

AN EXAMINATION OF THE TRAVELS AND TEXTS
OF THE SHAKESPEAREAN COMPANY

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PREFACE

Throughout the centuries since Shakespeare lived, scholars have delved into almost every conceivable aspect of his life and work, and the age which produced them. But, in spite of the vast amount of research that has been done, many important areas remain underdeveloped or subject to further investigation. One such field is the provincial travels of the company of actors with which Shakespeare was associated and the problems that these tours involved. Several works, including J. T. Murray's English Dramatic Companies, Sir E. K. Chambers's The Elizabethan Stage, A. Thaler's series of articles on travelling players, and Glynne Wickham's Early English Stages, contain valuable examinations of aspects of provincial dramatic activity and are basic to any examination of this subject. The need that exists is to collect the various viewpoints on the travels and texts of the Shakespearean company. To achieve the goal of a comprehensive look at the many considerations of the travelling company is the aim of this study. For aid in making this project a reality, this writer wishes to express particular gratitude to two individuals: Dr. Charles E. Walton, through whose inspiration and advice the study took shape; and Dr. June Morgan, whose efforts and suggestions proved invaluable in bringing it to a conclusion.

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CHAPTER I

CONDITIONS AFFECTING LONDON DRAMA COMPANIES, 1591-1600

How chances it they travel?
(Hamlet, II.ii.343)

An occupational hazard of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatic companies working in London was their proneness to controversy. By the nature of their chosen profession, players often became objects of severe attack and abuse from various elements of society. Many merchants resented the theatre because their apprentices left their work to attend. Puritans heartily disapproved of the stage on moral grounds, and they ominously pointed out that such activity had helped to lead to the downfall of Rome. City administrators viewed theatres as abettors to disease and riot. As a result of this many-sided criticism, actors had a precarious existence in London, and, when conditions became critical and officials banned performances altogether, players had no recourse but to leave the city and perform in the provinces. Even the most prominent companies of the day were not exempt from the reverses of fortune which seemed to take place all too often. Among these groups was the Strange-Chamberlain Company, the organization of which Shakespeare was a member. A close scrutiny of their activity during the years 1591-1600 reveals the instability of their profession.

By the year 1590, the stage had already had several decades of government control. Since dramatic presentation throughout its early history in England had been basically religious in nature, plays came in for condemnation first during the reign of Henry VIII, because of their differences with the Anglicanism the king was trying to establish.¹ Early in her reign in 1559, Queen Elizabeth made a definite proclamation on the control of drama. She delegated censorship responsibilities to local officials, the municipal officers in towns and Lord Lieutenants and Justices of the Peace in shires.² The specific order to these men was that matters of religion and reflection on the government should not be handled in plays, an order rationalized by the idea that these topics were appropriate only to men of authority and should not be presented before a common audience.³ Until about 1570, the 1559 Proclamation was frequently broken, since no one as yet was really sure of the need for such censorship.⁴ Thereafter, however, the law was more stringently enforced.

During the 1570's, the government established many additional controls over the drama. A law of 1572 called for

¹Glynne Wickham, Early English Stages, II, 149.

²Virginia C. Gildersleeve, Government Regulation of the Elizabethan Drama, p. 14.

³Wickham, op. cit., II, 76.

⁴Loc. cit.

the licensing of all companies by at least two Justices of the Peace in every shire.⁵ The authorities created this law to control the vagabonds that were numerous throughout the countryside, and with whom many players were associated. In legal terms, any actor who was not attached to some nobleman was a vagabond or stroller, subject to punishment by law.⁶ In 1574, the Master of the Revels, an official of the royal household, first assumed regulatory powers over plays, other than court performances, by virtue of a provision in a royal patent to Leicester's Players to the effect that throughout the kingdom they could perform only those plays approved by the Master.⁷ This power was extended in 1581 to the necessity of obtaining the Master's approval on all plays and players, a provision which was, however, more extensive in theory than actual practice.⁸ Yet, the act set a clear precedent for ever-tightening control over plays, and from it the government gained the opportunity to overrule local authorities in the power they had gained in 1559.

On December 6, 1574, the City Council of London acted to regulate plays more than ever before. Stating that plays gave rise to the assembling of disorderly crowds and were

⁵Sir E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 270-271.

⁶Alfred Hart, "Did Shakespeare Produce His Own Plays?" MLR, XXXVI (April, 1941), 175.

⁷Gildersleeve, op. cit., p. 16.

⁸Ibid., p. 17.

prone to immoral activities, the Council threatened actors and innkeepers alike with fines and imprisonment for ". . . anie wourdes, examples, or doynges of anie vnchastitie, sedicion, nor suche lyke vnfytt and vncomelye matter."⁹ As a result, the players set up their theatres outside of London, where they were under the jurisdiction of more lenient county justices.¹⁰

There was, in fact, a great division in attitude toward the theatre among the governing bodies themselves. The London City Council grew to oppose play performance, chiefly on the grounds given in their 1574 Act--that plays attracted low-life characters and led to misconduct, and, to a lesser extent, that they were sinful in nature.¹¹ The Privy Council, on the other hand, supported theatrical performances as long as there were proper restraints, the Master of the Revels being in charge of imposing these regulations. The Privy Council, which represented the Queen, had two basic reasons for backing the drama: first, plays were a favorite court entertainment, and performers needed the opportunity to keep in practice; second, the companies were under the patronage of lords whom the government did not want to offend.¹²

⁹Chambers, op. cit., IV, 274.

¹⁰Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 29-30.

¹¹Gildersleeve, op. cit., p. 178.

¹²Wickham, op. cit., II, 86.

Throughout the 1580's, this disagreement between the City and Privy Councils became more and more bitter. In 1582, the Privy Council relented enough to ban plays on Sundays and Holy Days until after evening prayer, but no one enforced this order until after Sunday, January 13, 1583, when part of the bear-baiting structure at Paris Garden collapsed, killing several spectators and injuring others. After this incident, Lord Burghley, in a letter to the Lord Mayor of London, agreed that all "prophane assemblies" should be prohibited on the Sabbath.¹³ The incident was generally attributed to a working of God's wrath.

An incident of 1589 further illustrates the general animosity of the City fathers toward plays. During the Martin Marprelate controversy, the Lord Mayor specifically denied the Admiral's and the Strange's Men the right to perform. The Strange's Men disobeyed the order and played on the same afternoon of the ban at Cross Keys Inn. For their defiance, part of the actors went to jail.¹⁴ As a result of the Marprelate affair, which involved a Puritan attack upon the established church, the Star Chamber suggested a compromise measure in which "some fytt persone well learned in Divinity," a representative of the Lord Mayor, and the Master of the Revels should unite

¹³Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 292.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 305.

to examine plays.¹⁵ The plan, if tried, did not work out, as the Master of the Revels consistently increased his power, and the church soon lost all official control over the drama.¹⁶

Thus, by the decade of the 1590's, the theatre was the object of conflicting opinions among officials. But the protests against the stage were more deeply entrenched in certain elements of society than in those who actually had the power to act against the theatre. Chief among the critics of plays and actors were the Puritans. They were vigorous in their opposition as early as the 1570's, and their protests grew until the stage was outlawed in 1642. Their attack on the theatre was based on the grounds that (1) it was a waste of time and money, (2) it was sinful and contributed to vice, (3) acting was a form of lying because one portrayed something he was not, and (4) playing of women's parts by men was specifically prohibited by the Bible in Deuteronomy XXII.5.¹⁷

The advocates of the Puritan position made their feelings against plays known to the public through a wide circulation of pamphlets. It is impossible to enumerate all of the accusations made in these publications, but the writings of one

¹⁵Ibid., p. 306.

¹⁶Wickham, op. cit., II, 88.

¹⁷William A. Ringler, Jr., "Hamlet's Defense of the Players," Essays on Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama in Honor of Hardin Craig, p. 202.

particularly articulate man, Stephen Gosson, illustrate the general trend of Puritan thought.

Gosson was himself a onetime poet, actor, dramatist, and satirist, but he became a Puritan preacher and took every opportunity to rail at the folly of his youthful vocations. His condemnation of the stage in the essay "The Schoole of Abuse," published in 1579, is particularly pointed. About the effect of the players on the audience, Gosson states:

. . . [the players] abroche straunge consortes of melody, to tickle the ear; costly apparel to flatter the sight; effeminate gesture, to ravish the sence; and wanton speach to whet desire too inordinate lust.¹⁸

Gosson also disapproved of the activities of the audience itself:

In our assemblies at playes in London, you shall see suche ytching and shouldring, too sitte by women; Such care for their garments, that they bee not trode on: Such eyes to their lappes, that no chippes light in them: Such pillows to their backs that they take no hurt . . . Such ticking, such toying, such smiling, such winking, and such manning them home, when the sportes are ended, that it is a right Comedie, to marke their behaviour . . . Not that any filthynesse in deede, is committed within the compasse of that ground, as was doone in Rome, but that every wanton and his Paramour, every man and his Mistresse, every John and his Joan, every knave and his queane, are there first acquainted and cheapen the merchandise in that place . . .¹⁹

The fact that a poor actor could at least give the appearance of being successful also disturbed Gosson:

¹⁸Stephen Gosson, The Schoole of Abuse, p. 32.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 35-36.

Overlashing in apparel is so common a fault, that the very hyerlings of some of our Players, which stand at reversion of vi s. by the weeke, let under Gentlemens noses in sutes of silke, exercising themselves too prating on the stage, and common scoffing when they come abrode, where they look askance over the shoulder at every man, of whom the sunday before they begged an almes.²⁰

Naturally, the proponents of the theatre responded with arguments for their point of view. Thomas Lodge answered Gosson's essay with "A Reply in Defence of Poetry Musick and Stage Plays" in 1580. In the pamphlet, Lodge admitted that there were some abuses of the stage, but defended it on the grounds of its potential to be a force for good:

. . . I say if the style were changed the practice would profit. and sure I thinke our theaters fit . . . if our poetes will nowe become seuerer, and for prophane things write of vertue: you I hope shoulde see a reformed state in those thinges, which I feare me yf they were not, the idle hedded commones would work more mischief.²¹

Arguments in the vein of Gosson and Lodge were frequent occurrences. Ringler suggests that the controversy may have been an incentive for Shakespeare to include in Hamlet the two scenes with the travelling players.²² A common argument in drama's favor was that plays showed man the folly of evil ways and helped him to sense his own guilt. Shakespeare did

²⁰Ibid., p. 39.

²¹Thomas Lodge, Complete Works, I, 41.

²²Ringler, op. cit., p. 207.

use this idea in Hamlet, but, as Ringler further points out, he did not come to the same conclusion in the end. Claudius does not reform despite his realization of wrongdoing, but goes on to contemplate further murder.²³

In all such arguments about the theatre, the Puritans had a decided advantage. Their argument was based upon Biblical injunction and was reinforced by sermons to which many people were subjected. There was no such incentive for the public to listen to scholars or literary figures who argued for plays on their classical authority.²⁴

Tradesmen were another large group who had some reason to protest against the stage. They were concerned about their apprentices' leaving their work to attend the theatre. Since plays were presented in the afternoon at a time when most of the regular audience should have been working, this charge had a real basis in fact.²⁵ In addition, masters had a responsibility to their apprentices to provide them with moral, as well as technical training.²⁶ The employers were certainly aware that, besides whatever questionable portrayals might be made on the stage, a greater danger lay in the too frequent

²³Ibid., p. 211.

²⁴Wickham, op. cit., II, 112.

²⁵Alfred Harbage, Shakespeare's Audience, p. 67.

²⁶M. H. Curtis, "Education and Apprenticeship," Shakespeare Survey, XVII (1964), 70.

riots, which took place at the playhouses. The physical accommodations of the theatre added to this danger. Since many people stood, rather than sat, during the performance, and since they tended to be in a holiday mood besides, minor jostling sometimes led to major uproars.²⁷ Apprentices were most frequently involved in these riots, many of which had additional, deeper causes.

One of the greatest reasons for argument against plays on the part of the merchant class was economic in origin. The players in London grew rich on money which otherwise might have filled the shopkeepers' own coffers.²⁸ Further, the theatre traffic brought crowds to certain districts at the expense of others. The one economic group which supported plays wholeheartedly was the watermen, who profited greatly from ferrying people to and from the playhouses.²⁹

One may clearly observe that, because of the groups having reason adamantly to oppose the stage, the London companies had an unstable existence. They did, however, have the support of the most important element of all, the crown and lords, and this friendship was usually enough to offset most of the critics. Thus, it was worthwhile and profitable for a company to base itself in London and hope for a troublefree

²⁷Wickham, op. cit., II, 86.

²⁸Harbage, op. cit., p. 14.

²⁹Ibid., p. 16.

stay. But such was not always the case. Nearly every year in the decade 1591-1600, there was a period of inhibition of all plays in London for one reason or another. Naturally, such an occurrence created problems for the company, and, in order to keep together and reap some financial benefit from an otherwise long period of inactivity, they took at least a part of their number and toured the provinces. One may examine the effects of play inhibition in the ten-year period in question and reach some conclusion on exactly what obstacles one particular company, the Strange-Chamberlain Men, had to overcome in order to obtain lasting fame as the company for which Shakespeare worked and wrote.

Shakespeare's company, known as Strange's Men until 1594, was, along with the Admiral's Men, one of the most popular groups in London. By the summer of 1591, the company had established itself in a regular theatre, the Rose. There is a record among the Alleyn papers at Dulwich that indicates that the Privy Council had withdrawn a previous restraint to their playing at this theatre.³⁰ According to the existing evidence, there does not seem to have been a complete inhibition of plays during this year. The Privy Council did, however, pass an important act. In a letter of July 25, 1591, the Council increased the prohibition of plays from Sunday alone

³⁰Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 43.

to two days a week: Sunday and Thursday.³¹ The reason given for the Thursday ban was that playing hindered the attendance at bear-baiting and similar sports. The prevention of play performance was a definite disadvantage to a company. Apparently, players resented even a Sunday prohibition, since much evidence remains to show that this law was frequently flouted. The actors seem to have desired to perform every day, or nearly so, and an eager audience awaited any presentation. Thus, with the Sunday restraint alone, the opportunity for fifty performances a year was lost, and, with the additional Thursday inhibition, more than one hundred playing days were legally eliminated. In spite of this edict, 1591 must have been a relatively good year for the Strange's Men.

In contrast, the year 1592 brought its share of problems. Shakespeare's company had evidently spent the winter of 1591-1592 playing at inns. But on February 19, 1592, they had established themselves at the Rose theatre. According to Henslowe, they remained there until June 23, giving a total of one hundred and five performances, with an average of between five and six days of play presentation per week.³² Evidently, the Thursday ban was not enforced during this year. But the players were under the pressure of constant criticism. On

³¹Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 307.

³²R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert, (eds.), Henslowe's Diary, pp. 16-18.

February 25, the Lord Mayor appealed to John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury, enlisting his aid against the problematical stage.³³ The Archbishop's subsequent admonition to the Privy Council contained a warning about previous riots at playhouses and the possibility of future disorders.³⁴

In early June, the inevitable happened. A dispute had long been brewing between foreign craftsmen, the Dutch, Flemish, and French Huguenot immigrants, and native artisans.³⁵ A riot finally took place in Southwark, reported in a June 12 letter from the Lord Mayor to Lord Burghley. He wrote that a feltmaker, falsely accused and captured by the Knight Mareschall's Men, set off the disturbance. A group of his cohorts, on the pretense of going to see a play, assembled for the purpose of rescuing their companion, setting off a riot.³⁶

No company of actors had anything directly to do with the affair. But the Privy Council, suspecting that the riots might occur again, closed from June 23 until September 29 all places, theatres included, where "the baser sorte of people" might meet.³⁷ The plague also flared up in the summer, and

³³Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 307-308.

³⁴Gildersleeve, op. cit., pp. 179-180.

³⁵Chambers, William Shakespeare, II, 511.

³⁶Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 310.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 310-311.

playing was further suspended throughout the autumn.³⁸ It was December 30 before Lord Strange's Men again resumed playing at the Rose.³⁹ During the six-month inhibition, the company travelled. On July 13, they were at Canterbury, and on October 6, they were at Oxford, having been at Bath, Gloucester, Coventry, and Cambridge in the interim.⁴⁰ Upon returning to London, they gave two plays at court.⁴¹ Assuming that the company travelled for five months during this year and could average four performances per week on their tour, one could make the generous estimate that they had played eighty times in the provinces. Added to the known one hundred and eight performances in London and at court, one hundred and eighty-eight actual performances seem possible. By remaining the full year in London, the company could have performed considerably more times. For example, Henslowe's accounts show that the Admiral's Men, in the seven-month period from June to December in 1594, played one hundred and sixty-nine times.⁴² This figure shows a possibility of almost two hundred and ninety total performances annually, if there were no hindrances.

³⁸Ibid., p. 348.

³⁹Foakes and Rickert, op. cit., p. 19.

⁴⁰John T. Murray, English Dramatic Companies, p. 86.

⁴¹Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 44.

⁴²Foakes and Rickert, op. cit., pp. 21-26.

The year, 1593, got off to a good start for the Lord Strange's Men. They played at the Rose theatre from December 30, 1592, until February 2, 1593, and in this thirty-five day period, they gave thirty-one performances, including two visits to the court.⁴³ But on January 28, the Privy Council ordered another inhibition because of the plague.⁴⁴ Playing then did not resume in London until December.

