



British playwrights 1880–1956

A Research and Production Sourcebook

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Preface

The British playwrights featured in this volume initiated, developed, or in some way resisted the appearance of English dramatic modernism. The date 1880 marks the onset of the "new" or "modern" drama in small, coterie theaters; 1956 marks a surge of postwar dramatic energy afforded, in part, by state patronage. From subscription-funded to state-subsidized theaters, from a centralized system of London-based production to a decentralized regional theater, from publishers' small press runs to the mass printing of play texts, from script-based stage drama to the proliferation of dramatic media (radio, television, and film), the two ends of this period contain between them two world wars and a vast amount of cultural change both forming and formed by a changing set of theatrical practices. At both ends of this chronological continuum, as well as at most points along it, British playwrights wrote predominately "realist" drama, some of it commenting directly on offstage social relations. A smaller number of playwrights chose to write in nonrealist modes, using the conventions of poetic, symbolist, and allegorical drama, to render the workings of mythic or individual consciousness. The playwrights included in this volume document the variety in twentieth-century British theater, a variety underscored by recent efforts to open the canon to once valued but since overlooked female playwrights and writers from the provinces.

Defined at its origins by historians and commentators like William Archer and Allardyce Nicoll, the canon of modern British drama has favored written (as opposed to musical or performance-oriented) genres marked by the skillful use of literary devices and the circulation of philosophical themes. Certain comedies found favor with the "new drama" coterie, most notably the "high" comedies of G. B. Shaw rather than, for example, the popular operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan. But with rare exceptions, the origins of British modern

drama lay in serious treatments of social, sexual, and philosophical themes. The onset of dramatic modernism is usually placed somewhere between the late 1860s and the 1890s, but all agree that the appearance of Ibsen in translation galvanized a select, influential group of English playwrights, translators, actors, and spectators who became the promoters of the "new" or "modern" drama. Ibsen's plays, successfully promoted by actress/playwright Elizabeth Robins and recontextualized by G. B. Shaw's *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, signaled a new intellectual seriousness and coincided with a growing preference for "realism" among actors, directors, and scenographers. Detailed stage business, illusionistic settings, and the careful integrating of character and material motives like heredity and environment became the norm for serious dramas by Arthur Wing Pinero, Harley Granville-Barker, John Galsworthy, Somerset Maugham, and others.

At the outbreak of the First World War, the London theater scene was vital and diverse, with spoken dramas played at the major, commercial theaters, and musicals, spectacles, variety, and—increasingly—cinema played in other venues. The repertory had been established in London through the efforts of J. T. Grein's Independent Theatre and its successor, the Stage Company, and of the Court Theatre. Annie Horniman, one of the founders of Dublin's Abbey Theatre, helped to establish the first English repertory company, the Gaiety in Manchester. The repertory idea spread to Glasgow, Liverpool, and Birmingham, where it fostered new playwrights, actors, and audiences.

The war changed the face and the structure of theater. In the 1920s higher production costs influenced repertory selection, which, in turn, influenced canon formation. The plays of Noël Coward, Somerset Maugham, Frederick Lonsdale, and others found an outlet in the commercial West End, but the self-styled artistic theater associated with the origins of dramatic modernism remained dormant until the mid- to late 1920s and the 1930s. Both the Oxford Repertory Company and the experimental Cambridge Festival Theatre began offering provincial audiences innovative theater on a seasonal basis in 1923. In the West End brief but often extraordinary productions at the Lyric Theatre, the Gate Theatre Studio, and the Barnes Theatre, for example, pushed the limits of spoken drama with experimental productions of Continental classics.

J. B. Priestley's conventional treatments of spiritual and metaphysical themes dominated the legitimate drama of the 1930s and 1940s, which also saw the founding of small, experimental, and typically left-wing theaters, such as Rupert Doone, W. H. Auden, and Robert Medley's Group Theatre, Joan Littlewood's Theatre of Action (later known as the Theatre Union) and her Unity Theatre, and Ashley Dukes's Mercury Theatre. The 1930s and 1940s also saw the appearance of nonrealist poetic dramatists with ambitious plans for renovating dramatic language and action. The Second World War again eclipsed dramatic innovation but prompted state patronage for theater through the 1939 formation of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA). CEMA brought Shakespeare to the troops, paving the way for a provincial repertory movement and later a National Theatre. CEMA was incorporated under royal

charter in 1946 as the Arts Council of Great Britain, which derived its budget directly from the Treasury. The state and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) also played a role during the Second World War in promoting radio as a mass medium. Radio plays reached thousands of listeners simultaneously and provided playwrights with more ready access to a mass audience than they were likely to find through the stage. As an aural medium, radio encouraged literary writing by playwrights who often later went on to write for the stage.

Shaw died in 1950, at the beginning of a decade in which British drama was transformed from its depleted postwar condition to a state of electrified brilliance. During the next six years the National Theatre foundation stone was laid; Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* received its English premiere (1955); the Berliner Ensemble gave its first London performance of Brecht's work (1956); George Devine founded the English Stage Company (1956); and John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, produced at the now Royal Court Theatre, was heralded as part of a new generation of plays by gifted young writers. The new wave of postwar playwrights gathered momentum and, in spite of severe losses of state support, has continued through the present day.

Each entry in this reference book consists of the following components, designed to allow the flexibility necessary to accommodate the range of artists included while providing a unified structure that will permit the reader easiest access to the materials presented:

1. *Biographical Overview*: A thumbnail sketch of significant events in the playwright's life, intended to introduce him or her to the reader. "Selected Biographical Sources," appearing at the end of the overview, lists references that will provide further biographical information.
2. *Major Plays, Premieres, and Significant Revivals: Theatrical Reception*: A selective list with dates (usually for first production) and runs of significant productions, including important revivals (many of which occurred after 1956). Summaries of the published critical receptions of these productions (generally from newspaper and magazine reviews) follow.
3. *Additional Plays, Adaptations, and Productions*: Includes theatrical events that were less significant in the playwright's career.
4. *Assessment of the Playwright's Career*: Includes general assessments from the entries' authors, which also incorporate summary references to published evaluations from critics/scholars writing in magazines, journals, dissertations, and books.
5. *Archival Sources*: A listing of locations housing unpublished materials.
6. *Primary Bibliography*: A selective list of the playwright's published plays and of essays and articles by the playwright relevant to the theater and/or his or her playwriting career.
7. *Secondary Bibliography*: A selected list of materials relevant to the playwright's life and career, including materials referenced in the preceding sections. Secondary materials referred to within the entry by authors of multiple works in the Secondary Bibliography will be distinguished by [1], [2], and so on.

