same time he could open vistas on the social history of the periods. Colette could teach French with echoes of Corneille and Racine behind it. English diction was another thing; Pittsburgh has an accent all its own, and to break local accents down, we wore out a succession of patient and devoted English actresses.

On April 23, 1914, three months after the Department of Dramatic Arts was inaugurated at Carnegie Tech, the first major production of the department, Shakespeare's Two Gentlemen of Verona, directed by Donald Robertson, became the first performance in the Theatre of the School of Applied Design of the new Fine Arts building.

The facilities of the department included a "practical

38 Ibid.
theatre, seating four hundred and twenty, with complete stage appliances."40 A detailed description of the theatre in the General Catalogue, 1916-1917 indicates that the theatre was planned and equipped as a beautiful and practical theatre. The elliptical auditorium was structured as an "oval room, paneled in carved white oak, and finished in the natural color of the wood."41 This carved white oak interior was "decorated with seven mural paintings designed by J. Monroe Hewlett, representing the great periods of art--Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Gothic, and Renaissance."42 Each composition was "very reserved in color, and . . . built up largely of renderings of famous statues, fragments and architectural motifs. The large central one, Rome, covered the curved steel drop curtain" of the stage.43 In the center of the auditorium ceiling was an oval "white and amber skylight."44 The auditorium seating arrangement consisted of fourteen rows, stepped and divided into three sections, and a left and a right side box-balcony area.45

40Ibid.
42Ibid. 43Ibid.
45Illustrations of the Theatre of the School of Applied Design at Carnegie Institute of Technology: Lucy Barton Scrapbook, loc. cit., "The Theatre of the School of Applied Design," a four page undated bulletin containing one floor plan sketch entitled "Plan of the Theatre" and three
The stage could be reached from the auditorium by a flight of three steps extending across the entire width of the stage to the column which framed each side of the proscenium arch. Steel fire curtains separated the stage from the auditorium and from the green room, located directly behind the stage. The stage was equipped with a "trapped floor, modern installation of lights," which included a "safety switchboard and full complement of dimmers" in the electrician's booth to the left and elevated from the stage floor, and a "gridiron with twenty-five sets of lines." In addition, "for many productions special lighting arrangements were made, and a projecting apron stage, built in sections and readily removable, occasionally" was used "in place of the conventional footlights." The stage scene drop-curtain was of "old gold velour"; encircling the stage pictures entitled "Interior of the Theatre," "Decoration of the Steel Curtain: Rome," and "The magnificent auditorium elliptical in shape, . . ."; Lucy Barton Scrapbook, loc. cit., "Plan of the First Floor," an undated single sheet with floor plan sketch; Mackay, loc. cit., opposite p. 218, one picture entitled "Auditorium of Carnegie Institute's Laboratory Theatre, Pittsburgh, Penn."; The Thistle, 1916, p. 30, one picture entitled "Carnegie Theatre."

46 "Plan of the Theatre," Lucy Barton Scrapbook, loc. cit.
48 Mackay, op. cit., p. 200.
50 Ibid.
was a "cyclorama of gray-blue velvet."

Identical in size to the stage, the green room was used as a rehearsal room and for fencing and dancing classes. Informal conferences, such as work in diction, dramatic composition, and preliminary play reading, were conducted in the Round Table Room, which adjoined the office of the Department of Dramatic Arts. The green room, the Round Table Room, and the second floor dressing rooms, located above the green room, were "equipped with furniture reproducing that of various historic periods, and this stock of furniture" was used as stage property. Also located on the second floor were the costume-making room, dye-room, model-making room, and the scene studio. The scene studio was "equipped with a counterbalanced paint-frame large enough for any drop-curtain used in the theatre."

These complete and modern facilities for theatre instruction and production were used by regular students, unclassified students, and night students enrolled in the department. Regular students were enrolled as day students who worked toward the Bachelor of Arts degree in Drama. The

51 Ibid.  
52 Ibid.  
53 Ibid.  
54 Ibid., p. 213.  
55 Mackay, loc. cit., opposite p. 200, one picture entitled "Costume Room."  
57 Ibid.; Mackay, loc. cit., one picture entitled "Studio for Scene Painting."
course for unclassified students, who were admitted without examination but did the same work as the regular students, led to a certificate of proficiency.\(^{58}\) Night school students, who were also admitted without examination, concentrated upon courses in diction, dancing, and rehearsal work.\(^{59}\) Special performances were given by night school students who also took part in productions involving regular and unclassified students.\(^{60}\)

On February 9, 1914, the Department of Dramatic Arts at Carnegie Tech began work with a class of eighteen students.\(^{61}\) During the first year, the department learned "what afterward turned out to be the most essential feature of the whole plan: that quality, talent, potential artistic power were the valuable ingredients--nothing else mattered half so much."\(^{62}\)

To insure an equally beneficial return for both the department and the student, the tryout, a week's series of tests for each candidate, was inaugurated for each student by 1915. Stevens believed that it was this "rigorous tryout"

\(^{58}\text{General Catalogue, 1916-1917, pp. 213-14.}\)

\(^{59}\text{Ibid., p. 218.}\)

\(^{60}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{61}\text{Stevens, "The Background: The First Plan and the Goal," op. cit., p. 492. (In "Mr. Bossange, Reviews History of School of Applied Design," loc. cit., the enrollment figures reported are fourteen students in February, 1914, and fifteen students in the fall, 1914.)}\)

\(^{62}\text{Stevens, ibid., pp. 492-93.}\)
which "produced the high percentage of professional success in the early roster of students." This tryout became a "time-honored technical test" in the department and consisted of

interviews of applicants by all members of the departmental faculty, the presentation of short prepared dramatic scenes, and finally—for actors—intensive rehearsal under several directors or, for those intending to specialize in other branches of the theatre, submission of tangible evidence of their interest in, and qualifications for, study in that field. This tryout also kept the enrollment down. During his ten years at Carnegie Tech, Stevens reported that the department "never had more than fifty . . . at any one time."

From its beginning, the Department of Dramatic Arts established the general pattern of productions within a repertory theatre plan, which began with the production of Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona* on April 23, 1914. A play by Shakespeare became an annual tradition, usually performed in the spring on Shakespeare's birth date. About this first Shakespearean production, Stevens reflected:

Donald Robertson came on as visiting director, and the painting department came down in squads to make the sets. Among them came Woodman Thompson, who was just graduating as an illustrator, and he stayed to be trained into a resourceful designer and executant. In those days the new stagecraft was a book by Gordon Craig and a gleam in

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Ibid., p. 492.


Bobby Jones' eye. When we set a play, we set it, with occasional experiments in scenery. Our budget was fairly generous for lumber, muslin and paint; what we did with these items was our own business.66

What was done with the scenery in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* was "noteworthy" according to a specification of this production. The scenery

... gave richness and beauty of effect through unelaborate means, the uncluttered stage lending a sense of spaciousness. Two pieces of tapestry, an offertory table, and three high-backed chairs were all that were needed to give an indoor scene a feeling of dignity and opulence.67

B. Iden Payne, who directed many Shakespeare productions at Carnegie Tech, his first *A Winter's Tale* in April, 1916,68 traced the use of scenery and the gradual shift of scenic style in these Shakespeare productions.

We began with the use of scenery, sometimes elaborate scenery if the play afforded the opportunity to use it. We discovered as time went on that the more we simplified the scenery the better it was for the production, the more immediate was the appeal of the play itself to the audience. At length the chance presented itself of constructing something closely approximating the Elizabethan theatre inside our proscenium, and of extending the apron stage which we already possessed.69

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66Ibid., p. 493.


68Shakespearean Plays Performed at Carnegie Institute of Technology and Regular Day Student Major Productions, Department of Drama, Carnegie Institute of Technology. (These two sources, typed lists, name twenty-eight Shakespeare productions directed by B. Iden Payne from 1914-1950. At Carnegie Tech, Payne served as guest director and visiting professor, associate professor, and head of the Department of Dramatic Arts.)

69B. Iden Payne, "The Central Figure: Shakespeare," *Theatre Arts Monthly*, XXIII (July, 1939), 497.
By 1926, with his production of *Hamlet*, Payne had adopted the scenic style of "something closely approximating the Elizabethan theatre" inside the proscenium arch theatre for his Shakespeare productions at Carnegie Tech.\(^70\)

In addition to Shakespeare, the major productions included Greek tragedies, plays by Moliere and Sheridan, and both modern comedies and serious drama. "Old and accepted plays" as a "distinct feature" of theatre production at Carnegie Tech was founded upon Stevens' belief that these plays furnished "excellent training not easily acquired by the young actor in the theatre-at-large."\(^71\)

The other types of productions included in the dramatic arts program at Carnegie Tech were one-act plays and Tech plays. One-act plays were given for two reasons: students could start with short roles and also could be actively engaged in theatre production if not cast in a long play.\(^72\) Tech plays were written, and usually produced, by those students enrolled in Stevens' *Dramatic Composition* class. Stevens described the procedure of the class and the types of plays which were written and produced by the students.

The *Dramatic Composition* class is an optional and informal one. It meets in the Round Table Room, and its members bring in their scenarios and eventually their plays, for free discussion, literally, around the table. Out of this open, fluid discussion, plays are chosen by


\(^71\) Stevens, "A Non-Commercial Theatre," *loc. cit.*

\(^72\) *Ibid.*
the head of the Department: the successful author chooses his cast, and the play is put in work. The types of plays vary widely. Most of the schemes are workable, for the young men and women in the class are continually acting, and are more keenly interested in material which has business- and stage-effect than in the purely literary side of the matter.\textsuperscript{73}

The first Tech play produced was \textit{The Weevils} written and directed by Howard Southgate and Sara E. Bennett. The campus newspaper, \textit{The Tartan}, announced that the play was "very successful, in fact, the theatre was crowded at each of the numerous performances."\textsuperscript{74}

For all these different types of productions, the technical work, such as scenery, costumes, and lighting, was done by the students under the supervision of a director: a member of the faculty, a fellow student, or a guest director as visiting professor who was brought in to introduce the Carnegie students of dramatic arts to a different directorial style. During its first season in 1914, the department invited Donald Robertson, actor and producer, to direct the first production, Shakespeare's \textit{Two Gentlemen of Verona}, and Padriac Colum, the Irish dramatist, to direct three Irish plays. During 1915, the guest directors were Mrs. E. P. Sherry, director of the Milwaukee Little Theatre, who directed Zona Gale's \textit{The Neighbors}; Douglas Ross, who directed the two Shakespeare productions \textit{Much Ado about Nothing} and \textit{As You

\textsuperscript{73}Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{74}"Tech Plays Will Be Produced This Year," \textit{The Tartan}, February 6, 1918, p. 1.
Like It and W. S. Gilbert's Creatures of Impulse; and B. Iden Payne, English producer, who directed G. Bernard Shaw's You Never Can Tell and John Fletcher's The Elder Brother. Donald Robertson returned to direct Moliere's Tartuffe. During 1916, William Poel, founder and director of the Elizabethan Stage Society, was guest director. Poel directed two plays: a reading of Calderon's Life's a Dream and a production of Ben Jonson's The Poetaster.

In addition to regularly scheduled performances, special "complimentary performances" were given for these actors and actresses who visited the department during these early experimental years: Maude Adams, Margaret Anglin, Julia Marlowe, Cyril Maude, E. H. Sothern, and Otis Skinner.75

A listing of plays produced by the department during the first two years, 1914-1916, indicates that there were several plays in rehearsal at the same time. Students were constantly in training as actors. Stevens explained this "emphasis on acting" as "automatic": "the employment load works out about twelve to one against scene designers, directors, and playwrights."76

The following plays with opening night date, playwright, director, and related explanatory information were produced


by the department from 1914-1916.77

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opening Night Date</th>
<th>Play, Playwright, Director</th>
<th>Related Explanatory Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>1914</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2478</td>
<td><strong>Two Gentlemen of Verona</strong> by Shakespeare Donald Robertson79</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 15</td>
<td><strong>Dancing Dolls</strong> by Kenneth S. Goodman Thomas Wood Stevens</td>
<td>New play--matinee</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 15</td>
<td><strong>The Shadow of the Glen</strong> by John W. Synge Padriac Colum</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 22</td>
<td><strong>The King's Threshold</strong> by William Butler Yeats Padriac Colum</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 22</td>
<td><strong>The Betrayal</strong> by Padriac Colum Padriac Colum</td>
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</table>

77 *1917 Thistle*, Second Yearbook of the Carnegie Institute of Technology, Published by the Junior Class, p. 107. (This listing includes a composite and cross reference of the above source; *Regular Day Student Major Productions*, loc. cit.; Mackay, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-204. All *1917 Thistle* date listings for plays indicate opening night performances. Most productions were repeated several times, usually six performances; some productions were given only single performances.)

78 All sources list this date as April 23, with the exception of the *1917 Thistle*.

79 Two sources list Thomas Wood Stevens as co-director of this production: "Design Theatre Is Dedicated," *The Tartan*, April 29, 1914, p. 1; *Regular Day Student Major Production*, loc. cit.

80 *Regular Day Student Major Productions*, loc. cit., lists this performance as one play in a three part bill including Yeat's *The King's Threshold* and Colum's *The Betrayal*, all given on October 22.
1915

January 15  The Land of Heart's Desire
by William Butler Yeats
Theodore Viehman\textsuperscript{82}

February 12 The Violin Maker of Cremona
by Francais [Francois] Coppee
Frederic McConnell\textsuperscript{83}

March 12  The Neighbors
by Zona Gale
Mrs. E. P. Sherry

March 13  You Never Can Tell
by G. Bernard Shaw
B. Iden Payne

March 24  The Chaplet of Pan
by Thomas Wood Stevens
and Wallace Rice
Thomas Wood Stevens

April 23  Much Ado about Nothing
by Shakespeare
Douglas Ross

May 27  Glory of the Morning

\textsuperscript{81}Stevens, "The Background: The First Plan and the Goal," \textit{op. cit.}, p. 495. Stevens writes about the early productions at Carnegie Tech: "I took the Greeks and Ibsen, and whatever plays and students were left over." The writer assumes that Stevens directed this production. It is possible that either Stevens or one of the students in the department directed productions for which the director is unknown.

\textsuperscript{82}Theodore Viehman was a student in the department.

\textsuperscript{83}Frederic McConnell was a student in the department.
by William Ellery Leonard
[Director Unknown]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>As You Like It</td>
<td>by Shakespeare</td>
<td>Two outdoor performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by Douglas Ross</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>Tents of the Arabs</td>
<td>by Lord Dunsany</td>
<td>Night student production</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Director Unknown]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>Creatures of Impulse</td>
<td>by W. S. Gilbert</td>
<td>New play</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by Douglas Ross</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>The Wonder Hat</td>
<td>by Kenneth S. Goodman</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and Ben Hecht</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by Thomas Wood Stevens</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>Tartuffe</td>
<td>by Moliere</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by Donald Robertson</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>November 18</td>
<td>The Elder Brother</td>
<td>by John Fletcher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by B. Iden Payne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 10</td>
<td>The Hippolytus</td>
<td>by Euripides</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by Thomas Wood Stevens</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 14</td>
<td>The Bracelet</td>
<td>by Alfred Sutro</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by Fredrick K. Cowley74</td>
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</table>

1916

January 21  | The Liars                     | by Henry Arthur Jones    |                              |
|            |                               | by B. Iden Payne         |                              |
| February 2 | Spreading the News            | by Lady Gregory          |                              |
|            |                               | [Director Unknown]       |                              |
| February 21| Henri Durot-Master Spy        | by Kenneth S. Goodman    |                              |
|            |                               | and Ben Hecht            | New play                     |
|            |                               | by Thomas Wood Stevens   |                              |

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84Fredrick K. Cowley was a student in the department.
April 5

**The Dear Departed**
by Stanley Houghton
[Director Unknown]

April 24

**A Winter's Tale**
by Shakespeare
B. Iden Payne

June 3

**Life's a Dream**
A reading
by Calderon
William Poel

October 25

**The Poetaster**
by Ben Jonson
William Poel

November 22

**The Doctor in Spite of Himself**
by Moliere
Theodore Viehman

November 25

**Pater Noster**
by Francois [Francois] Coppee
[Director Unknown]

November 25

**Jean-Marie**
by Andre Thenriet
[Director Unknown]

Stevens stated the objective of this flexible theatre schedule and wide choice of plays, ancient and modern, plus one Shakespeare and one Greek play each year: "to teach, not what the student could learn in his first weeks in stock... but what he could not learn there." 87

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85 There was only one performance of this reading. The time of performance is unknown.

86 Performance dates were October 25, 26, 27, and December 5 and 6 at Carnegie Institute of Technology and December 1 and 2 (matinee and evening) at the Detroit Museum of Art.

The student of dramatic arts at Carnegie Tech worked with many styles of acting and experienced many different directorial styles. Within two years, 1914-1916, the excellence of the department as organized and expanded by Stevens was established. Stevens recalls: "By 1916, when William Poel came over to put on his production of *Poetaster*, and to set up a counsel of perfection and thoroughness such as we had never known, the group fairly glittered with promise."  

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88Ibid., p. 495.
CHAPTER III

WILLIAM POEL'S PRELIMINARY VISIT TO THE CARNEGIE
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE LATE
SPRING OF 1916

William Poel's association with the Department of Dramatic Arts at Carnegie Tech in 1916 began with a preliminary trip in the late spring.

During this three-week visit, Poel's work was "largely personal instruction in diction, Shakespearian reading, and the use of voice."1 He planned "to return to Tech in the autumn and make a production of a play"; the title was "not to be determined" until Poel had seen the theatre and "the material at hand."2

Arriving in Pittsburgh on May 12, Poel officially began his work in the department on that date.3 In the first meetings with the students, "Poel read, with the class,

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1Letter from Thomas Wood Stevens to A. W. Tarbell, Registrar at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, May 2, 1916 (Xerox from the Thomas Wood Stevens Collection in the University Library Special Collections at the University of Arizona in Tucson).

2Ibid.

3"Famous Authority On Shakespeare Here To Coach Tech Players," loc. cit.

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portions of Macbeth and Hamlet." From these first readings, Poel decided that there was "much material—good talent—in the class," and that the class could "afford him a splendid opportunity for the production of some play" that spring. The play Poel chose was Fitzgerald's adaptation of Calderon's Life's a Dream.

Presented as a "public reading" on June 3, Poel's production was described as "a dramatic variant: delivering contents of a play by means of the voice trained to express emotion," for "instead of an acted play it was a 'reading' in which articulation, emphasis and voice shading played the chief part. . . . Action was almost wholly subordinated to the use of the reading voice and the attitude in securing dramatic results."

Poel's methods were described as "revolutionary" in the sense that they were "the widest departure from the styles of reading and declamation practiced by a majority of modern players."

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4Ibid.  
5Ibid.  
61917 Thistle, op. cit., p. 107.  
8Ibid.
harmony with the prevailing vocal rendition.\textsuperscript{9}

The student readers "succeeded in producing the somber atmosphere" of the drama and showed "an intellectual understanding of their parts and a crisp completeness of speech."\textsuperscript{10} In addition, the performance of each of the students, with the exception of the student who read Astolfo, was noted.