Plague inhibitions were to occur again in 1594 and 1596, and the disease proved to be the main cause of forced travel for playing companies. The theatres were automatically closed in London when there were thirty deaths in a week attributable to the plague.⁴⁵ That this number was often far exceeded is evidenced by the fact that 11,503 died of plague in London in 1592 and 10,675 in 1593.⁴⁶ The Privy Council in a 1593 Act elucidated their reasons for believing that the plague was spread among theatre audiences:

That for avoydinge of great concourse of people, w^{ch} causeth increase of thinflection, y^t were convenient, that all Playes, Bearebaytinges, Cockpitts, comon Bowlinge Alleyes, and suche like vnnecessarie assemblies should be suppressed duringe the tyme of infection, for that

⁴³Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁴Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 313.

⁴⁵F. P. Wilson, "Illustrations of Social Life: the Plague," Shakespeare Survey, XV (1962), 135.

⁴⁶G. B. Harrison, The Elizabethan Journals, pp. 183, 278.

infected people after their long keeping in, and before they be cleared of their disease and infection, being desirous of recreation, use to resort to such assemblies, where through heat and throng, they infect many sound persons.⁴⁷

Naturally, the Puritans found a way to lash out at the theatres by attributing the plague to God's vengeance on man for ". . . withdrawinge of the Queenes Maiesties subiectes from dyvyn service on Sonndayes and Hollydayes."⁴⁸ A consensus of general public opinion added two other possible causes for the plague: a rotten and corrupt air, and a certain conjunction of the stars and aspect of the planets.⁴⁹

Whatever the actual cause of the plague, the Strange Company were again victims of its effects in 1593. They evidently were inactive from January 28 until May 6, on which date they were granted a travelling license.⁵⁰ The indications are conclusive that even private practice was neither allowed nor financially possible for the group during plague inhibition. The 1593 license given to the Strange's Men stated that they might travel so that ". . . they may be in the better readines hereafter for her Maiesty's service whensoever they shalbe

⁴⁷"Lansdowne Manuscripts," Collections V, The Malone Society, 204-205.

⁴⁸Wickham, op. cit., II, 82.

⁴⁹Wilson, op. cit., p. 125.

⁵⁰Chambers, William Shakespeare, II, 313.

therunto called."⁵¹ Later documents give the same evidence. During the winters of the plague years, 1608 and 1609, King James provided financial aid to the King's Men so that they could rehearse privately.⁵² On September 15, 1637, Christopher Beeston petitioned the Privy Council that his company ". . . might have leave to practise for the better performance of their duties when they shall be commanded." The verdict stated that they ". . . should be at libertie to practice . . . at Michaelmas next, if by that time there be not considerable increase of the sicknes" ⁵³ Hence, the custom of the company's travelling during the time of plague inhibition may have been forced upon it by the very necessity of keeping the group intact. Otherwise, through months of inactivity without financial aid or the right to practice, the company could easily have disbanded.

The tour of 1593 lasted from May until December and covered much of England. In all, the Strange Company's itinerary, as preserved through the correspondences of Edward Alleyn and his wife, took them to at least seventeen provincial cities and towns.⁵⁴ Throughout the year, however, their total

⁵¹Loc. cit.

⁵²Hart, op. cit., p. 147.

⁵³C. C. Stopes, "Dramatic Records from the Privy Council Register," Shakespeare Jahrbuch, XLVIII (1912), 113.

⁵⁴Murray, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

number of performances was probably fewer than one hundred and fifty.

The year, 1594, also brought its share of problems. On February 3, the Privy Council again prohibited play presentation within five miles of London because of the plague.⁵⁵ It seems likely that Shakespeare's company travelled during this inhibition, even though they had been back in London for less than two months. No record exists which indicates provincial performances for the company in this particular period in 1594, but the Admiral's Men definitely did tour until May 16.⁵⁶ Probably the other companies followed suit. Plays resumed in London on April 6, but, since the first mention of Shakespeare's company in London occurs on June 3, one can conjecture that they travelled until that time. Between June 3 and 16, the company gave ten performances at Newington Butts in combination with the Admiral's Men.⁵⁷ Before summer, because of the death of their patron, Ferdinando Stanley, the company became the Lord Chamberlain's Men, as Henry Carey, the holder of this title, assumed patronage.⁵⁸

On June 16, 1594, the Chamberlain's Men broke with the Admiral's Company, and began performance at the Theatre in

⁵⁵Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 314-315.

⁵⁶Harrison, op. cit., p. 302.

⁵⁷Foakes and Rickert, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

⁵⁸Murray, op. cit., pp. 91-92.

Shoreditch on June 22.⁵⁹ Just how long they remained there is somewhat obscure. Harrison reports that the theatres were shut down on June 26 for two months because of rioting among workers.⁶⁰ Chambers dates an account, which tells of a plague inhibition, between July and October of 1594.⁶¹ The Admiral's Men, however, played at the Rose without hindrance throughout the year.⁶² The Chamberlain's Men, on the other hand, did travel during the summer, since they are traceable at Coventry, Leicester, and Marlborough in September.⁶³ In view of the fact that the Chamberlain's Men alone travelled, Chambers's dating of the plague inhibition is probably incorrect. Evidently, the Theatre was closed in an attempt to prevent rioting, but the Rose was not. If this conjecture be true, the Chamberlain's Men were the victims of discrimination.

That the company was not on good terms with the authorities in London is made clear in a very humble appeal made on October 8 by the Lord Chamberlain to the Lord Mayor in an attempt to gain permission for his players to perform at the Cross Keys Inn.⁶⁴ Among the things the patron promised was

⁵⁹Harrison, op. cit., p. 305.

⁶⁰G. B. Harrison, Shakespeare under Elizabeth, p. 92.

⁶¹Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 315.

⁶²Foakes and Rickert, op. cit., pp. 22-26.

⁶³Murray, op. cit., p. 93.

⁶⁴Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 316.

that his company would start plays at two o'clock, rather than the usual time of four o'clock, that they would not use drums or trumpets with which to attract the public, and that they would willingly contribute to the poor people of the Parish.⁶⁵ There is no evidence as to whether or not the Lord Mayor granted the request.

All in all, 1594 must have been a trying year for the Chamberlain's Men. They toured twice; and even in London, they performed in at least three different locations. Their activities are so varied, and in some cases so obscure, that it is impossible to make an accurate estimate of their number of performances. But it seems unlikely that they could have played for more than one hundred and fifty times.

The next year, 1595, brought with it the enforcement of a different type of suppression--the prohibition of plays during Lent. An act making plays illegal during the Lenten season was not new, since one had been issued in 1579.⁶⁶ But the law was rarely enforced. In this year, however, Henslowe's records show that the Admiral's Men presented no plays from March 14 until April 23.⁶⁷ The same would quite probably have been true for the Chamberlain's Men. Furthermore, such

⁶⁵Loc. cit.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 278.

⁶⁷Foakes and Rickert, op. cit., p. 28.

suppression marked a distinct change in attitude toward frivolous activities during the holy season. Stow reports that traditionally on every Friday in Lent, there were warlike games on horseback, and also in the Easter "Holydayes" water battles took place for sport.⁶⁸ Ultimately, then, the enforcement of the law was an attempt to hurt the theatrical interests, rather than an actual act of conscience.

Plays were evidently inhibited again during the summer of 1595, but no record exists to give the reason. There were no plays at the Rose, for example, from the end of June until August 29.⁶⁹ A letter of September 13 from the Lord Mayor to the Privy Council verifies that there had been a period of no plays and gives some hint of the cause.⁷⁰ The petition called for a final suppression of all plays and included the old charges that they were profane and led to improper behavior and rioting, all of which, the letter states, "... wee begin to have experienc again within these few daies."⁷¹ The indication is that plays were prohibited, ostensibly from a fear of rioting, but with an ultimate hope of eliminating them completely. The Chamberlain's Men appear to have toured

⁶⁸John Stow, The Survey of London, p. 76.

⁶⁹Harrison, The Elizabethan Journals, p. 44.

⁷⁰Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 318.

⁷¹Loc. cit.

as early as June 9, and they were recorded in Ipswich on this date.⁷² Altogether, no plays were permitted in London for more than four months in 1595.

The following year, 1596, brought a new crisis to the Chamberlain Company. Throughout the first half of the year, all apparently went well. The company probably performed at the Theatre, and there is no record of any problems. But on July 22, their patron, the Lord Chamberlain, died, leaving the company without government protection.⁷³ On the day of his death, plays were inhibited, supposedly because of the plague, although there is no evidence to indicate that it was serious in this year.⁷⁴ The suppression came about with the naming of a new Lord Chamberlain, William Brooke, who opposed plays, and the ensuing shift of the balance of power on the theatre issue which resulted.⁷⁵ The company's new patron was George Carey, Lord Hunsdon, son of the former protector.⁷⁶ This arrangement did not last long, as Brooke died on March 5, 1597, and Carey became Lord Chamberlain shortly thereafter, giving the company again a desirable influence in official quarters.⁷⁷

⁷²Chambers, William Shakespeare, II, 320.

⁷³Ibid., I, 64.

⁷⁴J. L. Hotson, Shakespeare vs. Shallow, p. 14.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 15.

⁷⁶Murray, op. cit., p. 94.

⁷⁷Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 64.

During the eight-month interval until this favor to their interests returned, all London players had a trying time. Their plight was described in a letter written by Thomas Nashe to William Cotton in September, 1596, which states:

Sir this tedious dead vacation is to mee as a terme at Hertford of St. Albons to poore cuntry clients or Iack Cades rebellion to the lawyers, wherein they hanged vp the L. chiefe iustice. In towne I stayd (being earnestly inuited elsewhere) vpon had I wist hopes, & an after harvest I expected by writing for the stage & for the presse, when now the players as if they had writt another Christs tears, ar piteously persecuted by the L. Maior & the aldermen, & howeuer in there old Lords tyme they thought there state settled, it is now so vncertayne they cannot build vpon it.⁷⁸

Nashe's sentiments, no doubt, summed up those of all in the stage profession.

During their inhibition, Hunsdon's Men travelled, although the only definite reference to them is at Faversham.⁷⁹ Playing resumed in London in the autumn, as the Admiral's Men returned to the Rose on October 27.⁸⁰ Hotson conjectures that Shakespeare's company established themselves at the Swan upon their return.⁸¹ In the final analysis, by the end of the year, there had been from three to four months of play inhibition.

⁷⁸Quoted in Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 319.

⁷⁹Murray, op. cit., p. 94.

⁸⁰Foakes and Rickert, op. cit., p. 54.

⁸¹Hotson, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

Conditions must have appeared more favorable to the new Lord Chamberlain's Company during the first half of 1597. From March on, they had regained a friend in official quarters, and there was no suppression of their activities. But an incident occurred in July which again brought trouble to the London companies. On July 28, Pembroke's Men performed Thomas Nashe's play, The Isle of Dogs. The Privy Council act concerning the matter spoke of the "... lewd matters that are handled on the stages," and implied that they took great offense from them.⁸² The statement also ordered that the Curtain and Theatre be torn down, or at least defaced, a command which was not carried out.⁸³ At any rate, the Chamberlain's Men, again confronted with a three-month period of inactivity, went to the provinces and appeared in at least five towns.⁸⁴ Plays resumed in London on October 11, but again more than three lucrative months of performance there had been lost.

By the beginning of 1598, the years of crisis for the Chamberlain's Men were apparently past. They were established at the Curtain theatre, and there were no inhibitions throughout the year. But even more important for Shakespeare's

⁸²Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 322-323.

⁸³Gildersleeve, op. cit., p. 95.

⁸⁴Murray, op. cit., p. 95.

company was an official sanction given them and the Admiral's Men by the Privy Council, while a third company, probably Pembroke's, was at the same time suppressed.⁸⁵

The year, 1599, was likewise a good one for the Chamberlain Company. They moved into their new playhouse, the Globe, in the spring, and evidently performed without hindrance. Some have conjectured that the company travelled to Scotland in November of this year, a trip which gave Shakespeare material for the scenic background of Macbeth.⁸⁶ Lee discounts completely the possibility of such a trip.⁸⁷ If the Lenten prohibition was not rigidly enforced in 1598-99, and there is no evidence that it was, the company may have been able to perform for the maximum number of days during these years. If such was the case, they no doubt profited greatly.

The theatrical profession had become lucrative enough by 1600 so that there was a flurry of new theatrical construction. In order to put down the influx of stages before they became well-established, the Privy Council issued an order on June 22, 1600, stating that only two public theatres, the Globe and the Fortune, were to be tolerated, and further commanded

⁸⁵Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 325.

⁸⁶Cf. Frederick G. Fleay, A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of William Shakespeare, pp. 135-136.

⁸⁷Sidney Lee, A Life of William Shakespeare, pp. 41-43.

that the companies should be allowed to perform regularly only twice a week and not at all during Lent.⁸⁸ In the edict, the Council made clear its position on playing. They claimed that play performance, ". . . not beinge evill in yt self, may with a good order and moderacion be suffered in a well governed estate," and went on to speak of the pleasure which the Queen derived from it.⁸⁹ The moderation of number of performances which they tried to effect was not adhered to for long.⁹⁰ If it had been, the number of possible performances per year would have been less than one hundred, and it is doubtful that playing in London could have continued at all on such a limited basis.

Another problem that the Chamberlain's Men had to cope with in 1600 was an ever-increasing rivalry with child-acting companies. Shakespeare wrote in Hamlet about the economic impact of the popular favor of the child actor on the adult companies. There is no indication, however, that Shakespeare's company ever travelled for this reason, although they were obviously concerned that such a necessity might arise.

Thus, from a comprehensive view of the ten-year period from 1591-1600, one sees that the Strange-Chamberlain Company

⁸⁸Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 329-331.

⁸⁹Loc. cit.

⁹⁰Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 64-65.

met with a variety of crises, some so serious that for six consecutive years the company was forced to spend part of its time seeking its fortunes in the provinces. Yet, there were other conditions which at times may have given the London company a cause for concern.

The first of these imminent problems was that of government censorship. The Master of the Revels was the official personage in charge of this function from as early as 1574, but it was not until the reign of James I, that the Master became well-established in this role.⁹¹ The hierarchy of power over plays was vested in the Crown, Privy Council, Lord Chamberlain, and finally the Master of the Revels.⁹² Since Shakespeare's company boasted a patron of great influence from 1594 on (with the brief exception of eight months in 1596-1597), they were less liable to include in their texts anything offensive to those in authority than a lesser company might have been.⁹³

Therefore, the number of incidents concerning the content of plays was limited for the Chamberlain's Men, and none of these occasions had any lasting consequences. In 1597, the descendants of Sir John Oldcastle caused his name to be taken

⁹¹Gildersleeve, op. cit., p. 18.

⁹²Ibid., p. 19.

⁹³Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 237.

from the Henry IV plays and changed to Falstaff.⁹⁴ At approximately the same time, Elizabeth ordered the excision of a scene of the king's abdication in Richard II, which supposedly would incite the viewers to rebellion.⁹⁵ This scene led to an unfortunate incident in 1601, when certain traitors persuaded the Chamberlain's Men to include it in their performance of the play. The conspiracy led to the eventual execution of Essex and several others, but the company suffered no lasting effects. In fact, they performed before the Queen only two weeks later.⁹⁶ Another object of censorship was the four-nation scene of Henry V.⁹⁷ Despite these instances, no general inhibition resulted from the Chamberlain's Men's plays, and any offense they created was soon forgiven.

A further potential problem that drama companies had to deal with was the purely physical consideration of the weather. The public theatres in London were partially open to the air, and it would seem that on days that were rainy or cold, play performance would be impossible. On the other hand, there is sufficient evidence to lead one to believe that weather was not a particular hindrance. The statistical averages of the

⁹⁴Gildersleeve, op. cit., p. 96.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 98.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 99.

⁹⁷Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 238.

London climate provide one with such an indication. According to Kendrew, the mean rainfall in London annually is 25.1 inches, with 21% of this amount coming in spring, 29% in summer, 28% in fall, and 22% in winter.⁹⁸ Also, because of the warmth of the surface waters of the North Atlantic, even winters in England are generally mild. The average London temperature during the coldest month, January, is 39.3°.⁹⁹ It becomes evident that year-round performance in an open-air theatre is more feasible in London than in most parts of the United States, when one compares the London weather averages with those of St. Louis, in the midwestern United States, which has an annual rainfall of 40 inches and an average January temperature of 31°.¹⁰⁰

In respect to temperature, then, audiences and players at winter performances must usually have been more comfortable than, for example, is often a present-day American football crowd. Yet, rain was still inevitable on occasion. To provide for this occurrence, certain measures were taken. In the first place, much of the theatre was protected from the skies. A slanted roof covered the back part of the stage, and theatres were constructed to allow for the prevailing southwesterly

⁹⁸W. G. Kendrew, The Climates of the Continents, pp. 215-217, 257.

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 210-211.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 304.

winds.¹⁰¹ The roof guarded the stage properties from a driving rain from this direction.¹⁰² Evidently, this roof drained into the yard, or at least far enough onto the forestage so that playing was permissible.