8. *Bibliographies*: If available, bibliographies concentrating on the playwright are listed for further referral to material not included in the Secondary Bibliography.

The contributors to this volume have selected materials they judged most significant to future scholarship on their respective playwrights, but few if any of the entries should be viewed as exhaustive in their bibliographic references. The selected bibliography at the end of this volume lists significant general books on British drama and theater during the period 1880–1956. For further sources of material, especially for those playwrights who have not yet received individualized bibliographic attention beyond this reference volume, readers should consult the following works:

Carpenter, Charles A. *Modern British Drama*. Goldentree Bibliographies in Language and Literature. Arlington Heights, IL: AHM Publishing Corporation, 1979.

Salem, James M. *A Guide to Critical Reviews*. Pt. 3. *British and Continental Drama from Ibsen to Pinter*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1968.

For a current, annual bibliography of scholarly materials, refer to issue 2 (June) of each annual volume of the journal *Modern Drama*. Additional current scholarly journals carrying articles on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theater are *Drama*, published quarterly by the British Drama League (1946–89), *New Theatre Quarterly*, *Nineteenth Century Theatre*, *Theatre History Studies*, *Theatre Journal*, *Theatre Notebook*, *Theatre Research International*, and *Victorian Studies*.

Many newspapers are difficult to locate in libraries. The *Stage Year Book*, 38 volumes (London, 1908–69), contains cast lists of all London productions, as well as other articles on theater and drama, including obituaries. In addition to *The [London] Times* and the *Observer*, the following periodicals, several of them available in microfilm, carry play reviews and articles of general interest on theater and drama: *Theatre* (1877–97); *Era* (1868–1919); *Playgoer* (1901–4); *Playgoer and Society Illustrated* (1909–13); *Play Pictorial* (1902–39) (an excellent source for production and studio photographs); *Theatre World* (1925–65); and *Plays and Players* (1953–). *Theatre 54 to 55* and *Theatre 55 to 56* (London, 1956 and 1957) are comprehensive annuals carrying criticism, checklists of London first nights, and other articles, as well as announcements of honors, awards, and obituaries.

Katherine E. Kelly

British Playwrights, 1880–1956

William Archer

(1856–1924)

VINCENT F. PETRONELLA

George Bernard Shaw's preface to *Three Plays by William Archer* informs us that his friend and colleague of forty years was not simply a stereotyped "dour Scot" but a complex individual whose persona blended both fable and reality. By analyzing the Archer mask, Shaw not only demystified the supposedly detached, overly reserved Archer but also humanized him as one who was quite capable of profound emotional response: one who knew how to laugh. Attesting to his friend's warm, jovial side, Shaw indicated that Archer considered him the incarnation of a joke. As the author of *Masks or Faces?* (1888), Archer projected a public persona not as elaborate and as far-reaching as that of Shaw, but a mask nonetheless. Although not a stage actor, Archer was an exponent of what he himself called the dual-consciousness paradox (*Masks or Faces?*, 150).

Photographs of Archer capture the "dour Scot" very well: the tall, dignified appearance, the dark suit and high collar, the commanding, well-formed Celtic features set off by carefully groomed dark hair and moustache. This is the man who at a gathering of friends called upon Shaw to finish a reading of his own translation of Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* because he himself had become too moved by the content. A mask of reserve, then, concealed Archer's actual sensitivities. That he was not to be stereotyped impressed Shaw and others quite favorably.

The son of Thomas Archer and Grace Morison, William Archer was born in Perth, Scotland, on 23 September 1856, just two months after his friend and nearly exact contemporary, Bernard Shaw, was born in Dublin. Archer's father came from a Nonconformist family of Walkerites, separatists who broke from the Episcopal Church of Ireland and whose doctrines resembled those of the Glasites founded in 1730 by the Scots minister John Glas. His mother was the daughter of James Morison, a celebrated Glasite. Archer's family was steeped in Bible worship and a divine, otherworldly Jesus, but he himself became skep-

tical of any kind of supernaturalism and hence gradually moved toward a rationalist frame of mind. His views of the occult would undergo a forced change, however, when his life began to resemble that of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who, like Archer, was shocked by the death of a son in World War I. Both freethinking men turned to spiritualism and parapsychology in a desperate attempt to communicate with the dead. But Archer's own death was imminent. Shortly after undergoing surgery for the removal of a tumor, he died on 27 December 1924. Shaw, who was in Spain at the time, responded to this news angrily. He personally believed that his old friend had been killed by blundering doctors, those very dunderheads raked over the coals in *The Doctor's Dilemma*, the play written in response to Archer's 1906 challenge asking Shaw to address dramatically the issue of death. Now, eighteen years later, Archer had died as a result, so thought Shaw, of botched surgery. Mrs. Archer, finding it difficult to follow her husband's burial instructions, which derived much of their content from Shakespeare, arranged a traditional service. So even in death William Archer was adorned with a mask: the staunch secularist was draped in Christian ceremony. Also covered in the cloth of respectability and hence not mentioned at this somber time was the matter of Archer's romantic liaison, which had started in 1891, with the captivating American actress Elizabeth Robins (see Whitebrook, 133–35; John, 4, 8, 75–85).

Contributing to Archer's multifaceted constitution was his close connection with Norway. The oldest of nine children, he enjoyed thoroughly the visits to Tolderodden, affectionately called "Odden." The family alternated between residences in Scotland and Norway before deciding to settle in Scotland, and as a child Archer spoke Norwegian. He became bilingual in English and Norwegian and gradually multilingual after acquiring several other languages: Danish, German, Italian, and French. Linguistically it is the translations of Ibsen's dramas that placed Archer in the center of dramatic history in the 1890s and early 1900s. As a literary and intellectual force, Henrik Ibsen entered Archer's life in 1873, and by 1878 Archer completed his first translation of *The Pillars of Society* (called *The Supports of Society*), which was staged as *Quicksands; or The Pillars of Society* at the Gaiety Theatre on 15 December 1880. Although presented at a single matinee only, this performance was the first ever of an Ibsen play in England.

