Problem of continuity in the production of the multi-scenic show| Techniques and devices for achieving continuity

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THE PROBLEM OF CONTINUITY IN THE PRODUCTION OF THE MULTI-SCENIC SHOW: TECHNIQUES AND DEVICES FOR ACHIEVING CONTINUITY

by

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B.S. Western Illinois University, 1958

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

1966

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AUG 17 1966
Date
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INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study is to explore the problem of continuity in the production of the multi-scenic show. The problem of continuity developed when pictorial settings were imposed upon plays. The use of pictorial settings resulted in pauses and interruptions to the play in order to facilitate scene changes. Continuity in production means the presentation of scenes in succession without delays or pauses, using transitional devices, when they seem appropriate, to link one scene to another so that the scenes bear a relationship to each other and to the play as a whole.

The multi-scenic show is one in which the acts (or parts) are divided into many scenes and which demand frequent shifts in time and locale.

This study is concerned not only with an examination of the problems in continuity, but also with an exploration of ways and means by which the play in many scenes can be produced so that its action is continuous and unbroken, its unity of production is maintained, and the style of production is consistent. My premise is that the more fluidity the production of the multi-scenic show can achieve, the better it is for the development
of the play, the establishment and preservation of its atmosphere, the effectiveness of its dramatic action, and its impact upon an audience.

This study in continuity is devoted to the production of multi-scenic shows as produced on the prosenium-type stage, although certain techniques and devices for achieving continuity will apply to other-type stages as well. My hope is that this study will serve as a practical guide to directors in achieving continuity in productions of the multi-scenic show.

The study has been approached in this manner. In the first chapter I have discussed the causes of problems in continuity. The second chapter is devoted to the exploration of problems resulting from a lack of continuity. In the third chapter I have discussed some of the techniques and devices for achieving continuity in the multi-scenic show. Chapter four deals with a practical application of those techniques and devices as used by certain directors and designers in solving problems in continuity. Chapter five contains conclusive remarks made as a result of this study.
CHAPTER I

THE CAUSE OF PROBLEMS IN CONTINUITY

The problem of continuity becomes evident in the production of plays in which the acts are divided into many scenes and which suggest a frequent shift in time and/or place. The multi-scenic show, by its very nature, poses a challenge to successful production. Rosamond Gilder, the American critic and former editor of Theatre Arts, refers to the multi-scenic show as:

a volley of scenes in rapid succession, each one complete, climatic, independent, connected only by the thread of life itself . . . the telling of a rapidly moving dramatic tale.¹

The director, in attempting a kind of production that is in keeping with the nature of this dramatic form will encounter problems in continuity. The complexity of these problems may be in direct ratio to the amount of scenery used in the production. As Hilton Edwards, founder and director of the Dublin Gate Theatre, points out: "The problem of continuity is the direct result . . . scenery has had upon the theatre's ability to tell a story without

Developing with the rise of realistic-type scenery, continuity in production became a problem (i.e. a lack of continuity in production hindered the effectiveness of theatrical production) during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Before the advent of realistic-type scenery, the multi-scenic show could be presented without a loss of continuity. According to Edwards:

in the days when pictorial settings were thought unnecessary, when the locality of a play was established and changed by a dozen words from the actors, the maintaining of continuity presented no problem. Scene followed scene with no greater pause between them than was needed for the actor to leave the stage and for another to enter and announce, directly or by implication, his whereabouts. The plays could be performed as an unbroken unity. Therefore, the plays of Shakespeare become a useful example in pointing out that the productions of these plays in Elizabethan England were not hindered by a lack of continuity. According to B. Iden Payne, the noted Shakespearean scholar and director:

there had to be continuity of action; otherwise, the attention of the audience would soon wander elsewhere, but because of the absence of representational scenery this presented no difficulty because the locality of


\[\text{3\cite{2}, pp. 46-47.}\]
the action could be left to the imagination of the audience, or when necessary, indicated in the dialogue. In any case, he was free to wander from place to place as the exigencies of his plot demanded. And so, even with the growth of playwriting into an art and its magnificent culmination in Shakespeare, these two features remain constant—indeed, absolute continuity of action.\(^4\)

Thus, when the independence of locality was forsaken in favor of the painted set to represent locale, the time needed to change these painted settings destroyed the continuous flow of scenes which had been a characteristic of the Elizabethan-type production.

Indeed, certain accounts of nineteenth-century productions of Shakespeare offer ample proof that the use of painted settings, or scenery in general, caused a problem in continuity in the multi-scenic show. Hugh Hunt, the British director and writer, has this to say in regard to the use of scenery.

> The reliance on realistic effect and archaeological details had buried Shakespeare beneath a pile of scenery and the actor-managers beneath a pile of bills.\(^5\)

Beneath the pile of bills, no doubt, were such famous nineteenth-century figures as Henry Irving, Herbert Beerbohm-Tree, and Augustin Daly. John Gassner, the noted scholar and critic, reports that Irving and Tree's


"butchering of Shakespearean plays" was due entirely to their concern for elaborate settings. To that end the other aspects of production became subordinate. The two actor-managers "transposed scenes, eliminated some, and fused others."^6

Irving's productions, according to Tyrone Guthrie, the British director, used one or two elaborate full-stage pictures with the rest of the scenes being performed in front of "sketchy and skimply-made scenery" while behind this the next great stage picture was being prepared. This system, to Guthrie's thinking, was a questionable kind of continuity.7

Norman Marshall, British director and author of several books on production, makes similar comments on Tree's approach to settings for Shakespearean plays. Sometimes a set was so elaborately realistic that it was unmovable, so willy-nilly most of the play had to be performed in it, except for a few front scenes which could be enacted before a front cloth.8

But one of Daly's productions would seem to be the ultimate in the triumph of scenery over all other aspects of production. Marshall comments on Daly's production of

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Twelfth Night by Shakespeare.