The part of Segismund was given to Violante [Veolante] Bollinger, whose spirited interpretation was highly praiseworthy. C. Frederick [Fredrick] Steen as the King gave his lines with fine articulation and intelligence. Arleigh Williamson as Clotaldo, the guard or jailor of the imprisoned Segismund, with his grave voice, gave the note of responsibility, but lacked the sinister suggestion that Segismund's constantly displayed fear of him seems to call for. Fife, the one comic part, was well taken by William Mulligan, who Mr. Poel says, is born with the gift of comedy. He had a chance to essay a pathetic note also, when Fife falls shot in battle. Hazel Beck as the adventurous Rosaura did the young girl adventuring in man's attire very well. Eula Guy gave distinction to the Princess Estrella. . . . The cast was completed by Scene Reader Florence Little, who read the necessary stage directions.\textsuperscript{11}

On the stage, the scenery consisted of a tapestry back-drop, a throne, and small benches. The readers approached the stage "from the audience in groups, just as the scenes called for them,"\textsuperscript{12} but Rosaura, "as first on stage, entered from stage right."\textsuperscript{13} The readers "sat before something like a dark back-drop but no curtain was used. The throne was stage right."\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{10}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{11}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{12}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13}Letter from Hazel Beck Lees of View Halloa, Sewickley Heights, Pennsylvania, to the writer, December 5, 1966.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid.
The lighting "came from the sides only. Each person had a spot on him only; the rest of the stage was completely dark."\textsuperscript{15}

Theatrical costumes were not used in the production; "the readers were in evening dress."\textsuperscript{16} The black, simple dresses worn by the girls were suggested to Poel by the student who read Rosaura, the girl disguised as the boy, because he saw her "in a dress with long black sleeves and a white Peter Pan collar" and this dress became her costume in the play.\textsuperscript{17}

The "carefully worked out" sound effects, run by Poel, who sat at a lectern in front of the steps leading to the stage,\textsuperscript{18} helped to establish the somber mood of the drama. The roll of the drums from the battle, the tramp of the soldiers and clank of chains when Segismund is haled again in his cave; the trumpet call of the guard, a constant and sinister reminder of Segismund's supposed madness and impending imprisonment, punctuated the drama at intervals with somber effects.\textsuperscript{19}

Poel's production "was an entertainment for the ear and the imagination rather than for the eye."\textsuperscript{20}

The students "did not have access to any promptbook"

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16}Bregg, loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{17}Letter from Hazel Beck Lees to the writer, August 29, 1966.
\textsuperscript{18}Both Veolante Bollinger Bennett and Hazel Beck Lees, who were in the cast of Life's a Dream, agreed with this statement.
\textsuperscript{19}Bregg, loc. cit.
\textsuperscript{20}Ibid.
containing Poel's directions but made their own notes. The student who read Segismund recalled that she used a copy of the play which was from the Library Room of the Pittsburgh Athletic Association. One 1903 edition of Fitzgerald's adaptation of Calderon's play, located by the writer in Pittsburgh at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, has dim pencil markings over, under, and through words in the lines spoken by Rosaura (Hazel Beck), Fife (William Mulligan), and Clotaldo (Arleigh Williamson). This particular book could have been marked by one of Poel's readers.

Most of the markings appear with Clotaldo's part. As example, one marked Clotaldo speech reads:

(aside). Oh, wondrous chance—or wondrous Providence! The sword that I myself in Moscovy,
When these white hairs were black, for keepsake left
Of obligation for a like return
To him who saved me wounded as I lay
Fighting against his country; took me home;
Tended me like a brother, till recover'd;
Poeschance to fight against him once again—
And now my sword put back into my hand
By his—if not his son—still, as so seeming,

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22 Telephone conversation with Professor Elizabeth Kimberly of the Department of Drama at Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, October 29, 1966. Professor Kimberly related that Veolante Bollinger Bennett had remembered that she had used the Athletic Association's copy of Life's a Dream. The writer could not locate this copy; the Pittsburgh Athletic Association no longer keeps books in its Library Room.

By me, as first devoir of gratitude,
To seem believing, till the wearer's self
See fit to drop the ill-dissembling mask.
(Aloud) Well, a strange turn of fortune has arrested
The sharp and sudden penalty that else
Had visited your rashness or mischance:
In part, your tender youth too, pardon me,
(And touch not where your sword is not to answer-
Commends you to my care; not your life only,
Else by this misadventure forfeited;
But ev'n your errand, which by happy chance,
Chimes with the very business I am on,
And calls me to the very point you aim at. 24

In addition, written directions indicate "rise" movements during speeches. An example includes the "rise" by Segismund which could serve as preparation for his confrontation with Clotaldo, and the "rise" by Clotaldo which could take the place of his entrance.

Segismund:

• • •
How I—that only last night fell asleep
Not knowing that the very soil of earth
I lay down—chain'd—to sleep upon was Poland—
Awake to find myself the Lord of it, rise
With Lords, and Generals, and Chamberlains,
And ev'n my very Gaoler, for my vassals!

Enter suddenly Clotaldo.

Clotaldo: Stand all aside rise
That I may put into his hand the clue
To lead him out of this amazement. Sir,
Vouchsafe your Highness from my bended knee
Receive my homage first. 25

If this particular edition were used by one of Poel's readers, the markings, where available, would indicate line reading, adaptation, and movement in his production.

The cast list of the production illustrates one of Poel's basic theories.

24Ibid., pp. 105-106. 25Ibid., p. 127.
A certain type of voice . . . meant to the theatregoer a certain type of character. To the producer a group of carefully chosen actors offered a range of voices to be played upon, much as an orchestra offers a range of tone and timbre to the conductor.26

Poel frequently cast a woman in a male role when he felt that she had the perfect vocal characterization for that male role.

His main concern was with the voice and that without regard to sex. If a woman's voice was more suited to a male character than that of any available man the woman played the part. . . . His obsession was with the voice as almost the sole instrument of characteriza-

In his three different productions of Life's a Dream, Poel consistently cast a woman as Segismund the Prince. At Carnegie Tech, he used Veolante Bollinger. In his two other productions given in England, Margaret Halstan acted Segismund in the Elizabethan Stage Society costumed stage production at St. George's Hall on May 15, 1899,28 and Viola Lyell read Segismund in the "vocal recital" of the drama at the Ethical Church on March 14, 21, 28, and April 4, 1920.29 In the 1920 vocal recital, Poel assigned two other male roles


28Program of Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of given at St. George's Hall, May 15, 1899 (Xerox from the William Poel materials in the Enthoven Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London).

29Program of Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of given at the Ethical Church on March 14, 21, 28, and April 4, 1920 (Xerox from the William Poel materials in the Enthoven Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London).
to women: Florence Saunders played Astolfo, nephew of the King, and Madge Whiteman played Fife, the comic squire of Rosaura.  

Poel's first production in 1899 was called a "very interesting experiment" and "a distinctly bold one." The production was handsomely costumed. For example, Segismund wore chains on his arms and ankles as the imprisoned son, then appeared in full armor with sword after defeating his father in battle. Although the grouping of the actors was "on the whole excellent," the stage seemed "occasionally overcrowded." Fitzgerald's verse with its long speeches, an "involved style, encumbered with parentheses," seemed more suited for the "study" than to the actor and his audience.

Presenting Life's a Dream as a reading instead of a costumed stage production at Carnegie Tech could have been favored by Poel for several reasons. Basic consideration was probably the short three week rehearsal time available to him with new actors. Poel was not engaged during this


33"The Elizabethan Stage Society," loc. cit.

34Ibid.
visit to direct a theatre production; yet the talent which he found available prompted him to work with the students in the presentation of a play. Readings were not a new type of production to Poel; his work in England included many presentations of plays as readings.35

When Poel repeated the play in England in 1920 at the Ethical Church, this presentation was described as a vocal recital, using "the version which was . . . first produced for the Elizabethan Stage Society at St. George's Hall in 1899."36 The style of presentation was reminiscent of Poel's Carnegie Tech reading: "For no reason that was apparent the whole company entered at the beginning of the play, with Mr. Poel at the little table facing them, and occupied seats from which they rose to take up their cues."37 Unlike the Carnegie Tech production, but like the 1899 Shakespeare Stage Society production, this 1920 production was costumed. "There was no excess of decoration to attract the eye, but the story was unfolded before unrelieved black curtains, against which the picturesque costumes of the actors showed to great advantage."38 Although there was no review of any sound effects, music used in the production was criticised.

A few musical strains which accompanied the recital might well have been omitted: it added nothing to

35Speaight, op. cit., pp. 279-84.
36"Fitz-Gerald as Dramatist, loc. cit.
37Ibid.
38Ibid.
the matter at hand to hear, from time to time, the first few bars of 'Land of hope and glory' (which by a polite fiction did duty for some ancient national anthem or battle-song of Poland): or to see Segismund and Estrella make their final exit to the wedding march of Mendelssohn.39

Poel's prompt-book for Life's a Dream, although sparsely annotated, gives specific information about the adaptation of the script, blocking directions, music cues, and stage properties.40 Markings on the script pages indicate: lines or words which were cut or revised by Poel; entrances, exits, and limited actions, most of which are dictated by the script, for some of the characters; music cues for the organ and song used in the play; and Poel's name for the voice of the soldier from the tower in Act III, Scene I. No markings in the script indicate how the lines were read. One direction, "Enter Fyfe in Balcony," could be an identification of part of Poel's set.

Other notations in Poel's prompt-book, written verso and recto the script pages, repeat cue directions noted in the script and indicate when the throne and chairs on stage are removed by cast members. Properties listed are those referred to in the play: whip and sword, lamp and chains, torches, and a book for the astrologer. On a separate sheet

39Ibid.

40Poel Promptbook of Calderon's "Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of" (Seven microcards in the Theatre Collection of the Department of Speech at Ohio State University in Columbus, which were loaned to the writer for research. The original Poel prompt-book is in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London).
as preface to the script are written the names and addresses of the cast members in the 1899 production.

A comparison of Poel's prompt-book with the 1903 Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh marked edition reveals few similarities. Notations and markings in these two sources would not necessarily be similar because each source contains information of a different nature and scope. In essence, Poel's prompt-book is a director's book while the 1903 Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh marked edition is a reader's script. However, several markings and notations could be accepted as similarities between these two sources: in cuts made in adaptation, in syllable emphasis in vocal delivery, and in volume notation for actors.

One comparison example of each of these three similarities is listed below.

Cuts made in adaptation: Poel's prompt-book

_Segismund:

... And woe to those who wrong'd them--Not as you, Not you, Clotaldo, knowing not--And yet

Bu'n to the guiltiest wretch in all the realm,

Of an treason guilty short of that,

Stern usage--but assuredly not knowing,
Not knowing 'twas your sovereign lord, Clotaldo,
You used so sternly.41

Cuts made in adaptation: 1903 Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh marked edition

_Segismund:

... And woe to those who wrong'd them--Not as you,

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41Poel Promptbook of Calderon's "Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of," loc. cit.
Not you, Clotaldo, knowing not—And yet
Ev'n to the guiltiest wretch in all the realm,
Of an treason guilty short of that,
Stern usage, but assuredly not knowing,
Not knowing 'twas your sovereign lord, Clotaldo,
You used so sternly.42

Syllable emphasis in vocal delivery: Poel's prompt-book

Rosaura:

And if you sing again, 'Come weal, come woe,'
Let it be that; for we will never part
Until you give the signal.43

Syllable emphasis in vocal delivery: 1903 Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh marked edition

Rosaura:

And if you sing again, 'Come weal, come woe,'
Let it be that; for we will never part
Until you give the signal.44

Volume notation for actors: Poel's prompt-book

Segismund: All this is so?
Clotaldo: As sure as anything
Is, or can be.45

Volume notation for actors: 1903 Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh marked edition

Segismund: All this is so?
Clotaldo: As sure as anything
Is, or can be.46

Since markings and notations appear in the 1903 Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh marked edition only for the

42 Fitzgerald, _op. cit._, p. 131.
43 Poel Promptbook of Calderon's "Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of," _loc. cit._
44 Fitzgerald, _op. cit._, p. 94.
45 Poel Promptbook of Calderon's "Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of," _loc. cit._
46 Fitzgerald, _op. cit._, p. 129.
three roles of Rosaura, Fife, and Clotaldo, in approximately one-third of the script, the amount of comparison between these two sources would be limited. The similarities include seven almost identical cuts made in adaptation, six almost identical syllable emphasis notations in vocal delivery, and one almost identical volume notation for actors.

In addition to his theatre work with the students, Poel gave a lantern slide lecture about Elizabethan playhouses to the students and faculty of the School of Applied Design on the afternoon of June 2. When Poel brought these same slides with him in the fall, he requested a letter from E. Raymond Bossange, Dean of the School of Applied Design. Bossange's letter explains the circumstances of Poel's lecture.

To Whom It May Concern:

Mr. William Poel of London on June 2, 1916 gave a lantern slide lecture to our students. He showed us about one hundred slides concerning the Elizabethan Play Houses. This lecture was not paid for in any way, but was given by him voluntarily. It was not part of the Drama course nor any course in this School. Mr. Poel has brought out the same slides this year and we hope that he will repeat last year's lecture on the same basis that is, without compensation [sic] and [sic!] without its being in any way a part of the curriculum. Under the circumstances I do not see why he should be charged any duty for these slides.47

On June 8, at 10 A.M., in Carnegie Music Hall, Poel

47 Letter from E. Raymond Bossange, Dean of the School of Applied Design at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, for William Poel, October 3, 1916 (Typed carbon copy located in the Department of Drama at the Carnegie Institute of Technology).
delivered the address "Shakespeare's Message to You" at the Ninth Annual Commencement of Carnegie Tech. Through his personification of Shakespeare, Poel announced this message:

'You cannot show any respect for me unless you show respect for the work I have done. To say that you admire my plays and then to put them on the bookshelf and content yourself with writing commentaries upon them may satisfy the ambitions of the critics, but it is no compliment to me. If you care for my plays please show it by talking and writing a little less about them, and having them acted a little oftener.'

In his address, Poel complimented the students of the dramatic arts on their "talent and intelligence"; maintained that the Shakespearean drama had "ceased to exist in England," and "deplored the passing of Shakespeare from the stage," for "with it passed sanity and beauty"; affirmed that "Bacon could not have written Shakespeare's plays" because he "had no conception of the art of dialogue"; and personified

48 There are three sources for this address. Poel's original notes entitled "Speech Pittsburgh, June 8, 1916." are in a notebook containing lecture notes in the William Poel Collection at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Two printed sources are: William Poel, "The Elizabethan Shakespeare," Monthly Letter, July, 1916, also in the William Poel Collection at the University of Kansas, and A. M. T[r]ethwy (ed.), Monthly Letters (London: T. Werner Laurie Ltd., 1929), pp. 53-59. Monthly Letters, edited by T[r]ethwy, is a compilation of Poel's writings taken from "a series of single-sheet leaflets" entitled Monthly Letter which were edited by Poel and "distributed monthly between 1916 and 1919, first to members of the London Shakespeare League . . . and then to selected persons." (Spaights, op. cit., p. 61f.)

49 Program, Ninth Commencement of the Carnegie Institute of Technology at Carnegie Music Hall in Pittsburgh on June 8, 1916 (Xerox from the Hunt Library at the Carnegie Institute of Technology).

Shakespeare in reply to questions about his life and plays. According to Poel, Shakespeare would have answered "a pale young curate . . . who is distressed to think that Shakespeare should advocate suicide, as is done in the play of Hamlet":

'I advocate suicide? . . . Why, those are Hamlet's words, not mine. If I remember rightly another of my characters who feigned madness to save his life, Edgar, in King Lear, expresses just the opposite opinion. And, for goodness sake, don't ask me which is my opinion. I have trouble enough sometimes to find opinions for all my characters, let alone thinking about any for myself.'

To an "academic young lady who insists on knowing why Shakespeare wrote his great tragedies," Shakespeare would have replied: "A matter not of design, but of accident, . . . and due to the Queen's dislike of the historical plays which handled too freely the doings of those in high places, and also to the success of the children at the Blackfriars' Playhouse." To the question, "Weren't you very miserable when you wrote those tragedies, Mr. Shakespeare?" Poel spoke for Shakespeare:

'Miserable? . . . Good Gracious, No! Never Happier. I was then making ten thousand dollars a year. I was able to buy more land. It was the hey-day of my life. But I don't mind telling you that when I was a younger man, and I was writing my comedies I had a love adventure which gave me exquisite pain for a time. . . . Well, some of that experience has got into my tragedies, but mind you, long after that adventure has been any serious trouble to me. Miserable? No! A man can't do

51 "Commencement At Tech Draws A Large Crowd," Pittsburgh Press, June 8, 1916, p. 4.

52 T[rethewy], op. cit., pp. 55-56.

53 Ibid., p. 56.
his work properly when he's miserable, and I’ll willingly confess I put some of my best efforts into those tragedies. You know we didn't let the Blackfriars' boys have it all their own way, and of course those little imps couldn't act tragedy. They had no experience of life to draw upon, to enable them to express its passions.'54

Poel insisted that he "refused to discuss Shakespeare except as a skilled artist, the expert in writing plays, who is the greatest artist in the domain of the drama the world has ever seen" for these reasons:

He is an expert, in contradistinction to a mere money-making craftsman, who is an amateur. He is a skilled artist because he has a natural aptitude for his work so strong that no persuasions can force him away from his special bent, and because he puts his own individual intelligence and enthusiasm into the work he fashions. He is a great artist, because he is forever striving to make the play he is at work upon better than the last one; because he refuses at anyone's bidding to turn out, I won't say a bad, but even an indifferent piece of work, whatever the public want, or think they want.55

Poel's commencement address on June 8 was his last commitment at Carnegie Tech. However, before he left Pittsburgh, he had announced his decision to produce Ben Jonson's The Poetaster in October at Carnegie Tech in honor of the Shakespeare tercentenary.56

When asked why he did not select a play written by Shakespeare, Mr. Poel explained his method of producing the English author's plays was different in many respects from the manner in which they might be produced here. He said that rather than risk criticism by a comparison untinged by understanding, he would produce his initial play here in a field in which

54Ibid., pp. 56-57. 55Ibid., p. 59.

there could be no comparison. 57

On June 14, the day he departed for England, Poel wrote to E. Raymond Bossange about the curtains and costumes which were to be used for The Poetaster.

I leave for England tonight. It occurs to me that I perhaps ought to have a letter from you if you wish me to send off one basket of curtains and one box of costumes for use in the Fall in the Poetaster. I ought to send them off by Freight Steamer early in August. They will be too heavy to take with me as Passenger luggage. I am willing to take the risk of their crossing the Atlantic if the Department will pay freight, too and fro, and the insurance. I will enquire into the cost of these as soon as I reach England, but there may not be time for me to correspond with you again before they are sent off so that I am anxious to know if I ought to have an authorization from you. 58

Poel's letter was written on stationery with the letterhead: "Hamilton Place, Paris, Canada," where Poel could have been visiting after he left Pittsburgh. Poel had visited with Paul S. Wickson 59 at Hamilton Place in December,

57 Ibid.

58 Letter from William Poel to E. Raymond Bossange, June 14, 1916 (Original located in the Department of Drama at the Carnegie Institute of Technology).

59 Paul Wickson, "an animal painter also portrait painter--lived" at Hamilton Place "for many years." He "was the son of a professor at the University of Toronto who was sent to London for his art training. In 1883 (at the age of 23) he came to Paris to visit his cousins who lived at Hamilton Place and shortly after married his third cousin, daughter of the house." (Letter from Genevieve Cooper Muir, Curator of the Local History Collection in the Paris Public Library in Paris, Canada, to the writer, January 3, 1967.)

There are eight letters, written between 1902-1914, from Paul Wickson to William Poel in the William Poel Collection at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.
1905, during his first trip to America, after he delivered a lecture on "The Elizabethan Play-house" at the University of Toronto on December 9.

In his University of Toronto lecture, Poel, using as illustration "pages of the Shakespeare quartos, contemporary cuts throwing light upon the history of the stage, and photographs of scenes in the productions of the Elizabethan Stage Society," expressed his theories concerning Shakespeare's stagecraft. He contended that only through a research of the "structure and plan" of Shakespeare's stage and a study of the "methods of stage management" on Shakespeare's stage, that is, only through discovering how Shakespeare practiced his stagecraft, could "precisely what Shakespeare meant to convey" be understood. Poel's specific conclusions concerning Shakespeare's stagecraft were Shakespeare's stage

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60 In a letter written to Professor James Mavor, "chief organizer of the Saturday lectures at the University of Toronto," Poel "requested that mail be sent to him between December 1st and 15th [1905] c/o P. S. Wickson of Hamilton Place." (Letter from Katherine Wales of the Reference Department in the University of Toronto Library in Toronto, Canada, to the writer, February 2, 1967.) William Poel's letter to James Mavor, dated November 15, 1905, and written from the City Club in New York City, 55-57 West 44th Street, is located in the University of Toronto Archives. This information was written to the writer by Miss Wales in two letters, January 20 and February 2, 1967.

61 "University Saturday Lectures," University of Toronto Monthly (January, 1906), 80 (Xerox from the University of Toronto Library).