Just a year earlier, Archer suffered an emotional crisis brought on not so much by the demands of his work as a journalist and theater critic as by his family's settling in London after returning from an eight-year stay in Australia. Family proximity created tensions growing out of differences regarding matters of religion and career. His parents' unwillingness to accept the idea of the theater as a proper endeavor intensified Archer's depression. Travel abroad was suggested, and although his family proposed Germany, Archer himself chose Italy, especially since Henrik Ibsen was at that time living in Rome. By December 1881 Archer was in Italy and specifically at Rome's Scandinavian Club, where he formally met the playwright whose *Pillars of Society* he had already trans-

lated and seen staged the previous year. Archer and Ibsen then met regularly to take an afternoon glass of vermouth at a Roman café. Archer's two-part essay on Ibsen in the *St. James Magazine* had recently appeared; he was pleased during this time to present a copy to the great Norwegian. At one of their meetings, Ibsen spoke about a recent publication of his own: the literary bombshell that would be translated as *Ghosts*. Postlewait, who dealt thoroughly with the Archer-Ibsen connection, argued for Archer's centrality in energizing and directing approaches to Ibsen's drama and took issue with those scholars who single out Henry James and James Joyce as vanguards for the Ibsen era in England. If anything, it was Archer together with Shaw who showed Joyce and James the way regarding Ibsen. Archer may have disagreed with the principal contentions in Shaw's *Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891), but both nonetheless provided the main force in England behind the growing interest in Ibsen during the 1890s, thanks especially to Archer's initial interest and, of course, to his ability to write translations that worked well on the stage (see Postlewait and Wisenthal).

The Italian journey meant meeting and communicating with Ibsen; but even more, Italy brought Archer the very emotional restorative he needed. In the United States three years earlier, he had visited Boston's Beacon Street, Cambridge's Longfellow House and Harvard College, Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre, and many sites in New York City—locales associated with American writers he greatly admired: Emerson, Cooper, Lowell, Holmes, Poe, Twain, and Hawthorne. Like most of these writers, Archer found intellectual and emotional enrichment in Italy. Caught up in the imagination of Hawthorne, for example, he used with pleasure *The Marble Faun* as a guide to Rome and parts of Tuscany. This heightened the excitement of his romantic adventure, which was topped off by his falling in love with Frances Elizabeth Trickett, an English girl traveling with her family through Europe. To Archer she was the intelligent, pretty girl with the face of a Della Robbia sculpture; he first saw her in Rome and would see her again in Florence, Venice, and at Lake Como. By the end of the Italian idyll they were virtually engaged. Looking ahead to an official engagement and marriage, Archer set out to increase and stabilize his financial resources. Helpful in this regard were two timely publications, both calling for change in the theater: *English Dramatists of To-day* (1882) and *Henry Irving, Actor and Manager* (1883), the latter a moderate follow-up to the scathing critique of Henry Irving in *The Fashionable Tragedian* (1877), which Archer published together with Robert Lowe and illustrator/caricaturist George R. Halkett. The anti-Ingving views, the involvement with Ibsen, the call for a new English drama, and a far-reaching interest in a national theater, which he formalized when he coauthored *A National Theatre: Scheme and Estimates* (1907) with Harley Granville-Barker: all of these made the friendship between Archer and Bernard Shaw a logical, almost inevitable, event. Even before they met, their thoughts were moving in similar channels.

The Archer-Shaw meeting was actually Archer's "discovery" of the future

G.B.S. In 1883 Archer went to the Reading Room of the British Museum, sat near a young, red-haired, red-bearded man in a wool Jaeger suit, and was struck by what the man was studying: a French translation of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* and the orchestral score of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. Once introduced, Archer and Shaw quickly realized that they had many common interests and hence became fast friends. They did disagree about what mutually interested them, but they still maintained a lifelong friendship that only temporarily grew lukewarm just prior to Archer's death in 1924. Archer secured for Shaw various journalistic posts: with the *Magazine of Music* (1884), the *Pall Mall Gazette* (May 1885–December 1888), the *Dramatic Review* (starting in 1885), and the *World* (1886–89). These would turn out to be extremely important in the development of Shaw, who left the *World* to become music reviewer for the *Star* using the persona of "Corno di Bassetto." The era of "Bassetto" ended when in May 1890 Archer persuaded the *World* to rehire Shaw, whose contributions were now, thanks to Archer, published through a new persona: "G.B.S." All that was needed was an involvement with Shaw's early playwriting career, and this occurred with the *Rhinegold* collaboration.

In the summer of 1884 Archer and Shaw mapped out a play based upon Émile Augier's cup-and-saucer comedy *Ceinture dorée*. Archer derived the plot line from Augier and presented it to Shaw, who then created witty dialogue. The play assumed various titles: *The Way to a Woman's Heart*, *Rheingold*, and finally *Rhinegold*. Shaw, hoping to develop socialist views in the play, quickly exhausted the plot material; and trying to incorporate details from his own novel, *An Unsocial Socialist*, from Dickens's *Little Dorrit*, and from Fabian essays did not help. *Rhinegold* was shelved. For Archer, successful playwriting had to wait, but as a writer generally he was prolific. As he proceeded to publish many books and essays on a variety of subjects, what had started as *Rhinegold* eventually became Shaw's *Widowers' Houses*. Premiering on 9 December 1892 at London's Royalty Theatre, with Archer and Elizabeth Robins in the audience (Whitebrook, 142), Shaw's play would at least echo the unfinished collaboration: the opening scene is set at a hotel overlooking the Rhine. Oscar Wilde enthusiastically ranked the play with his own work (*Lady Windermere's Fan*, in particular) and thanked Shaw for writing "Op. 2 of the great Celtic School" (Evans, 59). Revival productions of *Widowers' Houses*, like the one performed at Boston's Lyric Stage in late 1992, marked the play's centennial. Archer, who was discussed in the introductory remarks for the Lyric Stage playbill, was cited as having judged the play faulty and yet ten times better than what he called the contemptible *Rhinegold*—the collaborative play that might have turned out to be his first significant success as a dramatist.

Selected Biographical Sources: Charles Archer; Evans; Postlewait; Whitebrook.

MAJOR PLAYS, PREMIERES, AND SIGNIFICANT REVIVALS: THEATRICAL RECEPTION

War Is War; or, The Germans in Belgium: A Drama of 1914. 1919. Never performed.