The galleries also were covered to provide shelter for the spectators, leaving only the yard entirely exposed to the elements.¹⁰³ Harbage suggests a plausible solution for the difficulties involved in the event that it was raining at play time, explaining that the spectator would have had to decide between paying an extra penny for a seat in the gallery or not going to a play at all. If it began to rain during the actual performance, occupants of the yard would have been allowed to enter the galleries without extra charge.¹⁰⁴ Gosson adds contemporary evidence for this conjecture in his pamphlet, "Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions," published in 1582, in which he states:

Commedies are neither chargable to ye beholders purse, nor painful to his body; partly, because he may sit out of the raine to viewe the same, when many other pastimes are hindered by wether.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹Wickham, op. cit., II, 305.

¹⁰²Loc. cit.

¹⁰³Harbage, op. cit., p. 33.

¹⁰⁴Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁵Quoted in ibid., pp. 66-67.

The fact that plays were not postponed because of weather is further supported by evidence from Henslowe's Diary, which records consecutive performances for all months of the year.

There was, on the other hand, another matter for the players to consider. The public theatres, located outside of town, were difficult to reach in the winter months because of the muddy roads. For this reason, when London authorities were favorable, the companies sometimes resorted to city inns during this time.¹⁰⁶ Throughout the 1590's, this privilege was not usually granted, and the regular theatres remained in use. Harbage reports that despite the fact that actors must occasionally have had to sweep snow from the stage and the spectators to brave a muddy yard and chilly galleries, the attendance was only about one-third less in winter than in spring and summer.¹⁰⁷

When one takes into consideration all of the forces which were working against the efforts of Elizabethan dramatic companies, one can readily see that they had no easy existence while in London. The Privy Council prohibited stage activity altogether in cases of riot, plague, and on one occasion for an exceedingly offensive play. In order to stay together at all during these periods, the players toured to provincial cities. But even the tours brought their share of problems.

¹⁰⁶Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 30.

¹⁰⁷Harbage, op. cit., pp. 45-47.

CHAPTER III

A SURVEY OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE TRAVELLING COMPANY

Let them be well used.
(Hamlet, II.ii.546)

The actors of Shakespeare's or any other travelling company faced many of the same problems in the provinces that they confronted in London. It was desirable to have the opportunity to play frequently, to have an adequate place to perform in, and to have a sizeable audience at each performance. The latter two of these necessities, the playhouse and eager audiences, usually presented little trouble for the established London companies. Their major concern was to keep in the good graces of the government so that they could take advantage of the available facilities and enthusiasm. When they toured the countryside, however, the players had all of these perplexities to consider and several more besides.

Even getting from place to place throughout England was often a treacherous undertaking. Prosperous companies, such as the Chamberlain's Men, had a wagon for carrying their properties, and the actors themselves probably travelled on horseback.¹⁰⁸ Just how bad conditions could be at times on English roads was described by one traveller, Frederick, Duke

¹⁰⁸Alwin Thaler, "Strolling Players and Provincial Drama after Shakespeare," PMLA, XXXVI (1922), 276.

of Wurtemberg, in an account of the road from Cambridge to London. Writing in 1592, one of the years that Shakespeare's company was on the road until well into the fall, the Duke reported:

On the road we passed through a villainous boggy and wild country and several times missed our way because the country thereabouts is very little inhabited and is nearly a waste; and there is one spot in particular where the mud is so deep that in my opinion it would scarcely be possible¹⁰⁹ to pass with a coach in winter or in rainy weather.

Another observer, William Harrison, recommended that roads be more than doubled in width, so that ". . . the traveller might escape the thief, or shift the mire, or pass by the broaden cart without danger to himself and his horse."¹¹⁰

From these descriptions, one can see that merely to move from town to town was no trifling matter. In addition to mentioning the bad roads, Rothwell proposes that touring players also had to expect infrequent meals, a lack of cleanliness, and the possibility of "crowding into vermin-ridden beds."¹¹¹ But all of these discomforts were probably secondary concerns. The actors who travelled were doing so to earn

¹⁰⁹J. Dover Wilson, (ed.), Life in Shakespeare's England, p. 77.

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 76-77.

¹¹¹W. F. Rothwell, "Was There a Typical Elizabethan Stage?" Shakespeare Survey, XII (1959), 117.

their living, and the fact that their profession was far from luxurious was, no doubt, a condition that they merely accepted and made the best of.

Of much greater concern to the players must have been the financial rewards they could gain from their tour, since this consideration was the main reason for their venturing from London. Most Elizabethan accounts allude satirically to strolling players and consistently picture them as poor men. For example, Dekker states:

. . . [the players] out of an ambition to weare the Best Jerkin (in a Strowling Company) or to Act Great Parts, forsake the stately and our more than Romaine Cittie Stages, to travel upon the hard hoofe from village to village for cheese and butter milke.¹¹²

Such an account cannot be accurately applied to the men of the Strange-Chamberlain Company, since they made up one of the two most successful groups of the 1590's. Most of their financial gain, however, did come from performances in London, not from those in the provinces.

It is well-known that the leading actors in Shakespeare's company became quite wealthy in their profession. Chambers estimates that a sharer could earn from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds per year if the company spent all their time in London.¹¹³ Harbage deduces that, in 1595, the

¹¹²Thomas Dekker, The Belman of London, p. 81.

¹¹³Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, I, 370.

Chamberlain's Men had an average daily attendance of twenty-five hundred persons, with a weekly average of fifteen thousand spectators.¹¹⁴ Lee estimates that after the company had moved into the Globe, their average daily cash intake was twenty-five pounds, and he extends this figure into an annual gross of eight thousand pounds.¹¹⁵ This final estimate may be too high, because Lee bases it on the assumption that the company performed three hundred and twenty times annually, a total almost certainly too high, even for a banner year. But, if he is even reasonably accurate in his deductions, one can believe that the Chamberlain's Men gathered lucrative profits for their efforts in London. In addition to public performances, the company usually made three or four court appearances yearly, and for each of these presentations, they received ten pounds.¹¹⁶

In contrast to the London income, provincial receipts were extremely small. It is difficult to estimate exactly what totals a company might have received in a town. Present-day knowledge of how much companies earned is based primarily upon records of grants made to players by town officials. These sums were gifts, usually made by the mayor, and were additional to the total gate receipts. In themselves, these

¹¹⁴Harbage, op. cit., p. 36.

¹¹⁵Lee, op. cit., p. 208.

¹¹⁶"Accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber, 1558-1642," Collections VI, The Malone Society, 27-31.

grants varied greatly. For example, Murray's study of the records at Leicester reveals that such gifts ranged from ten to forty shillings for the important companies.¹¹⁷ Halliwell-Phillipp's examination of the payments made to the Chamberlain's Men between 1594 and 1597 shows an average receipt of about fifteen shillings from the town treasuries.¹¹⁸ However, the amount of money received from admission charges at each performance in Leicester averaged only seven shillings.¹¹⁹

Thaler estimates that forty shillings, or two pounds, was the amount a company received for a single performance throughout the provinces.¹²⁰ This figure, if correct, demonstrates that the provincial daily gate receipts were approximately one-tenth as much on the road as those in London. In addition to their monetary gifts, town officials occasionally aided the players by providing them food and drink.¹²¹

Despite these kind gestures, travelling expenses were high. Although there was no need to provide for the upkeep of

¹¹⁷J. T. Murray, "English Dramatic Companies in the Towns outside of London, 1550-1600," MP, II (April, 1905), 552.

¹¹⁸J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, Visits of Shakespeare's Company of Actors to the Provincial Cities and Towns of England, pp. 13-30.

¹¹⁹Murray, "English Dramatic Companies in the Towns outside of London," p. 552.

¹²⁰Alwin Thaler, "Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England," MP, XVII (January, 1920), 507-508.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 503.

a theatre as there was in London, companies still spent almost as much money in providing and maintaining necessary equipment and meeting costs of food and lodging as they expended in preparing for a full London season.¹²² This total amount probably was from one to two hundred pounds, depending, of course, upon the length of the tour.¹²³ That expenses sometimes were larger than rewards is evidenced in the Strange Company's petition to the Privy Council in July, 1592:

. . . oure Companie is greate, and thearbie our chardge intollerable, in travellinge the Countrie, and the Contynuanace thereof wilbe a meane to bring vs to division and separacion, whearebie wee shall not onelie be vndone, but also vnreadie to serve her maiestie, when it shall please her highenes to commaund vs.¹²⁴

Other leading companies had a similar problem. Pembroke's Men travelled in 1593, spent all available money, and had to pawn their properties when they were stranded.¹²⁵ Although Shakespeare's company never reached this low ebb in circumstances and probably did not meet the financial straits of 1592 during succeeding years, they must have undertaken most of their provincial tours with some misgivings about the likely success they would achieve.

¹²²Ibid., p. 500.

¹²³Ibid., p. 501.

¹²⁴Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 311-312.

¹²⁵Thaler, "Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England," p. 492.

In order to keep down expenses, only a limited number of actors went on tour. When in London, the Strange-Chamberlain Men consisted of from twenty to thirty-five members, counting sharers, hired men, and apprentices.¹²⁶ In the travelling license granted them by the Privy Council in 1593, only six players were listed: Edward Alleyn, Will Kemp, Thomas Pope, John Heminges, Augustine Phillips, and George Bryan.¹²⁷ Those names given were probably only those of the sharers who travelled. Five or six non-sharers were undoubtedly on the tour, also.¹²⁸ The usual number of actors in a travelling company was ten or twelve, although the size varied considerably at times.¹²⁹ It is also possible that the Strange's and Admiral's Men played both in combination and separately on their 1592 tours, since some provincial records allude to their joint appearances.¹³⁰

At any rate, at most times, the travelling company was small, and the necessity arose for doubling of parts in play performance. Since Shakespeare's plays average twenty-five

¹²⁶Thomas W. Baldwin, The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company, p. 38.

¹²⁷Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, 314.

¹²⁸Murray, English Dramatic Companies, p. 88.

¹²⁹Thaler, "Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England," p. 501.

¹³⁰Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, II, 121.

characters, the practice of doubling on tours probably had to be extensively followed.¹³¹ There was nothing at all new about this custom, but Shakespeare's company, with its large number of actors, could eliminate any need for doubling while in London. On the road, this practice must have been the rule. One man could take as many as three or four parts, and it was not unknown for a man to play two characters in the same scene.¹³² As a selling point to a travelling company, on the title-pages of an interlude, The Four Elements, by John Rastell, the printer pointed out how this drama could be acted by a limited number of players:

Foure men may well and easelye playe this Interlude.
Peace and Coll hassarde and Coscyence, for one man.
Haboundance and mysrule for another man.
Impaciente pouerte, Prosperute, and pouerte, for one man.
Enuye and the sommer for another man.¹³³

Although Shakespeare's company probably never doubled parts to this extent, the interlude proves that the provincial audiences were not unfamiliar with presentations by an inadequate number of personnel.

¹³¹ Thaler, "Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England," p. 501.

¹³² William A. Armstrong, "Actors and Theatres," Shakespeare Survey, XVII (1964), 193.

¹³³ Quoted in C. J. Sisson, "Shakespeare's Quartos as Prompt Copies; with Some Account of Cholmeley's Players and a New Shakespeare Allusion," RES, XVIII (April, 1942), 131.

If misfortune should befall one of the company's actors while the group was on tour, the problem became even greater. That such occurrences did take place is evidenced in a letter of August 14, 1593, from Henslowe to Edward Alleyn in which Henslowe states:

We hard that you weare very sycke at Bath & that one of youre felowes weare fayne to play youre parte for you¹³⁴

The sickness of a leading actor must, indeed, have taxed the strength of the Strange Company.

Another item affecting the prosperity of a travelling company was the number of performances which they could give in each town. If the actors could spend several weeks in one town, it would certainly be more profitable to them than the routine of moving every few days, during which travelling time, they would earn no money. But long visits in a town were not customary. The average stay of a company was only three or four days, although a particularly popular troupe sometimes remained in one place for as long as two weeks.¹³⁵ By adapting their performances to the tastes of the provincial audiences, the Chamberlain's Men may often have merited this special favor of a long run.

¹³⁴Chambers, William Shakespeare, II, 314.

¹³⁵Thaler, "Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England," pp. 512-514.

In other instances, however, all companies were limited by law to a restricted visit. In Canterbury in 1595, for example, the town council restricted any company to two consecutive days of performance in any one month.¹³⁶ It is possible that actors might have made the most of their allotted time by playing twice in the same day, but further in the Canterbury ordinance was the provision that there should be no performance after 9:00 p. m. The town of Chester banned plays after 5:00 p. m.¹³⁷

There were several reasons for provincial opposition to travelling players and the subsequent restrictions they received. First, many poor strollers, often unlicensed and legally considered as vagabonds, came to the provincial towns and succeeded in downgrading the entire profession in the eyes of some officials.¹³⁸ Furthermore, one complaint made by some authorities was that "lewd strumpets" usually accompanied the players.¹³⁹

The problems created by poor strollers were enhanced to some extent by the legal status of drama itself. The fact that licensed, professional companies travelled the countryside

¹³⁶Wickham, op. cit., II, 185.

¹³⁷Loc. cit.

¹³⁸Thaler, "Strolling Players and Provincial Drama after Shakespeare," p. 246.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 250.

was instrumental in rescuing the drama from possible amateur domination, since town authorities found it less troublesome and expensive to hire professional actors than to maintain their own.¹⁴⁰ But, paradoxically, with the passing of this legal authority to act almost solely into the hands of London professionals, many people experienced a change of attitude toward plays. Those individuals, who had lost their rights to act, under the threat of punishment and fine, could no longer think of plays as the innocent, enjoyable recreation of former years.¹⁴¹ In addition, since many professional companies toured only on a forced, temporary basis, there was a growing animosity in some quarters toward accommodating a company that favored provincial cities with its performances only when it was banned in London.¹⁴²

Perhaps the greatest source of opposition of all was the same in the provinces as it was in London, i.e., the Puritans. From an investigation of fifteen provincial towns, Williamson has shown statistically what the growing Puritan influence actually meant. In the peak decade of provincial performance, the 1580's, two hundred and thirty-eight visits were made to the towns by thirty-three different companies.

¹⁴⁰Murray, "English Dramatic Companies in the Towns outside of London, 1550-1600," p. 539.

¹⁴¹Wickham, op. cit., II, 113.

¹⁴²Loc. cit.

By the 1630's, there were only ninety-one visits made by eleven companies.¹⁴³ Puritan opposition became particularly strong after 1600, but companies felt its effect in some cities long before. Strangely enough, many cities offered a monetary gift to companies not to play. For example, Chester suppressed all performances in 1596, but offered up to twenty shillings to any lord's company which happened to desire to play in the town.¹⁴⁴

Provided that the Chamberlain's Men received a welcome from town officials in their tours of the 1590's (and in most places they would have), the company still had to be prepared to perform in a makeshift facility. Murray has found that the towns of Exeter, Great Yarmouth, and Worcester had regular playhouses, and that Shrewsbury had a type of amphitheatre.¹⁴⁵ Just how well these structures measured up to the theatres the company was accustomed to in London is unknown, but undoubtedly they were inferior, and the playhouses, in truth, may have been town halls converted for the purpose. In a total survey of the locations of provincial performances from 1530-1640, Wickham has found that twenty-three towns recorded plays in town halls;

¹⁴³W. Williamson, "Notes on the Decline of Provincial Drama in England, 1530-1642," Educational Theatre Journal, XIII (December, 1961), 283-284.

¹⁴⁴Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, I, 338-339.

¹⁴⁵Murray, "English Dramatic Companies in the Towns outside of London, 1550-1600," p. 550.

eight towns, in churches (a practice not continued into the 1590's); seven towns, in inns; and seven towns, in the open air.¹⁴⁶

Obviously, players found the town halls or guild halls their most convenient, and perhaps best, places in which to play. The large hall might have had a screen at one end for the necessity of quick changes, as well as for its acting conveniences, and perhaps some halls also had galleries.¹⁴⁷ The accounts of the Chamberlain of Norwich between 1540 and 1560 demonstrate how one town provided for the players in their hall: a stage was erected at one end of the hall from twelve long poplar planks, which were laid on barrels or forms; charcoal fires, fumigation, and candlelight were provided for the audience; but, the hall was available to players only if not needed for official business.¹⁴⁸ Some town authorities may have become reluctant to make their halls available for performance at all, since officials at Leicester in 1577 and 1579 noted the necessity of mending two forms and the doors after plays had been presented and also complained about broken windows.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶Wickham, op. cit., II, 177-178.

¹⁴⁷Rothwell, op. cit., p. 117.

¹⁴⁸Wickham, op. cit., II, 184.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 185.

With the cessation of local religious plays, open-air performances almost ceased to exist.¹⁵⁰ Thus, since churches also were not frequently used after drama became separated from religious ceremony, inns were the second most common locale of play presentation by 1590.¹⁵¹ Indeed, a widely-held idea is that the inn yard was a frequent site of performance. Endell reports that the Maydes Hede Inn at Norwich and the New Inn at Gloucester staged plays in large yards, enclosed with staircases leading to a surrounding gallery.¹⁵² On the other hand, while agreeing that, with the actors' need of hotel accommodations, they would often have played at inns where they stayed, Wickham feels that inn performances were generally rare, and when presented, that they were inside the inn, rather than outside in the yard.¹⁵³ In the first place, Wickham reasons that it was difficult to close inn yards to traffic and to overcome the noise from the surrounding establishments. Secondly, a company was usually obliged to present a play before the mayor of a town in the common hall as their first obligation upon entering a community. They would probably not have gone to the trouble of preparing a stage in a particular town

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 179.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 177.