62 Mavor, op. cit., p. 75.

63 Ibid.
was "of simple construction, coming out into the auditorium, with a passage on either side . . . often used in the movement of the play";\textsuperscript{64} Shakespeare's methods of stage management had "no pauses . . . in the movement. Lapse of time and change of place were indicated by the dialogue or by some device or movement of the actor. No attempt was made to assist or distract the imagination by the introduction of scenery";\textsuperscript{65} Shakespeare "intended his lines to be spoken fast, . . . a little louder than is customary in conversation, . . . but otherwise spoken naturally, and, therefore, with comparative rapidity";\textsuperscript{66} "dresses worn by the actors in the Shakespeare play-house were those of Shakespeare's own day, . . . appropriate to the character of the person represented."\textsuperscript{67}

The lecture about Elizabethan play-houses which Poel delivered to the students and faculty of the School of Applied Design at Carnegie Tech on June 2, 1916, could have dealt with the same content as his 1905 University of Toronto lecture, entitled "The Shakespeare Play-house," in which he advocated a presentation of Shakespeare's plays in that identical stagecraft method as practiced in the play-houses of Elizabethan times.

In the spring of 1916, Poel introduced the students of the Department of Dramatic Arts to some of his theories

\textsuperscript{64}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{65}Ibid., p. 76.
\textsuperscript{66}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{67}Ibid.
of the drama through his reading presentation of Calderon's *Life's a Dream*; in the fall of 1916, he continued to teach his theories to these students through his production of Ben Jonson's *The Poetaster*. 
CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM POEL'S THE POETASTER PRODUCTION AT THE CARNEGIE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART IN THE FALL OF 1916

When William Poel returned to the United States in the fall of 1916, his purpose was to produce Ben Jonson's The Poetaster at Carnegie Tech in October and to arrange a lecture tour throughout the United States in November and December.

The initial plans for The Poetaster at Carnegie Tech were arranged with E. Raymond Bossange, Dean of the School of Applied Design, before Poel left Pittsburgh in June of 1916. Thomas Wood Stevens, head of the Department of Dramatic Arts, was on leave of absence, directing, during the first week in June, a pageant "which celebrated the 250th anniversary of Newark, New Jersey," and during the following week, a masque and pageant in Boston "in connection with the dedication of the new buildings of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology."¹ Bossange, previously professor of design at Cornell University, came to Carnegie Tech in September, 1915,

as secretary of the School of Applied Design, and in April, 1916, was appointed Dean. With Bossange, Poel exchanged a series of letters during the summer of 1916 concerning his fall theatre work at Carnegie Tech.

Bossange confirmed the exact dates, fees, and terms of Poel's two visits to Carnegie Tech. For his three week spring visit, from May 12 through June 3, Poel was to receive a fee of $375.00; for an additional two days to this first three week period, Bossange suggested an "added $25.00 to this fee." For his three week fall visit, from October 2 through October 20, Poel was to receive another fee of $375.00. In addition, he reaffirmed that for the fall, Poel "was to select the play ... to give and also the cast of the play." Before June 14, Poel outlined his production stipulations; Bossange, who made a complete list of these items, presented them to Stevens on June 20.

Poel's requirements for The Poetaster production reveal how carefully he planned and how precisely he worked as a director: about the auditorium—"glass skylights to be

2"Mr. Bossange Appointed Dean," The Tartan, April 26, 1916, p. 1.


4Ibid.

5Letter from E. R. Bossange to William Poel, June 21, 1916 (Typed carbon copy located in the Department of Drama of the Carnegie Institute of Technology).
deafened above—a canopy hung below"; about the stage—

. . . canopy over the stage, deafening of the floor, black curtains in background (Mr. Poel will bring these from England), special stage built projecting 15' into house 16" above present stage, steps to lead from aisles up onto this stage, lighting to be provided either by central entrance or two side lights above boxes, stage furniture—Elizabethan stools;  

about the music—"string orchestra of eight pieces, musicians to be in costume, to know music by heart and do away with lights, Mr. [J. Vick] O'Brien [head of the Department of Music] to be asked to compose accompaniment for three songs"; about the dance—"Sword Dance and music for Sword Dance"; about the costumes—

. . . wardrobe mistress all the times plays are being put on, expert needle women understanding costumes, expert wig maker—to make and fit wigs, boots and shoes for the actor most important (What can be had in Pittsburgh?), helpers for dressing—actors must not be obliged to dress themselves, actors to be relieved entirely [entirely] of all anxiety concerning costumes, wigs, make up and stage settings, etc.;  

about specific acting roles—"two stage boys—short—McConnell and Price might do, two children needed—10 or 12 years old—not tall—girls preferred, Mr. Poel will bring dresses for these children to be selected to fit dresses"; about assistants—"extra men assistants whom Mr. Poel may call upon in case of need—outside of Department"; about the script—"prompters copies to be made if Mr. Poel requests";

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6 Items Needed for Mr. Poel's Play in the Fall (A two page typed list located in the Department of Drama of the Carnegie Institute of Technology).

7 Ibid.
about rehearsal—"schedule to be arranged so as to permit call rehearsals of individuals at any time and ensemble for all actors"; about the selection of actors—"mistake to try to combine acting, scene painting, and stage management—try students as actors first—if unsuccessful at that allow specialization"; about understudies and the tradition of a part—"actor should train an understudy to carry on the tradition of every part, certain classic plays should always be kept up—given every year and be always ready—only way to pass on tradition"; about the total production—"impossible for the actor to act in the proper spirit unless every item of costume, stage setting and properties are perfect."\(^8\)

Poel's concern over these various items which he believed essential for his production was explained to Bossange.

Of course these are the very matters which give me so much anxiety because I know how impossible it is for me to give an interesting performance unless my characters are properly costumed and 'made up.' And knowing that there may be difficulties in getting what is necessary for this purpose in America, as so very little Elizabethan costume is used over there of a correct kind, I am bringing out additional things which I have hired from London costumiers and to whom I hold myself responsible.\(^9\)

These "additional things" included goods "hired" for fifteen pounds; wigs, for three pounds; and the "music for songs and

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\(^8\)Ibid.

\(^9\)Letter from William Poel to E. R. Bossange, August 23, 1916 (Original located in the Department of Drama of the Carnegie Institute of Technology).
dance" arranged by Arnold Dolmetsch, for three pounds, "as...the music ought to be in character."\textsuperscript{10}

Poel reasoned the importance of the correct costuming: "Unfortunately Elizabethan costume is unlike Greek or classical costumes. It cannot be 'faked,' and the details are endless."\textsuperscript{11} Consequently, on August 29, Poel shipped from England to Carnegie Tech "three boxes and three baskets, . . . practically the complete production for the \textit{Poetaster}, . . . [including] the wigs, boots, and most of the props."\textsuperscript{12}

Poel explained to Bossange:

Although the cost of transit is increased, I am hoping this will prove the cheapest outlay in the end, for we shall only need the help of a work-woman for the last week, and we shall try and pick up a hairdresser in the town only if it is absolutely necessary. If I have done wrong, it is not altogether my fault—for I have not heard again from W. Stevens since his letter dated July 31st in which he wrote 'I will sometime during the present week write you fully, stating my understanding of these matters' [items I had mentioned to you] \textsuperscript{sic} 'indicating the steps we propose to take in order to supply them.' In the uncertainty therefore as to what was being done I thought I had better send out the original production.\textsuperscript{13}

This "original production" was Poel's production of \textit{The Poetaster} with the Shakespeare Stage Society for the 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary which was performed three times in London, on April 26 at 8:45 P.M. at the Apothecaries' Hall

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{11}Ibid. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{12}Letter from William Poel to E. R. Bossange, August 29, 1916 (Original located in the Department of Drama of the Carnegie Institute of Technology). \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
for the London Shakespeare League, and on April 27 at 5 P.M.
and 8 P.M. at the Small Theatre, the Royal Albert Hall.¹⁴

Poel made numerous inquiries and requests of Bossange
concerning his fall visit to Carnegie Tech. Poel asked that
he be "again allowed . . . the sole use of the room under-
ground adjoining the Sculptor's Studio," because it was the
"only place" where it was "possible to work at the vocaliza-
tion of the play"; that his "theatrical wardrobe . . . be
kept in a room by itself" and that he be present when these
costume boxes were opened; that it would take him "quite
three weeks to teach and rehearse the players, so that the
play ought not to be acted before the 23rd or 24th"; that he
left on the "secretary's table a parcel with six copies of
the Poetaster in it" for use upon his return; that he would
"again" like to "be put up at the [Pittsburgh] Athletic
Association Club . . . in his "old room 422"; and that he was
writing to "W. Stevens telling him of these different matters
as possibly some of them come under his jurisdiction."¹⁵
Poel concluded that he expected to leave England on or about
September 19.

On September 30, Poel arrived in Pittsburgh; on October
2, he began his work with the students of the Department of

¹⁴Program of The Poetaster (Xerox from the Victoria
and Albert Museum in London).

¹⁵Letter from Poel to Bossange, August 29, 1916, loc.
cit.
Dramatic Arts at Carnegie Tech. Described as the "first purely Elizabethan production in the United States," The Poetaster was given at Carnegie Tech on October 25, 26, and 27, then taken to Detroit for three performances at the Detroit Museum of Art on December 1 and 2, and finally repeated at Carnegie Tech on December 5 and 6. Poel's American performances of The Poetaster marked the first time the play had been presented in this country and the third time the play had been "publicly played since Jonson's time." On April 26, in the Apothecaries' Hall, the original site of the Blackfriars Theatre, and on April 27, at the Small Theatre, the Royal Albert Hall, Poel presented The Poetaster for the second time in England since the first production, as privately acted in 1601 at the Blackfriars Theatre by the Children of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel Royal.

Poel's notes in The Poetaster three production programs,

16Letter from Thomas Wood Stevens to J. B. Hench, loc. cit.
18Program of The Poetaster (Located in The Poetaster promptbook at the Carnegie Institute of Technology).
19Program of The Poetaster (Located in The Poetaster promptbook at the Carnegie Institute of Technology).

The story of Poetaster deals with the adventures of young Ovid and his friends at court, who meet at the house of a city jeweler, Albius, and his wife, Chloe, to carry on their love intrigues. In return for this hospitality the citizen and his wife are entertained at court by the emperor's daughter, Julia, unknown to her father. For imitating in a profane way the persons of the gods and goddesses in what the young people call a 'heavenly' banquet, the lovers are disgraced by the emperor and banished. Thus the 'Comical Satire' has an unhappy ending.22

Poel explains how this "comical satire" was "conveyed to an Elizabethan audience by Ben Jonson in the episode of a 'heavenly' banquet."23

The author, in the person of Horace, laments the disaster that has befallen the young people, and since the incident of the gods' banquet is modelled by Ben Jonson upon the synod of the Iliad, it is probably a satire upon Chapman's ecstatic admiration for Homer's heroes. Those who had never read Homer in the original must have been shocked at the behavior of the pagan deities, and the words put into the mouth of Julia, 'Gods may grow impudent in iniquity and must not be told of it' must have appealed to the humor of the groundlings. In the character of Caesar, Jonson shows the pedant who takes the Homer legend seriously and defends what in reality is incapable of defense. If Shakespeare's comedy, Troilus and Cressida, was acted in 1598, and immediately suppressed on account of the offense it gave to Chapman's allies the scholars, as a malicious piece of 'ignorance and impiety,' Jonson's satire may refer to that. In Poetaster he seems to be defending someone from attack who has dared to laugh at Chapman's idol, and continually in the play is Jonson attacking Chapman for the same reason as Shakespeare did; so that Jonson may be consciously defending

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22 Program of The Poetaster production given at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, loc. cit.

23 Ibid.
his brother-author from what he thought was an unwarranted prejudice against Shakespeare's satirical composition.24

According to Poel, "from allusions in the play one gathers that Shakespeare had already written Troilus and Cressida . . . [which] had been suppressed on account of the offense it gave to the allies of Chapman, who took seriously the Roman gods";25 hence, Poel surmises "the likelihood of Jonson's defending Shakespeare's suppressed play."26 Furthermore, Poel believed that there was . . . no evidence that Shakespeare and Jonson were not on very good terms in 1601. In every way was it to Jonson's interest to keep friends with one who could do so much to forward his interests at the Globe Theatre, and Poetaster was the last play Jonson wrote for the children of the Blackfriars Theatre, since he seemed anxious to resume his connections with the Globe.27

Jonson's next play, Sejanus, was produced at the Globe Theatre in 1603.

To Poel, The Poetaster was "full of personalities and brought onto the stage a unique gallery of Jonson's friends . . . and enemies";28 "Ben Jonson introduces his own personality in the character of Horace, Shakespeare can be

24Ibid.

25Program of The Poetaster production given at the Detroit Museum of Art, loc. cit.


27Program of The Poetaster production given at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, loc. cit.

28Ibid.
identified under the disguise of Virgil, while the dramatists Dekker and Marston appear as Demetrius and Crispinus." However, Poel felt that the "satire connected with Marston in the character of Crispinus" was "out-of-date" and had "become the least interesting part of the comedy." The play also "shows the quarrelings between rival companies of actors, ridicules the bombastic language of the older plays, and introduces Jonson's most famous comic character, Captain Tucca." Moreover, "although the characters and events are supposed to belong to the time of the Emperor Augustus in Rome, the period is Elizabethan, and the comedie gives an excellent idea of contemporary London." 

Poel concluded that "Jonson used the sub plot of 'Poetaster' for satirical purposes, as well as the main plot, and the two are thus linked." 

Caesar is informed of the banquet through an actor, he interrupts the banquet, banishing the lover and locking up his daughter. Horace is accused by the banqueters of having betrayed them but Horace attacks the player and the authority; . . . For since Jonson could not in Blackfriars abuse the censors, he makes Caesar become incensed at the impudence of the citizens in daring to counterfeit the divine gods, while Horace, out of reach of Caesar's ear, berates the spy and the player for mistaking the shadow for the substance and for regarding

29 "Producer's Notes" about The Poetaster (William Poel's unsigned one page manuscript located in the Department of Drama at the Carnegie Institute of Technology).

30 Program of The Poetaster production given at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, loc. cit.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

play acting as if it were political conspiracy.  

Although Poel acknowledged The Poetaster was not one of Jonson's "best constructed" plays, he believed "the brilliancy [sic] of its dialogue, its characterization, wit and humour" was "not exceeded in anyone [sic] of the author's dramas."  

Poel "intended to give as nearly as possible a replica of one of those performances" as "originally acted by the boys of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel, ... beautifully staged in rich costumes, ... [and] preceded by a 'delightful musical entertainment' given by them in their scarlet and gold uniforms."  
The Poetaster as revived by Poel was "an Elizabethan play, accurately produced after the manner of those days."  

According to Thomas Wood Stevens, Poel "did not intend to make the production in any sense an archaeological reproduction of the play as it was originally given but rather a production in accordance with the acting methods of the period."  

Since the play "was written with a view for its performance, not by the professional actors of the theatres of the Bankside, but by the Children of the Chapel

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34Ibid.

35"Producer's Notes" about The Poetaster, loc. cit.

36Program of The Poetaster production given at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, loc. cit.

37Program of The Poetaster production given at the Detroit Museum of Art, loc. cit.

38Letter from Stevens to Hench, loc. cit.
Royal 'the other side of the Tyber,'" Poel believed it was "essentially and by origin a young people's play" and insisted it be acted "by young people." In addition, Poel emphasized the essential feature characteristic of the Elizabethan stage.

The stage [Carnegie Institute of Technology and Detroit Museum of Art] resembles that of the Blackfriars playhouse, but it was not usual for the hangings to be black except when tragedy was acted. The black colors on this occasion is used the better to throw into relief the figures; the essential feature of the Elizabethan stage being that the figures stood out of the picture frame and appeared in the auditorium where they were the sole object to attract the eye.

Poel's stage for The Poetaster was a platform stage without scenery, but with a balcony, up center stage, bordered on both sides by black curtains. The "specially constructed stage" extended "into the auditorium as a kind of stage 'apron' giving a working stage twenty-five feet deep and thirty feet wide." Steps were placed on this apron: extreme right front, extreme left front, and "a double pair directly in front, . . . leading to the right and left center." The up center balcony, "painted brown," was a "rough scaffolding supporting a balustrade, that served as an opening in a hedge, a doorway or support to a balcony as

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39 Program of The Poetaster production given at the Apothecaries' Hall in London, loc. cit.

40 "Producer's Notes" about The Poetaster, loc. cit.

41 Beatty, op. cit., I, p. 20.

42 Ibid. 43 Ibid.
occasion required," and enabled the characters to pass under and "enter or exit to and from right and left rear." A floor plan sketch of Poel's platform stage is as follows:

![Floor plan sketch of Poel's platform stage]

The stage floor and steps and the two benches, up right and up left, were covered with black velvet. Seats on stage also included two three-legged English stools and a grey English chair.

The stage lighting effect was that of "suffused daylight, ... light as would illuminate all the personages without bringing into prominence the setting."

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44 "First Purely Elizabethan Production in the U. S.," loc. cit.

45 Beatty, loc. cit.

46 Ibid.


48 "First Purely Elizabethan Production in the U. S.," loc. cit.

The stage lighting was obtained by two baby spots, through two apertures in the rear wall of the theatre, some ten or twelve feet from the floor; to 'kill' the too conspicuous spotlight effect a 1000-watt lamp was placed directly above the stage, so arranged that the light did not strike the spectators who sat in the front row of seats.50

Standing out in bold relief against the black velvet curtains on the platform stage were the characters in rich Elizabethan costumes, loaned by the Elizabethan Stage Society which used these same costumes in Poel's English production. These costumes, along with the habits and manners of the characters, were authentically Elizabethan.

Details concerning ruffs, collars, sashes, gloves, chains, both in material and colour, were as accurate as specialists could determine. For instance, the poorer classes wore bright colours, the nobility choosing the more somber shades, black being very costly and worn only by those who could afford it; hats were elaborately trimmed; the aristocracy wore or carried gloves highly decorated in gold and seed pearls; the lace collars and ruffs matched; stays were worn by men; men wore their hair unparted and did not remove their hats in-doors.51

The description of the costumes, personal properties, and in some cases the make up of each of the characters in The Poetaster reveals the exact detail of Elizabethan dress which Poel used in the production.52

50Beatty, loc. cit.

51Ibid.