Archer's first play of note, an indignant drama about German war atrocities in Belgium. "It failed of production when peace was declared" (Matlaw). Shaw's review of the play was anticipated in a letter to Archer from Ayot St. Lawrence (29 April 1919): "It is quite a good play and suggests that you may, like Lady Gregory, begin a career as dramatist at an age when most dramatists are retiring. . . . The war has at last made you feel strongly enough to compel you to genuine dramatic utterance. . . . I always told you, on the strength of your youthful *Clive* [Archer's early one-act play], that you had the faculty. But you never really wanted to use it. . . . Why didn't you write *Widowers' Houses*?" (Laurence [2], 599–600; italics added). Archer wrote *War Is War* after closely and extensively studying relevant documents, and the play was important both in itself and for its indirect influence on his later years; his knowledge of the facts exposed the absurdity of the arguments being used to excuse Germany's involvement in the alleged Belgian atrocities (Charles Archer, 347–48). Finished in 1918, the play never reached the stage. The large cast (including many supernumeraries) was one problem. The other "problems" were the 1918 Armistice and the public fatigue regarding serious war plays. Archer's "Postscript: The Evidence in the Case" is an account of the documents concerning the events depicted in *War Is War*. The drama is an original three-part historical play depicting the military occupation of a typical Belgian village (Quinn [1], 8). Archer himself spoke of his attempt to dramatize the catastrophic descent from unapprehensive serenity to devastation, decimation, and ruin. That the play bears a superficial resemblance to Maurice Maeterlinck's *Burgomaster of Stilemonde* is to be expected if we remember that Archer earlier translated three of Maeterlinck's plays (Quinn [1], 8). Sending a copy of *War Is War* to Shaw, Archer hoped for a faithful evaluation. Since Lieutenant Kessler in the play commits suicide rather than order the execution of innocent Belgian civilians, Archer was not at all certain of Shaw's response, especially given the glaring contrast between Kessler and Shaw's practical-minded hero in *Arms and the Man*, Captain Bluntschli, who loads his cartridge belt with chocolate creams rather than with deadly bullets (Quinn [2], 102). Whitebrook wrote that Kessler "represents cultured Germany infected by the malignant spirit of militarism, a fair-minded man who no longer has either the conviction or the courage to defy the extremists" (326).

The Green Goddess. 1920. Opened 27 December 1920 at the Walnut Street Theatre (Philadelphia); reopened 18 January 1921 at the Booth Theatre (New York) for 440 performances; then on to Boston, Chicago, and throughout the northeastern states. With the exception of a brief recess during the summer of

1922, it was performed in America for nearly two and a half years, closing 5 May 1923; opened again 6 September 1923 at St. James's Theatre (London) for 416 performances.

Originally called *The Raja of Rukh*, the play, which Archer literally dreamed, was proposed as another collaboration with Shaw (Laurence [2], 639). The joint effort, Archer believed, would be the play of the century, but at Shaw's urging, Archer wrote *The Green Goddess* himself. The play makes reference to Shaw by name and includes details reminiscent of at least two of Shaw's plays: *Misalliance* and *Man and Superman*. So Archer, the prophet of realism for forty years, made his fortune at sixty-five as the author of a romantic thriller (Woodbridge, 218). That *The Green Goddess* was a successful melodrama is no contradiction, for although Archer was generally thought of as the apostle of higher theatrical things, he never looked down on the kind of drama that *The Green Goddess* is (Gebauer, 187). Critics liked saying that the play was a far cry from the work of Ibsen, but Archer was not trying to imitate Ibsen. He wrote a "thumping melodrama" that became "tremendously popular" (Matlaw, 35). All his life Archer tried writing plays, but success was elusive; then just before he died, he dreamed the plot of *The Green Goddess*, dramatized it with sufficient skill, and experienced a financial windfall (Lucas, 149–50). In the preface to Archer's *Three Plays* Shaw reacted to the story of Archer's dream: "The result proved that the complexes which inhibited him from writing effective plays when he was awake, did not operate when he was asleep" (Shaw, reprinted in Russell, 973).

Three Plays (*Martha Washington, Beatriz Juana, and Lidia*). 1927. Published posthumously with a preface by George Bernard Shaw.

Martha Washington. Eight-scene history play. No record of performance.

The three plays published after Archer's death are all costume pieces, and all of them focus attention on a central female character. *Martha Washington*, in particular, is a series of casually linked scenes with minimal dramatic value, but it may be that Archer, good liberal that he was, wished to pay dramatic tribute to Washington (Woodbridge, 218–19). The play sprawls episodically as it spans forty years and uses many different locations as settings. It is a dramatic classicist's nightmare. In two letters to Harley Granville-Barker (30 January and 12 April 1923) Archer lamented the lukewarm reception the play received when Winthrop Ames was asked to consider it for production and said that "America regards *Martha Washington* with chilling aloofness" (Charles Archer, 385–86).

Beatriz Juana. Four-act blank-verse drama based on Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's Jacobean tragedy *The Changeling* of 1622. No record of performance.

In the preface to his adaptations of two Jacobean verse dramas, Archer stated that after rereading many Elizabethan-Jacobean plays in preparation for a series of lectures at King's College in 1920, he was "struck by the fact that several

of the themes treated by the minor Elizabethans and Jacobean contained elements of enduring vitality that were overlaid and obscured by the technical and spiritual crudities of a semi-barbarous age" (*Three Plays*, 93). Woodbridge, slightly misquoting the same preface by omitting the qualifying prefix and hence leaving us with a description of the Jacobean era as a "barbarous age," saw Archer attempting to free the two older plays from "technical and spiritual crudities" after having become fascinated by the subjects of those plays (218). *Beatriz Juana* is a markedly better-constructed play than the Middleton-Rowley original (Woodbridge, 218–19). Quinn [1] indicated that Archer transformed Middleton's changeling into his own *Beatriz Juana*, a nonchangeling, a triumphant Lady Macbeth, a demon-woman who cuts through all obstacles that would thwart her desires (10). Shakespeare was also on Archer's mind when in a letter to Granville-Barker (30 January 1923) he teasingly left undisclosed the identity of an actress who was suggested to play *Beatriz Juana*. He flatly declined to offer the role to this unnamed actress "just as my eminent colleague Shakespeare would decline . . . if [that same actress] had been proposed for Lady Macbeth" (Charles Archer, 385–86).

Lidia. Four-act blank-verse comedy based on Philip Massinger's *The Great Duke of Florence*. No record of performance.

Comic love intrigue is central here. Archer's experiment results in a thoroughly charming, clearly artificial comedy (Woodbridge, 218). Archer disliked the way Massinger clumsily had Lidia informed of Giovanni's summons to the palace and had Petronella, her maid, impersonate Lidia to discourage the Duke's affections. Attempting to "correct" Massinger, Archer created more an academic exercise than a far-reaching contribution to neo-Jacobean drama (see Quinn [1], 10). Archer knew a great deal more of stagecraft than Middleton, Rowley, Massinger, or their contemporaries; but he has been described as knowing less of poetry and the making of poetry ("*Beatriz Juana* and *The Changeling*," reprinted in Temple and Tucker, 15). Writing about Robert Louis Stevenson, Archer indicated his own sensitivity to blank-verse technique: "[Stevenson's] blank verse, if it lacked freedom and variety of accent, attained a singular dignity, as of exquisite carving in alabaster" ("In Memoriam," 95).