Daly began with the first scene of the second act—the landing of Antonio and Sebastian. "This arrangement," explained one of the critics, "although it destroys all dramatic suspense as to the fate of Viola's brother, has the advantage of allowing the star to enter after the audience is seated." To make things easier for the scene shifters, the second scene of the first act was played next. Then the sea-coast scene was got out of the way and the Duke's palace was revealed, a fine elaborate set—so elaborate that there it had to stay for the rest of the act. Daly got out of this difficulty by what one critic mildly described as a "bold arrangement of the text." The first and fourth scene of Act I were played consecutively as a single scene; then, after the curtain had been lowered for a moment to denote a passage of time, scene three and five of Act I were joined up with the second scene of Act II, all run together without a break. 9

These examples which point out the cause of problems in continuity in Shakespearean productions, offer some justification for Granville-Barker's comment that "the best basis for any production is a bare stage." 10 This statement by the British playwright, scholar, and director, is justified in the fact that scenery, as used by such men as Irving, Tree, and Daly, was allowed to dominate their productions. Continuity was destroyed because scenery could not be used in a manner which allowed the scenes to be presented without frequent pauses (unless the scenes were rearranged from their natural order).

9 Ibid., p. 136.

Nevertheless, the use of scenery in production became important enough to affect the drama itself. According to Clayton Hamilton, the critic and teacher:

> for the first time the drama became primarily a visual, instead of an auditory, art. This new concept of a play as a thing to be seen instead of a thing to be listened to was developed at a time when realism happened to be rampant in all the arts.\textsuperscript{11}

This new concern for verisimilitude in setting emphasized the need for continuity. However, although continuity in production became more important, it was at the same time more difficult to achieve. The importance of continuity was heightened because realistic-type scenery demanded a realistic-type of production. The realistic production could not be achieved, however, in the multi-scenic show which paused repeatedly for scene changes. But rather than forsake the use of realistic-type scenery, Gassner explains that the desire in dramatic form was for a "return to unity of place."\textsuperscript{12} A "return to unity of place" was considered desirable to the multi-locale because the former could be treated more realistically, more true to life. And, with this concern for realism, settings attempted to duplicate actual places. Because such settings were difficult to shift, they posed


\textsuperscript{12}Gassner, Form and Idea, p. 31.
a problem in continuity in the multi-scenic show. As Edwards suggests: "The more realistic are the details found in the production, the more elaborate the dressing of the scene, the more cumbersome will be the scene change."\(^\text{13}\)

Again referring to Hamilton, "this growing zest for actuality in the appointments and the furniture of the stage" was a natural development in the evolution of theatrical production. Certain means evolved to deal with the problems in the use of scenery. Hamilton goes on to point out that the concern for "actuality" was only possible in the midst of a "great wave of practical invention."\(^\text{14}\) Thus, machines for the stage came into popular use. Machines, which today can be a practical aid to a director with a mind for continuity in production, were formerly the cause of problems in continuity. At the time of their greatest popularity, in Germany early in this century, machines were used chiefly as a means to produce great scenic wonders. Kenneth Macgowan and Robert Edmond Jones, in 1922, at the time of their partnership at the Provincetown Playhouse, wrote in *Continental Stagecraft* that the machines themselves were often responsible for three- to five-minute delays between the scenes.\(^\text{15}\)

\(^\text{13}\) Edwards, p. 47.


\(^\text{15}\) Ibid.
But Macgowan and Jones specify that the day of the domination of machines in the theatre is over. Because of newer concepts in design which embraced "imagination" instead of "actuality," a new type of scenery came into use.\(^{16}\) The new type of scenery, which became known as the New Stagecraft, was only part of a movement in stage production which aimed at the harmonious synthesis of all the elements of production such as setting, lighting, and acting. This new type of scenery depended less upon stage machines. No longer used to produce spectacular scenic effects, machines could then prevent rather than cause problems in continuity. But even the newer concepts in production have not eliminated problems in continuity. For with these ideas came a stricter adherence to a unified theatrical style which demanded the use of three-dimensional scenery. The scene drop, which had been an expedient means of concealing scene changes during production, was discarded by the theorists of the New Stagecraft. For example, the system used by Irving and Tree of shifting the action of a play from the realistic scenery of the main stage to the unrealistic scenery of the apron stage is the utilization of two different and opposing styles. The New Stagecraft, dominated by a concern with illusion, needed three-dimensional objects to be used for scenery. The scene-drop, with its

obvious lack of dimension, could not be used. Yet, even
in the case of simple, imaginative, symbolic-type
scenery, a theatre that is less than well equipped with
modern technical means of production will encounter prob­
lems in continuity.

Technical demands which cause problems in contin­
uity are further aggravated by the playwright whose plays
are heedless of the technical problems they impose upon
production. Very often, playwrights create problems in
continuity which must be solved by the director or designer.
Even when the greatest obstacle to continuity—the use of
scenery—is solved so that the play can be presented with­
out delays for scene changes, other problems of a techni­
cal nature become apparent. The quick change of a costume,
or the placement of a prop can also cause a problem in con­
tinuity. This kind of problem might be attributed to poor
craftsmanship on the part of the playwright. Additional
evidence of poor craftsmanship is in the arrangement of
scenes which are difficult to present in a cohesive pat­
tern. One example of this problem occurs with the passage
of time within a play. If the passage of time is brief
and reference to the amount of time passed is included in
the opening lines of a scene, the problem is manageable.
But when the passage of time between two scenes is con­
siderable, the problem is greater. The characters may
need changes in costume or make-up to reveal the effects
of time passed. Even when some expedient means is employed for a quick change in character appearance, the sequence of scenes remains awkward because the audience needs to "sense" that passage of time. Of course, the audience may, in half-lighted auditorium, find this information printed on their programs, but this—the least effective of visual signs—is a break in continuity. To solve this problem, the play may be constructed to allow an isolated scene with significant passage of time after an act break. Admittedly, this problem and its solution is better seen and understood by those in the field of playwrighting. But, however these things are dealt with by the playwright, in production they become the director's legacy.