52The Characters with a Description of Their Costumes and Personal Properties (Typed original, with two carbons, located in the Department of Drama at the Carnegie Institute of Technology).
Envy: flowing robe of vivid blue-green, mass of Titian hair inter-twined by many small green serpents, huge green serpent about left arm and shoulder, 'Apple of Discord' in right hand;

An Armed Prologue, a person in armour to defend the Author against the attacks of his adversaries, and detractors: youth in complete armor, naked sword;

Publius Ovid, in love with Julia: brown suit of student-at-law (without robe), doublet and hose, carries scroll;

Luscus, Ovid's servant: doublet and hose of brown, tunic, plain collar and cuffs, helmet-like hat, dark brown wig, face smooth, carries law-book and robe of black and brown for Publius Ovid;

Marc Ovid, his father: costume of a peer, peascod doublet, ruffs, sash, shoulder cape, chain of Rank (worn on top of all garments), feathered hat, gloves, boots reaching above knees, Georgian staff, grey wig;

Pantilius Tucca, a braggart captain: leather doublet, slashed breeches, soldier's coat of buckskin, military sash, elaborately trimmed hat, gloves, leather boots, sword, stiletto beard and an up-turned mustache;

Asinius Lupus, a lawyer: robes of brown silk and velvet, collar and cuffs, gloves, helmet-like hat, chain of order, small sword, dark brown wig, smooth face, legal scrolls and law-books;

Tucca's Two Pages, Pyrgi: Indian youths, gaudy oriental gowns, turbans, sashes, sandals;

Albius, a jeweler and salesman: brown doublet and hose, grey cape with sleeves (trimmed in black fur), starched collar and cuffs indicative of his prosperity, yellow shoulder wig, small stiletto beard, mustache;

Crispinus, one of the gentry who writes for the theatres:

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53 Program of The Poetaster production given at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, loc. cit. All characters' names are according to Poel's listing and description in this program.
black velvet doublet, slashed breeches trimmed in gold, silk hose, black velvet shoulder cape, lace collar and lace cuffs, feathered turban-hat, flat shoes with rosettes, small sword, lorgnette, perfumed lace kerchief, red wig, small stiletto beard, red mustache;

Chloe, the jeweler's wife: 'whale-bone bodice' and 'bum-rowls' supporting her skirt of grey satin, top coat of grey cloth with narrow sleeves, plain collar and cuffs, apron of black satin and lace, brown frizzled hair partly covered by a black velvet hood;

Chloe's Maid: grey bodice and skirt, plain collar and cuffs, white apron and cap;

Cytheris, a lady of the court residing in the house of Chloe: orange tinted gown with stomacher and farthingale, trimmed in gold and pearls, wide lace collar supported by an 'under proper' of wire (thus framing the face), hair dressed in a small blue velvet hair-covering;

Cornelius Gallus: black doublet and hose, black shoulder cape, ruff and cuffs, chain, gloves, small sword, feathered hat, brown wig;

Tibullus, a Courtier in love with Plautia: green velvet doublet, slashed breeches, silk hose, shoulder cape, lace ruff and cuffs, feathered hat, jeweled gloves, a chain and sword, black wig;

Julia, the Emperor's daughter: light blue gown with stomacher and farthingale, with silver spangles, lace collar and cuffs, small beaded hair-covering of silver;

Plautia, her attendant: yellow figured gown, but without farthingale;

Hermogenes, the Emperor's musician: red doublet and hose, black satin and cloth cape (with sleeves), ruff and cuffs trimmed in gold, black flat hat, light hair, forked beard and divided mustache, carry lute;

Minos, an apothecary: black doublet and black knee

54 The name, Cornelius Gallus, is omitted from the list of characters in the programs.
breeches, black hose, half-length grey cloth cape, starched collar and cuffs, Copatain hat, gloves, black rosetted shoes, grey wig, scattered whiskers, large spectacles;

Two Bailiffs, Lictors: leather jerkins over brown trunk hose, flat hats, carry staves;

Histrio, an actor of the Globe Theater: purple and white-striped trunk hose, paltock (short jacket), short blue velvet cape, long-toed cracowes (shoes);

Demetrius, a needy dramatist: brown doublet and hose, flat hat of cloth, no wig, no ruff or cuffs;

Augustus Caesar, one who honors pagan deities: long white tunic (short sleeves) heavily beaded and decorated in gold thread and gold lace, belt of leather studded with gold, ruff and cuffs of gold lace, long wide-sleeved robe of red velvet trimmed in ermine, white hose, gold boot-sandsals lacing to the knee, gold laurel crown, grey wig;

Virgil, supposed to be Shakespeare: black doublet and hose, wide collar, cuffs, small mustache and beard (the Droeshout Shakespeare);

Horace, supposed to be Ben Jonson: Brown and black doublet and hose, long black sleeved cape reaching almost to the floor, small brown flat hat, black shoulder wig, smooth face;

Knight attending Caesar, or Mecaenas: same dress as that of Caesar except that the Knight wears a gold and white hat and the decorations are not as elaborate as those of Caesar, does not wear a robe;

Halberdiers, or 'Beefeaters': red skirt-like jerkins with sleeves trimmed in black satin, red hose, black shoes, flat red hats, ruffs and cuffs, carry halbreds;

Choir Boys: gowns of Eucharistic red over which were worn white surplices;

Blue Coat Boys: blue coats reaching to the ankle, hose of white silk, low sandals, narrow leather belts, white stock collars and white cuffs.
In dressing all the Romans as Elizabethans, Poel provided still another part of the humor of the play.\textsuperscript{55} Poel's costumes, demonstrating Jonson's commentary of contemporary Elizabethan life and manners, were "full of meaning in their subtle class distinctions."\textsuperscript{56}

Believing that the Elizabethans used a prescribed and definite manner and method of speech and action for the stage, Poel's work with the students included a vocal training. Thomas Wood Stevens estimated Poel's vocal training as follows:

I think it [\textit{The Poetaster}] is going to be unusually interesting for whether one likes Mr. Poel's staging or not there is always the interest and vitality of his method of reading, and I have found few people who can make an old play as vivid to the student as Poel. In fact, I regard him as a remarkable teacher of acting.\textsuperscript{57}

Since Poel insisted that the Elizabethan drama was "intimate and colloquial," he "protested against the so-called 'dignity'" employed in reading the lines; he maintained that "even the diction of tragedy was given 'tripplingly on the tongue,'" not stressing every word of the line but only two or three, for only in this way could the longer plays come within the compass of the 'two hours' traffic of

\textsuperscript{55}Beatty, \textit{loc. cit.}

\textsuperscript{56}"First Purely Elizabethan Production in the U.S.,” \textit{loc. cit.}

\textsuperscript{57}Letter from Thomas Wood Stevens to Montrose J. Moses of New York City, September 30, 1916 (Xerox from the Thomas Wood Stevens Collection in the University Library Special Collections at the University of Arizona in Tucson).
the stage." Poel's contention was that "the speech of an Elizabethan play should be as much like a conversation as possible—a conversation of Shakespeare's time." In his opinion, "the redundancy of emphasis . . . is in large measure responsible for the slowness and heaviness that has been brought into Shakespeare in modern productions." In addition, Poel maintained that "to the Elizabethan dramatists and to Shakespeare in particular, the cast of a play was a vocal symphony," and that this "orchestral effect out of the vocalization, . . . holds the dramatic interest and creates the atmosphere of Elizabethan drama." Therefore, the actor was cast as a character when he or she possessed the particular type of voice characterizing that part.

Each character as sketched by the dramatist, implies to him [Poel], a particular type of voice. One may be nasal, another rumbling, and another verging toward falsetto. He constantly speaks of the 'tone' of a character, meaning almost literally the musical pitch of the voice.

Poel selected each voice "not only with reference to the particular character to be played, but also with regard to its relation to other voices." To Poel, "the play . . . is above all a symphony of many blending tones, . . . and 'the theatre is a place in which to hear.'"

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58 Beatty, op. cit., I, p. 18.
60 Ibid.
61 Beatty, loc. cit.
62 Moderwell, loc. cit.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
The Elizabethans used boys to act women's roles; Poel sometimes used women to act men's roles. Thomas Wood Stevens explained that Poel put "all faith in the pitch and modulation of the voice; character is expressed through its 'tune.' Now this 'tune,' the characteristic total of the readings, with their pitches and inflections all designed, is the entire vocal expression of a given part."\(^{65}\) To Poel, . . . the other potentialities of the actor are secondary. Gesture, facial expression, personal appearance, matter comparatively little. If the voice completely characterize the personage, other matters will take care of themselves. For outside the manipulation of voice, in comedy especially, there is little 'acting' to be done.\(^{66}\)

In practice, after Poel read the play to the group of actors, he dwelled upon the "tune" of each character: Poel taught each character in the play his "tune" for "every line of every speech most minutely and accurately" working with the cast singly, in pairs, in small groups, and finally as a whole so that "a harmony of voices and a variety of cadences was obtained that gave to the whole a note of naturalness and finish."\(^{67}\)

Some of the "vocal expression" which Poel taught the Carnegie Tech actors for *The Poetaster* characters was marked in one of the script copies of *The Poetaster* used at Carnegie


\(^{66}\)M[oderwell], *loc. cit.*

\(^{67}\)Beatty, *loc. cit.*
Tech by Poel's assistant director, T. Bayard Beatty, a faculty member of the Department of Dramatic Arts.\textsuperscript{68} Inflection and emphasis in the "vocal expression" of the lines and an indication of the pace of the speeches can be deduced from these markings. In addition, to some speeches there are written directions which indicate the mood of the lines and the action that accompanies the lines. One example can be found in the speech of Tibullus in which Ovid Junior passionately proclaims his love for Julia; the markings and directions with the lines indicate the "vocal expression" and pace of the speech and also set the mood and action for the speech.

\begin{verbatim}
Tib. Publius, thou'lt lose thyself. \textsuperscript{Laughing heartily.}
Ovid. Oh, in no labyrinth can I safelier err, Than when I lose myself in praising her.
Hence, law, and welcome Muses, though not rich, Yet are you pleasing: let's be reconciled, And now made one. Henceforth, I promise faith And all my serious hours to spend with you; With you, whose music striketh on my heart, And with bewitching tones steals forth my spirit.
In Julia's name; fair Julia: Julia's love Shall be a law, and that sweet law I'll study.
The law and art of sacred Julia's love:
All other objects will but objects prove.\textsuperscript{69}
\end{verbatim}

This script copy which also contains details as to cuts and arrangement of lines and speeches was used as a preliminary script guide by Beatty when he began his work as


\textsuperscript{69}Ibid., p. 243.
Poel's assistant director. Subsequently, Beatty prepared


The prompt-book

... records the 'business' of the players, the necessary 'cuts' and 'arrangements', the personal and general 'props', together with such other matter as the director thought necessary for the performance. To make this book pages of two copies of 'poetaster' *[sic]* were pasted on the leaves of a note book, the 'cuts' and 'arrangements' were entered and other general directions were indicated on the margins of the leaves of the note book; then all was assembled and the note book thumb indexed so that one could turn instantly to any act or scene desired.70

The prompt-book records the following "business"

written *verso* the script page; the example used is the Ovid Junior speech quoted previously.

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Tib. Publius, thou'lt lose thyself.
Ovid. Oh, in no labyrinth can I safelier err,
Than when I lose myself in praising her.
Hence, law, and welcome Muses, though not rich,
Yet are you pleasing: let's be reconciled,
And new made one. Henceforth, I promise faith
With you, whose music striketh on my heart,
And with bewitching tones steals forth my spirit,
In Julia's name; fair Julia: Julia's love
Shall be a law, and that sweet law I'll study,
The law and art of sacred Julia's love:
All other objects will but objects prove.—Exit.
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By the time the prompt-book was made, Poel had completed his initial work in "vocal expression" with the students and was working to incorporate the "business" of the play into the production.

A combination of the script pages from the prompt-book and the preliminary script copy shows a total production


Poel's adaptation of *The Poetaster* includes changes in the following elements:

1. characters: Poel drops Propertius, Aristius, Trebatius, and Aesop;

2. cuts: Poel eliminates most of the literary quarrel in the play;

3. rearrangement of lines: Poel reassigns lines to other characters in the play, lifts lines and placed these in a different order in the play, and adds words to lines and lines to the play;

4. word changes: Poel changes words, for example, ten drachms to sixpences.

About his shortened version of *The Poetaster*, Poel wrote:

I candidly admit that it is not possible for me to defend the liberty I have taken with Ben Jonson's work in omitting so much of his text. I do not acknowledge that there is such a thing as a prompt copy of a writer's play if it has become a classic and if it was originally produced in the form in which it was written because the whole play constitutes the prompt copy. This statement may seem to be inconsistent with my letter to W. Lodge, but in reality it
Lodge had criticized Poel's English production of *The Poetaster*.

This play was cut all through; any strong, or as people call them, 'coarse' expressions, were left out, even Captain Tucca, one of the best parts in any comedy, was emasculated and spoiled, though the player was good; Virgil, whose face was made up after a portrait of Shakespeare, was played without vigour or energy or one hint of the overflowing vitality which must have informed our greatest man, so that one could far more easily have believed it was Shakespeare had the face been left alone and some energy and manliness been put into the part. The central scene of this play is, of course, the famous basin scene, in which Crispinus is made to bring up the crude and ill-digested words he is so fond of in his writing. 'Hamlet' without the Prince of Denmark, would be as interesting as the 'Poetaster' without his basin. How was this played? It was done 'off.' Noises were made behind the scenes, and we were asked to be satisfied with that, instead of one of the most amusing scenes in drama.

Poel replied to Lodge's criticism concerning his cuts and his playing of the basin scene off-stage.

The question whether an Elizabethan play should be shortened or not in presentation of the modern stage must be determined by its dramatic, as distinct from its literary, merits. There is, in my opinion, no justification for inflicting on the public an imperfectly constructed play, merely because it is three hundred years old, and has been written by a man with a big literary reputation. When Ben Jonson followed the Latin form of construction, as he did in 'The Silent Woman,' 'The Alchemist,' and 'Volpone,' he wrote good drama, but his satirical plays, written for

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71 Letter from William Poel to T. Bayard Beatty, January 3, 1919. The original letter was given by Beatty to the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1959.

72 O. W. F. Lodge, "The Playing of Shakespeare," Shakespeare League Journal, July, 1918. This issue was sent to T. Bayard Beatty by William Poel; Beatty gave it to the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1959.
the children at Blackfriars, were very carelessly put together, and it was 'on the score of art,' and for no other reason, that I omitted scenes and dialogue from 'Poetaster.' . . . To bring on the basin in 'Poetaster,' before an unimaginative audience, would be a dramatic mistake on the part of a modern producer, for it then would be obvious to everyone that the man was not really vomiting. The scene went very well, as it was played in 1916, both in London and Pittsburgh, and no one among the audience, but Mr. Lodge apparently, was in any doubt that 'Poetaster' had brought up the objectionable words.  

Poel's argument was that "everything depends upon the conditions under which it is produced."  

But a play, whether it is an old or a modern one, when it is acted, must come within the possibilities of the actor's powers of interpreting it, if not the representation will give the audience no adequate idea of the author's play, and there is often no choice left to the producer between omitting scenes or passages because the available talent is not of a sufficiently skilled nature to do justice to them, or to prejudice the success of the play through inefficiency [sic] on the part of the performers.

Poel's argument, however, was "not intended as a reflection on the young students who took part in the performances of the Poetaster either in London or Pittsburgh"; to Poel, "not on the professional stage" of 1916, "except, perhaps, in the National Theatre in France, could be found actors capable of doing justice to Ben Jonson's characters or verse."  

Disagreeing with Lodge about Poel's English production, T. Fairman Ordish, one of the vice-presidents of the

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74Letter from Poel to Beatty, loc. cit.
75Ibid.
76Ibid.
London Shakespeare League, contended that the "text of the play had been dealt with in a courageous manner." 77

Much of the matter relating to a contemporary theatrical war, of which the key is missing, was judiciously omitted. On the other hand, the supplementary dialogue between the Author of the play and an interlocutor was deftly introduced in the course of the action. With this compression and addition the play gained in homogeneity [sic], and, especially for the occasion, in completeness of effect. 78

"The Apologetical Dialogue" was the scene which Poel retained in the English performance but omitted in the Carnegie Tech performance. Poel "rarely used the same version twice for an Elizabethan play." 79

The programs for the Carnegie Tech and Detroit Museum of Art productions do not indicate what actors played which roles. Student-actors' names were printed in alphabetical order under the listing of characters in the play. Poel's theory was that the audience would then remember the character in Jonson's play rather than the actor playing that character.

In the remainder of this chapter, excerpts from newspaper reviews of the Carnegie Tech and the Detroit Museum of Art productions and excerpts from letters received by the writer from cast members and from interviews with cast members of The Poetaster are presented to provide information

77T. Fairman Ordish, "Poetaster," Monthly Letter, May, 1916. This issue was sent to Beatty by Poel; Beatty gave it to the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1959.

78Ibid.

79Letter from Poel to Beatty, loc. cit.
on the more important aspects of the production.

Jonson's play as a dramatic work for the stage was criticised.

'Poetaster' is not one of Jonson's best works. A great deal of its points is purely topical and has evaporated with the passing of years; for the 'war of the theatres' and the merits or demerits of such dramatists as Marston and Dekker are no longer matters of interest except to the antiquary.—The Pittsburgh Gazette Times

The presence of purely topical 'hits' in the play detracts from great interest in the work, except to the student and the antiquarian.—The Pittsburgh Sun

... the play has long been considered by scholars and readers to be the least actable, and the most confused in plot and thought, of all Jonson's works. Certainly it lacks almost completely those elements which are likely to make an Elizabethan revival (of the usual sort) interesting to present-day theatre-goers. It is not distinguished by beautiful verse, or by poetry of thought, or by stirring story.—Theatre Arts Magazine

Specific comments about the costumes; the stage and technical aspects; the direction, blocking and stage movement; the acting; and the music and dance reveal the details in Poel's Pittsburgh and Detroit productions.

THE COSTUMES:

The costumes were gorgeous, ... [and] said to have been absolutely true to the life of the times; more important than that, they were true to atmosphere—brilliant, harmonious, picturesque but not bizarre.—Theatre Arts Magazine


81"Tech Students Revive Jonson's Poetaster," The Pittsburgh Sun, October 26, 1916, p. 3.

The costumes . . . were rich and beautiful. . . . The most gorgeously attired person in the cast is Eula N. Guy as Cytheris.—Pittsburg Press

The costumes . . . were rich and elegant, and by no means the least consideration of the production.—The Tartan

The costumes . . . were surely as rich as those of the seventeenth century and infinitely more beautiful than anything recent audiences have been permitted to see. . . . While the play is supposed to be laid in Rome, the scene is really seventeenth century London, and the costumes are an Elizabethan's idea of classic garb. Young Ovid, for instance, who is supposed to be a Roman, is attired in doublet and hose, sandals with pom poms, an Eton collar and a toga that resembles an English raincoat. More markedly Elizabethan, perhaps, is Ovid, the elder, who has a Van Dyke beard, a cavalier's hat and a black and gold tunic; while Pantilla [Pantilius] Tucca, one of the characters who supplies the comic element, is adorned with a small mustache. Typically seventeenth century, too, are Tucca's two pages, small blackamoors, in exceedingly Oriental costumes of turbans, sashes and Turkish sandals. And [Tucca's] Page No 1 is perhaps the most hybrid Roman at the 'heavenly' banquet, where he serves nectar, additionally attired in a red page's cape and a cap of grapes and cloth of gold. . . . The most gorgeously attired and, at the same time, the most beautiful person in the cast, is Eula N Guy as Cytheris, in orange velvet, gold lace and a small blue velvet hair covering, her face oval and fragile as peach glow.—The Pittsburg Dispatch

First there is the rich beauty of the Elizabethan costumes against the plain black hangings of the stage.—unidentified Detroit newspaper

. . . the costumes . . . were elaborate and striking. The

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85 "Drama Department Produces Poetaster," The Tartan, November 1, 1916, p. 5.

86 "Jonson Comedy Is Beautiful," The Pittsburg Dispatch, October 26, 1916, p. 5.

87 An unidentified Detroit newspaper clipping in the Scrapbook of Hazel Beck Lees.
young lady who played Augustus Caesar was painfully weighted down with her ponderous garments. Dresses shouted and hats crowed to elaborate Elizabethan style.—Boston Evening Transcript

THE STAGE AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS:

The stage was so arranged that the Elizabethan forestage was retained, the back of the stage being simply hung in deep green [sic] velvet.—Pittsburg Press

The stage was extended into the audience after the manner of the Elizabethan stage.—The Pittsburgh Sun

Mr. Poel, following the tradition of the Elizabethan stage, brought the actors into closer contact with the spectator by extending the stage into the auditorium.—The Pittsburgh Gazette Times

In the matter of settings, Mr. Poel believes that beautiful backgrounds detract from the action of the play. The stage was so arranged that the Elizabethan fore-stage was retained, the back of the stage being simply hung in deep green [sic] velvet, which, while not obtruding itself upon the eye, by very contrast focuses attention upon the actors. There is an entrance at the back, bordered by a rough scaffolding, which serves as an opening in a hedge, a doorway, or the support to a balcony, as occasion requires.—The Pittsburg Dispatch

A single opening in the black curtain revealed a small doorway with a balcony above it; a general entrance and exit leading to and from all sorts of places.—unidentified Detroit newspaper

88M[oderwell], loc. cit.
89"Carnegie Tech Students Present 'Poetaster, '" loc. cit.
90"Tech Students Revive Jonson's Poetaster," loc. cit.
91"Ben Jonson's 'Poetaster' Revived by Tech Students," loc. cit.
92"Jonson Comedy Is Beautiful," loc. cit.
93An unidentified Detroit newspaper clipping in the Scrapbook of Hazel Beck Lees.
There is no scenery, but the spectators are asked to imagine the scene changed from time to time, now representing a Roman street, now the home of the jeweler and now the palace of the emperor.—The Detroit News

THE DIRECTION, BLOCKING AND STAGE MOVEMENT:

The players made their entrances and exits more frequently through the audience than from behind the scenes.—The Pittsburgh Gazette Times

With the conclusion of the musical program a loud knocking behind the scenes riveted attention upon the stage with its sombre velvet background and subdued lighting and out of its shadow emerged the most impressive dramatic figure in the entire production, Envy, clad in flowing robes of vivid blue greens which threw into high relief the massa of Titian hair in which the greenish coils of many snakes gleamed, while one wound its length about his extended arm, its head reared and fangs protruding. The appeal to the imagination was instant and insistent. This is the unforgettable picture in the play.—The Tartan

... like a Rosetti painting is the Julia, of Ena Lewis, in the balcony scene where she leans from the half darkness of back stage to toss a rose to her lover, in the spotlight below.—The Pittsburg Dispatch

... characters refused to confine their activities to the stage, but as well made free use of both aisles.—Partially identified Detroit newspaper

... pages carrying forth signs announcing the locale or the fact that an 'Interval' has arrived.—Unidentified Detroit newspaper

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95"Ben Jonson's 'Poetaster' Revived by Tech Students," loc. cit.