ADDITIONAL PLAYS, ADAPTATIONS, AND PRODUCTIONS

The Jeweller's Daughter; or, The Assassins of Paris (1876) was a four-act drama ("melodrama," by Archer's own admission [Charles Archer, 49]) based on a Hoffmann story, and is unpublished and nonextant. *Our Special Correspondent* (1878) was a one-act farce coauthored by Robert Lowe, unpublished and nonextant. *Rosalind* (1878) a two-act comedy, received a single performance 1 March 1878 with Robert Lowe portraying Mr. Moncrieff, an actor-manager resembling Sir Henry Irving. It is unpublished and nonextant. *Clive* (no date), a one-act play, dealt with a failed attempt at suicide. It is unpublished and

nonextant. Shaw referred to this play in his preface to *Three Plays* (Shaw, reprinted in Russell, 972). Shaw also mentioned "another play" but gave no title or details. *Rhinegold* (also *The Way to a Woman's Heart*) (1884) was the basic plot of the play that would become Shaw's *Widowers' Houses* (1892). *The Samurai* (1923), a one-act play, received at least one performance at the Hippodrome Theatre (Bristol) on 4 December and was perhaps performed more than once (see Quinn [1], 3, 10). It is unpublished and nonextant. *The Joy Ride* (1925) was performed 18 May at the Prince's Theatre (London) and 8 February 1926 at the Q Theatre (London) (see Quinn [1], 10). It is unpublished and nonextant. For other unpublished plays by Archer, see Whitebrook (421–22).

Three film adaptations of *The Green Goddess* have been made. A silent version came out in 1923 starring the Anglo-American stage and screen actor George Arliss as the Rajah. Arliss, who became a friend of Archer, had performed the same part on the stage from 1920 through 1923. A "talkie" version appeared in 1924, again with George Arliss as the Rajah (Nash and Ross, 1110). Arliss was very much disappointed to find that many of his favorite scenes had been cut from Archer's text for the screenplay. He learned the hard lesson that in Hollywood action and thrills are of more vital importance than dialogue (Arliss [1], 38). In 1943 appeared the third film adaptation, an inferior, low-budget Warner Brothers undertaking called *Adventures in Iraq*. This starred Ruth Ford as Tess Torrence and Paul Cavanagh (now best remembered for his roles in several of the Basil Rathbone–Nigel Bruce Sherlock Holmes films) as Sheik Ahmid Bel Nor (i.e., the Rajah character of Archer's play).

During the 1923–24 run of *The Green Goddess* in London, a different kind of "theatrical" production was mounted to commemorate the stage presentation: Selfridge's department store devoted an entire window to the characters, setting, and props for Archer's popular play (Arliss [2], 305). This is typical of Selfridge's, which on another occasion—the Royal Jubilee Year of 1977—decorated several of its windows with scenes and characters from the plays of Shakespeare.

ASSESSMENT OF ARCHER'S CAREER

One of the few to assess Archer's achievement in the drama is George Arliss, who, as a stage and screen actor, knew him as a practicing playwright. He spoke highly of Archer as one whose influence on the theater should not go unrecognized (Arliss [1], 302). Like many others, Arliss was quite aware of Archer as the translator of Ibsen and especially as the dramatic critic possessing exemplary integrity, that glittering feature inevitably singled out whenever his criticism is discussed. Even the brief entry on Archer in the Italian encyclopedia of world drama necessarily devoted space to his stature as critic: "I suoi numerosi scritti di critica teatrale mostrano l'intransigente rigore, l'orrore per compromessi, ciò che H. G. Wells chiamò 'un'integrità senza scrupoli'" (his numerous critical writings on the theater reveal the intransigent rigor, the aversion to compromises that H. G. Wells called "an unscrupulous integrity") (Guerrieri, 787). This

comment epitomizes Archer as critic and reviewer; but what Arliss makes us particularly aware of is Archer's ability as a playwright, a craftsman who provides not only a workable text for a stage production but also language that achieves literary power.

Structurally *The Green Goddess* combines the well-made play with romantic melodrama. In its story line it anticipates James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* (1932) and what Hollywood then would do with materials like the Hilton novel and a host of adventure screenplays culminating in the *Indiana Jones* films. Archer, at the same time, offers us, as he does in *War Is War*, dramatic prose that succeeds in propelling the narrative in uncluttered fashion. His ability to pace the action and maintain a verbal forthrightness enables his play to give equal due to event and character. The melodrama is there, but so also is complexity of character, especially in the case of the embittered British-educated Rajah who slowly entraps the marooned Westerners as he gradually reveals, with sadistic irony, his distaste for them and their culture. The cinematic possibilities of *The Green Goddess* quickly become evident, and one is not at all surprised to learn that three film adaptations of the play were produced. Unlike Shaw, Archer was not given to the long speech or to dramatic philosophizing. He proceeded in a different stylistic direction.

By contrast, *Martha Washington* is devoid of the dramatic impact of *The Green Goddess*. Using a well-known historical figure as the central character immediately poses a problem of dramatic effect. Will the playwright present the biographical personage convincingly and avoid the creation of a two-dimensional pasteboard character unsatisfactorily animated by stilted, predictable language? Place, in fact, takes on more significance than fully drawn people. The play derives most of its dramatic energy through the several changes of geographical locales over the course of eight scenes: from Virginia (the York River area and Mount Vernon) to Massachusetts (at Washington's Cambridge headquarters [now the Longfellow House Museum] where events in Lexington and Boston are monitored), to Valley Forge, and to Virginia again (Eltham and finally Mount Vernon). Despite spanning forty years of time and many hundreds of square miles of space, *Martha Washington* is more a domesticated chronicle play than a dramatic epic. The forthright prose, however, does manage to capture the clearheadedness, if not the depths, of many of the characters who inhabit the Enlightenment world that Archer creates. This is not Broadway material, but it is worthy of at least a short run (at Ford's Theatre or the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.) during a national-holiday period.