Another problem imposed by the playwright is in the kinds of settings he suggests in his plays. Demands for realistic-type settings for many different locales, shifts in locale, and a frequent return to locale may cause problems in continuity. Too often, says Edwards, playwrights think they have solved these problems of shifts in locale by inserting in the script the directions that the stage should now revolve to reveal such and such a place. But this does not solve the problem of scenery in the theatre unequipped with a revolving stage. Does

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the playwright intend that his play be produced in only those theatres with such equipment, or does he intend that the director and designer should solve this problem by alternate means? This seems to leave part of the show's effectiveness to chance, or to the ingenuity of the director. The director, in solving these problems in continuity, may feel that he is completing a task which the playwright should have solved. Or, the director finds himself involved in solving problems to the neglect of his real duties as director—in which case he works against the intentions of the playwright.

Thus, while problems in continuity are aggravated by poorly equipped theatres, and by plays which make strenuous demands upon the theatre's technical resources, the main cause of the problem in continuity rests with the use of scenery: the extent to which scenery is used; the manner used to shift the scenery; and the use of scenery so that the style of production is consistent.
CHAPTER II

PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM A LACK
OF CONTINUITY

Problems resulting from a lack of continuity are encountered in the production of a play in which the acts are divided into many scenes. The two- or three-act play presents no particular problem in continuity since one or two pauses for intermission are generally considered desirable. To an audience these intermissions may be considered necessary and therefore justified. But pauses between scenes during which an audience must wait in a darkened or semi-darkened auditorium for the next scene to proceed pose a problem in continuity which hinders the show's effectiveness.

Certain multi-scenic plays benefit from a treatment which ignores a continuous flow of scenes bridged together with transitional devices. Certain playwrights and directors have ignored continuity in production—quite by design—in order to achieve some special effect. The concern here, however, is with continuity when it is deemed desirable and necessary by the director and, in any case, continuity when it is under the control of the director. A break in the progression of scenes within
an act imposed by the director is one thing; but the break in continuity which is undesired, or due to technical problems, or unresolved by the director, is quite another thing—and the concern of this paper.

When the multi-scenic show is produced with delays and pauses between the scenes, these delays and pauses threaten the show's effectiveness. The effectiveness of the show is threatened because these delays and pauses challenge audience believability, involvement, and concentration; the play's unity, style, action, and mood.

Believability.—Believability is one of the objectives of any theatrical production. Believability means perceiving as true. Through the use of illusion, a production attempts to give some degree of reality to its presentation. An audience is expected to believe in this illusion, not as reality, but as theatrical truth. The fewer intrusions upon illusion, the stronger the power of the illusion will be. Whether the illusion is immediately believable to an audience or if the audience only gradually comes to accept and believe in the illusion, time remains an important factor. The opening moments of a scene are consumed in audience orientation to the visual elements such as the settings, properties, colors and mood of the stage picture. In the multi-scenic show with many scene changes, the audience spends considerable time in adjusting
to change. Change itself challenges believability. An illusion once established may fade from view, another may replace it. But what transpires in the viewer's mind while he waits for the next illusion to be revealed challenges his believability. For one thing, pauses and delays call attention to the technical aspects of production. The believability a production creates will weaken during the pauses. If the pauses are long and the scene changes laborious, a greater strain is put upon audience believability. The embarrassed titter from an audience at the sound of a noisy scene change is one indication that believability has been challenged. The embarrassment results from a kind of betrayal. The audience is painfully reminded of its presence in a theatre. The make-believe world of the stage which transplanted them to a fantastic reality now drops its pose and admits to being a deception. The successive interruptions may find the audience less willing to be deceived. Since the success of a show depends upon the willingness of an audience to enter into and accept the theatrical truth, interruptions to its presentation can result in a lack of believability and thus hinder the show's effectiveness.

**Involvement.**--Involvement of the audience is difficult in the play that allows frequent lulls and pauses between the scenes. Involvement is the interest and concern the audience has for the presentation. When an
audience is concerned with the action, the characters, the outcome of the story, one can say an audience is "involved." When the audience is involved in its reception of the play, the play's impact will be stronger than if the audience is unconcerned or indifferent. The audience becomes involved in a play through an appeal to its intellect and senses. An audience can easily become involved in the well-made type of play because of its careful unfolding of events, its steady building to a climax, its logical denouement, and its close relationship to the affairs of life. The fragmentary or episodic, by its very nature, seems less likely to involve the audience, unless, of course, it too can utilize some of the same interest-building techniques found in the well-made type of play. The multi-scenic presentation with pauses between the scenes seems to invite a reminder to the audience that for the duration of the pauses, involvement may be relaxed. A useful example appeared in a recent issue of *Time*. The forty-two interruptions of a film shown on T.V. caused a court judge to make the following statement:

It is true that the effect of the commercial interruptions was to lessen, to decrease, to disturb, to interrupt, and to weaken the mood, effect or continuity and the audience involvement—and therefore some of the artistry of the film.1

A parallel can be drawn to theatre presentation. When one is involved in the presentation, the pause, according to Edwards, "has all the torture of recapture at the very moment of escape." For no matter how interested or involved an audience becomes in these dramatic sequences, the disruption of a pause will hinder audience involvement and may create disinterest. When the production resumes, it must attempt to recapture the interest of the spectator. Total and continual involvement will make the multi-scenic show more effective.