¹⁵²Fritz Endell, "Traveling with Shakespeare and Montaigne," Travel, XXVI (March, 1916), 24.

¹⁵³Wickham, op. cit., II, 196.

at more than one place.¹⁵⁴ There are no recorded performances at inns by any provincial company during the 1590's.¹⁵⁵ One must remember, however, that the records of the companies on tour are largely contained in city papers, which would not necessarily note such performances. Both Wickham and Rothwell point out that actors would always have preferred to play in the relatively small public hall inside an inn, rather than in any outside place of performance, so that they and their costumes could be protected from the weather.¹⁵⁶

In view of the inadequate facilities they sometimes met, actors must often have thought of establishing regular theatres in the more promising provincial towns. That they did not do so may be attributed to the facts that (1) they could not have raised the money, (2) there was always a possibility that town officials would come to disapprove of dramatic activities and outlaw them, and (3) the companies were London organizations in every sense and desired to go into the country only when circumstances forced them to travel.¹⁵⁷

Since travel was frequent, the play repertory was probably such that the plays could be adapted to makeshift stages.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 188-189.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 178.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p. 188; Rothwell, op. cit., p. 17.

¹⁵⁷Wickham, op. cit., II, 147.

Actually, the preparation of a stage might not have been too difficult to reconcile in planning a provincial tour. The conditions of performance were already approximated in the public theatres, and no major change of stage setting or actors' moves was required.¹⁵⁸ The plays were, however, designed for performance in halls and chambers, not in the street.¹⁵⁹ Since town records show that town halls were most frequently used for plays, these structures were probably equipped with raised stages and other conventional areas.¹⁶⁰

That plays were not staged in a realistic setting was probably not a matter of concern for the provincial playgoer. According to common Tudor practices, a perspective scene did not approach mathematical exactness.¹⁶¹ Reynolds suggests that the London stage usually consisted of three parts: a front, unenclosed platform; an inner stage, flanked by doors and separated by a curtain from the front stage; and a curtained balcony or upper stage.¹⁶² If this opinion be true, these conditions could be met in most town halls, although a properly

¹⁵⁸Ibid., p. 205.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. 202.

¹⁶⁰Loc. cit.

¹⁶¹J. H. McDowell, "Tudor Court Staging: A Study in Perspective," JEGP, XLIV (April, 1945), 207.

¹⁶²George F. Reynolds, "Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging, I," MP, II (April, 1905), 581.

placed gallery might not always have been available. When plays were given on the common type of stage, the forestage traditionally represented an outdoor area, perhaps a street or a wood, where business conferences of players' initial confrontations took place.¹⁶³ For house scenes, the rear curtain would usually be opened. In this case, the forestage became part of the interior, but retained its former status when the curtain closed.¹⁶⁴

The stage properties did not need to be particularly elaborate. The audience did not expect the stage background to be the locality surrounding the action. It was a symbolic or ornamental device upon which decorations might be hung to make it shadow forth the most grandiose structure.¹⁶⁵ Very often the stage doors, through which actors entered and departed, had no relationship to a realistic background.¹⁶⁶ The other properties could also be emblematic, and their simplicity served well the needs of the travelling company. An arbor, a rock with a sliding panel combining the symbolic properties of a cave and a mountain, some trees, a bed and a tent that could serve as a palace, castle, throne, tomb, or temple--all of these

¹⁶³McDowell, op. cit., p. 201.

¹⁶⁴Loc. cit.

¹⁶⁵George R. Kernodle, From Art to Theatre, p. 135.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 132.

items a company could have owned and, perhaps, even carried with them on tour.¹⁶⁷ In cases where the necessary stage equipment was unavailable, actors must have exercised their ingenuity. Rothwell suggests that for assaulting court walls, two benches, one on top of the other, might have served as the battlement. If a divine personage had no equipment with which to ascend into heaven, he would simply walk off.¹⁶⁸

Since the spectator did not demand rigid stage realism, not much subtlety was needed in setting the properties for the separate scenes. Reynolds finds that the alternationist theory--that a scene on the forestage always was followed by one on the backstage--does not always prove true.¹⁶⁹ He suggests, instead, a possible procedure that was generally followed in the setting of scenery. At the beginning of the play, heavy properties, used throughout the performance, were put in place. Stage pieces used only once were put behind the curtain, where they could be quickly handled when needed. If the rear stage could not be used, pieces were brought in when the action demanded and were carried off when not needed. Properties too heavy to move, even when not appropriate, were left on the stage. When the audience should notice them, they

¹⁶⁷Wickham, op. cit., II, 256.

¹⁶⁸Rothwell, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

¹⁶⁹Reynolds, op. cit., p. 610.

were mentioned in the text of the play; otherwise, they were forgotten.¹⁷⁰ The audience could accept this type of stage-setting with no qualms, since these customs had been followed throughout the history of the drama.¹⁷¹

Inasmuch as the people did not object to a loose creation of realism in staging, the travelling company may have had little trouble in this aspect of their play presentation. Also, custuming, although it may have been lavish, was made up of contemporary Elizabethan fashion (except for special effects such as armor), and one set of costumes could be used for all plays alike.¹⁷² Thus, aside from the problem of transporting properties and costumes from town to town, a dilemma which must have been solved by the use of at least one wagon, staging plays in the provinces may have been a relatively simple matter.

Besides the consideration of where they were going to play, the travelling companies had to keep in mind the people to whom their entertainment was being offered. It has long been a point of much Elizabethan scholarship to think of the drama of a writer, such as Shakespeare, in terms of the audience for which he wrote. Critics of King Lear, for example,

¹⁷⁰George F. Reynolds, "Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging, II," MP, III (June, 1905), 90.

¹⁷¹Ibid., pp. 73-74.

¹⁷²E. E. Hale, Jr., "The Influence of Theatrical Conditions on Shakespeare," MP, I (1903), 182.

have interpreted the blinding of Gloucester as a device to catch the attention of bloodthirsty viewers. That such criticism of Shakespeare has doubtful validity is pointed out succinctly by Prior, who states:

. . . by virtue of being an extraordinarily gifted imaginative man [Shakespeare] possessed what always distinguishes such minds in every age from their more commonplace fellows--the capacity to enter sympathetically into the whole of human experience; he was therefore able to create . . . without denying his age, something more than the bogey of the prejudices of his audience, even of his own prejudices. To refer the entire problem to the local audience is, in consequence, to make the part stand for the whole and to evade the responsibility of coming to grips with the whole play.¹⁷³

Nevertheless, one must take some notice of the possible differences between a typical London and provincial audience, because there is reason to believe that Shakespeare's company had the differences well in mind and made concessions to them in plays presented on tours throughout England.

There is a natural tendency for an individual to look upon the society of an age almost four hundred years past and think of it as having been extremely primitive and naive. But such a feeling is not accurate. Harbage reiterates that it is ridiculous to think that the Elizabethan was a brute illiterate, incapable of any normal human emotion.¹⁷⁴ In essence, the

¹⁷³M. E. Prior, "Elizabethan Audience and the Plays of Shakespeare," MP, XLIX (November, 1951), 120.

¹⁷⁴Harbage, op. cit., p. 155.

members of the typical Elizabethan audience were human beings with minds and feelings much the same as those of people of today, and whether they were Londoners or inhabitants of the provinces, they were not a mechanical mass made up of crude sensibilities.¹⁷⁵ For this reason, it is difficult to make generalizations on how members of the Lord Chamberlain's Men would have viewed the problem of going into the provinces, in terms of what they should present to their audiences.

Doubtless, the problem of the company in satisfying its audience was much the same in London as it was in the provinces. Harrison quotes a statement, written at the time of public theatre presentation of three of John Lyly's plays in 1591:

At our exercises soldiers call for tragedies, their object is blood; courtiers for comedies, their subject is love; countrymen for pastorals, shepherds are their saints.¹⁷⁶

Middleton expressed the same sentiment in 1613 in the "Prologue" to his play, No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's:

How is't possible to suffice
So many ears, so many eyes?
Some in wit, some in shows
Take delight, and some in clothes:
Some for mirth they chiefly come,
Some for passion,--for both some;
Some for lascivious meetings, that's their arrant;
Some to detract, and ignorance their warrant.

¹⁷⁵Loc. cit.

¹⁷⁶Quoted in Harrison, The Elizabethan Journals, p. 60.

How is't possible to please
 Opinion toss'd in such wild seas?
 Yet I doubt not, if attention
 Seize you above, and apprehension
 You below, to take things quickly,
 We shall both make you sad and tickle ye.¹⁷⁷

From these descriptions, one can see that the entire matter is in essence one of audience taste. That this problem was not minor is evidenced in a statement which occurs in The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl (1611), in which Robert Tailor warns:

I hope you have made no dark sentence in't; for I'll assure you, our audience commonly are very simple, idleheaded people and if they should hear what they understand not, they would quite forsake our house.¹⁷⁸

It was necessary for the travelling company to have as large an audience as possible to make their tour even reasonably profitable. They, no doubt, knew well what their audience's taste in entertainment was and how it differed from that of their regular patrons in London.

The London and provincial public theatre audiences probably were much the same, as far as classes of people are concerned. In London, a cross-section of the population was represented at plays, but there were more young people than old, more males than females, more worldly individuals than religious,

¹⁷⁷A. H. Bullen, (ed.), The Works of Thomas Middleton, IV, 281.

¹⁷⁸Robert Dodsley, (ed.), A Select Collection of Old Plays, III, 386.

and more craftsmen, journeymen, and apprentices than any other economic rank.¹⁷⁹ The provincial audience may have been dominated more by common workers with an income of about a shilling per day, since a peasant class made up from eighty to ninety per cent of the provincial population.¹⁸⁰ According to the contemporary account of Nicholas Breton in Fanastickes, the life of these laborers, many of whom arose at three o'clock in the morning and had their work well under way by four o'clock, seems dull and uninviting by present-day standards.¹⁸¹ These workers did, however, have numerous occasions for leisure, enjoying twenty-seven holidays throughout the year besides Sundays.¹⁸² Plays, when available, were almost certainly one of their main sources of recreation.

The amount of education that the average provincial playgoer would have possessed was doubtless smaller than that of his London counterpart, although some educational facility was available throughout most of England. Grammar schools, either independent or associated with a church, guild, or hospital, were most common, and church-related song schools and private teachers offered some kind of instruction, although

¹⁷⁹Harbage, op. cit., p. 90.

¹⁸⁰W. G. Hoskins, "Provincial Life," Shakespeare Survey,

¹⁸¹J. D. Wilson, (ed.), op. cit., pp. 275-279.

¹⁸²Hoskins, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

it was generally inferior to that of the grammar school.¹⁸³

Byrne points out that in some provincial towns, perhaps, a majority of the population had no education at all.¹⁸⁴ But

Adamson qualifies this concept by stating:

. . . it may be said of the English people of the fifteenth and especially of the sixteenth century that it was by no means an illiterate society and that facilities for rudimentary instruction at least were so distributed as to reach even small towns and villages. True to the national tradition, parents used, or failed to use, these opportunities for their children's benefit as they individually pleased. But where teaching existed there were candidates to receive it¹⁸⁵

Those who received a grammar school training were officially taught Latin and were given a classical education.¹⁸⁶ Such instruction was more readily available in London than in the provinces, and, no doubt, a greater percentage of the London play audience had taken advantage of opportunities in learning. But, one can by no means make the generalization that the London drama enthusiasts were educated and the small town audiences stupid. Probably both groups existed in both audiences.

¹⁸³W. Adamson, "The Extent of Literacy in England in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: Notes and Conjectures," Library, Series IV, X (1929), 173-182.

¹⁸⁴Muriel St. Clare Byrne, Elizabethan Life in Town and Country, p. 157.

¹⁸⁵Adamson, op. cit., p. 193.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., p. 174.

Yet, there is one significant way in which the London and provincial audiences would have varied and for which touring companies would have needed to provide. One might call this contrast a distinct difference in degree of sophistication in play viewing. Londoners simply had more chances to gain experience in hearing and seeing the drama of truly great playwrights, and they would have been able to comprehend it more fully than would an inexperienced theatregoer. Harbage has shown that the London audience was a regular one, constituting only about one-third of the city's population, while the other two-thirds never attended plays.¹⁸⁷ Those familiar playgoers had knowledge of what dramatists normally presented to them, and their tastes were, of course, shaped accordingly. Stoll sums up the matter in this way:

. . . by ear the audience through lifelong attendance responded to the niceties of the different art in the Forum and the Athenian and London theatres. The technique as such they did not understand; but the ideas, sentiments, and morals, the language and situations, were not above their heads, and to what they heard they were accustomed, attuned.¹⁸⁸

The problem of sophistication is concerned only with those portions of a play which would not be obvious or entertaining to any viewer, no matter how extensive his dramatic

¹⁸⁷Harbage, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹⁸⁸Elmer E. Stoll, "Poetry and the Passions: an Aftermath," *PMLA*, LV (1940), 982-983.

background. Even plays used in London contained much material of little artistic value. The accounts of individuals who attended plays in London and were not especially knowledgeable about the drama demonstrate what the infrequent viewer enjoyed and remembered about a play. Hentzner, a German visitor in England in 1598, gave this account of the drama he saw:

Without the city, are some theatres, where English Actors represent almost every day Comedies and Tragedies to very numerous audiences; these are concluded with a variety of dances, accompanied by excellent music, and the excessive applause of those that are present.¹⁸⁹

Thomas Platter, another German visitor in 1599, described the experience of seeing Shakespeare's Julius Caesar in this way:

. . . ich bin mitt meiner gesellschaft Über dz wasser gefahren, haben in dem streuwinen Dachhaus die Tragedy vom ersten Keyser Julio Caesare mitt ohnefahr 15 personen sehen gar artlich agieren; zu endt der Comedien dantzeten sie ihrem nach gar Überausz zierlich, ye zwen in mannes undt 2 in weiber kleideren angethan wunderbarlich mitt einanderen.¹⁹⁰

It must have been clear to the travelling players that some concession had to be made to people who saw and enjoyed most those parts of the play that, in truth, meant the least.

That actors did actually have the provincial taste in mind is further pointed up in a statement made in 1624 by John Gee:

¹⁸⁹ Quoted in William B. Rye, England as Seen by Foreigners, p. 215.

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in Gustav Binz, "London Theater und Schauspiele," Anglia, XXII, (1899), 458.

It was wont when an Enterlude was to be acted in a Country-Towne, the first question that an Hob-naile Spectator made, before he would pay his penny to get in, was, Whether there bee a Divell and a foole in the play? And if the Foole get upon the Divels backe, and beate him with his Cox-combe til he rore, the play is complete.¹⁹¹

An emphasis on farcical elements, then, is one aspect of the travelling text. Also, the company would stress the dances, songs, or any other vaudevillian acts that would come within the range of their play. Wright suggests that the provincial audience would have found these items particularly amusing, because plays were presented in the same places that strolling jugglers, tumblers, and magicians performed, and the audience would have placed travelling actors in approximately the same category.¹⁹²

Companies, at various times, had members in their troupe who specialized in variety entertainment. The Queen's Men, a leading company of the 1580's, had several acrobats who travelled with them, and provincial records note payments to the "Torkey Tumblers," ". . . the Quenes men when the Turke went upon the Roppes," and ". . . the Quenes players at the dancing on the rop."¹⁹³ The Admiral's Men received a similar

¹⁹¹Quoted in Armstrong, op. cit., p. 192.

¹⁹²L. B. Wright, "Variety Entertainment by Elizabethan Strollers," JEGP, XXVI (July, 1927), 294.

¹⁹³Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 35, 38.

provincial notice in 1590.¹⁹⁴ The Chamberlain's Men had several actors in the company who were noted for their vaudevillian ability. Will Kemp was especially famous as a clown and morris dancer; Thomas Pope became famous as a rustic clown; both Pope and George Bryan were noted as "instrumentalists" and "fiddlers."¹⁹⁵ Playwrights, such as Shakespeare, Jonson, and Marlowe, rebelled at this taste, but their texts were subject to such adaptation so that lesser minds could be satisfied.¹⁹⁶ Shakespeare's plays, Love's Labor's Lost, Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Tempest, and the three plays in which Falstaff is a character, all have a certain amount of extraneous clowning.¹⁹⁷

Perhaps an even more important consideration in preparing a text for presentation before a provincial audience was the people's desire for action, rather than words. Aside from possible displays of clowning and vaudeville in Shakespeare's plays, there were two types of passages: long speeches in verse, very rhetorical in nature, and short exchanges of dialogue, either in blank verse or conventional prose.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴Wright, op. cit., p. 295.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 299.

¹⁹⁶Thaler, "Travelling Players in Shakespeare's England," p. 499.

¹⁹⁷L. B. Wright, "Variety-Show Clownery on the Pre-Restoration Stage," Anglia, LII (March, 1928), 59-60.

¹⁹⁸S. L. Bethell, "Shakespeare's Actors," RES, I (July, 1950), 204.