Martha Washington has received little or no critical attention. The same is true for the two "Jacobean" plays: *Beatriz Juana* and *Lidia*. Not wanting simply to reproduce *The Changeling* and *The Great Duke of Florence* photographically, Archer effectively rewrote the plays by altering the plots, reconceptualizing characters, liberalizing the blank verse, and toning down the richness of poetic imagery. Although the full baroque quality of both the Middleton-Rowley and Massinger plays was sacrificed, Archer managed to maintain the "Jacobean"

aura as he added elements from the nineteenth-century romantic theater and created an immediately accessible blank-verse technique that anticipated what T. S. Eliot would do in his verse plays. Both *Beatriz Juana* and *Lidia* are worthy of production by repertory companies or by university theater-arts workshops.

Like *The Green Goddess*, these are playable dramas revealing that Archer, who was so prolific as a critic of society and dramatic art, had only started, in his later years, to develop as a playwright. His dramatic work, had he lived some five or six years longer, might have matched at least that of Galsworthy and Granville-Barker, if not that of George Bernard Shaw.

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Archer's papers are found in various repositories: The British Library, the Enthoven Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Theatre Association of London, the National Library of Scotland, the Sarolea Collection at Edinburgh University, the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library (Washington, D.C.), and the Mitchell Library (Sydney, Australia).

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W. H. Auden

(1907-1973)

JANE SEAY HASPEL

W. H. Auden is best known for the poetry that influenced a generation of poets, but for a period of about ten years, he experimented with drama in an attempt to find a form that would appeal to a wider audience than poetry. Had he concentrated his talents more closely on drama, he might very well have been able to realize this vision.

Born on 21 February 1907 in York, England, to Constance Rosalie Bicknell and George Augustus Auden, Wystan Hugh Auden was the youngest of three boys. Auden went away to school for the first time when he was eight years old and flourished there. At St. Edmund's he first met Christopher Isherwood, who became his lifelong friend and occasional literary collaborator. Auden began writing poetry in 1922 while in public school at Gresham's, and by the end of the year he had published his first poem in the school magazine.

In 1925 Auden entered Christ Church, Oxford, and in his last year at Oxford, 1928, he wrote his first play, *Paid on Both Sides*, a charade he hoped would be performed during a country visit at the home of friends. Although it was not performed at that time, a revised version was published by T. S. Eliot in the *Criterion* in 1930.

While Auden spent the next several years teaching, he was also busy writing both poetry and drama. Auden's next play was *The Dance of Death*, written for the Group Theatre (no relation to the Group Theatre in New York), a new theatrical cooperative founded by Rupert Doone and Robert Medley in February 1932. Soon Auden was doing much of the Group's writing, not only contributing his own plays, but recommending plays to be performed and writing program notes, subscription requests, and Group manifestos.

Although Auden was a homosexual, in 1935 he married Erika Mann, daughter of Thomas Mann, so she could obtain a British passport and leave Germany.

From September 1935 to February 1936 Auden worked with John Grierson's GPO (General Post Office) Film Unit. Here he met and collaborated with director Alberto Cavalcanti, artist William Coldstream, and composer Benjamin Britten, producing verse narration for several documentaries. Most notable of these is *Night Mail*, a film documenting the London-to-Glasgow mail train that included narration by Auden and music by Britten. Unfortunately, the unit had few projects that would exercise Auden's talent, and he became concerned that the unit's dependence on government financing would jeopardize the integrity of their work.

Auden's next three plays were written in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood, although according to Isherwood they typically worked independently on their respective parts, then put them together. *The Dog beneath the Skin* (1936), *The Ascent of F6* (1937), and *On the Frontier* (1938) were all produced by the Group Theatre. None made Auden's reputation as a playwright, and his interest in playwriting seems to have evolved into an enthusiasm for writing opera librettos.

In 1937 Auden went to Spain, intending to drive an ambulance in support of the government in the Spanish civil war, but instead he broadcast propaganda to a mostly Spanish—and Loyalist—audience. After a little over a month, Auden returned to England disillusioned with communism in general.

Auden claimed that while writing *The Ascent of F6*, he realized that he had to leave England in order to pursue his art in a less confining atmosphere. So in January 1939 he abandoned playwriting and politics and, along with Isherwood, left for America, where each would pursue his own work.

Auden's time in America was spent writing poetry, teaching, lecturing, and, for a time, living a rather bohemian life in New York in a three-story house inhabited by an eclectic group of artists and writers. In New York Auden met Chester Kallman, the man fourteen years his junior who would become Auden's lover early in their relationship and companion for most of Auden's life. Kallman was responsible for deepening Auden's appreciation for opera, and they collaborated on most of Auden's operatic ventures.

Auden was castigated by the British literary establishment for leaving England on the brink of World War II, but he did apparently offer his services toward the war effort to the British embassy. In late April 1945 he went to Germany as a member of the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, and in 1946 Auden became an American citizen.

Beyond his poetry, Auden's work turned to adaptations, translations, and librettos. He and Kallman collaborated on several operas, most notably *The Rake's Progress* (1951) with Igor Stravinsky.

From 1948 to 1956 Auden lived each summer in Europe. He continued to return to America to earn his living primarily by editing, writing reviews, and lecturing from fall to early spring. Auden was elected professor of poetry at Oxford in 1956, and in 1957 he bought a house in Kirchstetten, Austria. In 1972 he retired to Christ Church, Oxford, and spent his summers in Kirchstetten. On

29 September 1973 Auden died of a heart attack in his hotel room in Vienna after giving a poetry reading at the Austrian Society of Literature.

Selected Biographical Sources: Carpenter; Mendelson [1]; Osborne; Sidnell [1].

MAJOR PLAYS, PREMIERES, AND SIGNIFICANT REVIVALS: THEATRICAL RECEPTION

Paid on Both Sides: A Charade. 1931. Opened at Briarcliff College (New York) in March; produced by Hallie Flanagan and Margaret Ellen Clifford. Opened at the Festival Theatre, (Cambridge, England) 12–17 February 1934; conducted as part of a program of "Experiments" by Joseph Gordon MacLeod.

Written for his friends to perform during a visit to their country home, this charade was ostensibly about a blood feud between two families in which war becomes a never-ending cycle, but was full of private jokes and allusions. At the time of its publication, T. S. Eliot wrote E. McKnight Kauffer asking him if he would be interested in producing it, calling it "a brilliant piece of work," and twenty years later still hailed the play as the "forerunner of contemporary poetic drama" (Haffenden, 77). Many readers, however, found it obscure, including poet and critic William Empson, who also noted that the inclusion of modernist ways of thinking, specifically its use of surrealism and psychoanalysis, gave the play "the completeness that makes a work seem to define the attitude of a generation."