Concentration.—The multi-scenic show, by its very nature, is subject to frequent changes in locale, time, and mood. This diffuse dramatic form presented without continuity will pose a problem to audience concentration. Concentration is the application of audience thought and attention to the presentation. Audience concentration is broken when its attention is distracted from the play itself. Tyrone Guthrie explains that an interruption to the audience concentration is caused by the mere fact of change. And Gassner and Allen point out: "There is something in too frequent changes of scene which confuses and fatigues the spectator, and produces a bewildering


effect upon his attention." Interruptions in the progression of scenes subject the audience to yet another type of change. This type of change is the most undesirable since it is a shift from illusion to reality. In the multi-scenic production, pauses and breaks between the scenes emphasize this concept of change and pose a serious threat to audience concentration.

Unity.—The unity of a play is hindered by a lack of continuity. The unity of the play is the relationship of all its parts to a whole. According to Theatre Language, this principle of "oneness" is applicable to every aspect of dramatic writing and production, each element contributory to a single over-all effect. The multi-scenic show should be presented in a manner which attempts to unify its many segments. The production which allows pauses between the individual scenes tends to emphasize the parts and not the whole. In view of a number of scenes of a particular act, interjected pauses may have the tendency to call attention to the scene following the pause and thereby cause some imbalance of attention. When the involvement and concentration of the audience is interrupted by pauses, the audience fails to see the scenes in

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relationship to each other. The whole feeling that one scene is the consequential result of another is more difficult to establish if intervening pauses are allowed. The pause obscures the fact that one scene is directly the cause of the next. Likewise, the action of one scene grows out of another. The characters within these scenes pursue a line of action. The mood of a scene, too, is affected by those scenes already played. The play's unity is realized in the culmination of these elements into a whole. A lack of continuity disrupts the relationship of scenes to each other and tends to disunify the multi-scenic show.

**Style.**—A problem in style results from a production lacking in continuity. Style is a distinctive mode of presentation, "Style," according to Mordecai Gorelik, the American designer and writer, "is a specific formula for production." The production which allows lulls and pauses between the scenes lacks style in the sense that it has found no satisfactory manner of handling the problem of continuity. One might refer to the problem as an external problem in style. For instance, the film which interrupts its presentation to change reels poses a comparable problem in style. The problem is external in the sense that it is not directly related to the internal

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style of the presentation. The style a play achieves, in the sense of the quality of its playing, its decor, its directional art, constitutes its internal style. The external style can of course interrupt the effectiveness of the internal style and thus affect the very nature of the artistic expression itself. A lack of continuity poses then two problems in style: pauses and delays between the scenes resulting in a lack of style, and pauses blocking the flow of the inner style from scene to scene.

Action.—The action of a play is affected by a lack of continuity. Action is the sense of motion implicit in the plot and realized in the characters and situations. Action may be expressed outwardly in the form of movement, or inwardly in the sense that a character is moved to action through thought or decision. A sense of action is not always easily achieved, nor easily sustained. Strong action generally occurs toward the end of scenes; a high point in the action often closes a scene. A pause after such a scene gives the feeling that the action and the effects of the action are finished. This is a danger to the play because action usually builds slowly. Once a feeling of action, motion, or energy is established, its effect needs to be sustained and related to the remaining scenes. The pause is a "let-down" to the audience. The pause prevents the action from carrying
over into the next scene. The stronger and more powerful the action, the more important that it should be presented in a continuous pattern.

**Mood.**—The mood of a play can be seriously affected by a lack of continuity. Mood is the feeling created by a play which emanates to the audience. According to *Theatre Language*, mood is "the general emotional quality of a dramatic piece or of its representation." The mood of a play may be described as the play's magic, the very essence of the theatrical feeling. The audience "gets into the mood" of the piece and goes along ready to believe and accept what is shown them. Mood is perhaps the most fragile component of a play and therefore subject to the greatest damage from a lack of continuity. The mood of a piece can be nurtured through scene breaks by special transitional devices such as music, but this is of questionable merit when it is only a guise to cover the scene change. Edwards' comment on using music in this way is that however well intentioned it is, it only "vainly attempts to fill a gap." Music may or may not sustain mood. However, mood must be unified: the mood of each scene being harmonious to the whole mood of the piece. If one thinks of the acts of a play as the movements of a

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7Bowman and Bull, p. 169.
8Edwards, p. 45.
symphony, he can justify the pauses for intermissions—as the pauses at the end of movements. Other pauses would be like those inflicted within a movement itself. The scenes of an act, like the single movement of a symphonic work, need to be experienced in relationship to each other. Pauses, of course, disrupt this organic harmony of mood.

In summary, the effectiveness of the multi-scenic show depends upon its being presented as a cohesive sequence of events uninterrupted between the scenes. The effects pauses and delays have upon the multi-scenic show have been pointed out. Pauses challenge the believability, involvement, and concentration of the audience; disrupt the play's unity, style, action and mood.

While a lack of continuity challenges the successful production of the multi-scenic show, complete continuity, with no delays between the scenes, except for the intermissions, will aid the effectiveness of the multi-scenic show.
CHAPTER III

TECHNIQUES AND DEVICES FOR ACHIEVING CONTINUITY

Since the problems of continuity are concerned with a manner of production in which pauses between the scenes are eliminated, held to a minimum, or, at least, kept under the control of the director, an examination of the techniques and devices which can aid the director in this endeavor will be useful. The techniques and devices for achieving continuity have been grouped into five categories as follows: (1) devices to conceal scene changes; (2) scene change devices; (3) utilization of stage areas; (4) types of settings; and (5) special transitional devices.