The audience could, of course, understand and interpret a play on different levels, some people appreciating the rhetoric, others the clowning, and still others the fast-moving action. The provincial audience, not experienced playgoers, would be impressed most by the lower levels. Thus, the travelling players would probably eliminate some of the more elaborate passages, which slowed down the action. This possibility was enhanced by an Elizabethan tendency to have more interest in an individual's actions than in the motivation behind his act.¹⁹⁹ Man, they felt, was moved either by reason or passion, with no accumulation of motivation from past experiences.²⁰⁰ The elaborate psychological background that many modern scholars depend on in interpreting a character was never so important to the Elizabethan.²⁰¹

The provincial audience was not immune, however, to the effects of an outstanding, well-written passage. An incident occurred in the seventeenth century, in which a company of bad actors appeared in a town with a play called Pizarro. During the play, a question was answered by the insertion of a passage from Hamlet. The audience, recognizing the relative merit of the lines, broke into applause.²⁰² Any

¹⁹⁹Bernard Beckerman, Shakespeare at the Globe, p. 142.

²⁰⁰Loc. cit.

²⁰¹Roberta Langbaum, "Character versus Action in Shakespeare," Shakespeare Quarterly, VIII (Winter, 1957), 69.

²⁰²E. Colby, "Supplement on Strollers," PMLA, XXXIX (September, 1924), 643.

audience could appreciate a play in which they saw characters like themselves, involved in situations in which a moral choice was necessary.²⁰³ Harbage has written that all of Shakespeare's plays were dominated by a moral purpose.²⁰⁴ This aspect would not be disregarded by any responsible set of actors, no matter how crude their audience's tastes might be. But, an adapter could easily see fit to cut the length of some speeches, omit similes and overly elaborate comparisons, classical allusions and references to topics of current interest in London, but not generally known elsewhere, displays of learning, excessive play on words, and much of the poetical ornament.²⁰⁵ All of these omissions, along with the emphasis on vaudevillian entertainment, could have been made in most, if not all, of the texts taken on a tour. Also, considering changes that may have been needed to provide for fewer actors and possible difficulties in staging, one may surmise that the version of a play presented in the provinces was somewhat different from that normally seen in London.

²⁰³ Alfred Harbage, As They Liked It, p. 7.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁰⁵ Hart, op. cit., p. 179.

CHAPTER III

A SUMMARY OF CRITICAL OPINION ON SHAKESPEARE'S QUARTOS

. . . Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

(Hamlet, II.11.419-421)

No amount of speculation on how companies might have changed their play texts for presentation in the provinces is tenable without uncontested proof that such a practice existed. Fortunately, some of Shakespeare's quartos show evidence of shortening when compared with the longer F₁ forms.²⁰⁶ Two such texts are the 1597 Quarto of Romeo and Juliet and the 1602 Quarto of The Merry Wives of Windsor, versions which may well have been travelling texts. In the past, critical opinion, however, has varied widely in attempting to explain the "bad" quartos, and most theories have either overlooked or discounted the possibility that these may have been provincial play texts.

The numerous and different explanations for the state of these quartos are the result of the many problems related to these texts, involving frequent omissions of material, paraphrases, variations in sentence order and episodes, erroneous

²⁰⁶The abridged quartos have received the designation of "bad" quartos on the grounds that they are so corrupted that they could never have been performed. Numerous scholars have refuted this claim, but the tag remains.

character designations, metrical changes, and transpositions of words, phrases, and lines. Scholars have, therefore, offered explanations which take into account all of these known textual variations. Consequently, a summary of the general reasoning behind these major theories is necessary before reaching any conclusions about Q_1 of Romeo and Juliet and the Q text of The Merry Wives.

The earliest attempts at an all-inclusive summation of the "bad" quartos concerned a printer's sending a stenographer to the theatre to record the play as it was performed. Theobald, first, suggested this means of transmission as early as 1733; Malone accepted this theory for at least the Henry V quarto; J. Payne Collier defended the conjecture in 1844; and many nineteenth century German scholars accepted it without question.²⁰⁷ Herbert Evans, in his "Introduction" to the facsimile edition of Romeo and Juliet, Q_1 , and P. A. Daniel, in the "Introduction" to the 1888 facsimile edition of the 1602 Merry Wives quarto, accept this stenographic theory, adding that the reporter may have received help from a literary hack in bringing the play into its printed form.²⁰⁸ According to this shorthand theory, the differences in the so-called

²⁰⁷William Bracy, The Merry Wives of Windsor, the History and Transmission of Shakespeare's Text, pp. 19-20.

²⁰⁸Herbert Evans, "Introduction," Romeo and Juliet, 1597, pp. vi-viii; P. A. Daniel, Merry Wives of Windsor, 1602, pp. ix-x.

corrupted texts are due to the reporter's faulty hearing, additions of unmetrical words (which may have been inserted by actors), a recording of gags, and a provision of stage directions to describe the action when the recorder could not write all the dialogue.²⁰⁹

Although several systems of shorthand were in existence during the Elizabethan Period, the theory that it could have been used for play transmission has been discounted by modern scholars. The degree to which shorthand had developed at that time was insufficient to take down even slow speeches with much accuracy. For example, Matthews shows that Bright's system of "Characterie," published in 1588, had five hundred and seventy different symbols to distinguish, required a great grasp of vocabulary, and was further slowed by the necessity of writing in columns.²¹⁰ Thus, the recording of an entire play in this manner, even in a corrupted form, is considered to have been quite improbable.

There are numerous extensions of the reporter theory, in addition to the note-taker concept, all based upon the supposition of memorial reconstruction by either a single actor, a literary hack, or a group of actors. The hypothesis is that the lone actor or hack was a thief, who knew, fairly

²⁰⁹Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 157.

²¹⁰W. Matthews, "Shorthand and the Bad Shakespeare Quartos," MLR, XXVII (July, 1932), 254.

accurately, a complete text and reproduced from memory an otherwise unavailable copy for a printer. Theoretically, a whole group of actors would work together to reconstruct a text, if a prompt-copy were lost or destroyed, and this version may have found its way into print in somewhat altered form.²¹¹

Kirschbaum examined bibliographical data in comparing the "bad" quartos to their fuller, extant texts for variations in spelling, punctuation, italicization, capitalization, stage directions, and lining of blank verse, and from his findings he confirmed his belief in the memorial reconstruction theory.²¹² Greg, who first popularized the idea, also examined bibliographical data in comparing quartos and found a reporter's unaided memory responsible for the omissions, additions, and changes in some of the texts.²¹³ Rhodes added another phase to the reporter theory in his supposition that some of the variant quartos had been prepared by actors who had played with the Chamberlain's Men in the provinces and had subsequently left the company, later trying to reconstruct the shortened play from memory.²¹⁴

²¹¹Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 158.

²¹²Leo Kirschbaum, "Hypothesis Concerning the Origin of the Bad Quartos," PMLA, LX (September, 1945), 714-715.

²¹³Bracy, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

²¹⁴Ibid., p. 47.

Further evidence in support of the memory thesis is found in the transposed or out-of-place lines which often occur in the "bad" quartos.. Hoppe attributes the one hundred and sixty recollections and anticipations he finds in Q₁ of Romeo and Juliet to a reporter who had acted in both a full-length and shortened version of this play. He proposes that this man had tried to reconstruct the longer form, but could remember only the text of the abridged version. Occasional passages of the longer text, however, survived in his mind, which lines he incorporated into the play out of place.²¹⁵ Also, Hoppe thinks that a reporter sometimes brought in speeches from other plays.²¹⁶ Indeed, Greg concurs in the belief that a reporter was responsible for the problem of line transposition in Q of The Merry Wives.²¹⁷ Shapin also has conducted an experiment in memorial reconstruction and has found that the recollection of a play by one of its minor actors does result in some amount of line transposition.²¹⁸

Other proofs used to back up the reporter theory are those which reflect the significance of the more extensive

²¹⁵H. R. Hoppe, "The First Quarto Version of 'Romeo and Juliet,'" RES, XIV (1938), 275.

²¹⁶Ibid., p. 276.

²¹⁷Bracy, op. cit., p. 45.

²¹⁸Betty Shapin, "Experiment in Memorial Reconstruction," MLR, XXXIX (January, 1944), 9-17.

stage directions, such as those contained in the "bad" quartos of Romeo and Juliet and Merry Wives. Hoppe finds these directions to be evidence of a reproduction by someone who remembered the stage actions and could perhaps not recall all the dialogue that had originally gone with them.²¹⁹ Hoppe concludes, furthermore, that the reporter made up his own verse in Q₁ of Romeo and Juliet when he could not recall the original speech.²²⁰ The actor-reporter has even been tentatively identified by close examinations of the texts to determine which parts have been best reproduced. Greg deduces that the Host was the pirate of the Merry Wives.²²¹ Hoppe proposes that the actor who portrayed Romeo was the thief of Romeo and Juliet.²²² Bracy, however, shows that such conjectures are inaccurate, pointing out that other actors have parts in the play which are equally well-retained, even when the supposed reporter is absent from the stage.²²³ In fact, in another example, one of the Host's speeches in the Merry Wives is assigned to another character.

Although it is still widely-held, the memorial reconstruction theory has been refuted by other textual examinations.

²¹⁹Hoppe, op. cit., p. 278.

²²⁰Ibid., p. 277.

²²¹Bracy, op. cit., p. 40.

²²²Ibid., p. 57.

²²³Ibid., p. 40.

Behind the opinion is the theory that there was a need for an illegal recording of texts. Since there were no major theatrical fires in which manuscripts were destroyed during the 1590's, and since there is little chance that all good copies of a play would have been lost, it is much more probable to think that texts were often released for printing by the actors themselves, when their prosperity was low. A great surge in printing of texts from 1593-1595 and around the turn of the century, both of which were periods of adversity for actors, lends plausibility to this concept.²²⁴ The problem is, then, to determine why the texts which may have been sold to the printers were generally less complete than other versions, from which the majority of scholars, no matter what their ultimate conclusions from bibliographic study, are agreed that they were derived.

Pollard and Wilson argue that many of the "bad" quartos were printed from prompt-copies, basing their assumption upon the observation that the stage directions seem to be those of a prompter, e.g., "Enter Will Kemp" for "Enter, Peter" in Q₁ of Romeo and Juliet.²²⁵ Gaw has examined the texts in which actual names appear and finds that the actors' names are not always written when a character first enters, as they would

²²⁴Ibid., p. 63.

²²⁵R. B. McKerrow, "Elizabethan Printer and Dramatic Manuscripts," Library, Series 4, XII (December, 1931), 269.

have been recorded if they were meant to be a reminder for the prompter.²²⁶ McKerrow supports this conclusion, in a study of the characteristics of the prompt-copies of the period.²²⁷ He suggests a more plausible explanation, however, for these manuscripts recorded by the printer. Pointing out that, on the whole, most works printed in the Elizabethan Period are accurate, he proposes that the greater frequency of errors in the printed texts of plays was a result of less readable copies being offered for printing.²²⁷ A company needed a clear, readable prompt-copy and would have guarded it carefully. If the company wished to submit a play to a printer, it was not the prompt-copy, but the author's original foul papers that might have been used.²²⁹ Craig supports this hypothesis for many of the "bad" quartos.²³⁰

The shortened versions of Romeo and Juliet and the Merry Wives, however, may not fall into the foul paper classification. Bracy differs from most other theorists on the Merry Wives quarto by showing it to be a perfectly good acting text,

²²⁶A. Gaw, "Actors' Names in Basic Shakespearean Texts," PMLA, XL (September, 1925), 535.

²²⁷McKerrow, op. cit., pp. 270-272.

²²⁸Ibid., p. 268.

²²⁹Ibid., pp. 264-266.

²³⁰Hardin Craig, A New Look At Shakespeare's Quartos, pp. 3-4.

consciously abridged.²³¹ He suggests the work of an adapter who was familiar with the play, whose job it was to prepare a stage version. This individual might have subconsciously inserted lines out of place, or consciously preferred a familiar passage in another spot. In an illegible portion of the copy, he might have used his memory and, in certain spots, might have revised to suit his own preferences.²³² These suggestions, if true, explain most of the differences in the "bad" quartos, i.e., the transpositions, revisions, and omissions.

Bracy also considers other textual problems. The more elaborate stage directions, he feels, originated in the theatre and give rise to more effective staging and quicker movement of plot.²³³ The appearance of an actor without a speaking part in a scene, a frequent phenomenon in Q of the Merry Wives, is almost certainly an indication of an adapter's work, with a retention of the notation of the actor's appearance from the longer copy, but a subsequent elimination of his speeches in the stage version.²³⁴ The greater abridgment occurring in the last one-third of this play, Bracy attributes to the actors'

²³¹Cf. Bracy, op. cit., pp. 79-97.

²³²Ibid., pp. 69-70.

²³³Ibid., p. 72.

²³⁴Ibid., p. 60.

concern about audience impatience after the mid-crisis point has passed.²³⁵ The minor variants of single words that are very important in the formation of the reporter theory, Bracy deduces, may be explained by the difficulties presented in the transmission from Elizabethan handwriting.²³⁶ After a complete investigation of the quarto compared with the folio, Bracy finds that the most logical conclusion to be reached about the Merry Wives quarto shows that it was abridged for performance in the provinces by the Chamberlain Men during their 1597 tour. In the more trying times of 1602, the version was offered to the printer, since it was a text no longer in use.²³⁷

Nearly the same explanations can be applied to the differences which exist between Q₁ and Q₂ of Romeo and Juliet. Craig believes that Q₂ was printed from the foul papers of Shakespeare's revision and not from Q₁. Q₁, however, is a stage version of the play and was consciously adapted from the earliest form of the play.²³⁸ Craig shows that Q₁ is a good acting version and was quite possibly abridged for a provincial tour.²³⁹

²³⁵Ibid., pp. 63-64.

²³⁶Ibid., p. 129.

²³⁷Ibid., p. 126.

²³⁸Craig, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

²³⁹Ibid., pp. 256-265.

None of the major quarto theories, from shorthand to memorial reconstruction to abridgment for acting, is without its weaknesses. In the vast complication of interpreting the hundreds of variances between "good" and "bad" quartos, the system-makers are often very strong in one area of their argument, while on shaky grounds in another. Therefore, much scholarship is based upon supposition or suggestion of what could have been the circumstances of quarto printing, while opposing theorists bring forth hypotheses to support an entirely different position. It is unlikely that there will ever be universal agreement on all aspects of the problem.

For the purposes of this study, the findings of Bracy and Craig on the first quartos of The Merry Wives of Windsor and Romeo and Juliet, i.e., that they are legitimate acting versions, most likely for provincial tours, are particularly inviting. That these men's opinions have been reached in recent years, after careful sifting through the claims of the past, makes their stand even more useful. But their ultimate suggestion that these quartos are abridgments for the provinces may be given even more validity by examining these texts specifically as travelling texts.

CHAPTER IV

EXAMINATION OF THE FIRST QUARTOS OF THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

AND ROMEO AND JULIET AS TRAVELLING TEXTS

I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million
(Hamlet, II.ii.454-456))

Throughout the following textual examination, the earlier stated conclusions on aspects of actors' concern for performing on provincial tours will be used. Briefly, these criteria are the following: a provision for fewer actors, consideration for staging difficulties, shortening of speeches, omissions of figurative language, classical and obscure topical allusions, and an emphasis upon variety entertainment.

Comparison of Q and F₁ of The Merry Wives of Windsor

The earliest dating of the Merry Wives is 1597. Hotson, who has examined extensively the satirical implications of the play, concludes that it must have been acted during the lifetime of one William Gardiner, who died on November 26, 1597.²⁴⁰ An old and generally accepted tradition states that Queen Elizabeth demanded that Shakespeare write a play showing Falstaff in love. The occasion for the performance was to be a celebration of the Order of the Garter. A very elaborate festivity of this nature

²⁴⁰Hotson, op. cit., p. 111.

was held on April 23, 1597, at which time George Carey, the new Lord Chamberlain and patron of Shakespeare's company, was inducted into the Order.²⁴¹ That The Merry Wives of Windsor was possibly written for this celebration is a theory which has received common assent since Hotson's discoveries.

The Chamberlain's Company travelled in 1597 after July 28, when plays were inhibited in London following the presentation of the Isle of Dogs. One thinks it is likely that the company would have taken their new and popular play with them so that Q of Merry Wives could actually come from the version performed on this tour. The title page, when the quarto was printed in 1602, states that the play was reproduced ". . . as it hath bene divers times Acted . . . both before her Maiestie and else-where."²⁴² The "else-where," although ambiguous, could be construed to imply provincial performance.

The most obvious thing about Q in comparison with F₁ is its greatly reduced text. Q has a total of 1620 lines, compared to 2701 for F₁.²⁴³ This fact alone suggests a much shorter time of performance. Perhaps, this consideration

²⁴¹Bracy, op. cit., p. 107.

²⁴²All references and quotations from Q are from the facsimile edition of Merry Wives of Windsor, 1602 Quarto, prepared by William Griggs. All references and quotations from F are from Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies, a facsimile edition prepared by Helge Kokeritz.

²⁴³Bracy, op. cit., p. 79.

itself was a motive for cutting the play, although there is no proof or ready explanation to show why this reasoning would hold true for a provincial performance. Ogburn suggests that the basis for the shorter play is that of producing vigorous action, no matter what the cost to motivation or plot.²⁴⁴ He finds that the farcical elements are consciously accentuated, and he describes Q as a farce interlude.²⁴⁵

The quarto calls for a multiple stage. In the distribution of settings, the play contains five street scenes, three scenes in a field or park, six scenes in a room at the Garter Inn, three scenes at Ford's house, and one scene each at Dr. Caius's and Page's houses. Some differentiation between these numerous locations must have been made, possibly by means of using the controversial curtained backstage. To suggest the changes of setting between the interior of the houses and the Garter Inn, perhaps a sign or crest signifying the Inn was alternately hung and taken down. The representation of different houses is made clear in the dialogue and action, and there would be no particular difficulty in accepting the fact that three houses are called for, even if no property changes are made visually to indicate substructures. It is interesting to note that no two consecutive scenes are played within the

²⁴⁴Vincent H. Ogburn, "Merry Wives Quarto, a Farce Interlude," PMLA, LVII (September, 1942), 655.