96"Drama Department Produces Poetaster," loc. cit.

97"Jonson Comedy Is Beautiful," loc. cit.


99An unidentified Detroit newspaper clipping in the Scrapbook of Hazel Beck Lees.
The characters enter through the audience; at each side of the stage stands a burly beef-eater, . . . --The Detroit News\(^\text{100}\)

Envy, having passed out through the auditorium, Prologue took his station beside the stage with the groundlings, close to some of the lusty beef-eaters who throughout the performance flank the stage. . . . Characters entered nonchalantly and servants brought in what chairs or properties the scene required.--Boston Evening Transcript\(^\text{101}\)

**THE ACTING:**

The actors of the institute gave the play in animated style, giving a noteworthy presentation of the manners of the Elizabethan stage. While the work of the entire cast was of merit, particular skill was displayed by Veolante Bollinger, Ena Lewis, Blanche Levy, C. Frederick [Fredrick] Steen, Frederick [Frederic] McConnell, and Arleigh B. Williamson.--The Pittsburgh Sun\(^\text{102}\)

. . . the players (as Hamlet wished) speaking their lines trippingly on the tongue, in some instances a little too trippingly. The cast was of such excellence that it would perhaps be invidious to single out special performances for mention, although a word should be said for the work of Veolante Bollinger, Ena Lewis, Blanche Levy, C. Frederick [Fredrick] Steen, Frederick [Frederic] McConnell and Arleigh B. Williamson in some of the most arduous parts.\(^\text{103}\) . . . The dramatic class played the several roles with less evidence of awkwardness than would naturally be expected when the changing forms of drama and acting that have taken place in three centuries are considered.--The Pittsburgh Gazette Times\(^\text{104}\)

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100 "Ancient Comedy Delights Crowd," loc. cit.

101 M[oderwell], loc. cit.


103 "Ben Jonson's 'Poetaster' Revived by Tech Students," loc. cit.

... the careful and accurate acting done by the large group of students. ... Mr. [Thomas] Filer [Envy] is gifted with a beautiful voice, deep and rich in quality, which he uses with feeling, governed by a proper sense of restraint. 'Envy' was followed by the 'Prologue,' in armor, in the person of Miss Mary F. Ricards. Her lines were read with ease and carried well to the last seat in the house. She was well cast in this character and her diction reflects credit on her instructions, while indicating careful preparation on her own part. ... Captain Tucca, Johnson's [Jonson's] most famous comic character, afford Mr. Arleigh [Arleigh] Williamson an opportunity in an entirely new role and proved his versatility. He made the braggart, weddling coward, a very vital character and furnished most of the mirth in the play. 'Crispinus [sic] (Mr. Frederic McConnell), the perfumed dandy whose vanity fed itself upon the foolish admiration of stupid women, was a most diverting characterization. Mr. McConnell's voice proves one of his most valuable assets, making many roles possible to him, and his duet with the melancholy musician Hermogenes (Mr. Joseph Jamison), who has a very good tenor voice—was the source of much laughter. In the last act Crispinus became really human, after the dose of hellibore [sic] is administered and the general laugh attested that the realism 'struck fire,' even if the literary allusion 'missed fire.' Mr. Frederic [Fredrick] Steen, as the citizen 'Albius,' gave a very interesting interpretation of this foolishly fond husband who had taken a gentlewoman for his wife and paid for the honor by enduring innumerable snubs cheerfully. His song, 'Wake! our mirth begins to die.' was in his own words, 'most orderiferous [odoriferous] music.' One of the best—if not the best—characterizations was Mr. Howard Smith's 'Mare Ordius,' [sic] father of the poet. He was especially well cast and did the best work of his career—showing a finish in manner and speech that he has never before attained. Mr. Hubbard Kirkpatrick's 'Histrio'—was one of the pleasant parts in the play. Mr. William Viehman made a very satisfactory 'Asinius Lupus.' Mr. William Mulligan had scant opportunity as 'Lucus,' [sic] but made the most of it, as he usually does with whatever he undertakes. In the character of 'Orid,' [sic] Miss Lucy Barton did very acceptable work, and shows marked improvement in diction and stage presence. There is little action in the role and the opportunities of which Miss Barton made the most are of dramatic readings beginning—'and give me stomach to digest this law'—and the one in the balcony scene—'Banished the court, Let me be banished life.' One had to continually remind oneself that this was a satire, in order to reconcile the Eaton collar to the character who wore it. It made one suspect 'Orid' [sic] of having gingerbread in his
pockets. The point appears to have been to make 'Ovid' [sic] ridiculous and the end was 'achieved.' Miss [Margaret] Ravenscroft was most fortunately cast as 'Tibullus'—possessing both voice and manner suitable to the character. 'Cytheris' (Miss Guy) had but one obligation, to look lovely in a gorgeous gown—and the obligation was fulfilled. Miss Hazel Beck's 'Chloe' was a source of much amusement and gave evidence of careful work. Miss Lewis made a very stately and beautiful 'Julia'—and her lines in the balcony scene were read with her usual charm. Violante [Veolante] Bollinger's 'Augustus Caesar' was given with much dignity and reserve—just a little too subdued, one felt. She was well cast and wore the magnificent velvet robes of Caesar like one 'born to the purple.' Miss Blanche Levy's 'Horace' made a most favorable impression, as also did Mr. Burke's 'Virgil.' Miss Kathyrine [Katherine] Jones was well cast as 'Little Minos' the apothecary.—The Tartan

Very manly and fresh, too, is this Ovid, as played by Lucy A Barton. Consistent acting in less picturesque roles is done by Arleigh B Williamson, as Pantilius Tucca, the braggart captain; Hazel Beck, as Chloe, the jeweler's wife, [sic] and Katherine Jones, as Minos, an apothecary. Sara E Bennett looked well as Chloe's maid, and both of Tucca's pages deserve honorable mention.—The Pittsburgh Dispatch

These are very human characters, recognizable in any age, and their enactment by these students is praiseworthy. Especially fine is the woman who plays Chloe and the man who does the braggart captain; the professional stage could not offer more finished performance. If some of the other parts are weak there is nevertheless a spontaneity and zestfulness about them which should help one make considerable allowance.—Unidentified Detroit newspaper clipping

The acting is delightful; the rather rough comedy is played boisterously; . . . and the measured speeches of the emperor's daughter are read with full appreciation of eloquentary values. . . . The part sof [sic] Ovid, Marc, Capt. Tucca, Crispinus, Chloe, Cytheris, Julia,

105"Drama Department Produces Poetaster," loc. cit.
106"Jonson Comedy Is Beautiful," loc. cit.
107An unidentified Detroit newspaper clipping in the Scrapbook of Hazel Beck Lees.
Hermogenes, Minos and Caesar were most adequately embodied.—The Detroit News

To that part of the audience with slow ears, used to the equal emphasis of words, the speeches in many cases seemed incoherent and at times unintelligible. But to those whose ears were alert to this subtle distinction, the laughs in 'Poetaster' fell hammerlike on certain notes, the parts Mr. Poel wished emphasized being stressed the rest running trippingly from the tongue.—New York Times

... these young people gave a spirited performance, speaking clearly and fluently, and characterizing, in a somewhat conventional way, with no little success.—Boston Evening Transcript

Of all the beauties of the production none was more gratefully received than the trained modulations of speech throughout. ... the dialogue was spirited, ... the characterizations were pushed to a point approaching caricature.—Theatre Arts Magazine

The Carnegie Tech students and the parts they played in The Poetaster were

Lucy A. Barton—Publius Ovid, in love with Julia
Hazel Beck—Chloe, the jeweler's wife
Sara E. Bennett—Chloe's Maid

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110 M[oderwell], loc. cit.
111 Allard, op. cit., p. 25.
112 This alphabetical listing of students' names is taken from "Names of Students taking part in the Play," as listed in programs of The Poetaster production given at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and at the Detroit Museum of Art. In most cases, the role that each student played was learned from newspaper reviews of the production. In some cases, student-actor identification with the role played is unknown. Individual footnotes identify several roles played in the production which were not mentioned in newspaper reviews.
Veolante L. Bollinger—Augustus Caesar, one who honors pagan deities
Harry D. Bowers—[Character unknown]
James Church—Demetrius, a needy dramatist
Walter J. Crozier—[Character unknown]
Anna C. Dice—Played two roles: one, a Court Boy
Bishop I. Dickinson—[Character unknown]
Eula N. Guy—Cytheris, a lady of the court residing in the house of Chloe
Joseph S. Jamison—Hermogenes, the Emperor's musician
Katherine Jones—Minos, an apothecary; also Wardrobe Mistress
Hubbard Kirkpatrick—Histrio, an actor of the Globe Theater
Blanche Levy—Horace, supposed to be Ben Jonson
Ena Lewis—Julia, the Emperor's daughter
Amelia F. Lucas—[Character unknown]
Frederic McConnell—Crispinus, one of the gentry who writes for the theaters
Mary McIlvaine—[Character unknown]
Nicholas Muller—[Character unknown]
William F. Mulligan—Luscus, Ovid's servant
Carl Benton Reid—Stage Manager and Call Boy
Margaret Ravenscroft—Tibullus, a Courtier in love with Plautia
Mary F. Ricards—The Prologue in armour to defend the Author against the attacks of his adversaries and detractors
Helene Shaeffer—Plautia, Julia's attendant
Howard Smith—Marc Ovid, Publius' father
C. Fredrick Steen—Albius, a jeweler and salesman
Theodore Viehman—Dancer in English Folk Dance

113Identified from the Carnegie Institute of Technology The Poetaster program in the Scrapbook of Hazel Beck Lees.
114Telephone conversation with Anna K. Dice of Pittsburgh, October 27, 1966.
115Letter from Lucy Barton to the writer, May 14, 1966.
116Letter from Carl Benton Reid to the writer, June 30, 1966.
117Letter from Theodore Viehman to the writer, June 15, 1966. This particular information is taken from the two page first draft copy, "William Poel at Carnegie Tech," of Viehman's personal reminiscences which was enclosed in this letter and loaned to the writer for research.
William Viehman—Asinius Lupus, a lawyer
Arleigh B. Williamson—Pantilius Tucca, a braggart captain

Although the Carnegie Tech campus newspaper reported that Envy was played by Thomas Filer and Virgil by [Mr.] Burke, neither of these names is listed in the programs. Student-actor identification is unknown for the following characters: Gallus; Knight attending Caesar, or Mecaenas; Pyrqi—Tucca's two pages; two Halberdiers, or "Beefeaters"; two Bailiffs, or Lictors; Blue Coat or Stage Boys; and Servants.

THE MUSIC AND DANCE:

Preceding the performance a number of delightful Elizabethan musical compositions were performed by a string quartet and by boy sopranos. A morris dance provided much amusement in the second part of the play.—The Pittsburgh Gazette Times

The play was preceded by a concert, after the Elizabethan custom, of Old English dance times (arranged for string quartette by J. Vick O'Brien, director of the Department of Music), and of songs of the same period, sung by three choir boys, wearing choristers robes of scarlet, white and gold. The effect was very quaint and picturesque and to many, the concert was a very delightful part of the program. The string quartette, composed of Miss Dorothy Manor, Messrs. Gluck, Shakely and Curry of the Department of Music, played with their usual taste and finish.—The Tartan

The 'delightful musical entertainment' which, for a whole hour preceded the original play, while shortened last night to conform to the demands of a hastier generation, nevertheless created a definite and lovely atmosphere when Hermogenes, the court musician, came

118 "Ben Jonson's 'Poetaster' Revived by Tech Students," loc. cit.

119 "Drama Department Produces Poetaster," loc. cit.
forth with his lute and played that three boys might sing.—The Pittsburg Dispatch

And best of all there are two or three typical old English songs, charming alike for their simplicity of sentiment and of their melody.—Unidentified Detroit newspaper

The music which preceded the performance included the following songs which were sung by Hermogenes and three Choir Boys:

Three-part Song, 'Without Dyscorde and both Acorde', by King Henry VIII;
Song,---------- 'Take, O Take those Lips Away', by J. Wilson;
Song for three Voices, 'In the Merry Month of May', by J. Wilson.

In addition, the impression upon and the reaction of the audiences to the total production was reported.

Paralleling, as closely as possible, the original production, three centuries ago. . . .—Pittsburg Press

The production possessed a pictorial atmosphere that bespeaks historical and dramatic knowledge. But if anything were needed to show the fundamental vitality and real humor of even a second-rate Elizabethan play, last night's performance certainly achieved that object. . . . The performance went with laudable swiftness. . . .—The Pittsburgh Gazette Times

. . . pitched in the highest key . . . the production

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120"Jonson Comedy Is Beautiful," loc. cit.
121An unidentified Detroit newspaper clipping in the Scrapbook of Hazel Beck Lees.
122Beatty, op. cit., II, p. 5.
123"Carnegie Tech Students Present 'Poetaster,'" loc. cit.
124Bregg, loc. cit.
125"Ben Jonson's 'Poetaster' Revived by Tech Students," loc. cit.
held American audiences absorbed from beginning to end.

When the success of the production is analyzed, it seems to lie in a tour-de-force of stage management. No one remembers the story—if indeed, any connected plot could be recognized during the action—and there is no recollection of lines beautiful in themselves. The method of production was everything.

No stage trick was overlooked if it would help to make the play 'move.' The tension thus produced was such that the audience was kept continuously absorbed. Sometimes it was chuckling over a comedy bit, again it was delighting in a colorful stage picture, or again it was dreaming under the spell of an old song; but always its attention was riveted on the stage.—Theatre Arts Magazine

The very essence of all that may be beautiful and at the same time dramatic was given in William Poel's production. . . .—The Pittsburg Dispatch

no attempt was made to localize the scenes.

. . .—Partially identified Detroit newspaper

a certain beauty in the simplicity of the production, which is made without the conventional curtain.

. . .—Unidentified Detroit newspaper

Mr. Poel has cut the play freely and to follow the story is not an easy task.—The Detroit News

Using the Elizabethan stage, Mr. Poel pays the magnified attention it makes necessary to diction and to tone values, upon which reliance must be placed for what is missing in atmosphere and color.—Unidentified Detroit newspaper

126Allard, loc. cit.

127"Jonson Comedy Is Beautiful," loc. cit.

128A partially identified Detroit newspaper clipping in the Scrapbook of Hazel Beck Lees.

129An unidentified Detroit newspaper clipping in the Scrapbook of Hazel Beck Lees.

130"Ancient Comedy Delights Crowd," loc. cit.

131An unidentified Detroit newspaper clipping in the Scrapbook of the Detroit Museum of Art (Xerox).
Under his hands the play moved swiftly, its fable was clear, its jokes highly amusing, its personages living. . . . 'The Poetaster' took on shape as an amusing and comprehensible play, at best somewhat dull in spots, but living, with what life was in it, in the actual theatre.—Boston *Evening Transcript*  

The Carnegie Tech performances of *The Poetaster* had "created so much favorable comment throughout the country" that it was staged for three performances, on December 1 in the evening and on December 2 in the afternoon and evening, in the Detroit Museum of Art under the auspices of the Trustees of the Museum and the Society of Arts and Crafts. The "full cast of 45 students and orchestra of six pieces" made the trip in "two special [Pullman] cars," leaving Pittsburgh on Thursday evening, November 30 and returning Sunday afternoon, December 3, accompanied by Poel, Thomas Wood Stevens and his wife, and three faculty members, T. Bayard Beatty, Redmund Flood, and J. Woodman Thompson. The Carnegie Tech campus newspaper described this trip as the "first attempt of the students of the Department of Dramatic Arts . . . to invade another city and please a strange audience." According to the *Bulletin of the Detroit*

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*132* M[oderwell], *loc. cit.*  
Museum of Art, Poel's production at the Museum

... afforded an opportunity to see an Elizabethan play accurately produced after the manner of those days. ... [The] emphasis was placed on the lines of the poet rather than on the setting. The appeal was solely in the beauty and accuracy of the costumes and in the spoken word, and the audience went away satisfied, feeling that they had gotten close to the creative spirit of the poetry of Queen Elizabeth's golden age.136

The financial responsibility for the production was assumed by Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., President of the Detroit Museum of Art.137 Ferry collaborated with Sam Hume, theatre director of the Society of Arts and Crafts, in advertising Poel's production at the Museum. Hume went to Professor I. M. Demmon, Shakespeare scholar at the University of Michigan, with a letter of introduction from Ferry, inviting "Ann Arbor friends" to the production.

If any of your faculty or students want to see this please arrange with Mr. Hume for tickets etc. This is such a rare treat and our seating capacity is so small that I take this means of presenting the matter so that some of our Ann Arbor friends will not miss out.138

Thomas Wood Stevens received a letter from Frederic Allen Whiting, Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, inquiring about the possibility of bringing The Poetaster to


137 Ibid.

138 Letter from D. M. Ferry, Jr. to Professor I. M. Demmon, November 20, 1916. A xerox copy of this letter was sent to the writer by Dexter Ferry of Detroit, son of D. M. Ferry, Jr.
OQ

Cleveland. Stevens' reply to Whiting's inquiry stated that "it would not be practicable" to bring the Poel production to Cleveland for these reasons: the difficulty was one of dates, for other theatre work had been arranged at Carnegie Tech; since Poel expected to sail to England on December 14, a trip with The Poetaster before Poel left was not possible to schedule and a trip after Poel left was impossible because Poel would take the costumes with him; a Cleveland company could not be trained because Poel's "requirements are very rigid and he needs a large group of experienced people under the control and discipline corresponding to that of a professional theatre." However, Stevens suggested that "it might be possible to persuade Mr. Poel to remain longer and for 'The Poetaster' to be taken to Cleveland at the end of the school term in the middle of December." Since Poel had commitments in England, he could not prolong his stay in America; The Poetaster was not presented at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Students at Carnegie Tech who took part in Poel's production of The Poetaster recall their work with Poel--his

139 Letter from Frederic Allen Whiting to Thomas Wood Stevens, November 22, 1916 (Xerox from the Thomas Wood Stevens Collection in the University Library Special Collections at the University of Arizona in Tucson).

140 Letter from Thomas Wood Stevens to Frederic Allen Whiting, November 26, 1916 (Xerox from the Thomas Wood Stevens Collection in the University Library Special Collections at the University of Arizona in Tucson).

141 Ibid.
vocal training and direction, the rehearsals and performances, the characters and costumes—in addition to anecdotes and stories about Poel and *The Poetaster*.

Lucy Barton, who played Publius Ovid, writes about Poel's method of creating a concert of voices, about her costume, about the learning of lines, about Poel himself, and about audience reaction to the production.