Devices to Conceal Scene Changes

The act curtain.—The act curtain is a fabric material used just within the proscenium arch so contrived to conceal or reveal the stage to the audience's view. As its name implies, the curtain can be used to open and close each act. When the curtain is closed, scenery and properties can be shifted on- or off-stage free from the view of the audience.
Examination of the early use of the curtain will be useful insofar as it was used along with the advent of realistic scenery. Richard Southern, British authority on technical theatre and theatre architecture, describes the use of the curtain in the "early days of scenery which he identifies as being no further back than the seventeenth century."

The front curtain in those days was used at the beginning of a show to disclose...a brilliant stage, to an audience, and, at the end of the show, to veil the picture and signify the séance was broken and the performance over.\(^1\)

The use of the curtain at the beginning and at the end of the show was also prevalent during the latter half of the eighteenth century. According to David Burnium, one of Garrick's biographers, the curtain was used conservatively during the eighteenth century. Garrick, the famous actor and manager, can be taken as representative of the period. Garrick, like his contemporaries, was opposed to using the curtain other than at the beginning and end of the play. Later in the eighteenth century, the use of the curtain gave way to more frequent use. The act curtain came to be used at the end of acts.\(^2\) The nineteenth century, with its trend toward realism, brought the


curtain into still more frequent use. The curtain had to hide scene changes at the end of acts or scenes—wherever the scene shift occurred in the play. Southern explains why this was considered necessary.

You cannot change a realistic, built, box-set representing three walls of a room with all its curtains, pictures, fireplace, ornaments, light-fittings, carpet and furniture in a visible scene change! It was with Irving that the changing of the new built scenery, now become too complicated to be managed in sight, was concealed behind a dropped curtain.3

Thus, the curtain came to be used only as an expedient to scene changes, ignoring its aesthetic function. The subsequent revolts against realism, such as expressionism, symbolism, and impressionism, have given the director free license to use the curtain as he sees fit.

However, if the curtain is to become a helpful agent in achieving continuity in the multi-scenic show, the director needs to understand not only the physical, but also the psychological implications of the curtain.

Friedrich Duerrenmatt, the modern Swiss playwright, in an article appearing in *Tulane Drama Review*, explains the psychological nature of the curtain. Duerrenmatt claims that the curtain "clearly defines an act or part. It clears the table, so to speak."4 Duerrenmatt's

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explanation clearly links the curtain's use to that of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And, even though during the nineteenth century scenery became so elaborate that it could not be changed without closing the curtain, the nature of the curtain remains the same. Southern, too, admits that the "atmosphere" (the mood created in the play) is broken each time the curtain is lowered.\(^5\) Therefore, the curtain, by its definite implications, is too strong, too disunifying to use at the end of scenes. At the end of acts the curtain can be justified in that the presentation admittedly stops for a fixed period of time, after which it resumes.

However, the time consumed in the closing and re-opening of the curtain alone is sufficient to break continuity. Both Guthrie and Edwards testify that the closing of the curtain—if for more than a few seconds—constitutes a break in continuity.\(^6\) The time involved in the maneuvering of the curtain, however, is not the only factor which disrupts continuity. The decisive nature of the curtain causes a psychological break in continuity by interrupting the sense of action which the various scenes attempt to create. Thus, if the curtain is to be an aid to continuity,

\(^5\)Southern, Scenery for Amateurs and Professionals, p. 103.

it is by its restricted use at the end of acts or parts and not at the end of scenes.

The scene drop.—The scene drop is a painted fabric used upstage (direction away from the audience) of the act curtain. The scene drop can be lowered from above the stage to the desired place on stage. A new scene can be played in front of the scene drop while scenery is being changed behind it. When painted, the fabric tends to stiffen and take on the appearance of a wall mural. Its flat surface is often disguised by perspective painting. The scene drop, even with perspective design, rarely is accepted as an actuality of the thing it represents as are the scenery walls of a box set. Actors in front of the scene drop expose the falseness of its perspective; the three-dimensional body in front of it emphasizes the lack of dimension of the drop. These problems are aggravated by the fact that, to expedite scene changes, the scene drop must be used in a downstage position (near the audience).

The scene drop is most effective in musical comedy, or other "stylized" productions where the scenery admits to being theatrical make-believe rather than pretending to be "realistic." The scene drop is less effective—if not actually offensive—in the realistic-type of production. The reason is that scenery in the realistic
production tries to represent an actual, true-to-life environment. Using the scene drop in realistic-type of production poses a problem. Although the use of the scene drop is expedient for scene changes and can prevent delays and interruptions in the presentation by allowing the scene to proceed while scenic changes take place, its use can force the style of production to be inconsistent. Style, according to Gorelik, is a distinctive formula of stage production. For example, a three-dimensional set denotes a particular style; the manner of setting is one devised with reproductions of particular types of things. The realistic-type setting attempts to duplicate a particular environment in order to create the impression that the setting is that environment. Another example of a style in production is the space stage. By the utilization of various platform levels, the space stage creates "in space" a series of locales which can, by the power of suggestion, come to represent specific places. Whichever style of production is attempted, unity and consistency of that style is desirable. The scene drop has a particular style of its own; it is flat, without dimension, determined to wrinkle, billow and expose its own artificial quality. To use the scene drop in a play with realistic-type settings is to use two different and opposing styles.

Likewise playing part of a show on the stage proper is one style; playing minor scenes on the downstage part in front of a scene drop is another style. The extent to which the two styles can be compromised to each other is a manner of individual taste. But, according to Edwards, no matter how much ingenuity is employed to reconcile the two types of scene, "and though the system of full set and front cloth (scene drop) works easily and is generally accepted, it is not completely satisfactory."^8

Another problem which results when the scene drop is used is the placement of properties. Since the scene drop is itself a device to cover a scene change, it is, when in use, exposed to the full view of the audience. Some system of placing properties in front of it must be devised.