²⁴⁵Loc. cit.

houses in Q. There is such an occurrence in F₁ in III.iii and III.iv, when rooms in Ford's and Page's houses are portrayed. In Q, however, these two scenes are separated by III.v, set in the Garter Inn. Obviously, if a signifying property for the Inn did exist, then a greater sense of realism could be created by interspersing this scene between two consecutive locations for which no differentiating emblem existed.

A scene by scene comparison of Q and F₁ reveals many textual variations. In I.i, the stage directions of F₁ call for twelve characters, all of whom have speaking parts. In Q, one character in F₁, Simple, is never mentioned, and Bardolph, who is indicated as entering, has no speeches. The elimination of Bardolph's part, also, makes clear that only ten actors are needed in Q, a number suitable to a travelling company and within keeping with what it could afford for the scene.

The two plays open quite differently in I.i. In F₁, the first seventy-four lines contain Justice Shallow's listing of grievances against Falstaff. In the process, Shallow and Slender elaborate humorously upon Shallow's position and family name. Among the topical allusions in the lines in F₁ are the terms, Custalorum, Rato-lorum, and Armerigo. In addition, there is a reference to the luces (fish) in Shallow's coat-of-arms. Hotson has convincingly shown the satirical thrusts of this entire passage toward William Gardiner. Shallow is a

parallel to Gardiner, who was a justice of the peace and of the quorum for the county of Surrey.²⁴⁶ Custalorum and Ratolorum (Custos Rotulorum, Keeper of the Records) was the next office above Gardiner's rank.²⁴⁷ Hotson suggests that a man of Gardiner's bad character would have been well-known so that references to him would have been recognized by a London audience.²⁴⁸ The whole passage is not meaningful to a careful, modern-day reader without this background of the implications which it contains, and obviously it would probably have been meaningless to members of provincial audiences, who had likely never heard of Gardiner. In addition, the talk involved gives the play a slow start as far as plot and action are concerned. It is significant to note, therefore, that most of these lines are completely missing in Q.

The first eighteen lines of Q differ almost completely from those in F₁, except for one reference to the making of a Star Chamber matter out of the disagreement which occurs between Shallow and Falstaff. In Q, conversation between Shallow and Page begins immediately, and in these lines the basic subplot concerning Page's betrothal of his daughter, Anne, is initiated in forthright terms. The humor which a

²⁴⁶Hotson, op. cit., p. 94.

²⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 95-99.

²⁴⁸Ibid., p. 99.

knowledgeable audience might detect in the opening of F_1 is missing in Q, with action and plot immediately begun in its stead. Furthermore, Falstaff, the main character, is brought on much quicker in Q.

In Q, I.i.20-22 correspond to F_1 , I.i.140-143, lines which mark the first occasion of anticipation in the shortened version. These lines involve an introduction of characters by Evans:

The first man is M Page, videlicet M. Page.
 The second is my selfe, videlicet my selfe.
 And the third and last man, is mine host of the gartyr.
 (Q, I.i.20-22)

Although these lines are placed differently in Q when compared with F_1 , they serve the very useful purpose of introducing the characters on stage, a technical matter which needs initial clarification. An adapter could well have purposely placed them earlier in the first scene, especially since three additional characters enter immediately after this speech is uttered. With the omission of many of the opening lines contained in F_1 , all identities are not clear in Q until this point in the play.

The initial encounter of Falstaff and Shallow in I.i is essentially the same in Q and F_1 , but Q again is abbreviated in form, devoting only thirty-five lines to the dialogue, while F_1 utilizes seventy. Q, however, omits lines which are not necessary to the action, and statements which possibly

contain obscure allusions. "Banbury cheese," and "Mephostophilus" (an obvious allusion to Marlowe's Dr. Faustus) are missing in this sequence, and later, the name of Sackerson, a Paris Garden bear, is also omitted.

Furthermore, in Q, Mistress Ford enters at I.1.57 and a short period of byplay ensues which is not mentioned at all in F₁. Falstaff greets the lady, and, according to a stage direction, kisses her. He, then, makes a comment that he desires "more acquaintance" with both Mistress Ford and Mistress Page. This incident serves to establish the basic jealousy plot much more quickly in Q than in F₁, where it is not actually established until I.iii.

The end of I.1 in Q brings about another transposition of lines. The situation involves a conversation between Anne Page and Slender, who has been persuaded to be a suitor for her hand. His basic indifference to the whole affair is brought out in F₁ in thirty-four lines of conversation with Shallow and Evans, all of which are missing in Q. Five lines (Q, I.1.73-77) are borrowed from F₁, III.iv.69-73, in which Slender expresses the same sentiment to Anne:

Nay for my owne part, I would little or nothing with you. I loue you well, and my vncke can tell you how my living stands. And if you can loue me why so. If not, why then happie man be his dole.

(Q, I.1.73-77)

I.ii and I.iii are much the same in both versions, but I.iv in Q is approximately only one-half as long as the

corresponding scene in F_1 . The setting is Dr. Caius's house wherein Simple requests Mistress Quickly to speak well to Anne Page in Slender's behalf. Here, Q and F_1 both accomplish the same ends, but the opening fifteen lines of F_1 are omitted in Q. In F_1 , this passage involves the sending of John Rugby to watch for Dr. Caius. In Q, Rugby's failure to appear until the middle of the scene would allow an actor from the previous scene the necessary time to change costume so as to double in the later entrance in the rather minor part.²⁴⁹ Since the Doctor comes upon Simple and Quickly by surprise anyway, one suggests that the part could have been eliminated without serious disturbance to the text.

When Dr. Caius does approach, Quickly hides Simple in a "closet" in F_1 and in a "Counting-House" in Q. The change of words, here, could indicate intentional staging differences. A stage direction in Q reads: "He steps into the Counting-house." Caius, then, discovers Simple when he looks for ". . . simples [medicinal herbs] in a box in de Counting-house." In F_1 , the corresponding line reads: ". . . dere is some simples in my closet." Obviously, the irony of the situation is embodied in the double meaning of the word, "simples." Possibly, also, Simple was literally hiding in a box in Q. Perhaps, upon a provincial stage of limited facilities, a box may have been

²⁴⁹Bracy, op. cit., p. 81.

one of the properties used here. Certainly a box could be "stepped into," as the direction indicates.

In Q (I.iv), a character is altogether missing. In F₁, Fenton comes in for the last thirty-four lines and asks Quickly to speak to Anne in his behalf. However, this sequence is lacking in Q, perhaps the result of an actor's doubling in the part. The minor character, Nym, who never appears in a scene with Fenton, is present in the scenes before and after this one. Were this actor assigned to both roles, probably he would have found it impossible to make the needed costume changes for the portrayal of two different characters in three consecutive scenes.

II.1 is somewhat shorter in Q (F₁, 218 ll.; Q, 155 ll.), but the action remains essentially the same. Nine characters appear in both versions. One point which Q makes that F₁ ignores is an allusion to Falstaff's obesity. In Q (II.1.203), Falstaff remarks in his letters to Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page, ". . . youre faire, and I am fat." Later, in Q (II.1.19-20), Mrs. Page observes, "Well, I shall trust fat men the worse while I live for his sake." In F₁ (II.1.33-34), Mrs. Page does make the rather crude statement that Falstaff's "Guts are made of puddings," although Q (II.1.84) reiterates this point, when the confused Page, trying to explain Falstaff's advances toward his wife, suggests, ". . . perhaps he hath spoken merrily as the fashion of fat men are." Q's great emphasis upon the point of Falstaff's obesity makes size a possible motivational factor for Falstaff's acts. In F₁, the fatness appears to have been exploited only as a humorous note. Perhaps, the

adapter of Q felt that some stress on motivation was needed. In fact, with the omission of many descriptive lines contained in F₁, no character in Q is fully drawn. Equating Falstaff's physical size with wantonness may have been considered a sufficient explanation for his acts. Nevertheless, the problem of the physical description does not clearly indicate that a different actor was employed in the Q version, since the Falstaffs of Q and F₁ are both obviously fat.

Several omissions of lines in Q (II.ii) eliminate figurative allusions. Among these are Mrs. Page's desire to ". . . be a Giantesse and Lye under Mount Pelion." (F₁, II.ii. 79-80), Falstaff's attraction to the "Gally-mawfry" (F₁, II.ii. 119), and Page's resolution not to "beleeve such a Cataian." (F₁, II.ii.148) The Brooke-Broome name crux also occurs in this scene. Q uses Brooke for the assumed name which Ford takes on in order to conceal his identity. F₁, probably because of later censorship, changes the name to Broome. Brooke was the family name of Lord Chamberlain, inimical to theatrical interests, who took office in 1596.²⁵⁰ Any controversy over which name was used probably would have had little effect upon a provincial audience, which undoubtedly would have been unable to recognize the name in the first place.

The shortened text of Q (II.ii) results in keeping a fast pace in the play. In F₁, the corresponding entire scene is taken up in long prose speeches, first by Quickly and, then,

²⁵⁰Hotson, op. cit., p. 15.

by Ford. Many of their speeches, herein, are ten or more lines in length. The same thought is retained in Q and in much the same wording, but all material unnecessary to the essential features of the plot is lacking. Quickly's shorter speeches in Q do de-emphasize her characterization in F₁ as a busybody and gossip. Altogether, she speaks only twenty-six lines in this scene in Q, compared to her seventy-one lines in F₁.

Ford's part is also shorter in this scene in Q, but not nearly as short as Quickly's. Obviously, his speeches are more necessary in establishing the revenge plot later perpetrated upon Falstaff and , therefore, cannot be reduced too sharply without damaging clarity here. His final twenty-five lines in F₁ are, however, nearly half as long in Q. This passage contains Ford's lament occasioned by the possibility of his being made a cuckold. A comparison of the texts in this speech provides an example of Q's typical abridgment of F₁'s rhetorical, bombastic material without loss of meaning:

Quarto

Folio

Ford. What a damned epicurian is this? My wife sent for him, the plot is laid: Page is an Asse, Ile sooner trust an Irishman with my Aquauita bottle, Sir Humour parson with my cheese, A theefe to walk my ambling gelding, the my wife with her self: then she plots, then she ruminates, And what she thinks in her hart she may effect,

Ford. What a damn'd Epicurian Rascall is this? my heart is ready to cracke with impatience: who saies this is improuident lealousie: my wife hath sent to him, the howre is fixt, the match is made: would any man have thought this? see the hell of hauing a false woman: my bed shall be abus'd, my Coffers ransack'd, my reputation gnawne at, and I shall not only receive this villanous wrong, but stand

Sheele breake her hart but
 she will effect it. God
 be praised for my iealousie:
 Well Ile goe preuent him,
 the time drawes on, Better
 an hour too soone, then a
 minit too late, Gods my
 life. cuckold, cuckold.

(Q, II.ii.160-172)

vnder the adoption of abhom-
 inable termes, and by him that
 does me this wrong: Termes,
 names: Amaimon sounds well:
 Lucifer, well: Barbason, well:
 yet they are Diuels additions,
 the names of fiends: But Cuck-
 old, Wittoll, Cuckold? the
 Diuell himselfe hath not such
 a name. Page is an Asse, a
 secure Asse; hee will trust his
 wife, hee will not be iealous:
 I will rather trust a Fleming
 with my butter, Parson Hugh
 the Welshman with my Cheese, an
Irishman with my Aqua-vitae-
 bottle, or a Theefe to walke my
 ambling gelding, than my wife
 with her selfe. Then she plots,
 then shee ruminates, then she
 deuises: and what they thinke
 in their hearts they may effect;
 they will break their hearts
 but they will effect. Heauen
 bee prais'd for my iealousie:
 eleuen o'clock the howre, I
 will preuent this, detect my
 wife, bee reueng'd on Falstaffe
 and laugh at Page. I will
 about it, better three houres
 to soone, then a mynute too
 late: fie, fie, fie: Cuckold,
 Cuckold, Cuckold.

(F₁, II.ii.290-315)

The Q reductions of the F₁ soliloquy are easy to see. The digression of the names of devils is missing (although interestingly enough, it appears later in Q as a recollection). Also, much of Ford's repetitive ranting agains his wife is gone. Yet, the F₁ sentiment is conveyed in Q to the audience, and the same plot is laid, demonstrating the skillful and professional shortening in Q.

Time variation of Q and F_1 is first noted in II.ii and is carried on throughout the play. In F_1 , the hour of Falstaff's and Mrs. Ford's first meeting is stated as being between ten and eleven o'clock, whereas this appointment is set between eight and nine o'clock in Q. The times are merely switched for the second encounter: between ten and eleven o'clock in Q and between eight and nine o'clock in F_1 . The result of these time shifts is that in F_1 two days are indicated for the meetings, while in Q the action appears to occur in one day. One feels that there is a greater application of the unity of time in Q, in which version it is easier to keep the appointments straight, since the times are listed in consecutive order. A conscious adaptation, then, is quite probable in effecting this change, since a simplification of understanding results in Q.

Throughout the next four scenes (II.ii-III.ii), several characters are missing in Q. The part of Quickly's boy, Robin, is gone from Q (II.ii). In the two following scenes (II.iii and III.i), Slender also has no assigned speeches. Although he is listed as entering, he evidently does not appear. Similarly, Bardolph is mentioned in a speech in Q (III.i.68), but apparently is not on stage. Bracy has suggested that the error may have been the result of mistaken identity of an actor who doubled in the parts of Bardolph and Simple.²⁵¹ Two

²⁵¹Bracy, op. cit., p. 88.

characters, Mrs. Page and Robin, who open III.ii in F₁, are also missing in Q. The omission of these characters in Q could be the concession an adapter of a play text for provincial performance would have had to make to accommodate the smaller company.

Rugby, Dr. Caius's servant, is not present on stage in Q (III.ii). Fenton does, however, receive mention in the Q version for the first time, although he, too, is not on stage. The lines describing him are the same in both texts. The Host says: "[Fenton] capers, he daunces, he writes verses, he smelles / All April and May" (Q, III.ii.20-21). In addition to describing Fenton's characteristics, the passage gives promise of some variety entertainment at the approximate midway point in the play.

F₁ allusions are missing in Q (III.ii). For example, a reference to Page in F₁ as "a secure and wilfull Acteon" is wanting. Page's statement that Fenton is unacceptable to him as a suitor for his daughter, because ". . . hee kept companie with the wilde Prince, and Pointz" is also gone. This last allusion, of course, refers to the Henry IV plays. There is no reason to think that a London audience would not have appreciated the statement, but country patrons quite possibly would not have recognized its significance.

Eleven characters are mentioned in the stage directions of Q (III.iii). Slender and Shallow again are listed, but they

have no speeches and are never referred to in the scene. The two are, therefore, expendable here. They are not mentioned at all (even in a stage direction) in F_1 (III.iii), but there is a noted difference in the emphasis upon numbers in the two versions. Significantly, in this one instance, Q indicates more characters than F_1 . When Ford tries to spring upon his wife and Falstaff by surprise in Q, Mrs. Page announces his coming with the statement: ". . . your husband woman is coming, / With halfe Windsor at his heeles" This "halfe Windsor" turns out to be Ford, Page, Dr. Caius, Sir Hugh, and possibly Slender and Shallow. In F_1 , there is a different reference to the group: "Your husband's comming hether (Woman) with all the Officers in Windsor" The "Officers" are apparently Ford, Page, Dr. Caius, and Sir Hugh. Although there is no reason for one to rely heavily upon the validity of Mrs. Page's report, especially since it is intended to frighten Falstaff, Q does have greater accuracy in the scene than F_1 , if Slender and Shallow do appear, as the stage direction indicates.

There are three allusions to places in London in F_1 (III.ii), of which Q retains two. An order in F_1 (II.ii.11-12) for two servants to carry the laundry basket containing Falstaff ". . . among the Whitsters in Datchet Mead" is a simple command in Q to ". . . carry this basket, say to the launderers." One of the references to London retained in Q (1. 28) alludes to Mrs. Page's ". . . smelling like Bucklersberry in simple time."

Bucklersbury was a street in London, known for its grocers and apothecaries.²⁵² The real humor of using the allusion in this situation is in the pun on "buck," a word used throughout the scene to connote dirty laundry. For this reason, it could have had meaning for a provincial audience, even if the street name would not have. The second remaining London allusion in Q (1. 33) occurs in Falstaff's declaration that making a statement to the effect that he loved anyone except Mrs. Ford was like saying that he ". . . loved to walk by the Counter-Gate." This reference to the Compter, a prison, is more localized. Falstaff elaborates upon the type of place it is in the lines immediately following, saying that the Counter-Gate ". . . is as hatefull to me / As the reake of a lime kill." Perhaps, this explanation would have been enough to make the meaning of the allusion clear, even though its full impact might not have been felt by an audience outside of London.