In a tryout group which contained, as I remember, more men than women, Mr. Poel picked me because I had the most boyish voice, Julia because her voice harmonized with mine, and Veolante because, I suppose, her voice carried the implications of empire more than that of any of the men. It seemed to work out very well. It was just lucky that I was a tall, skinny girl, Julia was sort of plumpish and very pretty, and the Emperor wore a long, shoulder-to-floor robe plus large drapery, so that 'his' womanly figure was not revealed.142

... [The costumes] were very well-made and handsome and gave me my first glimpse of the Renaissance conception of *a l'antique*, a topic which I have since pursued with ardor... how well they served the purpose of this play and... this method of costuming is the logical and satisfactory one for costuming Elizabethan-Jacobean drama.143

My costume (beautifully made of brown serge and very authentic) had of course a doublet padded to make a gently pear-shaped torso. With it went round hose and black tights. My longish hair was braided and tucked under an auburn cropped wig. My collar and cuffs were of white linen, austerely narrow. One of my professors remarked, puzzled, 'Lucy always struck me as a very boyish-looking girl, but somehow she is a rather girlish-looking boy'. For the banquet scene my school-boy serge was covered by a sumptuous robe. I think it was put on like a coat, probably partly because the change was pretty short.144

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142Letter from Lucy Barton to the writer, *loc. cit.*
the actor learned his lines only in the company of Mr. Poel. One sat at a table, opposite him, and repeated his intonation word by word, I might even say syllable by syllable. We each had our character 'tune'. These were put together in the flow of the dialogue and indeed I think the result must have come close to a musical 'concert'. Inevitably we learned each others' tunes, and about that I must tell you this anecdote: One night (and we were playing at the Detroit Art Museum . . .) we were in the midst of the banquet scene. It was a beautiful stunt of mounting crescendo, to be broken, as I remember, by the entrance of the Emperor--up the aisle. Right in the midst of the acceleration someone dried up. Not even realizing what I was doing I picked up his tune and carried his line for--0 I don't know, a few words, I suppose--till he picked it up and we went on without drop of pace. Very soon, I suppose in a few lines, I was banished the court and made my exit up the aisle where, I knew Mr. Poel was standing. I am sure I trembled, for he did not hesitate to express annoyance or anger at mistakes. No. He grasped my wrist as I passed through the exit door and whispered 'This was the most beautiful performance of any'. (I doubt that the words are authentic, but the idea certainly is.) Although he was in the habit of saying all our lines with us as he watched us, he had not detected the change of speaker which gives you an idea of what his training could do.145

He was a gentle, but eccentric man. During afternoon rehearsals, the wardrobe mistress brought him his tea and a biscuit which, in the stress of directing, he often used to stir his tea instead of using the spoon. It was difficult to make him stop to have a regular meal. One time he discovered that we (who also, at that point didn't stop for dinner) were making cocoa for ourselves on the two-burner gas stove in the scene loft. He said wistfully that it smelled very good, and after that we always made a cup for him. I am sure he never knew that it was made with condensed milk--a very un-Elizabethan trick! He was rigidly ethical, sometime, we felt, to embarrassment. . . . When the last show was over and he was to leave, we threw some sort of a party for him, at which we (Fred McConnell the spokesman) presented him with two handsome silver candlesticks, engraved, respectively, Life's a Dream and Poetaster. He thanked us politely but said that he never under any circumstances accepted gifts, and gave us back our silver.146
I have always been grateful for this experience of work with an absolutely unique scholar-director who, I am sure, was almost single-handed in restoring Shakespeare to theatrical life, . . . in showing the live plays in terms of voice, of movement and of costume to make a real 'concert' in the renaissance meaning.\textsuperscript{147}

The diction was fast, though very clear. The plot as you know is involved. My mother said of the show 'I have no idea what it was all about, but I enjoyed it thoroughly'. Remember, I never had a script to bring home, not even my own sides, so Mother did not read the play as she usually did when I was acting. But it was a good show and had audience appeal.\textsuperscript{148}

Veolante Bollinger Bennett, who played two roles for Poel, Segismund, the Prince in Calderon's \textit{Life's a Dream} and Augustus Caesar in \textit{The Poetaster}, maintains that with both characters Poel helped her exactly to a "bringing up to the part."\textsuperscript{149}

Anna K. Dice, who played two roles, one a Court Boy, in \textit{The Poetaster}, recalls that the students could not understand the play at first: "Poel did explain it to us before we began."\textsuperscript{150} Poel worked with each student individually for his "tune"; once in a rehearsal, he would not stop for the "tune" which was practiced only at the individual reading.\textsuperscript{151}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[147]\textit{Ibid.}
\item[148]Postcard from Lucy Barton to the writer, June 5, 1966.
\item[149]Telephone conversation with Veolante Bollinger Bennett, October 27, 1966, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
\item[150]Telephone conversation with Anna K. Dice, October 27, 1966, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
\item[151]\textit{Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
I remember one of the words I spoke, 'fair,' had four musical speaking tones to it. . . . Poel played with the intonation of the word, with each of the syllables in the word. With Poel, all the musical speaking tone was put together in one word. His idea was a tuning of the speaking voice which was often flat and uninteresting if not tuned. 152

Blanche Levy, who played Horace, related an incident to Miss Dice in regard to the facial make up she intended for Horace: "Poel was furious, had Blanche quickly and thoroughly remove it before the performance. He said he had selected her for her own complexion as well as her voice." 153

Hazel Beck Lees, who played two roles for Poel, Rosaura, the girl disguised as a boy in Calderon's Life's a Dream and Chloe, the jeweler's wife in The Poetaster, writes about The Poetaster: her first speech in the play: "Come, bring those perfumes forward a little, and strewn some roses and violets here: . . ."; one of her "props," a live dog; the "heavenly" banquet scene; Poel's attitude toward movement on stage; and Poel's appearance and manner.

. . . [Poel's] obsession was with the voice as almost the sole instrument of characterization. One syllable would be stretched to three or more sounds each at a different pitch. Words of a sentence would be run together as one word for effect. I remember in opening the play I had to say the word 'Come-----.' He had me start this word at the bottom of my voice and continue in a rising inflection that sounded like nothing less than a cow in distress. He insisted this word was the keynote for the entire play. He kept drilling on these vocal gymnastics by constantly following me around and shouting these inflections in my ear till they became

152 Ibid.

153 Letter from Anna K. Dice to the writer, November 25, 1966.
automatic with me but as sounds without meaning. I well remember the opening night of the play when I was tensing myself for my initial entrance and concentrating on doing that properly when I was scared out of my wits by this tall man coming up behind me, leaning down and hissing in my ear 'C-o-m-m-m-m-e—!' I almost fainted from the shock for which he apologized later. I remember telling him if he did it again I was liable to have a heart attack and there would be no 'keynote' to the play or at least a completely different one. This was so much on his mind however before the opening of the show in Detroit he could not resist going about the stage asking of no one in particular 'Where's Miss Beck, where's Miss Beck.' In the turmoil no one paid much attention to this query except 'Miss Beck' and she kept out of sight by the simple expedient of walking behind him wherever he went and no one gave me away.\(^{154}\)

... the film was just as meticulous. In one scene I had to say to my servant 'Bring me my muff and me dog.' Mr. Poel insisted that it be a real dog. Each night I was handed a different dog by the prop man and the only reason I can advance for this is that as the scene dragged on each dog got bored and to the delight of the audiences proceeded to chew the rhinestone buttons off my dress. Apparently one meal of rhinestones was as much as any dog could stand but buttons or no buttons Mr. Poel decreed that the show must go on—but with live dogs.\(^{155}\)

I remember vividly the banquet scene where all the characters were seated in a large semi-circle before the black curtains constituting the scenery. The cast in the various and vivid costumes of purple, red, blue, orange, gold, pink, yellow and green with these banqueters in boisterous conversation made a scene of tumultuous action and riotous color.\(^{156}\)

Mr. Poel did allow his actors freedom to originate stage business as they grew into their roles. He was quick to note when someone put in something he liked. On one occasion with me he restrained another member of the cast from imitating a bit of business I had originated. However in the voice work all inflections were Mr. Poel's.\(^{157}\)

\(^{154}\)Letter from Hazel Beck Lees to the writer, August 29, 1966.

\(^{155}\)Ibid.

\(^{156}\)Ibid.

\(^{157}\)Letter from Hazel Beck Lees to the writer, September 19, 1966.
In appearance William Poel was tall, thin, with longish hair, and somewhat stooped as fitted the popular idea of the old time Shakespearean actor or even, to some, the 'ham' actor. But he was a perfect gentleman, always kind and considerate and everyone loved him. His kindness and gentleness did not prevent him from working his student actors from eight in the morning till midnight. His rehearsals continued right through lunch and dinner and each actor left when he could to eat and while doing so was liable to be paged by Mr. Poel demanding to know where Mr. or Miss So and So was. He seemed never to stop to eat and apparently lived on tea and chocolate bars. He would order his tea at noon, forget it and about three o'clock discover it on a theater seat beside him. It would be cold of course but this made little difference to him as he continued rehearsing while stirring his tea with his finger. 158

Frederic McConnell, playing Crispinus, "was a sensation" when he "had to detergetate during a speech. Mr. Poel's direction at this point was accurate and brilliant." 159 McConnell "designed the first open stage to be built in this country, at the Cleveland Play House in 1949"; his "thoughts on this subject first began to jell with" his "study under Mr. Poel at Carnegie Tech." 160

Carl Benton Reid, who "did not play a part but was stage manager and call boy combined," 161 writes about some of the aspects of the production: music, stage, lighting and costumes; about his particular duties; and about Poel during

158 Letter from Hazel Beck Lees to the writer, August 29, 1966.

159 Letter from Frederic McConnell to the writer, July 26, 1966.

160 Ibid.

161 Letter from Carl Benton Reid to the writer, June 30, 1966.
rehearsals and performances.

Mr. Poel had a group of musicians, violin, viola, cello and perhaps harp I am not quite sure, which played in a box off stage but in sight. They played very beautiful Elizabethan music. It added much to the production.

... The stage was hung with a black cyclorama, velvet I think and the whole floor was covered with the same material. Overhead was a large flood light which was concealed in some kind of black non-flammable material and it spilled a large pool of light down on the stage... the magnificent Elizabethan costumes were shown to wonderful advantage.162

... Before the performance began, after the house lights were dimmed and the stage light came up, I was supposed to pound the stage, backstage of course, with a good sized 2x4 in order to bring the audience to attention. I remember in Detroit I was doing my bit of pounding and the old man came rushing up to me saying 'Louder, louder' and took the 2x4 from me and went at it himself. I don't think he was any louder but at any rate he felt better about it and it was fun to see him pounding away and I think if we had not stopped him he would have gone on all night. He would get quite excited before the play began and on one or two occasions we had to ease him out of the wings so we could get going.163

He was an eccentric but lovable old man and was completely wrapped up in his Elizabethan world.164

I was very much impressed with this wonderfully unique and picturesque old man. He looked as if he had just stepped out of the pages of some Dickens' novel. He was probably six feet tall but did not stand erect. He was gaunt and rangy... His grey suit just hung on him and I never saw him in any other. He certainly looked English. I recall seeing him directing rehearsals, sitting on a high stool, his long legs wrapped around the legs of the stool, with a cup of tea in his hand, his bowler hat, which he always wore, pushed back on his head of fairly long grey hair and shouting to the actors, 'You have no 'chune' in your voice - get some 'chune' in it.' This brings up a point which was often discussed by the drama students and is I think a very important one... the same thing applied to [B. Iden] Payne. The older drama students had had this advantage and I remember one of them saying 'It takes some people a long
time before they hear Iden'. How true this was. Most of us spoke monotonously or hammed it up and did not hear the wonderful variety of inflection which these men got into their reading of a Shakespearian line. They tried to make us understand that there must be variety in voice and emphasis and also bring out the sense (meaning is a better word). Mr. Poel called it tune.165

Howard Southgate [Howard Smith], who played Marc Ovid, Publius' father, writes about his vocal training with Poel.

Poel . . . read all the lines and we did nothing but parrot. It was good training for us tyroes. . . . he orchestrated the entire dialogue, choosing voices for their pitch. . . . This method of inflicting line-reading is followed still by B. Iden Payne. . . . Yes, Poel taught us the sweep of inflection and variety of vocal production. We all stood up there, his perfect echoes. But it all was effective and seemed to hold the audience, though the subject matter puzzled them mightily.166

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
As for myself, I benefited greatly from Poel, mainly in improved diction. We imitated a very clear, supple English voice. It was a strange effect with spoken language, not quite sung, but almost so. My tones were previously muffled. He brought them forward.167

Theodore Viehman, who was a Dancer in the English Folk Dance, writes about the exercise drill which Poel used to "extend pitch range of the voice."168

The biblical quotation: 'May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be always acceptable in thy sight O Lord my strength and my Redeemer' is spoken aloud with carefully graduated but arbitrary steps of pitch change from the highest possible spoken note to

165Ibid.
166Letter from Howard Southgate to the writer, June 13, 1966.
167Ibid.
168Letter from Theodore Viehman, loc. cit.
the lowest possible, and vice versa. 169

Poel, in a letter to Bossange, expressed his personal sentiments concerning The Poetaster.

... I think the play is shaping fairly well. I am never optimistic knowing by experience how easy it is for something at the last moment to happen to make a success impossible. Everyone is very kind and helpful, and what can be done is being done. W. Beatty is specially useful, and a great improvement upon methods as they stood last term. 170

In a letter to Horace Howard Furness, Jr. of Philadelphia, Poel informed Furness of the Carnegie Tech production.

We are all hard at work at the 'Tech' here on the production of the Poetaster. As it is the first of my Elizabethan performances to be given in this country the director is extremely anxious to have everything done well, and I have brought the costumes of the Elizabethan Stage Society from England that the setting may be complete in every detail. I have a good cast and I think, as far as I can tell at the moment, that the performance will be quite up to the level of those I have been able to give in my own country.

The director I know is most anxious that any scholars who are likely to be interested in the performance shall be present, and he would be only too pleased to send you an invitation.171

After the October 25, 26, and 27 performances of The Poetaster at Carnegie Tech, Poel left the campus for a lecture tour through the United States. He returned to Pittsburgh

169 Ibid.

170 Letter from William Poel to E. R. Bossange, October 16, 1916 (Original located in the Department of Drama at Carnegie Institute of Technology).

to rehearse the cast for the December 1 and 2 performances of *The Poetaster* in Detroit and to give two additional performances on December 5 and 6 at Carnegie Tech.
In addition to producing Ben Jonson's The Poetaster, William Poel delivered a series of lectures in the United States in the fall of 1916.

His first lecture was scheduled in Pittsburgh while he was rehearsing The Poetaster. On the evening of October 16, Poel lectured on "Shakespeare's Theatre" in the Carnegie Music Hall as a speaker for a drama lecture, one of the 290 meetings, including addresses, dramatic readings, musical events, and other educational work, scheduled for that season by the Academy of Science and Art of Pittsburgh.¹

Poel's lecture as reviewed in The Pittsburg Dispatch disclosed some of his theories of the Elizabethan theatre. The "actor was the thing and the stage came second." The Elizabethan stage "went back to the early Greek theater, an open air auditorium existing in Cornwall as a bear-baiting ring, before the Globe was built to resemble it in London." Shakespeare's plays were performed at the Globe "on a platform

in the center of the theater with pit seats, that could be
got for tuppence, on three sides, and boxes, for six pence,
rising in tiers." Two doors, "leading to actor's dressing
rooms," were "used alternately, in order that the action of
the play be continuous." The orchestra was placed in the
back of this stage: the "last theater to have the 'forward
stage'" in London was the Haymarket "which showed signs of
decay in the fact that the orchestra was placed in front of
the stage." Poel "urged simplicity" in relation to the
scenery and costumes for an Elizabethan stage. About the
productions of Shakespeare, he

"... derided the 'tons of scenery' necessary on a
pictorial stage and the 'ridiculous costuming' that
made the Othello of the late nineteenth century a man
'in mutton chop whiskers' and Desdemona a woman who,
in Bernard Shaw's words, 'deserved to be killed.'"

Poel declared that realism was

"... not possible in a theater where the stage presents
a picture within a frame. ... The proscenium arch as
introduced in Drury Lane Theater 50 years ago, ... is
responsible for the pictorial stage of today, in which
the actors are background to the scenery, instead of
the scenery being background to the actors."

Additional information advanced by Poel concerned
Shakespeare's living quarters while writing Hamlet: "over a
barber shop, the 'little tattle' place of sixteenth century
London"; Shakespeare's thinking when writing his tragedies,
specifically Richard III: "And when the Globe Theater

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2"Pictorial Stage Is Death of Realism, Says English
Critic," The Pittsburg Dispatch, October 17, 1916, p. 5.

3Ibid.  
4Ibid.  
5Ibid.
threatened to fall into evil days after Ben Jonson's court masques were produced, Shakespeare said to Richard Burbage, another Globe actor: 'You made a wonderful Richard III; I'll keep on writing tragedies for you.'"; Shakespeare's earnings as contrasted to Ben Jonson's: "Shakespeare netted $15,000 a year from his dramas and Ben Jonson made only $10,000 during the 40 years he was writing plays."6 To Poel, Jonson's position in his time was that of "the greatest moral force."7

Poel began his lecture tour throughout the United States immediately after *The Poetaster* performances on October 25, 26, and 27 at Carnegie Tech. From October 29 until he sailed for England on December 23,8 Poel delivered lectures in Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Madison, and Detroit. Also, he returned to the Carnegie Tech campus on November 27,9 to rehearse the students for *The Poetaster* performances on December 1 and 2 at the Detroit Museum of Art and two repeat performances on December 5 and 6 at Carnegie Tech. Poel delivered lectures in Chicago to the Chicago Ethical Society, at the University of Chicago, and at the Grace Hickox Studio for the Art of Expression; in Los Angeles to the Los Angeles Center Drama League of America, to

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6Ibid. 
7Ibid. 
the Hollywood Woman's Club, and at the Cumnock Schools; in Minneapolis at the University of Minnesota; in Madison at the University of Wisconsin; and in Detroit at the Detroit Museum of Art, at the Society of Arts and Crafts Little Theatre, and at the residence of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr.

When Poel left Pittsburgh after the October performances of The Poetaster, his first lecture engagement was in Chicago. The dramatic study group of the Chicago Ethical Society planned three lectures by Poel: "Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw" at 11 A.M. at the Playhouse and "Shakespeare's Verse" in the evening "at the rooms of the society in the Mailers building" on October 29; and "Shakespeare's Theatre," an illustrated lecture, in the evening at the City Club on October 30.10

On October 31, at the University of Chicago, Poel delivered a lecture on "Hints in Costuming in the Elizabethan Theatre," in Harper Assembly.11 In this lecture, Poel pointed out his thesis concerning costuming the Elizabethan play: "To present an Elizabethan play correctly a knowledge of the exact costuming of the time is absolutely essential."12

10 "Society and Entertainments," The Chicago Daily Tribune, October 28, 1916, p. 14. Announcement of these lectures were made in two Chicago newspapers; the writer found no record of any reviews of these lectures.


12 Ibid.
Although Poel allowed that the director "may go to a costumer and get a garment which apparently fits the character to be represented," he insisted that "to be absolutely and historically true one has to make a somewhat extensive study of the costuming of the age."  

As the theatre director must "make a study beforehand of the costume of the age," so must the painter. Poel explained that "to be a true artist one must know exactly what the person he is painting wore," and in order "to give a true representation," the artist "must live for a time in the period he is painting."  

Poel contended that artists did "not take the trouble to discover just what kind of garments were worn in the days of Elizabeth," and although these artists had "good intentions," because of "their lack of care we are given many ridiculous misconceptions" about Elizabethan dress. Rejecting the "mellow and pleasant representations of Shakespeare" by artists, Poel maintained that Shakespeare was "absolutely miscostumed" in "most of his pictures," and cited the paintings in which Shakespeare appears "in the fashion of Don Quixote," or "in the time of Louie XVI," or "in Neapolitan garb."  

In the Elizabethan attire, Poel believed that "perhaps one of the most distinctive articles" was "the collar, or
ruff, worn by men," which "was the sign of the class of the individual who wore it"; in the entire Elizabethan period, one was "unable to find two ruffs alike." Poel's example of the "fashion plate" of the Elizabethan period whose "choice of collars was entirely distinctive" was Raleigh, who "chose them so that he would be imitating nobody." Poel opposed those ideas on Elizabethan dress in the theatre and in paintings which did not give a true representation of the dress in Elizabethan times.

After his lectures in Chicago, Poel spent two weeks in Los Angeles, where he visited his nephew Reginald Pole, actor and director "well known in Los Angeles," and his bride, Helen Taggert, who was "prominent in amateur theatrical circles." The Reginald Poles planned a "number of social affairs in honor" of Poel; at an informal reception on November 6, and a tea later that week, Poel met persons "interested in

21"To Reside Here," Los Angeles Examiner, October 1, 1916, VIII, p. 3.
things literary or of the drama": 24 members of the faculty of the University of Southern California and of the Cumnock Schools, and members of the Drama League and of the Amateur Player's Club.

In Los Angeles, Poel was described as a "noted English dramatic critic and Shakespearean authority," 25 a "foremost English stage director in artistic rather than commercial productions," 26 the founder and director of the Elizabethan Stage Society of London, "which perhaps runs rather to faddish productions, but has the high merit of accuracy and beauty in what it does," 27 a "revolutionary authority on dramatic matters," 28 and an "eminent Englishman." 29 In addition, his views about art and indecency, Shakespeare's Measure for Measure and Troilus and Cressida, and the effect the war would have upon drama in England and America were reported.