If the scene drop is to be used to achieve continuity in production, something might be said against the constant return to a single drop. The use of one drop becomes as tiresome for the spectators as repetitive stage action or business. Returning to a single scene drop can hamper the sense of the show's development and progression. But if a show is dependent upon a single scene drop, variety in lighting might give it more scope and suggest the necessary transition in atmosphere from one scene to

^8Edwards, p. 49.
the next scene. Thus, the scene drop which helps to make a statement for the play is more effective than one which does not, and one which pretends to be no more than a cover-up for scene changes.

The scrim drop.—According to Gorelik, the scrim drop is a material "which seems opaque when lit from in front, but which becomes virtually transparent when lit from behind." The scrim drop can be used in the same manner and to the same purpose as the scene drop. The scrim drop, however, has one distinct advantage over the ordinary scene drop. Like the scene drop the scrim drop can be lowered into place on the stage to cover a scene change while a scene is played in front of it. The advantage which the scrim has over the scene drop is its transparent nature.

In a recent article in Educational Theatre Journal, Orville K. Larson, the author, acknowledges Jo Mielziner, the American designer, as having used the scrim drop more successfully than any other designer on Broadway. Mielziner's use of the scrim drop is an asset to continuity. By his refinement of the scrim, Mielziner is able to create:

... the psychological effect ... of a continuous flow of action from one locale to

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another without any awareness on the part of the spectators that the show has stopped to change scenery. Mielziner uses a painted scrim which moves from one side of the pros­ cenium arch to conceal the opposite side of the stage. This curtain is lighted from the front and as it traverses the opening it momentarily hides the stage from the view of the spectators while the scenery behind is quickly being changed. Then the front lights are dimmed as the lights behind are brought up. The scrim curtain seems to disappear as it is drawn aside and the new scene "floats" into view.10

Larson claims that Mielziner devised this technique because the latter disliked those scenes found so often in musical comedy which are "padded just enough" to allow for scene changes. By lighting through the traveler the designer feels he captures "those precious seconds which heighten the sense of flow."11 This use of the scrim, in the manner described by Mielziner, proves a useful device in achieving continuity.

In summary, curtains, scene drops, and scrim drops, which are devices to conceal scene changes, can retain that function in the multi-scenic show, and serve as an aid to continuity. The curtain was pointed out as being the strongest or most conclusive of the three devices, and can, as such, work against continuity. The scene drop, the common expedient in scene change and continuity, was


11Ibid.
pointed out to be a probable cause of inconsistency in the style of production. The scrim drop which can serve the same function of the scene drop was described as being a better device for achieving continuity than the scene drop because of its transparent nature.

Scene Change Devices

Flies.—Since continuity in production is heavily dependent upon the efficiency of scene changes, many devices have come to serve that purpose. If a theatre is equipped with "flies" (the entire area above the stage where scenery can be stores), scenery can easily be "flown away" and a new set lowered into place. Cleon Throckmorton, the American designer, refers to the system of flying sets, drops, wings and other pieces of scenery into the space above the stage and lowering it as needed to the stage level as "the old stand-by." "For general use," advises Throckmorton, "it is one of the best." However, Gorelik points out certain problems with "flying" scenery: "the very fast change is not possible and the problem of placing properties is not solved." In all probability, the "fast change" will be


13 Gorelik, "Designing the Play," p. 331.
necessary in the multi-scenic show. Of course, the flexibility of the "fly" system depends upon the type and amount of scenery used in production. If elaborate, realistic-type sets are to be used, the fast change will not be possible. In fact, the time required for the scene changes may be sufficient to break continuity. If, on the other hand, simpler scenery is used, one set can be raised to the flies while another is being lowered into place on the stage. Since this latter method can be done in view of the audience, one scene can follow another with no break in continuity.

In regard to property placement (one of the unresolved problems in using the fly system), Gorelik suggests that sometimes entire settings can be erected on platforms and they can be hoisted away entirely to the wings. Presumably another entire set can be hoisted on to the stage with no loss in continuity.

Sinking stage.—In addition to the "fly" system, additional flexibility for changing scenery is found in sinking and sliding stages. Philip Barber, whose handbook for scene technicians is printed in Gassner's book, Producing the Play, defines the sinking stage as:

an arrangement that allows a scene to be set up understage, and the scene shift accomplished by raising an entire section of stage into position with a set in place while the

\[14\] Ibid.
previous setting slides below stage to be removed while the play continues with only a moment's interruption.\textsuperscript{15}

Steele MacKaye, playwright and early innovator of American stage machinery, used the sinking stage "to control the waits between acts ... in order to avoid tedious delays."\textsuperscript{16} Max Reinhardt, the famous German producer, frequently used the sinking stage. Gassner and Allen, commenting on one of Reinhardt's productions, say that each time the platform rose it brought a complete change of environment which allowed the action of the play to be carried on uninterruptedly.\textsuperscript{17}

The sliding stage.--The sliding stage is a platform which can move off-stage by means of steel tracks. With this device an entire setting can move off-stage while another setting moves on-stage. The German theatre at Sarrbrucken is equipped with all these mechanical devices; consequently, more than thirty settings can be mounted at one time, and these can be changed by push-button electronic control.\textsuperscript{18} With such elaborate mechanical equipment, almost any feat in changing scenery might


\textsuperscript{18}Tour of Theatre at Sarrbrucken by author, 1960.
be performed with no break in continuity in a multi-
scenic show. But, in order to achieve continuity, these
scene-changing devices must be independent of the front
curtain. If the curtain must conceal the scene changes,
the result may be a break in continuity.