The next two scenes of the play (III.iv and III.v) have served as an important argument for advocates of the reporter theory. F₁ (III.v) precedes F₁ (III.iv) in the sequence of scenes in Q. The hypothesis states that a pirate actor could not remember the proper place for the scenes. But, in studying Q as a possible travelling text, one sees several reasons for support of a conscious scene shifting here. For example, as

²⁵²Thomas F. Ordish, Shakespeare's London, p. 126.

far as the sense of the play is concerned, there is no loss at all in Q. F₁ (III.iv) covers the subplot of Anne Page's betrothal. F₁ (III.v) contains Falstaff's lamentation over being thrown into the Thames. In placing the view of Falstaff in the scene immediately following his misfortune, the play achieves more continuity. Indeed, the betrothal plot had been in the background for some time. It is likely that the audience would have been far more interested in Falstaff's condition than in Anne's choice of husband at this point.

There is another possibility to explain the switching of the scenes. Q (III.iii) involves as many as eleven actors, possibly the complement of a travelling company. The part of Fenton, who appears in F₁ (III.iv), would have to be played in Q by an actor who doubled in the part, most likely one of the two servants of Q (III.iii). To change to the costume of a gentleman would probably take more time than would be allowed between the servant's exit and the succeeding scene. Thus, the scene reversal may be the result of doubling. As already suggested, the indication of change of setting from Ford's house to the locale of the Garter Inn might also have been easier to achieve by the method of rearranging these two sequences.

F₁ (IV.1) is omitted in its entirety in Q, and for what appears to be a good reason. In F₁, the scene is merely an insertion, having no relationship with either plot. In addition,

it introduces a new character, William Page, which role would have necessitated on tour another instance of required doubling. But, more important, it is a scene in which the humor is lodged in William's and Sir Hugh's pretense to learning, using a number of Latin words for which it is necessary for one to have a good comprehension of Latin in order to understand the puns involved. In fact, it is difficult to see how the scene would have been effective even before a London public audience (unless it were courtly), since it presupposes a rather sophisticated ability to elicit implications. Therefore, Chambers suggests that the scene was intended only for court performance.²⁵³

F₁ (IV.11) is considerably shorter in Q, retaining only ninety-two of F₁'s two hundred and eight lines. It involves Falstaff's second meeting with Mrs. Ford, his hiding, his disguising himself as a woman, and, finally, his receiving a severe beating. In both texts the action is consistent, but in Q long speeches are shorter, and unnecessary details, such as a further elaboration of Ford's jealousy, F₁ (IV.11.19-26), are missing. Craig suggests that stage business took the place of many of the lines, since there are ample opportunities for comic antics in the sequence.²⁵⁴

There is also a different hiding place for Falstaff indicated in the two versions. In both, there is evidently a

²⁵³Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, p. 431.

²⁵⁴Craig, op. cit., p. 73.

chimney in the stage setting, since in each version Falstaff offers to hide in its recesses. But in Q, a stage direction indicates that, for Falstaff's final hiding-place, "he steps behind the arras." On the other hand, in F₁, Falstaff hides in the chamber. One thinks it quite possible that the staging was similar in both performances. The scene must have been played on the forestage, with Falstaff's hiding and changing into disguise taking place behind a curtain. The significant thing is that a drapery is definitely indicated in Q, substantiating the theory that, even in the provinces, a conventional type of stage must have been utilized.

Both Q and F₁ are largely the same in IV.iii, a scene involving the introduction of the stolen horses plot. This portion, much underdeveloped in both versions, has led to wide critical speculation upon its implications.²⁵⁵ The incident concerns the duping of the Host of the Garter Inn and the subsequent theft of his horse by a German Duke. Why such a sequence should remain in Q, when almost every other bit of extraneous F₁ material is otherwise missing, is not entirely clear. One possibility is, however, that a travelling company would have dealt with the hosts of inns with frequency and may indeed have performed at inns occasionally. Thus, the acting company and their audiences could have considered a satiric

²⁵⁵Cf. Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, pp. 431-432.

thrust at their hosts amusing and worth retaining in their acting text.

IV.v of Q and F₁ is much the same in both texts. The tricking of the Host is further elaborated and discussed. One allusion to the Germans, calling them "Dr. Faustesses," (F₁, IV.v.69), a second reference to Marlowe's play, is missing in Q. IV.vi is again similar in the two versions. Fenton's thirty-eight line speech (F₁, IV.vi.9-46), in which he merely repeats the plan to trick Falstaff and reveals his own intentions of stealing away with Anne Page, is contained in only thirteen lines in Q.

The first four scenes of F₁ Act V are missing altogether in Q. The hiatus, however, is not as great as it might appear to be. These four scenes comprise only sixty lines in F₁, serving merely to give a final view of the characters involved in the climactic scene in Windsor Forest. F₁ (V.i) reveals Falstaff's hopes for a successful encounter with Mrs. Ford. In F₁ (V.ii), Slender and Page reveal their plan to obtain the hand of Anne Page. In F₁ (V.iii), Mrs. Page and Dr. Caius bring forth their counterplot for Anne's marriage. F₁ (V.iv) serves only to show the fairies making their way to the forest. All of these scenes are iterative, containing knowledge which the audience already has. They serve only to remind one of forthcoming events and are, therefore, not actually necessary.

The last scene of the play is one which must have included all of the members of the cast, if it were performed in

the provinces. Twelve characters are called for, not counting the fairies. It is possible that the three or four young boys needed as the dancing fairies in the masque might well have been recruited for the performance from a provincial town itself, for they have no speaking parts. It is interesting to note that all of the activities of the fairies are carefully guided by the directions of Mistress Quickly, who tells them:

Go strait, and do as I commaund,
 And take a Taper in your hand,
 And set it to his fingers endes
 (Q, V.v.50-52)

A bit later, she states:

A little distant from him stand,
 And every one take hand in hand,
 And compasse him within a ring,
 First pinch him well, and after sing.
 (Q, V.v.63-66)

In Q, the stage direction following these lines indicates that the boys do sing as they dance about Falstaff. A song is recorded in F₁, but not in Q. The task of learning any song, however, would not be too great, even for young boys, and would not eliminate the possibility of provincial recruitment for the parts.

The scene also calls for a number of special costumes. Falstaff appears in a deer's head, complete with horns. The fairy costumes are fitted specifically to the situation: one

must be red; another, green; and Anne Page's, white. Sir Hugh is said to enter "like a Satyre." In addition, since the scene is set in Windsor Forest, at least a few trees must have made up the stage properties. The company must have had all of these items for their London performance, but, for a provincial performance, the scene would have been especially extravagant in its necessary equipage. There is no apparent reason, however, for believing that the company could not have carried these items with them.

Q and F₁ speeches vary most widely in V.v. The action is consistent and is presented very clearly in Q, but only a few lines and phrases between the two texts are exactly the same. Craig finds it unlikely that the Q adapter was working with the scene as it is preserved in F₁ and suggests that Q's lines, in this instance, may have come from an older version of the play.²⁵⁶

Some of the omissions in Q do preserve the precedent already established throughout the play. For example, Falstaff's first speech in F₁ (V.v) is fifteen lines long, but only six lines long in Q. The F₁ passage is quite rhetorical, as Falstaff mentions Jove, Europa, and Leda, comparing their occasions for disguise with his own appearance in a deer's head. Q (V.v.3) mentions Jove's transformation into a bull, but there

²⁵⁶Craig, op. cit., p. 74.

is not much development of the comparison. In addition, Quickly's twenty-two line speech in F_1 , concerning the Order of the Garter, is missing in Q. Possibly, this section, written only for the initial court celebration, would not otherwise have been presented.

This textual analysis of The Merry Wives of Windsor hypothesizes what must have been the primary concerns of a travelling company in regard to their texts. However, numerous other comparisons or contrasts between Q and F_1 are readily noticeable, e.g., occasions when similar passages are printed in prose in one version and verse in the other. These bibliographic problems have been the subjects of examination many times, and their solutions are outside the scope of this study. If, however, the type of changes noted in the Merry Wives quarto can be validly called alterations undertaken for provincial audiences, the same formula, then, must hold true for other texts as well. Hence, a similar examination of another Shakespearean play is deemed necessary to this investigation.

Comparison of Q_1 and Q_2 of Romeo and Juliet

On the title page of the 1597 Quarto of Romeo and Juliet, the play is said to have been printed ". . . as it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publicly, by the right

Honourable the L. of Hunsdon his servants."²⁵⁷ This claim definitely dates the performance of the play between July 22, 1596, and April 17, 1597, since Shakespeare's company would have had this name only during this time. Furthermore, since the company travelled during August and September of 1596, a provincial text is a distinct possibility for Q₁. Q₂, printed in 1599, is a longer form of the play and probably closely resembles the text from which Q₁ was made. The comparative number of lines in the two quartos shows how much shorter is Q₁: Q₂ has a total of 3007 lines, compared to 2232 lines in Q₁.²⁵⁸

Beginning with the first scene of the play, one notes obvious variations between the two texts. I.1 involves the street fight between the Montague and Capulet households. In Q₂, there is a dialogue among Gregorie, Sampson, Tybalt, and Benvolio concerning the fight. In Q₁, twenty-three lines of this dialogue are gone, but replaced by a stage direction:

They draw, to them enters Tybalt, they fight to them the prince, Old Mountague, and his wife, old Capulet and his wife, and other Citizens and part them.
(Q₁, I.1.66-68)

²⁵⁷All references and quotations from Q₁ are from the facsimile edition of Romeo and Juliet, 1597, Quarto, prepared by Charles Praetorius. All references and quotations from Q₂ are from the facsimile edition of Romeo and Juliet, 1599 Quarto, prepared by Charles Praetorius.

²⁵⁸Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 342.

Although Tybalt is mentioned in this direction, he is assigned no speeches in the scene in Q₁, and no reference is made to him. Aside from the omission of one character, the reason for the deletion appears to be that of unnecessary explanatory material, such as Gregorie's statement, ". . . my naked weapon is out." (Q₂, I.1.40) This fact would, of course, be obvious to the audience, and it in no way affects the understanding of the action, although the omission of the line does detract somewhat from the emphasis on Gregorie's cowardly character.

Gregorie's statement and the action accompanying it in Q₂ could also be interpreted for obscene implications. But, hereafter the adapter does not appear to have been concerned with omitting other ribald lines which occur in the scene, for left intact in Q₁ are such statements as ". . . Ile thrust the men from the wall, and thrust the maids to the walls" (Q₁, I.1.20-21), and the servingman's boast that he would cut ". . . the heads of their Maids, or the Maidenheades, take it in what sence thou wilt." (Q₁, I.1.30-31) Therefore, the shorter Q₂ (I.1) seems to have been necessary to hasten the action, rather than to spare an audience's sensibilities. In line with the theory of variety entertainment preferred by provincial audiences, one suggests that the fight scene could have been staged like an elaborate fencing match.

Other speeches in Q₂ are missing from the scene in Q₁. One example concerns some lines of the Prince's speech in

reprimanding the Capulet-Montague struggle. In Q₂, the Prince says:

Prophaners of this neighbour-stained steel,
 Will they not heare? what be, you men, you beasts:
 That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
 With purple fountains issuing from your veines
 (Q₂, I.i.89-92)

The language, here, is noticeably figurative in such expressions as "neighbour-stained steel," and "purple fountains." Perhaps, a consideration bearing upon a travelling text was the fact that this language would have been unappealing or even incomprehensible to a provincial audience.

In another instance, a twelve-line speech by Montague in Q₂, in contemplation of the suspicious actions of Romeo, is given in two lines in Q₁. The lines omitted from Q₁ include this statement:

But all so soon as the all cheering Sunne,
 Should in the farthest East begin to draw,
 The shadie curtains from Aurora's bed
 (Q₂, I.i.140-142)

The personification of the sun and the allusion to "Aurora's bed" could have been considered too figurative to have been interpreted fully by a provincial audience.

The scene ends in Q₂ with a dialogue between Romeo and Benvolio concerning Romeo's grief over his love problems, twenty-two lines of which are not included in Q₁. The speeches discuss such matters as the lady's beauty and chastity and are

not necessary to the action of the play, but they do accentuate the despair of Romeo and heighten the degree of his melancholy. Characterization is sacrificed to quick-moving action throughout Q_1 .

In I.iii, there is an example of the omission of repetitious statements. The nurse tells the story of Juliet's youthful incident of falling in both quartos. But in Q_2 (I.ii. 51-55), she repeats the story for a second time. This repetition is missing in Q_1 . In the same scene, a long speech by Juliet's mother in Q_2 is missing in Q_1 , and there are two possible reasons for this omission. First, in Q_2 it is again a largely repetitious passage, in which the great beauty and virtue of Paris are further elaborated from an earlier passage. Secondly, the speech is quite figurative in its language. Paris's face is likened to a "volume" in an extended metaphor of fifteen lines. Such rhetoric could well have proved bore-some to a provincial audience more interested in action than words. Another interesting thing occurs in the scene, concerning the assignment of the part of a servingman in Q_2 (I.iii. 99-103), to a clown in Q_1 (I.iii.100-103). This difference might suggest that Kemp, the well-known clown, was playing the part in Q_1 , although the stychomythic speeches are much the same in both versions.

At the beginning of the next scene, I.iv, there is a difference in stage directions. In Q_1 (I.iv.1), the direction

reads: "Enter maskers with Romeo and a page"; in Q_2 (I.iv.1-2), the direction reads: "Enter Romeo, Mercutio, Benvolio, with five or six other Maskers, torchbearers." Here, the significant point of difference is that Q_2 suggests a fairly large number of extras, while Q_1 is indefinite. The reason for such vagueness could lie in the fact that Q_1 was performed by the travelling company with a smaller cast; hence, a large number of maskers would not have been available. All told, in I.iv and I.v (the two scenes involving the Capulet party), there are ten players provided for in Q_1 . Q_2 shows a marked difference in the number of characters portrayed. At least four servingmen begin I.v in Q_2 with a conversation; "guests and Gentlewomen then enter," and there is music and dancing. None of these parts appears in Q_1 . In Q_1 , the party scene in the Capulet household contains bare essentials of dialogue, with none of the panoramic quality it could have if presented by a larger company.

On the other hand, a passage in Q_1 (I.iv) indicates that the adapter of the quarto did not always omit material which was unnecessary. The Queen Mab speech is quite similar in both versions, covering thirty-five lines in Q_1 , and, since it is digressive, it seems that, for the interest of emphasizing action, it could have been taken out. On the other hand, the many references of the speech, none particularly obscure, could have been a great source of amusement to a provincial audience.

The lines offer numerous opportunities for a player to provide comic antics and to mimic different types of people. Rather than being a long, boresome speech, it likely is one of the most delightful in the entire play.

Staging of I.iv and I.v may have been difficult to reconcile in the provinces. I.iv is set in a street before Capulet's house. I.v takes place in a hall inside the house. Q₂ bridges the location of the scenes with a stage direction: "They march about the Stage, and Servingmen come forth with Napkins." As has been noted, the servingmen sequence is missing in Q₁. Reynolds suggests that the actors' marching and changing of position indicate the shifting of background.²⁵⁹ More must have been left to the imagination in Q₁. Capulet and the ladies do enter in Q₁ at the beginning of I.v, however, and perhaps their presence and the following entreaties to join in the dance were sufficient to reconcile the different setting.

In II.ii, the scene of the secret meeting of Romeo and Juliet in the garden, both quartos are quite similar. Q₁, as well as Q₂, clearly shows that it is intended to be played upon a multiple stage. The indications of how this and the other orchard scenes are staged in both quartos suggest the presence of an orchard wall. In addition, Juliet is viewed in "yonder window" in both versions. This statement precludes

²⁵⁹Reynolds, op. cit., II, 74.

the theory that there was an upper gallery in which for her to appear. If a balcony were not available, and it would seem probable that at some inns and townhalls an "upper stage" would not exist, the meeting of II.ii might have been improvised in the use of both the front and rear stages. The staging of III.v, later in the play, however, cannot be accounted for with the internal evidence, as using any other location besides that of an upper stage. The meeting of Romeo and Juliet on their wedding night in Juliet's chamber is located on an upper level. Much attention is given in previous scenes to obtaining a rope ladder by means of which Romeo will leave the chamber. The stage direction in Q_1 is definite: "He goeth downe." Thus, evidence is clear that the play is designed for the London type of stage. If players on tour made provisions for the eventuality of performance on stages not equipped with all the conventional acting areas, this text shows no indication of any such preparations. Possibly, the company would have given this particular play only in those cities wherein the necessary stage existed. Also, the players might have revised their lines to fit the occasions when stage improvisation was unavoidable, and thereafter, failed to record such matters in their texts.

A significant omission of fifteen lines occurs at the end of Q_1 (II.ii) in an incident concerning Romeo and Juliet's meeting. These lines in Q_2 include such sentimental leave-

taking as: "This bud of love by Summer's ripening breath / May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet." (Q₂, II.ii. 122-123) In addition to providing a rather elaborate personification of summer, the lines do little to further any action and may be omitted without harm to the continuity of the play. However, something is lost in characterization.

The fact that not all classical allusions are missing in Q₁ is exemplified in II.iv, in which Mercutio tells of Romeo's passion for Juliet and speaks these words:

Sirra now is he for the numbers that Petrarch flowdin:
Laura to his Lady was but a kitchin drudg, yet she had
 a better love to berime her: Dido a dowdy Cleopatra a
 Gypsie, Hero and Hellen hildings and harletries: Thisbie
 a gray eye or so
 (Q₁, II.iv.41-45)

A knowledge of Petrarch and a realization that he wrote sonnets to Laura, and a recognition of the other figures mentioned are necessary for a comprehension of all of the implications of this speech. The description of these people and the intent of the lines is fairly clear without such knowledge, but to many provincial audiences, it may have been obscure in meaning.