Art . . . is not indecent as long as it is art. I

24Ibid.


26Otheman Stevens, "American Playwrights Should Learn to Write Truer Plays; Then They Would Occupy Ascendant Position That Is their Due," Los Angeles Examiner, November 12, 1916, IX, p. 5.

27Ibid.


have frequently been offended by indecent productions, paintings, works of sculpture and the like, but I believe the indecency was intentional on the part of the artist—an attempt to suggest the sensuous.  

As to 'Measure for Measure' and 'Troilus and Cressida,' I think they are Shakespeare's two most ethical works. In them he talked more seriously and directly than in most of his others. He had a real sermon to deliver and he delivered it straight from the shoulder.

Poel thought that the war would have a "decidedly unfavorable effect on the production of the drama in England for many years."  

It should be America's opportunity, . . . and when American producers find they cannot import their drama from England they will set themselves to work at home. There is no reason why America cannot produce the equal or the superior of the English drama.  

On November 11, Poel and Richard Ordynski, the director of the Little Theatre for the Players Producing Company, were guests of honor at a luncheon at the Hotel Clark given by the Los Angeles Center of the Drama League of America. Poel, delivering an address concerning "motion pictures in the field of dramatic art," declared that "'movies' have come to stay and as to their effect on the drama, it is well that people respond to this form of 'inexpensive pastime to relieve the weariness and monotony it has displaced.'"  

According to Poel, "the influence of the 'movie' . . . is

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30 "This Is Day for American Drama," loc. cit.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 "Two Are Honored by Drama League," The Los Angeles Sunday Times, November 12, 1916, I, p. 11.
bound to be good on the better drama, and hasten the elimina-
tion of that sort of drama that is promoted for revenue
only." Furthermore, Poel believed that even though the
movies had "numerous crudities at present," these were a part
of what usually confronts any industry "in the pioneer stage
of development, which time and thought and broader under-
standing will mitigate, if not entirely overcome." However,
Poel commented critically that "until the tyranny of machine-
made requirements are broken, or better understood, there
can be no true dramatic art on the screen." Poel felt
that "the demands of the camera man . . . make the actors do
things that are not only inartistic, but unimpressive—in
fine, unnatural." Poel's concluding comments dealt with
the work Ordynski was doing at the Little Theatre; he "urged
the people to support Ordynski, as an exponent and champion
of the best in drama today."

Ordynski, who had been a "former professor of litera-
ture at Cracow," a "dramatic critic for various Polish
publications," the "manager of the Modern Theatre in Warsaw,"
and an associate of "Max Reinhardt in the production of
'Sumurun,' spoke about Poel's work in England, about

36Ibid.
37"Two Are Honored by Drama League," loc. cit.
38Ibid. 39Ibid. 40Ibid.
41"Women's Work, Women's Clubs," The Los Angeles
"their meeting in Berlin, and their friendship,"42 and affirmed that he was "producing things he loves himself and hopes to teach others to love the same dramatic works."43

What Ordynski, as the director of the newly organized Players Producing Company, was producing at the Little Theatre was his adaptation of the Russian drama, Nju, by Ossip Dumow, with settings designed by Norman Bel Geddes.44 Poel "strongly indorsed" this production in addition to congratulating the city on the presence of Miss Aline Barnsdall as the manager,45 whose purpose was "to get in touch with those who are hungry for better, sincerer things in the theatre."46

On November 15, at 2:30 P.M., Poel delivered a lecture on "Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw" to the Hollywood Woman's Club.47 Poel's lecture, "as well as being a most elucidating comparison of the life, character, career and philosophy of these two great dramatists, was a lesson in

42"Two Are Honored by Drama League, loc. cit.
43"Poel and Ordinski Drama League Guests," loc. cit.
itself in the use of clear uncorrupted English."48

Poel delivered two lectures at the Cumnock Schools:49 the School of Expression, maintaining a "three-year collegiate course,"50 directed by Miss Helen A. Brooks, and the Academy, maintaining a "4-year college preparatory course,"51 directed by Mrs. E. H. Brooks, which offered "courses in dramatic expression, physical education, interpretative dancing, literary management, play producing, prose, poetry and music."52 Delivering his lectures at Cumnock Hall, 200 S. Vermont Avenue, Poel spoke on the evening of November 15, on "Hints on Costume,"53 and on the afternoon of November 16, on "Shakespeare's Verse and How to Read It."54

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49 Letter from Nathan O. Reynolds, Headmaster of the Westlake School for Girls at 700 North Faring Road in Los Angeles, to the writer, September 28, 1966: "Cumnock School was discontinued in 1942 and renamed Holmby College. Holmby College, under the direction of Mrs. Briggs, was discontinued by the owners of the Westlake School in 1945. All records of the college were transferred to Mrs. Briggs's private residence which burned down in 1948. Consequently, no record of William Poel's visit to Los Angeles exists."


52 "Cumnock School to Open for Fall Term," Los Angeles Examiner, October 5, 1916, I, p. 3.


Poel's "Hints on Costume," was announced as being "illustrated with stereopticon views," and Poel was described as being "famous for his novel views on how Shakespeare should be produced," with "his theories of costume" being "an important part of his interpretation of the function of the stage."  

In his lecture on "Shakespeare's Verse and How to Read It," Poel argued "in favor of a more naturalistic interpretation of Shakespeare," and criticized the "elaborate and costly productions of the present day as being out of keeping with the poet's own spirit." To Poel, "the diction of most actors in playing Shakespeare" was "all wrong," and he proclaimed that "Shakespeare himself would perish of mortification if he could attend a modern performance and hear the bombastic, oratorical mouthings of his immortal lines."  

Since Poel planned to leave Los Angeles on November 17, via San Francisco, he wrote to President Benjamin Ide Wheeler of the University of California suggesting: "If in passing I may give a lecture to the students of your English or dramatic departments, I would be very pleased to do so for

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the nominal fee of twenty-five dollars." Poel also wrote that he had produced *The Poetaster* at Carnegie Tech in October and that he was "lecturing at Cumnock School and Throop College" during his stay in Los Angeles.

As the guest of the University of California, Poel was asked to deliver his illustrated lecture on "Shakespeare's Theatre" on November 20, in Room 101, California Hall, at eight o'clock, with Professor William Dallam Armes of the Department of English presiding.

In a letter to President Wheeler, Professor Armes expressed the significance of Poel's visit to the university.

I am very glad to know that Mr. Poel is to speak here, and it will give me great pleasure to introduce him. Berkeley is no stranger to his work, for he is the man that was responsible for the production of 'Everyman'.

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58 Letter from William Poel to the President of the University of California in Berkeley, November 1, 1916 (Photostat from the University Archives in Bancroft Library at the University of California in Berkeley).


Letter from Roderick J. Casper, Librarian at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, to the writer, August 8, 1966: The California Institute of Technology has "no receipts or records of Poel's visit to Throop." The writer found no record of Poel lectures at Throop College.

60 Letter from Poel to the President of the University of California, *loc. cit.*

61 Letter from Newton B. Drury, Secretary to the President of the University of California in Berkeley, to William Poel, November 9, 1916 (Photostat from the University Archives in Bancroft Library at the University of California in Berkeley).
that so impressed you when you saw it in New York that you invited Mr. Greet to bring it to the University. Mr. Poel produced it before the Elizabethan Stage Society, of London, which he founded, and Mr. Greet simply bought the production and brought it to America, under the management of Mr. Charles Frohman. Mr. Poel's work in staging Elizabethan plays in the original manner is very highly regarded by English scholars, and his 'Some Notes on Shakespeare's Stage and Plays' has just been published by Longmans, Green, and Co. I am glad that he had been invited to speak here and that the subject of his lecture is one on which he is one of the foremost authorities.62

Poel, however, had already booked a lecture for the University of Minnesota on November 21, and he explained to Newton B. Drury, Secretary to the President of the university:

I could probably get my lecture there postponed, but I might lose the engagement in consequence. If the President cared to increase my fee to fifty dollars, I would come on the 20th, but of course he may not be willing to do this. . . . As it is, I am very disappointed, as I much wanted to give my lecture on Shakespeare's Theatre to your students.63

Drury's reply to Poel's request was as follows:

The President regrets very much the change in your plans which deprived the University of the pleasure of having you lecture here. Professor Armes, particularly, and other members of the English Department were disappointed not to have heard your lecture on Shakespeare's Theatre. Unfortunately, the University has a fixed rule regarding the fee for single lectures, and it was found impossible to depart from this rule.64

62Letter from William D. Armes to President Benjamin Ide Wheeler, November 13, 1916 (Photostat from the University Archives in Bancroft Library at the University of California in Berkeley).

63Letter from William Poel to Newton B. Drury, November 13, 1916 (Photostat from the University Archives in Bancroft Library at the University of California in Berkeley).

64Letter from Newton B. Drury to William Poel, November 17, 1916 (Photostat from the University Archives in Bancroft Library at the University of California in Berkeley).
Consequently, Poel did not deliver his lecture at the University of California.

At the University of Minnesota for the first university public lecture of the year, Poel spoke on "Shakespeare's Theatre" at 4 P.M. on November 21 in the Little Theatre. "With the aid of stereopticon views," Poel traced the history of the drama from the earliest Greek tragedy thru the successive stages of comedy, morality and mystery plays, pageant, and interlude, to the modern drama. According to Poel, "when Shakespeare was 24 years old, the only form of theatre known in Europe was the Roman, . . . the English were the first to invent something different. The first English playhouse was built by the Lord Leicester Players in 1576. Poel's comments about the use of the Elizabethan stage were:

'The whole secret of the Elizabethan drama is the secret of movement. The Elizabethan stage can do what the modern stage can never do—it can show you walking on the stage.' . . . this stage with its lack of scenery, contributed to the realism of the play by concentrating all the interest on the dialog of the characters.

65 The Minnesota Daily, November 21, 1916, p. 3 (Typed in letter from Maxine B. Clapp, Archivist of the Walter Library at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, to the writer, April 5, 1966).
67 "Poel Speaks on Old Time Drama," The Minnesota Daily, November 22, 1916, p. 1 (Xerox from the Walter Library at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis).
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
In addition, Poel maintained that drama "is not learned in the study; it is learned in the street by observation." The next day, November 22, Poel spoke on the identical subject, "Shakespeare's Theatre," at 8 P.M. in 165 Main Hall at the University of Wisconsin "before a large audience of students and faculty." The campus newspaper, The Daily Cardinal, reviewed Poel's illustrated lecture as follows:

Excellent slides of the plan of Shakesperian theatres were shown, and also slides of the actors who have been notable exponents of Shakesperian characters. Most of the pictures were devoted to the casts [Shakespeare Stage Society] which have been reviving Shakespeare's plays in their original manner.

In comparing Shakespeare's theatre to the modern theatre, Poel judged that the "theatre of Shakespeare's time was more realistic than the theatre of today, . . . for the actors were closer to their audience. The earlier theatre was more intimate and had not the sham of modern drama."

Newspaper mention of Poel's visit to the University

70Ibid.  
71Ibid.  
75Ibid.
of Wisconsin announced him as "the most distinguished Shakespearean scholar to devote himself to the Elizabethan stage production."76

Mr. Poel has devoted himself to the production of what is variously and loosely called by such names as the 'unactable', the 'literary', the 'poetic' and the 'closet' drama. His greatest distinction is that no man of our generation has produced so many plays as he which would not have been produced if it were not for him.77

The next day, November 23, Poel was in Chicago.78

During this second visit, he gave a "recital" on the subject, "Shakespeare's Plays and How to Read Them," at the Grace Hickox Studio for the Art of Expression, 512 Fine Arts Building, on November 25 at 3 P.M.79

On December 15 and 16, Poel lectured for the second time in Detroit. His first visit was on December 1, 2, and 3, when at the Detroit Museum of Art, he produced The Poetaster with the Carnegie Tech students on December 1 and 2, and gave an illustrated lecture on "Shakespeare's Theatre" in which he "further brought home . . . the difference


77 Ibid.

78 Letter from William Poel on letterhead stationery of the University Club of Chicago to E. Raymond Bossange, Dean of the School of Applied Design at Carnegie Institute of Technology, November 23, 1916 (Original located in the Department of Drama at the Carnegie Institute of Technology).

between the stage of illusion today and the stage of reality of the Elizabethan period, on December 3 in the afternoon.

The Theatre Committee of the Society of Arts and Crafts arranged two lectures by Poel at the Arts and Crafts Little Theatre: "Costume," illustrated with 120 lantern slides, at 8 P.M. on December 15, and "Shakespeare's Verse—How It Should Be Read" at 4 P.M. on December 16. Poel's return engagement in Detroit was a result of "the very widespread interest" of his lecture on "Shakespeare's Theatre" at the Museum of Art on December 3.

The Society of Arts and Crafts had, on November 16, dedicated its new $75,000 building with a 250 seat Little Theatre at its tenth anniversary "with a dinner for more than half of the 400 members, the annual business meeting of the society," and the performance of two one-act plays, The Tents of the Arabs by Lord Dunsany and The Wonder Hat by Kenneth Sawyer Goodman, produced by the director of the Little Theatre, Sam Hume. On November 17, the public was

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82 Ibid.


invited to a full program of four one-acts; the two additional plays were *Sham* by Frank G. Tompkins and *The Bank Account* by Herbert Brock.\(^8^5\) The Arts and Crafts Society, which cooperated with the Museum of Art in bringing Poel's production of *The Poetaster* to the Museum, was anxious "to stimulate interest" and "to sustain" the newly organized Little Theatre program by asking "for pledges of $10 each which entitled each subscriber to one ticket to each of the five proposed productions in January, February, March, April and May," and arranged for Poel's two lectures to be given at the Little Theatre.\(^8^6\) Cards of admission\(^8^7\) for Poel's lectures were free to members of the Society and to all subscribers to the proposed Little Theatre; tickets to the general public were 50 cents and to accredited teachers and students, 25 cents.\(^8^8\)

Poel, in his illustrated lecture on "Costume," showed through specific examples "what absurdities are perpetrated by artists in painting or costuming characters of bygone times, which they have only heard tell about" and explained "what the correct costumes for the different periods should

\(^8^5\)Ibid.


\(^8^7\)Card of admission in the Scrapbooks of the Detroit Museum of Art, *loc. cit.* (Xerox from the Detroit Museum of Art).

\(^8^8\)Card announcement in the Scrapbooks of the Detroit Museum of Art, *loc. cit.*
be, and incidentally told of curious customs and manners which in part accounted for them."^89

One painting he used as an example was a "mural decoration from the Carpenters' hall in London done in the Elizabethan period," in which the artist showed Jesus as a working carpenter of a guild in an interior scene of Joseph's shop.^90 Poel pointed out that "the only trouble was that all were garbed in the habiliments prevailing in 16th century London, rather than those of old Bethlehem."^91 Other illustrations used by Poel were "pictures of Shakespeare clad in a rather neatly-tailored overcoat."^92 In another picture, "Sir Francis Drake appeared wearing his sword," and Poel's comment was that "it was customary for an admiral of his day to have a servant or two to carry his weapon."^93 According to Poel, the customs and manners of Elizabethan times dictated the following observances in dress: Only the aristocratic ladies of court "were permitted to wear decollete gowns while all others were dressed to the chin"; gentlemen never removed their hats indoors in the presence of women: the "hats were an essential part" of their dress, and they "doffed them by way of salutation, but immediately put them back on"; ruffs were often "so fancy, with countless tucks and trimmings, that two dozen yards of material were needed

^89"Lecturer Scores Art Absurdities," The Detroit News December 16, 1916, p. 3.

^90Ibid. ^91Ibid. ^92Ibid. ^93Ibid.
for one ruff," so that "they were sometimes quite uncomfortable," for "if a man had a flowing beard," his ruff might make the beard take a "sharp turn and end in a flourish at an angle of about 90 degrees," while "some of the ruffs" Poel showed were "so built as to give a man's whiskers a chance to grow along the course nature and the laws of gravity designed for them, with cute little apertures through which the beard might be trained."\(^94\) Poel's conclusions about the costumes used in the current productions of Shakespeare were that

\[\ldots\text{the costumes are so outrageously designed as to impress the audience from the start with their impossibility}\ldots\text{the correct styles at that time were ornate but highly graceful; while your ordinary Shakespeare troupe is so astoundingly clad that the spectators justly can't believe men ever walked in such garments.}\(^95\)

In his lecture on "Shakespeare's Verse--How It Should Be Read," Poel stated that "present day students of the drama are almost wholly lacking in the art of reading verse."\(^96\) He "dwelt at length" on the "beauties" of Elizabethan poetry and drama and "deplored the fact that we have no living actors worthy of presenting the Elizabethan dramas"; and asserted that "most of the really good actors have gone and the few remaining ones are swiftly passing," giving as example, "the younger Sothern."\(^97\) Poel felt that the problem

\(^{94}\text{Ibid.}\) \(^{95}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{96}\text{A partially identified} \text{Detroit News Tribune} \text{newspaper clipping from the Scrapbooks of the Detroit Museum of Art (Xerox from the Detroit Museum of Art).}\)

\(^{97}\text{Ibid.}\)
with verse reading by actors of today was that they "smother the real beauty of verse" by laying "such stress on the shadings as utterly to sacrifice the meaning [sic] and rhythm." 98

Poel's final lecture in Detroit was on December 16, at the residence of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., who entertained in Poel's honor; after dinner, Poel discussed "Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw." 99

Poel intended to give as many of his planned lectures in the United States as possible. In September, Poel wrote to Horace Howard Furness, Jr. of Philadelphia that he would be in America in the fall and enclosed a circular advertisement listing his American lectures: "The Elizabethan Shakespeare"; "The Elizabethan Hamlet"; "The Play of 'Julius Caesar,' (Why it was written)"; "Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw (The two most modern men of their age.)"; "Shakespeare's Verse: How to Read it"; and two "Illustrated Lectures": "Shakespeare's Theatre (100 slides)" and "Hints on Costume (80 slides)." 100 In October, Poel wrote to Furness that he hoped to visit him at his home in Philadelphia on his trip to New York, 101 where he was "booking lectures for the first

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101 The writer found no record of any Poel lectures
week of December."\textsuperscript{102} In addition, Poel recalled his first visit to America in 1905-1906 as "inseparably associated with the memory of the afternoon I spent in your father's studio, an experience which only happens very rarely in a man's lifetime."\textsuperscript{103}

The Carnegie Tech campus newspaper, \textit{The Tartan}, mentioned that Poel would "deliver lectures on the Elizabethan stage in Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis,\textsuperscript{104} and Philadelphia" after his production of \textit{The Poetaster} at Carnegie Tech.\textsuperscript{105}

In the spring of 1917, Poel was engaged in a lecture tour in England, which was advertised as his "American Lectures, as given in the principal Colleges and Schools of the U.S.A., October to December, 1916," with the following lectures: "Shakespeare's Theatre (100 Lantern Slides)"; "Shakespeare's Stage Costumes (100 Lantern Slides)"; "How to Speak Shakespeare's Verse"; "The Elizabethan Shakespeare"; and

\textsuperscript{102}Letter from William Poel to Horace Howard Furness, Jr., October 15, 1916, \textit{loc. cit.}

\textsuperscript{103}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{104}The writer found no record in St. Louis of any Poel lectures given in that city.

\textsuperscript{105}"William Poel Restores Old Plays to Stage," \textit{The Tartan}, October 18, 1916, p. 4.
"The Elizabethan Hamlet."\textsuperscript{106}

Delivering his Elizabethan and Shakespeare lectures in major cities in the United States in the fall of 1916, Poel spoke to a diversified grouping of audiences, insisting that production of Elizabethan drama be performed in staging, costuming, and acting as performed on Shakespeare’s stage in Elizabethan times.

\textsuperscript{106}"Mr. William Poel's American Lectures," a circular advertising their repeat in England, Spring, 1917 (Xerox from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London).
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

William Poel came to the United States in 1916 acclaimed as one of the foremost living authorities on the Elizabethan theatre and the drama of Shakespeare. During his two visits, in the late spring and in the fall, he confirmed his reputation through his theatre work and lecturing.