**Wagons.**—Few theatres, however, are equipped with
such elaborate scene-shifting machinery. Those theatres
without flies hardly will have the sliding or sinking
stage. Therefore, trucks or wagons are often used as a
means of changing scenery. This device is a platform
mounted on casters which carries a setting. Gorelik recom-
mends wagons because of their greater flexibility. He
suggests using platforms holding entire settings which
can be wheeled off-stage to be changed while an alternate
wagon is brought on-stage.\(^\text{19}\)

**Revolving stage.**—According to Gorelik, the re-
volving stage, or turntable, is a round platform which
turns like a phonograph disk by means of manual or motorized
power. The ordinary way to use it is to erect two scenes
back to back, the first scene playing while the second
scene is set up. Or, the table may be divided into
smaller segments so that three or four scenes may be pre-
set and revolve into place as needed.\(^\text{20}\)

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\(^\text{19}\)Gorelik, "Designing the Play," p. 321.

\(^\text{20}\)Ibid.
Gassner points out that the revolves should not be used when they "give the impression of a mountain laboring to bring forth a mouse." But, efficiently used, "one or more stages revolving on a pivot can ensure continuity in a multi-scenic play." \(^2\)

Besides the obvious flexibility of the revolving stage, another of its advantages is that it can be used in full view of the audience. The scenery which changes in view of the audience may be desirable in that it becomes a part of the action. This offers an answer to the problem of continuity because the action of the play appears to be continuous and uninterrupted. Continuity can be achieved in this way by allowing the action of the play to continue while the setting changes on a revolve.

Manual system.—Manual scene changing is done by the manpower of the actors or stagehands in full view of the audience. Like the revolving stage when it functions in full view of the audience, this manual system can give the impression that the action of the play is uninterrupted. According to Edwards:

> the scenery and properties can be changed in view of the audience, by man-power, by the cast, or by property men, as part of the action. This when it is done with style and dispatch can be effective. \(^2\)


\(^2\)Edwards, p. 48.
In conclusion, certain scene-changing devices have been pointed out as a means of achieving continuity in production. The sinking stage, sliding stage, and revolving stage are most useful in changing heavy realistic-type sets. The flies can also be used to that end but do not allow changes to be made so quickly as the other three devices. Wagons, flies and revolving stages will best serve lighter and smaller scenery. The manual system can be employed to change small pieces of scenery and properties. Insofar as achieving continuity in production is concerned, all these devices depend upon their ability to function in full view of the audience.

Utilization of Stage Space

In producing the multi-scenic show, directors may choose to utilize the stage by dividing it into separate playing areas. This allows various possibilities for achieving continuity because various areas allow more flexibility. Instead of being limited to one main playing area, the play's action can be presented in alternate areas. Because this allows various possibilities for setting one scene while another scene is playing, continuity can be achieved.

Forestage-mainstage.--Forestage-mainstage is a common type of stage division. This allows two playing areas. The forestage, or apron, can be used as one playing
area, the upper stage as another playing area. Bernard Hewitt, in an article in *Educational Theatre Journal*, relates his experience with this type of stage utilization. Hewitt used for the upstage playing area an inner proscenium arch with decorative stage curtain which could be drawn to conceal that area when scenes were played on the downstage portion of the stage.

This division with the draw curtain between allows an alternation of exterior and interior settings and a corresponding shift of action from the forestage to the inner stage. It also allows the backing and properties for the interiors to be changed behind the inner proscenium curtains while the previous scene is being played on the forestage ... allowing the action to flow from one scene to the next without lowering the front curtain.23

The triparate.—The triparate is another method of stage utilization which was discussed in a recent article in *Educational Theatre Journal*. Wendell Cole, the author, defined this type of stage as:

... a platform with three separate acting areas which can be concealed from the audience by curtains and which may be used one at a time or opened up to form a single large playing space.24

Auxiliary.—The auxiliary stage arrangement is yet another type of stage utilization. Some stages are equipped with an area which extends from the apron to the side walls


of the auditorium. Other theatres have erected these areas which can be utilized as "side stages." Using these stages allows scenes to be played on them as well as on the main stage. The action of the play can shift from one stage to another with no break in continuity.

One of the disadvantages of this system is that it can result in inconsistency in production. For example, if the curtain is to be used for the main stage, it should be used for the auxiliary stages as well. An attempt should be made to treat the auxiliary stages in the same manner as the main stage. Since the auxiliary stages are outside the picture-frame (the proscenium arch), efforts must be made to relate them to the picture created on the main stage.

Thus, the process of dividing the stage into various playing areas is useful in achieving continuity in the multi-scenic show. Using the upstage-downstage division, the triparate, or the auxiliary stages can all serve continuity by allowing scenes to follow each other in the various areas. The disadvantages of creating multiple playing areas were pointed out as being problems resulting in inconsistency in production.

Types of Settings

Since scenery is the major cause of problems in continuity in production, many types of setting have been
proposed to restore continuity to the multi-scenic show.

**Permanent set.** According to Gassner, the permanent set is a setting that is unchanged and unshifted and which secures flowing action for plays written in many scenes. According to a recent article in *World Theatre*:

> The adoption of a permanent set . . . allows the portrayal of massive, complicated and multiform scenes. Numerous episodes succeed one another in it without intervals and thus produce the dynamism demanded by the action.

The use of the permanent set in the multi-scenic show admits that the play is more important than the setting. The permanent set does not attempt to be realistic, but suggests only a background for the action. This type of setting is used harmoniously in the multi-scenic show because it allows a unity of style in the production.

**Semi-permanent set.** The semi-permanent setting has a main permanent structure with changeable sections. If these changes can be made efficiently and do not hinder continuity, the semi-permanent setting is preferable to the permanent set because it allows more scenic variety.