An emphasis on light entertainment in Q₁ (II.iv) is indicated (in the midst of a speech by Mercutio) in a stage direction which reads: "He walks by them and sings." (Q₁, II.iv.41) His song is in reference to a "hare in a Lenten pye" and makes a play on words. The song goes:

And an olde hare hore, and an olde hare hore
 is verie good meate in Lent:
 But a hare thats hoare is too much for a score,
 if it hore ere it be spent.

(Q₁, II.iv.42-45)

There is no stage direction indicating a song in Q₂, although the same passage is contained in the speech. The fact that it was definitely sung in Q₁ is a significant addition to the supposition that opportunities for variety entertainment were fully utilized in provincial performances. The song, whether the provincial audience actually understood the play on words or not, would have been pleasing. The lines of the song contain ribald implications, and the fact that obscenity was no real consideration in the preparation of Q₁ is further elucidated later in the same scene. Mercutio taunts Juliet's Nurse in front of Peter, her man, and the Nurse accuses Peter: "And thou like a knave must stand by and see everie Iacke use me at his pleasure." (Q₁, II.iv.163-164) After this challenge, Peter replies:

I see no bodie use you at his pleasure, if I had, I
 would soon have drawn: you know my toole is as soone
 out as anothers if I see time and place.

(Q₁, II.iv.165-168)

The double impact of these lines is actually minimized in Q₂, by Peter's elaboration upon a "good quarel, & the law on my side."

In the next scene, II.v, the opening speech by Juliet contains eight lines in Q₁ and fourteen lines in Q₂. In this

speech, Juliet impatiently awaits the Nurse's return from a visit to Romeo undertaken to set a time and place for a meeting. In the extra lines in Q₂, Juliet talks of the extreme slowness of the Nurse and refers to her in these terms: ". . . but old folkes, many faine as they were dead, / Unwieldie, slow, heavie, and pale as lead." (Q₂, II.v.16-17) In Q₁ (II.v.4), the Nurse is called "lazier" but is never described as old or heavy. This variation could indicate that a younger (or less well madeup actor) was playing the part in the travelling version.

Later, in the same scene, there is another important difference between the two quartos. The situation involves the Nurse's report to Juliet of the plans for Juliet to meet Romeo at Friar Lawrence's cell to be married. In Q₂, Juliet makes a one-line statement to her departing Nurse: "Hie to high fortune, honest Nurse farewell." (Q₂, II.v.80) But in Q₁, her corresponding speech is three lines long and somewhat altered:

How doth her latter words revive my hart.
 Thanks gentle Nurse, dispatch thy business,
 And Ile not faile to meete my Romeo.
 (Q₁, II.v.80-82)

The import of this change seems clear. First, the pun on the word "hie" is eliminated. Furthermore, it provides an indication to the audience that Juliet does feel enough love for Romeo to enter into the secret marriage, a fact which, up to

this point, has not been too well-developed in Q₁. The chorus prologue, eliminated in Q₁, provides an insight into Juliet's passion for Romeo in Q₂, but inserted lines such as these have to make up the motivation in Q₁.

The next scene, II.vi, is the first to be almost totally different in the two quartos. The scene in Q₁ has generally been considered "un-Shakespearean."²⁶⁰ Although presented in a different manner, the action in the two quartos is the same-- the meeting of Romeo and Juliet at Friar Lawrence's cell. In Q₂, the Friar has command of the entire situation, while in Q₁, the scene belongs to the lovers and their free and passionate talk. The activity of Romeo and Juliet finally leads the Friar to admonish them in Q₁:

Defer imbracements till some fitter time,
Part for a while, you shall not be alone,
Till holy Church have joyned ye both in one.
(Q₁, II.vi.35-37)

This display of emotion helps further to prove that Romeo and Juliet do actually love each other enough to go through with the marriage, an act which, as has been pointed out, is rather poorly motivated in Q₁. This provision for an additional insight into the passion of Romeo and Juliet could have been a valid reason for a revision of the scene in Q₁.

Another example of a changed passage in Q₁ occurs in

²⁶⁰Hoppe, op. cit., p. 277.

III.ii.57-60. When the Nurse enters with the report of the second street fight and gives Juliet the impression that Romeo has been killed, Juliet's reactions in the two quartos are quite different. In Q₁, she says:

Ah, Romeo, Romeo, what disaster hap
 Hath severd thee from thy true Juliet?
 Ah why should Heaven so much conspire with Woe,
 Or Fate envy our happie Marriage,
 So soone to sunder us by timeless Death?
 (Q₁, III.ii.57-60)

The corresponding passage in Q₂ reads:

O break my heart, poore banckrout break at once,
 To prison eyes, nere lookt on libertie.
 Vile earth too earth resigne, end motion here,
 And thou and Romeo presse one heavie beere.
 (Q₂, III.ii.57-60)

Clearly, the more expressive passage is that of Q₂. Hoppe identifies the lines in Q₁ as non-Shakespearean because of the stilted diction and versification. Expressions, such as "disaster hap" and timeless death," the shifted stress of "envy," the necessity of a three syllable pronunciation of "marriage," to him all indicate an amateur writer.²⁶¹

The identity of the reviser has also varied considerably in critics' speculations. Thomas attributes the changed passages to Henry Chettle, a one-time working partner of John

²⁶¹ Loc. cit.

Danter, the Q₁ printer.²⁶² Some advocates of the memorial reconstruction theory hold that the lines were written by the reporter as a fill-in for parts he could not remember.²⁶³ On the assumption that Q₁ was a consciously-prepared acting version, Bracy's reiteration that adapters occasionally revised portions of a play according to their own tastes is most satisfactory.²⁶⁴ The fact that travelling actors would have done so certainly cannot be proved, but such a possibility does exist.

In III.i, there is a further indication that Q₁ was intended for performance by a smaller cast, revealed in the stage directions for the personnel involved in the second Montague-Capulet street battle. Q₁ has "enter Benvolio, Mercutio," (III.i.1), while Q₂ has "enter Mercutio, Benvolio, and men." (III.i.1) Later in the scene, Q₁ has "enter Tybalt," (III.i.39), and Q₂ has "enter Tibalt, Petruchio and others." (III.i.38) Before the scene is over, it appears that the battle in Q₂ would have as many as sixteen actors, while in Q₁, it could have been played by half that many.

In the next scene, III.ii, a major action is missing in Q₁. In Q₂ the scene opens with Juliet's thirty-one line

²⁶²Sidney Thomas, "Henry Chettle and the First Quarto of Romeo and Juliet," RES, I (January, 1950), 11-15.

²⁶³Chambers, William Shakespeare, I, 345.

²⁶⁴Bracy, op. cit., p. 70.

soliloquy, of which only the first four lines are included in Q_1 . Again, the missing portion is a very figurative one. The passage in Q_2 entreats night to come quickly in these lines:

Come gentle night, come my loving black-browd night,
 Give me my Romeo, and when hee shall die,
 Take him and cut him out in little starres,
 And he will make the face of heaven so fine.
 (Q_2 , III.11.20-23)

Q_1 omits all such sentiment and attention to Juliet's inner thoughts and reduces the whole passage to the bare essentials of an expression of her hope of a safe escape with Romeo and wish for a "cloudie night" for concealment. Therefore, with the shorter length of the soliloquy, the pending announcement of the murder that Romeo committed is greatly hastened. The four lines which remain in Q_1 contain two classical allusions. There is a mention of Phoebus's lodging and Phaeton in the short passage. In this instance, Q_1 does not exclude all of the possibly obscure references.

Throughout the rest of the scene, III.11, many other lines are missing in Q_1 . Altogether, Q_1 contains only sixty-three lines, compared to the one hundred and forty-nine lines in Q_2 . Only those lines are left which furnish a report of the action's taking place. It is a conscious job of eliminating unnecessary material, but much of the beauty of the longer form is gone. The purpose of the shorter form is evidently that of eliminating the long dramatic speeches, proceeding

more quickly to the sections of the play which contain more action.

There is evidence of many similar omissions in the Q₁ text. For example, Friar Lawrence's long fifty-one line speech (Q₂, III.iii.109-159), in which he attempts to encourage the despondent Romeo, contains only twenty-five lines in Q₁ (III.iii.112-136). In IV.1, a thirty-three line speech by the Friar in Q₂ (89-122) is represented in nineteen lines in Q₁ (IV.1.89-103). Then, the Friar's plan for giving Juliet the potion is quite sparsely sketched, and the motivation for carrying out the plan is slight. In IV.iii, a major omission occurs in Q₁ in Juliet's soliloquy before she drinks the supposed death-dealing potion. The nineteen-line speech in Q₁ is a mere summary of the highly dramatic forty-four line speech in Q₂. For instance, one line in Q₁ states: "Ah then I feare I shall be lunaticke." (IV.iii.49) This sentence takes the place of seventeen poignant and moving lines in Q₂. One can easily see, however, that an audience not appreciative of poetic language would become very impatient in waiting for the result of Juliet's risk.

The next scene, IV.iv, involves the preparation for the wedding of Juliet and Paris, and it is changed in a few respects. One line in Q₁ is noteworthy. Spoken by Capulet, it reads: "Will will tell thee where thou shalt fetch them." (Q₁, IV.iv. 14) The corresponding line in Q₂ has "Call Peter." (Q₂, IV.iv.

15) It is surmised that "Will" refers to Will Kemp, who may have been with the touring company. The scene is a light one in which the actor may have had the opportunity to indulge in comic antics. Also, the scene in Q_2 has a stage direction, "Play Musicke," missing in Q_1 . Since the musicians are eliminated in I.v of Q_1 , the text thereafter clearly excises any instrumentation. This fact is not surprising, since a traveling company probably could not afford to carry a group of musicians with them.

The final scene of the play, V.iii, provides, again, an indication of how many actors may have made up the touring company, since this scene probably utilizes all available players. Here, three characters--Romeo, Juliet, and Paris--are dead upon the stage. Balthazar, Paris's page, and Friar Lawrence soon enter, followed by the Prince, Lady and Old Capulet, and Montague. There are, then, ten major characters present. There are also other persons represented. Two Watchmen appear, but their lines are short and could have been easily handled by extras, not actual members of the touring company. From this evidence, it seems that the company was made up of as few as ten actors.

In this scene in the churchyard, the tomb may have been represented by the curtained backstage. Trees are referred to in the text, and may have been a necessary part of the stage properties. An interesting note is that Paris advises his

page in Q_1 to ". . . lye thee all along / Under this Ew-tree." (V.v.1-2) Q_2 records his advice as "Under yond young Trees lay thee all along" (V.v.3) Perhaps, the difference in number indicates only one tree as a stage property in Q_1 , while there were several in Q_2 .

Nearly eighty lines of Q_2 are missing altogether in the final scene in Q_1 . Romeo's dramatic, but time-consuming fifty-one line soliloquy before he dies in Q_2 is reduced to twenty-three lines in Q_1 . The Watchmen's total of twenty-four lines in Q_2 is contained in only four lines in Q_1 , a further indication that the part was purposely de-emphasized. Friar Lawrence's forty-line speech is nearly the same length in both quartos, being a necessary summation of all the circumstances of the tragedy and a speech which cannot be deleted without a loss to the ending of the play.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST QUARTOS OF THE MERRY WIVES

OF WINDSOR AND ROMEO AND JULIET

. . . for they are the abstract and brief chronicles
of the time.

(Hamlet, II.ii.550-551)

An examination of the 1602 Quarto of The Merry Wives of Windsor and the 1597 Quarto of Romeo and Juliet in accordance with criteria logical for provincial performances, reveals some significant evidence about the consistency of their preparation. Both quartos are distinctly shorter. The relative amounts of abridgment differ rather significantly. Q of the Merry Wives is some 40% shorter than F₁. Q₁ of Romeo and Juliet is 26% shorter than Q₂. The Merry Wives clearly has suffered more in abridgment than Romeo and Juliet. The reason for the degree of variation may be inherent in the contrasting types of drama represented.

F₁ of the Merry Wives tends toward the farcical, fast-moving comedy from the very beginning, although it often reaches the heights of high comedy. For example, the supposed satirical intent of F's opening lines and the frequent play on words, particularly in the learning sequence of IV.1 and in the blunders of the foreigner, Dr. Caius, are high comedy, and would be enjoyable only to those accustomed to this type of humor.

A concise, but always clear, low comedy is probably the result of the adapter's work in Q. All of the situations receive full attention. Falstaff still gets beaten, burned, and dunked in the Thames, and even the Host has his horse stolen in Q. If the intent of travelling players was to satisfy an underdeveloped artistic taste in the provincial audience, they succeeded in removing most of the intellectual elements in the Merry Wives Quarto.

Romeo and Juliet, on the other hand, is not subject to the same degree of adaptation. In order to retain the emotional impact of the tragedy, a conscious abridgment could not reduce the play to a mere series of situations. Some declamation of the thoughts of the major characters is essential in keeping the play even close to Shakespeare's intent. Thus, there are more long speeches in Romeo and Juliet, and fewer opportunities to excise material than in the Merry Wives. Nevertheless, Romeo and Juliet emphasizes action, rather than exposition, whenever possible within the grounds of integrity.

The type of omissions made in the two texts, in spite of their basic differences in content, is remarkably similar. Many literary allusions are missing in both plays. The Merry Wives has more references to people and places in London, since it is set specifically in Windsor. Not all of these references are missing in Q, but many are. Particularly noteworthy is Q's omission of the Gardiner allusions. This excision in itself

makes the reporter theory hard to accept. This material was undoubtedly considered potentially scandalous to those who knew its full impact, and it seems impossible that this particular portion would have been "forgotten" by actors who had once known a full text.

Romeo and Juliet has no clear cut allusions to the London scene, but the allusions in figurative language to people of classical and mythical origin are often missing. Some of these names do remain in Q_1 , but enough have been taken out so as to make a general trend in alteration in this direction very noticeable.

In fact, there is evidence of an effort in both quartos to reduce the figurative language, whether it contains obscure allusions or not. Elimination of personifications, metaphors, and similes was one of the adapter's basic methods of cutting long speeches. Since these figures require at least two levels of thought and are time consuming and perhaps, the sign of pomposity to individuals not accustomed to hearing this type of speech, their loss may have been rationalized. Soliloquies are consistently reduced in length in both texts, making clear that conscious effort was made to shorten the periods of stage inactivity. As a result, psychological motivation is often non-existent in the two first quartos.

The transposition of lines in the early versions of both plays is one of their most obvious common characteristics.

These anticipations and recollections are never cumbersome in the positions in which they are placed. Very often, they sum up a person's character or a situation better than the correctly-placed lines of the longer text. That phrases or lines were consciously transferred or unconsciously misplaced by an adapter is a difficult claim to make. But the possibility does, at least, exist and is as tenable as most explanations.

The comic or variety elements of the first quartos evidently received full attention. The fact that Will Kemp is mentioned in the comic roles in Q₁ of Romeo and Juliet gives rise to the speculation that clownery, songs, and dancing were given full emphasis in these few scenes of this tragedy that lend themselves to this type of entertainment. The Merry Wives by its nature, provides numerous opportunities for comic antics. Both plays, in addition, have a masque, although the disguising is apparently not as well-developed in Romeo and Juliet as in the Merry Wives, which shows provisions for the use of more extras. Of course, the variety scenes have not been added specifically for the travelling version, since they are also contained in the longer texts. Their inclusion, however, does suggest the possible great popularity of light entertainment in the provinces.

The internal evidence of the major items of staging manifest within these two early quartos does not, in either case, show a special adaptation for provincial makeshift

theatres. The Merry Wives has no need of an upper stage, but Romeo and Juliet clearly does. The emblematic areas of front and rear stages are fully used in both plays. The minor variation in the Merry Wives in the location of the hiding places of Simple and Falstaff does not imply a great difference in stage locations, although references to them are somewhat changed. Stage properties, also, are similar in both the complete and shorter forms of the plays, indicating that the touring company had planned for a familiar type of stage. If it were not available, they may have adjusted their speeches and movements to the situation, without noting special conditions in their texts. It is more than likely, however, that most large towns had adequate theatrical facilities.

Perhaps the most conclusive evidence to show that these texts are provincial versions rests in the fewer number of actors called for. Twenty-one characters, not counting the fairies, have parts in the Merry Wives, but the most that appear at one time is twelve, in the final scene of the play. One notes, also, portions of the play which could clearly provide for the practice of doubling. Nearly the same numbers apply to Romeo and Juliet. Twenty-one speaking parts are included in Q_1 , with no more than ten or, possibly, eleven characters appearing at a time. Doubling of roles would have been necessary, but not a problem. The indicated number of players is very much in accord with the size of most travelling companies.

All in all, the similarity in textual preparation between the first quartos of these two plays lends heavy support to the theory that they may have been texts adapted for provincial performances. Admittedly, many differences between "good" and "bad" quartos remain. Minor variants of spelling, word choice, and printing occur frequently, and are, perhaps, entirely independent of results of the preparation of texts for company tours. But the indications provided in these two quartos, both in individual analysis and in comparison by specified criteria, are conclusive enough to label them as travelling texts and to make this approach to the study of all of their variations most warranted.

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