Although Poel did not produce a Shakespeare play, he directed two different productions with the Carnegie Tech students. In the spring, the students received individual training in diction and the use of voice. Poel used, as a drill exercise, a biblical quotation, and he also had the students read from Shakespeare's Macbeth and Hamlet. Poel's production of Edward Fitzgerald's adaptation Such Stuff As Dreams Are Made Of from Calderon's Life's a Dream on June 3 at Carnegie Tech as a public reading was described as "an entertainment for the ear and the imagination rather than for the eye."¹ Aware that Fitzgerald did not intend his adaptation for acting, Poel chose to direct the play as a reading. His production was characterized by these elements:

¹Bregg, "A Dramatic Variant," loc. cit.
no curtain was used; actors approached the stage from the auditorium and sat on benches on the stage; movement on stage was limited; scenery consisted of a throne and benches in front of a back-drop curtain; lighting fell on the readers only; Poel, at a lectern in front of the stage, provided the sound effects; readers were dressed in contemporary evening clothes: girls wore simple black dresses with white collar and cuffs; and a narrator read all the necessary stage directions.

To Poel, a character in a play was personified by a particular vocal quality; hence he sought to cast that voice which best suited the role. This theory was put into practice when he cast a woman in the role of Segismund the prince. In addition, this correct vocal quality for each character in the play contributed to an orchestration of voices, the total effect which Poel aimed to achieve. In introducing the students to this reading presentation, Poel's method included training in articulation, emphasis, voice shading, and enunciation which served the musical rhythm. The dramatic effect was achieved through the voices rather than through the visual elements of the production.

In October, Poel produced Ben Jonson's The Poetaster with the students. Described as the "first purely Elizabethan production in the United States," the presentation

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2 "First Purely Elizabethan Production in the U.S."
loc. cit.
reflected in spirit and manner an Elizabethan play presented in accordance with those methods Poel believed were employed on the Elizabethan stage in Elizabethan times. In adapting the play, Poel eliminated much of the topical material because he believed it "out-of-date" to a modern audience; the production concentrated on showing the different types of Elizabethans which Jonson satirized in the play. The climax in the production was the "heavenly" banquet scene. Directorially, Poel chose to play the Crispinus basin scene off-stage "on the score of art"; he felt that an audience would not accept the obvious unrealistic quality of the scene. One of Poel's directorial problems was suiting the play to the talent available, which could have been a major consideration in his adaptation of Jonson's script.

Poel's production of *The Poetaster* was a staged costume presentation with no scenery. The action was presented on a specially built raised platform stage with an apron-thrust reached by three stair units, left, right, and center; all floor and stair space was covered with black velvet to deaden any noise. The back of the stage consisted of a balcony scaffolding, painted brown, bordered on both sides with black velvet curtain hangings. Lighting was supplied by two spotlights located left and right in the back of the auditorium. One floodlight, suspended above the stage, was concealed by black hangings draped towards the sides of the stage. Properties consisted of Elizabethan stools which were removed by cast members when not in use. The costumes,
borrowed from the Elizabethan Stage Society which had used them in their April production of *The Poetaster*, were authentically Elizabethan, elegant, elaborate, and colorful.

Loud knockings from backstage, after the old English custom, drew the audience's attention to the stage. The production was preceded, after the custom in Jonson's time, by three songs given by three choir boys accompanied by Hermogenes. Throughout the play the actors frequently made their entrances and exits through the audience. Poel was aiming for an intimacy, the intimacy which the Elizabethan theatre had offered its audience. To Poel, the words spoken and the character who spoke these words was most important in the Elizabethan drama; the actor, then, was the most important element to be considered in the production. In *The Poetaster*, as in *Life's a Dream*, Poel worked for an orchestration of voices. In suiting the voice to the character, he chose women for the male roles of Ovid Junior, Tibullus, Minos, Caesar, and Horace; the Armed Prologue was played by a woman. Poel had a preconceived idea of each character in *The Poetaster*. His actors not only had to have the vocal quality which fit the character played, but also had to sustain that character through an exact reading of the lines. Poel trained each of his actors to read his lines exactly to prescribed pattern: Poel dictated the inflection and the emphasis, the total line reading for each character. Poel's theory was that Elizabethan verse should be spoken quickly and naturally, but not like prose, and at
the most, with two or three stresses to each line. Through his intense vocal training, based upon his theory about the reading of Elizabethan verse, the students became more aware of the vocal responsibilities in acting. One student recalls that his tones were muffled, and Poel helped to bring them forward. Another student remembers how Poel helped them, for the first time, to hear the vocal variety possible in speaking verse. Other students are indebted to Poel because of some of the other elements that Poel introduced to them through his Elizabethan production, the Elizabethan costumes and the Elizabethan stage.

Although audiences could not recall what the play was all about after they had seen it—some persons in the audience did not understand what it was all about while they were watching it—it was thoroughly enjoyable and had audience appeal. Thomas Wood Stevens called it a "very interesting production in the Elizabethan manner." B. Iden Payne thought it was "very interesting" and recalled that Poel "got an awful lot out of the players." E. Raymond Bossange felt that the "admirable performance given of 'Poetaster' . . . brought very great credit to the school, to Mr. Stevens' 

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3Letter from Thomas Wood Stevens to Michael Carmichael Carr of Columbia, Missouri, November 26, 1916 (Xerox from the Thomas Wood Stevens Collection in the University Library Special Collections at the University of Arizona in Tucson).

4Interview with B. Iden Payne, loc. cit.
leadership and to our students." That The Poetaster was taken to Detroit for three performances at the Detroit Museum of Art, was repeated for two performances at Carnegie Tech after Detroit, and was wanted for presentation at the Cleveland Art Museum, which had opened in June of that year, attests "great credit" to all involved with the production.

Stevens regarded Poel as a "remarkable teacher of acting." The emphasis in the Department of Dramatic Arts at Carnegie Tech was on acting. Poel was invited to bolster the program in drama in the "instruction in acting and stage direction." His work with the students through his two different productions at Carnegie Tech contributed to that standard of excellence which Stevens set in his initial planning of the curriculum.

In addition to his theatre work at Carnegie Tech, Poel delivered an illustrated lecture about Elizabethan playhouses to the students and faculty of the School of Applied Design on June 2. He was the Commencement speaker at the Ninth Annual Commencement of Carnegie Tech on June 8,


6Letter from Louise G. Schroeder, Secretary to the Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art in Cleveland, to the writer, April 19, 1967.

7Letter from Stevens to Moses, loc. cit.

8Letter from Stevens to Carr, loc. cit.
delivering the address, "Shakespeare's Message to You."

Poel's theories about Shakespeare's plays were based upon the thesis that in order to produce Shakespeare to modern audiences, a study of the methods and practices of Shakespeare's stage in Shakespeare's time had to be undertaken. Shakespeare's plays were written for his particular theatre, and the conditions which existed in that theatre dictated the method of presentation. The actor was most important, for it was through the actor that the words of the text were conveyed to the audience. In his lectures about Shakespeare, Poel explained the Elizabethan play-houses, using illustrations to point out his theories about how Shakespeare's drama was used on Shakespeare's stage. Poel believed that Elizabethan plays should be performed in a theatre like Shakespeare's in order to be fully appreciated. What appealed to the groundlings in Elizabethan times could appeal to a modern audience when the conditions of production were identical to the conditions of production in Elizabethan times.

Most of Poel's lecturing in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Madison, and Detroit was about Shakespeare, his theatre, his costumes, and his verse—how it should be read. These lectures deal with three important Elizabethan practices in the theatre which Poel worked to stimulate in his Shakespeare productions. The theatre should be like Shakespeare's play-house, the platform stage with two side doors for actors' exits and entrances which aid the play
in achieving continuous movement, and a balcony backstage center, under which exits and entrances are made, and used according to the demands of the text. For example, Poel used the balcony for the Ovid Junior-Julia farewell scene in *The Poetaster*. The costumes should be authentically Elizabethan. Shakespeare used Elizabethan dress as costumes in his plays. Poel believed that Shakespeare's plays, regardless of locale, should be costumed in Elizabethan dress, in that style of clothing which the Elizabethans wore during Shakespeare's time. B. Iden Payne recalls that Poel's exactness in costuming his plays made him aware of costuming: "Poel felt that the clothes—he called them clothes, not costumes even if he were not doing it Elizabethan—should be authentic. He had them made from Elizabethan portraits. He used actual portraits, then designed them with the character in mind, then had a tailor make these clothes. He fitted his clothes tight on the actor." 9 Carnegie students in *The Poetaster* believed the costumes they wore to be beautiful, but heavy and almost cumbersome to wear on stage. Poel insisted that each character wear his complete dress, which might, at times, include so many items or such heavy dress as would impede the actor's movements. One critic remarked that the girl who played Caesar in *The Poetaster* looked weighted down under her robes. Poel was a scholar of Elizabethan costuming, and he employed this scholarship

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9Interview with B. Iden Payne, *loc. cit.*
completely and thoroughly when costuming a play. Concerning the speaking of Shakespeare's verse, Poel had his theories on how the Elizabethans spoke. He believed they spoke rapidly; he believed in key word emphasis. B. Iden Payne explains that Poel "overemphasized key words, had an excessive emphasis on key words." The emphasis which Poel used on key words was based upon an elongation of the syllables of the word. In the process of stretching out the syllable, the voice would become a tone in that syllable, then another tone on another syllable. Thus emphasis was achieved through the elongation of the syllables which produced a varied tonal pattern within the word itself. Emphasis to Poel was this tonal elongation of the syllables within a word; the word which was to Poel a key word in a line was given this type of emphasis.

When Poel gave his lecture about Shakespeare's verse, he undoubtedly read examples of Shakespeare to show what he meant by rapid delivery and emphasis of key words; the lecture he gave about Shakespeare's verse at the Grace Hickox Studio for the Art of Expression was announced as a "recital." Poel spoke at Schools of Expression about the reading of Shakespeare's verse and about costuming; he spoke to university audiences about Shakespeare's theatre; he spoke

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10Ibid.

11The writer could locate no record in Chicago newspapers which reviewed this lecture.
to the Hollywood Woman's Club and to the dinner guests at the Detroit residence of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr. about Shakespeare and Shaw. However, in Los Angeles, he talked about motion pictures as an art form, not about Shakespeare, to the Los Angeles Drama League. He spent two weeks in Los Angeles, yet delivered only four lectures there, three about Shakespeare. In Chicago Poel lectured on five different Shakespeare subjects; in Detroit, on four. Poel's lecture tour included speaking on university campuses, at schools of expression, to a woman's social group, to two new little theatre groups, in a private residence, and at an art museum.

Wherever Poel traveled in the United States, he was described as one of the foremost living authorities on Elizabethan theatre. He introduced the students at Carnegie Tech and the audiences to whom he lectured to his theories of the drama and his ideas for reform for the theatre. He did not limit his work to Shakespeare productions; his interest was classical drama, verse drama, which contained poetic thought and expression, which he believed could best be expressed in the theatre by the actor who was well-trained, especially in voice.

His work in the United States in 1916 confirmed his scholarship and his directorial abilities as one of the foremost living authorities on Elizabethan theatre. In 1916,

12 The writer could locate no record in newspapers which reviewed Poel's lectures about Shakespeare and Shaw.
Stevens estimated Poel's influence in the theatre as follows: "It is undoubtedly the influence of Mr. Poel's productions that has brought about in many quarters the decided reaction against the use of excessive scenery in the staging of Shakespeare."\(^{13}\)

Poel started the movement to produce the plays of Shakespeare as Shakespeare produced them on his stage. In 1916, his influence was recognized; today, his influence is even more recognized: the production of Shakespeare which uses those methods of production employed on Shakespeare's stage to be the truer production of the play, a play more fully appreciated.

\(^{13}\)Letter from Stevens to Hench, \textit{loc. cit.}\)
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APPENDIXES
APPENDIX A

A CALENDAR LISTING OF WILLIAM POEL'S THEATRE WORK

AND LECTURES IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1916

This list includes the performance dates and places of Poel's two theatre productions, Calderon's *Life's A Dream* and Ben Jonson's *The Poetaster*, and the date, subject, and location of Poel's lectures in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Madison, and Detroit.

**Theatre Productions—Pittsburgh and Detroit**

**June 3 [Time unknown]**

Calderon's *Life's a Dream*—a public reading given at the Theatre of the School of Applied Design at Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh

October 25, 26, and 27 and December 5 and 6 (evening performances)

Jonson's *The Poetaster*—a costumed stage production in the Elizabethan manner given at the Theatre of the School of Applied Design at Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh

December 1 (evening) and 2 (afternoon and evening)

Jonson's *The Poetaster* given at the Detroit Museum of Art under the auspices of the Trustees of the Museum and the Arts and Crafts Society of Detroit

**Lectures—Pittsburgh**

**June 2 (afternoon)**
"Shakespeare's Play Houses" (illustrated) given in the Theatre of Design to the students and faculty of the School of Applied Design at Carnegie Tech

June 8 (10 A.M.)

"Shakespeare's Message to You" Commencement Address at the Ninth Annual Commencement of Carnegie Tech, given at the Carnegie Music Hall in Pittsburgh

October 16 (evening)

"Shakespeare's Theatre" (illustrated) given at Carnegie Music Hall in Pittsburgh for the drama lecture series of the Academy of Science and Art of Pittsburgh

**Lectures—Chicago**

October 29 (11 A.M.)

"Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw" given at Playhouse for Chicago Ethical Society (dramatic study group)

October 29 (evening)

"Shakespeare's Verse" given at the rooms of the society in the Mallers building for the Chicago Ethical Society (dramatic study group)

October 30 (evening)

"Shakespeare's Theatre" (illustrated) given at the City Club for the Chicago Ethical Society (dramatic study group)

October 31 (afternoon)

"Hints in Costuming in the Elizabethan Theatre" (illustrated) given at the University of Chicago (in Harper Assembly)

November 25 (3 P.M.)

"Shakespeare's Plays and How to Read Them" gave a "recital" at the Grace Hickox Studio for the Art of Expression, 512 Fine Arts Building
Lectures—Los Angeles

November 11 (afternoon)

"Motion Pictures in the Field of Dramatic Art" given at the Hotel Clark at a luncheon in honor of Poel and Richard Ordynski, Little Theatre director, by the Los Angeles Center of the Drama League of America

November 15 (2:30 P.M.)

"Shakespeare and Shaw" given to the Hollywood Woman's Club in Hollywood

November 15 (evening)

"Hints on Costume" (illustrated) given at Cumnock Hall of Cumnock School of Expression

November 16 (afternoon)

"Shakespeare's Verse and How to Read It" given at Cumnock Hall of Cumnock School of Expression

Lectures—Minneapolis

November 21 (4 P.M.)

"Shakespeare's Theatre" (illustrated) given in the Little Theatre at the University of Minnesota for the first university public lecture of the year

Lectures—Madison

November 22 (8 P.M.)

"Shakespeare's Theatre" (illustrated) given in 165 Main Hall at the University of Wisconsin before a large audience of students and faculty

Lectures—Detroit

December 3 (afternoon)

"Shakespeare's Theatre" (illustrated) given at the Detroit Museum of Art

December 15 (8 P.M.)

"Costume" (illustrated) given in the Little Theatre of the Arts and Crafts Society (Theatre Committee)
December 16 (4 P.M.)

"Shakespeare's Verse--How It Should Be Read" given in the Little Theatre of the Arts and Crafts Society (Theatre Committee)

December 16 (evening)

"Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw" given after a dinner in Poel's honor at the home of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., President of the Detroit Museum of Art
APPENDIX B

A LISTING OF AVAILABLE PICTURES OF WILLIAM POEL'S

THE POETASTER PRODUCTION IN THE UNITED STATES

IN 1916

This list includes those pictures which the writer located in available source materials concerning Poel's productions in the United States in 1916. None of these pictures could be reproduced in this study. Only pictures for The Poetaster were located; these pictures can be found in three sources: T. Bayard Beatty's unpublished thesis "A Prompt-book for Ben Jonson's Poetaster" at Columbia University, newspapers, and the Carnegie Tech yearbook, 1917 Thistle.

In "A Prompt-book for Ben Jonson's Poetaster," Beatty has included five pictures of scenes from the Carnegie Tech production of The Poetaster. Some of the characters can be identified. These five pictures, as labeled by Beatty, plus a brief description of each picture by the writer, are as follows:

1. "Hermogenes and Choir Boys."

Preceding the play, Hermogenes (Joseph S. Jamison) plays the lute for the three choir boys who sing their three
songs. Prominent in this picture are the distinctive ruff and cuffs on Hermogenes and the white surplices with small ruffs on the choir boys, who hold books during their performance.

2. "Ovid Senior remonstrating with Ovid Junior."

This group picture of four shows Ovid Junior (Lucy A. Barton) seated, with Luscus (William F. Mulligan) and Lupus (William Viehman) standing near him, while Ovid Senior (Howard Southgate), standing apart and forward, remonstrates: "Verses! Poetry! Ovid, whom I thought to see the pleader, become Ovid the play-maker!" Prominent in this picture is the elaborate and imposing dress of Ovid Senior, particularly his Georgian staff, boots reaching above his knees, wide brimmed feathered hat, and wide laced collar.

3. "I debase myself, from my hood and my farthingal, to these bum-rowls and your whale-bone bodies."

Standing with her back to her husband, arms outstretched to the audience, Chloe (Hazel Beck) upbraids her husband Albius (C. Fredrick Steen) while her maid (Sara E. Bennett) stands upstage and eavesdrops by turning to hear over her right shoulder. Chloe's long lace apron and the maid's bun cap with lace shade reveal costume detail in their dress.


In the forestage is Tucca (Arleigh B. Williamson), who urges Minos (Katherine Jones) to pay. To the left and in the middle stage is Crispinus (Frederic McConnell),
hanging "girtle and hangers" to Tucca's two pages, who are dressed in different styles of oriental gowns with sashes, turbans, and sandals. Backstage center stand the two blue coat boys, facing each other.

5. 
"-- -- we exile thy feet
   From all approach to our imperial court

Caesar (Veolante L. Bollinger), in magnificent long, trailing robe, commands the kneeling participants of the "heavenly" banquet. The grouping, which calls attention to the authentic costumes, is particularly effective; Caesar stands stage left and above the group which forms a half circle while cowering from Caesar.

Beatty's picture entitled "Hermogenes and Choir Boys" can be found in the Boston **Evening Transcript** (November 4), "Poel, Pittsburgh, and 'The Poetaster,'" by H. K. M[oderwell]; "Pay, pay; 'tis honor, Minos" can be found in two Detroit newspapers: The **Detroit Free Press** (November 27), "Carnegie Students Will Present Play Here," and a partially identified Detroit newspaper clipping "The Elizabethan Drama Revived" in the Scrapbooks of the Detroit Museum of Art; and "-- -- we exile thy feet . . ." can be found in The **Detroit News** (November 30), "Scene from 'The Poetaster' Produced by William Poel."

The **Detroit News** (December 2), "Ancient Comedy Delights Crowd," carries a picture of Ena Lewis as Julia; this picture could have been taken in Detroit.
A picture of Poel's stage as constructed for the theatre at Carnegie Tech can be found in the Boston *Evening Transcript* article quoted above; The *Detroit News Tribune* (November 26), "Stage Setting for Jonson's 'The Poetaster',"; and the Carnegie Tech yearbook, 1917 *Thistle* (p. 106). This picture of Poel's stage shows the two "beefeaters," with halbreds, standing on either side and in front of the elevated stage, the draped hanging over the stage, the black curtain back-drop, and eight characters from the play, in four different groupings of two, around and under the balcony scaffolding. The only stairs visible are those in center front of the stage.

Seven pictures of Poel's production of *The Poetaster*, five different scene pictures, one character picture, and one stage set picture, can be found in the three sources quoted above.
VITA

Gonnie Michaeloff was born October 1, 1930, in Kastoria, Macedonia, Greece, and came to the United States at eight months of age. She received her elementary and secondary school education in Granite City, Illinois, and was graduated from Granite City Senior High School in 1948. In 1950, she received the A.A. degree from William Woods College, Fulton, Missouri; in 1955, the B.S. degree and in 1960, the M.A. degree from the University of Illinois, Urbana. She had taught English and speech for seven years in the Granite City Senior High School before beginning graduate work at Louisiana State University in 1963. She is a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Louisiana State University in May, 1967. In the fall of 1967, she will assume duties as a member of the faculty of the Department of Speech at Louisiana State University.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Gonnie Michaeloff

Major Field: Speech


Approved:

[Signature]
Major Professor and Chairman

[Signature]
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

EXAMINATION REPORT

Date of Examination: May 12, 1967