The Dance of Death. 1934. (one act). Opened at the Westminster Theatre (London) for 2 performances for Group Theatre subscribers on 25 February and 4 March (double-billed with *The Deluge*). Reopened 1 October 1935 at the Westminster (London) for 15 performances (double-billed with T. S. Eliot's *Sweeney Agonistes*). Both productions by the Group Theatre (London). Directed by Rupert Doone. Music by Herbert Murrill. Set and costumes by Robert Medley. First American performance by the Experimental Theater at Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York (as *Come Out into the Sun*), 2–3 August 1935. Opened at the Adelphi Theatre (New York) May 1936. Produced by the Federal Theatre Project. Supervised by Alfred Kreymborg. Music by Clair Leonard.

This experimental work—part ballet, part charade, part agitprop, part mummies' play—is, according to the Announcer, a "picture of the decline of a class." Auden's leftist, didactic, and often-obscure approach to enlightening his audience to the ills of society may have put off many viewers and critics alike. But even though much has been made of the negative reviews, the response was mixed. The *New Statesman and Nation* ("Plays and Pictures") said that the play was too unfocused and "unpolished," and Verschoyle [1] agreed, calling the satire propaganda, "for the most part crude and jaded."

However, many critics found Auden's satire brilliant in spite of its flaws. The critic for *The Times* ("Westminster Theatre: 'The Dance of Death'"), while

commenting that Auden developed his political theme with "desperate single-mindedness," also applauded Auden's use of music and dance to enhance his ideas, noting that the play "gives a hint of how poetry, by basing itself upon contemporary speech-rhythms, may regain its old place in the theatre." Hawkins considered the play a learning experience for Auden. He praised it for its energy and poetry and saw in it some hope for renewal of the "decrepit Drama" of the time. Sayers was ecstatic in his praise of this new direction for the theater: "Here is theatre springing from the rhythms and idiom of your own life . . . with its slang and jazz heightened into poetry, your own fevers and languors made tragic, pathetic, comic, so that the action seems familiar, and at the same time disturbing." Dukes found it "a blend of some inspiration and much nonsense" and called Auden "raw and not too level-headed" but still "a writer for a future poet's theatre."

The Dog beneath the Skin; or, Where Is Francis? A Play in Three Acts. (with Christopher Isherwood). 1936. Opened at the Westminster Theatre (London) 30 January for 52 performances. Produced by the Group Theatre. Directed by Rupert Doone. Designed by Robert Medley. Music by Herbert Murrill. Revival: Cherry Lane Theatre (New York) 22 July 1947, for 27 performances.

This satire on European decadence by way of a young man's search for the heir to his ancestral home accompanied by a dog who is really the lost nobleman in disguise was considered by most critics to be an improvement over *The Dance of Death*—less heavy-handed and, as Morgan [1] in the *New York Times* suggested, "at some pains to make its meaning clear," certainly a charge not usually leveled at Auden. In fact, many reviewers, including Verschoyle [2], commented on their pleasant surprise that Auden had lightened up on the political rhetoric that had annoyed so many in *The Dance of Death*. The *Times* critic ("Westminster Theatre: 'The Dog beneath the Skin'") wrote that even though propaganda was expected of two such earnest playwrights, they "are often genuinely eloquent and seldom wilfully freakish."

The Ascent of F6: A Tragedy in Two Acts. (with Christopher Isherwood). 1937. Opened at the Mercury Theatre (London) 26 February for 50 performances. Moved to the Arts Theatre (Cambridge) on 22 April for 4 performances. Moved to the Little Theatre 30 April for 42 performances. Presented by Ashley Dukes in association with the Group Theatre. Directed by Rupert Doone. Designed by Robert Medley. Music by Benjamin Britten. Revival: Old Vic Theatre, 27 June 1939, for 15 performances. Produced by the Group Theatre, with Alec Guinness as Ransom.

Many critics again saw improvement in Auden's and Isherwood's dramatic work, but as usual the reception was mixed. The plot of this complex play concerns a protagonist modeled on T. E. Lawrence who is challenged to scale a mountain, and the moral, political, and psychological implications this challenge represents for each character. Spender, writing in the *Left Review* about the text, was disappointed that the dramatists failed to realize the implications

of the protagonist's character, "that Ransom was a prig, a fact, after all, even more significant than that he was in love with his mother." Morgan [2] found the play improved over the dramatists' previous play, especially for its "introspective passages." The *Times* ("Old Vic") found the Old Vic production better than previous ones and even exciting, but thought that the writers had "started a dozen hares and seem to be themselves uncertain which to pursue." Stonier grew tired of the complaints and, like most, found the ending unsatisfactory, but still proclaimed that the play "succeeds brilliantly."

On the Frontier: A Melodrama in Three Acts. (with Christopher Isherwood). 1938. Opened 14 November at the Arts Theatre (Cambridge) for 6 performances. Moved to the Globe Theatre (London) 12 February 1939 for 1 performance. Produced by the Group Theatre. Directed by Rupert Doone. Scenery and costumes by Robert Medley. Music by Benjamin Britten.

On the Frontier was a return for Auden and Isherwood to the themes of war and capitalism. It was not successful, either popularly or with the critics, with a few exceptions. The *New Statesman* called it "precisely topical," and The *Times* ("Group Theatre") also reviewed it favorably, saying that even though it was propaganda, it "can be watched with continuous interest even by those who do not come to a theatre in the same spirit in which they attend a political meeting." Barnes, however, reviewing the published text, said that Auden and Isherwood "continue to follow their principle of putting Marxist pap into bourgeois bottles." Even MacNeice, a longtime friend of both writers, offered only faint praise. He noted the important theme, but said that when the play was compared with *The Ascent of F6*, there was "less sparkle, less poetry, less thought and even more embarrassment." But he also noted that even with its flaws, it was "a great deal more worth while [sic] than an alpha-plus domestic triangle among the sherry glasses."

ADDITIONAL PLAYS, ADAPTATIONS, AND PRODUCTIONS

Several of Auden's early plays remain unproduced, their parts having been cannibalized for later plays. Subplots and poems in *The Enemies of a Bishop* (1929), a collaboration with Isherwood, and *The Fronny* (1930), of which only a fragment exists, eventually appeared in *The Chase* (1934), which turned into *The Dog beneath the Skin*.

By the mid-1930s Auden was eager to branch out from drama and poetry. He contributed the narrative for several documentary films: *Coal Face* (1935); *Night Mail* (1935); *Negroes* (1935), which was completed in 1938 and renamed *God's Chillun*, but appears never to have been exhibited (Mendelson [3], 669); *Beside the Seaside* (1935); *The Way to the Sea* (1936); and *The Londoners* (1939).

He was also becoming increasingly interested in music. He collaborated with Benjamin Britten on the narrative to the song cycle *Our Hunting Fathers* (1936) and wrote the libretto for the badly received *Paul Bunyan* (1941).

He was more successful after he began collaborating with Chester Kallman. With Stravinsky, Auden and Kallman wrote the libretto for *The Rake's Progress* (1951), which became Auden's most successful operatic work and one of the few modern operas to enter the opera canon (Carpenter, 371). With Hans Werner Henze, the two wrote *Elegy for Young Lovers* (1961); *The Bassarids* (1966), considered one of Henze's greatest accomplishments; and *Moralities* (1969). With Nicolas Nabokov they collaborated on an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* (1973). During the same period Auden translated or adapted a number of works for the dramatic and operatic stage, including John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1946) and Bertolt Brecht's *The Seven Deadly Sins of the Middle Class* (1959). See Mendelson [2,3] and Beach for texts and notes on the librettos and other dramatic writings.

ASSESSMENT OF AUDEN'S CAREER

Hobson's comment in a review of *The Dance of Death* probably applies to Auden's whole career: "Mr. Auden belongs more to the pioneers than to the masters of drama. His achievement consists rather in pointing out a fresh road than in traveling down it very far himself." Sidnell [2] noted that although Auden and Isherwood were innovators in the use of song, dance, poetry, and prose to convey serious themes, they were not sufficiently committed to the theater to achieve the success they might have. While Auden revitalized the verse drama in English, he was less influential on verse drama than Brecht, whose epic theater with its similar goals and techniques remains the standard by which such plays are judged.

In his 1934 *Listener* review of Priscilla Thouless's *Modern Poetic Drama*, Auden set down the tenets by which he would write poetic drama. He would embrace all popular forms of entertainment, including the variety show, the pantomime, the musical comedy, the revue, the thriller, even the ballet. The playwright, he said, should use stock characters, characters a proletarian audience would be familiar with. Only then would poetic drama succeed. In the program notes to *The Dance of Death*, Auden noted that since drama "began as an act of the whole community," the audience should be an integral part of the performance and that "the subject of drama . . . is the Commonly Known, the universally familiar stories of the society or generation in which it is written."

Auden proved better at theorizing than he did at putting his ideas into action. Verschöyle [1] skewered each of Auden's principles, saying, "The characters are 'simplified' only because they are poorly observed and feebly drawn, and the subject-matter is made up of the 'familiar stories of the society or generation in which it is written,' only in the sense that it is identical with the contents of most undergraduate communist magazines and similar repositories of popular myth."

More than one critic pointed out that it often seemed as if Auden and Ish-

erwood had failed to take the time necessary to properly hone a scene. Benét called Auden "a careless sort of writer" who "depends too much on flashes of brilliance." John Maynard Keynes, who backed *The Ascent of F6*, considered it generally a fine play but complained, "I remain exceedingly angry that being so good it should not be better, for the gifts in it seemed to be from God and the errors avoidable" (Haffenden, 21). Even Spender chided them for their lackadaisical approach, for throwing "fragments of good stuff into a loosely constructed play."

Auden seemed unable to devote enough time and energy to the theater to evolve as a playwright. Williams pointed out that many of the thematic elements in his plays are imposed rather than allowed to develop through dramatic means, resulting in the loss of dramatic integrity (252, 256). It may be that had Auden been associated with a more experienced theater group, he would have learned more about the requirements of good drama. Clearly, he was more than willing to make revisions in response to criticism and the demands of the production (Carpenter, *passim*). He was constantly rewriting the endings to his plays, yet perhaps because of his lack of experience in the theater, even with Isherwood's help, his endings were never quite right.

Auden gradually came to doubt the power drama could actually exert on its audience. Auden's own political convictions—if they were ever convictions—were fading, especially after his trip to Spain in 1937. Mendelson [1] noted that *The Ascent of F6* may be autobiographical, with Ransom representing the private poet who tried to become a public one, only to discover that there is no place in this world for a redeemer (285–86).

What little commitment Auden had to the theater faded along with his political agenda. If the theater could not make a political statement that would move men to act, then Auden's dream of bringing poetry to the masses was no longer so inspired, and the public poet found himself powerless to effect change. MacNeice, although commenting specifically on Auden and Isherwood's last play, seemed to sum up Auden's theatrical career, saying that "it does not hit us like a wedge but like a number of escaped posters and photographs blown by the wind in one's face." Auden's dramatic work was innovative and refreshing during a stagnant period of English theater, but he never quite focused enough on it to be fully effective as a playwright or as well known for his drama as he is for his poetry.

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The most extensive collection of Auden's published and unpublished writing is in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library. The Harry F. Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin also holds a significant collection of Auden manuscripts.

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Sir James Matthew Barrie

(1860–1937)

VALERIE C. RUDOLPH

Sir James Matthew Barrie "could make a good play out of a doorknob and two spoons" ("Barrie's Little Mary"). Best known for *Peter Pan*, sometimes remembered for *Dear Brutus*, *The Admirable Crichton*, and *The Little Minister*, and often forgotten for the remainder of his more than forty plays and theatrical pieces, Barrie intriguingly masked the technical and aesthetic depth of his work under surface simplicity and sentimentality. To look anew at his dramatic achievements, therefore, is, in Barrie's own words, to embark on "an awfully big adventure."

James Matthew Barrie, third son and youngest child of David and Margaret Ogilvy Barrie, was born in Kirriemuir, Forfarshire, Scotland, on 9 May 1860. Kirriemuir later became Thrums, the fictional setting for many of Barrie's novels. Barrie was devoted to his mother, who belonged to an austere religious group known as the Auld Licht sect. Both his mother and the group gave rise to prose works—Barrie's *Auld Licht Idylls* (1888) and *Margaret Ogilvy* (1896). Always devoted to his mother, Barrie spent many years after the accidental death of his older brother David trying to console her by replacing her absent son. Indeed, mother-child relationships and "lost" children appear often in Barrie's plays.

Barrie's dramatic career began in childhood when he presented various entertainments in the washhouse in his own backyard. His first play, *Bandolero the Bandit* (1877), was presented at Dumfries Academy, which he attended from 1873 to 1878. From 1878 to 1882 he studied at Edinburgh University, earning a master of arts degree. Upon graduation he worked briefly for the *Nottingham Journal* before moving to London in 1885. There Barrie the journalist developed the Kirriemuir/Thrums sketches that led to Barrie the novelist and eventually to Barrie the dramatist.