**Multiple set.** The multiple set, according to Charles Brooks in an article in *Tulane Drama Review*, is:

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one which is not changed during the play but which allows the action to occur in more than one place. Continuous action is an advantage which the multiple set shares with the single set over scene shifting; instead of a series of blocks put together into an action, there is a single action interrupted only by whatever intermissions the audience is permitted.27

Since the multiple set attempts to create an actual environment for the various scenes, a degree of realistic effect can be achieved. According to Edwards, the multiple set would be the "perfect solution" for the multi-scenic show--except that all multi-scenic shows cannot take this type of setting.28

Space stage.--The space stage, according to Gassner, is a "concept for production procedure," rather than a "well-defined mode of production." Space staging makes use of acting planes rather than representational settings. There may be no settings except a few inconspicuous platforms, or the stage may consist of conspicuous levels with steps, pedestals, etc. These acting areas are treated as voids until picked up by shafts of light at which time they become a temporary location for the action of the play.29 Any change in the space stage setting throughout the performance would be minimal. Few, if any, properties


28Edwards, p. 47.

29Gassner, Producing the Play, p. 421.
are used. Since shifts from one place to another are accomplished by a change of lighting, literally nothing stands in the way of continuity in using the space stage.

Projected settings.--Projected settings can be achieved with an instrument which projects images on to the stage. Thomas Wilfred, in a recent article in *World Theatre*, discusses projected scenery:

We are increasingly aware that the constantly mobile flow of action can be tremendously enhanced by an equally mobile flow of transition in settings.\(^{30}\)

The author goes on to suggest that the only limitation in the use of projected scenery for realistic-type productions is the necessity to blend the projection into the built scenic elements. Of course, projections without built scenery can be used.\(^{31}\) Walter Unruh, writing in *World Theatre*, suggests that the creation of entire settings by means of projection affords artistic possibilities of a very special kind. Unreal places, scenes of mystery, distant landscapes, all lend themselves to this decorative technique, which, moreover, offers the great advantage of rapid changes, especially when two projection units are employed.\(^{32}\)

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\(^{31}\) Ibid.

Using projections in the manner suggested by Unruh can be extremely useful in achieving continuity. The projection used in one scene can fade as the new projection comes into view. If whole settings can be created through the use of projections, their use offers tremendous potential in achieving continuity in the multi-scenic show by eliminating material scenery.

The types of settings discussed are those which allow continuous action in productions of the multi-scenic show. The type of setting to be used in production depends upon the extent the play requires a realistic-type of environment. The permanent set attempts to represent all places for all scenes by representing no place in particular. The multiple set provides a complex of actual locales. The space stage makes no pretense at representing actual locale, but achieves locality only in the mind of the audience. Projected settings achieve locale by mechanical means, thus freeing the stage of actual scenery.

Special Transitional Devices

Light as transition.—Light, so essential in setting, is in itself a device whereby one can achieve continuity in production. Macgowan and Jones wrote in 1922 that the day of elaborate stage machinery is over. They explained the passing of machines with the coming of a "miraculously animated new medium"... something very
like the 'life force.'

Light is one of the best devices for transition between scenes. The slow fade at the close of a dramatic scene is psychologically satisfying to spectators, allowing them to grasp or savor the full impact of a scene's content. The slow change of light from one scene to another area where the following scene will be played will provide a psychological transition between the scenes. During the time required for this light change, brief scene changes may occur before the next scene commences.

Certain effects in lighting will serve to bridge scenes together. Re-occurring light on a symbolic object between scenes is just one example of this practice. Done effectively and sparingly, this practice not only allows time for scene change but can enhance the meaning of a scene and set a new mood for the scene which is to follow. This method intensifies the motion of a scene or subdues it, whichever effect is desired by the director.

**Irisng.**—Irisng, according to Gassner, is a film method of achieving a transition from one scene to another by means of an iris shutter (a device for controlling a beam of light) which forms a circular area on the screen. In the theatre, irising appears in spotlighting stage

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areas and enlarging or diminishing them.\(^3\)

**Music.**—Music is one of the most common devices to give continuity to the multi-scenic show. The proper music can sustain a mood created in one scene and carry this mood to the next scene. Music can comment upon the meaning of a scene and set a new mood for the scene which is to follow. The effect of music can intensify or subdue the motion of a scene. Because music can create just about any mood the director wishes the spectator to experience, the possibilities it offers to bridge scenes together is almost endless. But as Ronald Mitchell suggests in "Music in the Theatre," a chapter appearing in Gassner's book, *Producing the Play*, extreme care must be practiced in the selection of music. "Music can be as potent atmospherically as a stage setting and to some people more potent."\(^3\)

Frank Vernon, in his book on production, discerns the use of musical accompaniment:

> to occupy such time as it takes the crowd to get on stage. . . . [This] is theoretically right, so long as the music relates to the crowd and not the crowd to the music. The music fills a gap, but it must not overflow, and whether it comes from the orchestra or behind does not matter.\(^3\)


Montage.--Montage is a device which can give continuity to the multi-scenic show. Best known in motion pictures, montage is the production of a rapid succession of images to illustrate an association of ideas. Scenes played simultaneously or which overlap each other make use of the theatre's practice of montage. Okhlopkov, the experimental Russian director, used montage by "transferring the action from one set to another not only at the end of one episode and the beginning of another, according to the author's instructions, but at any time within the episode." Okhlopkov, as reported by Russian director Andre Van Gyseghem, was only indirectly concerned with continuity and warned "there must be no break in the action of the performance in connection with the montage." Continuity can easily be achieved by overlapping scenes or putting them "back to back." But Okhlopkov's montage action offers to the director a bold experiment in achieving continuity. Of course, the director would have to take certain liberties with a script to achieve this kind of continuity. By breaking a scene before its conclusion and switching to another scene means that scene endings--as such--would not exist because another scene would be always in progress.

The frame.—The frame can give continuity to the play in many scenes. But this device—framing certain characters at the beginning, end, and at intervals between scenes—is actually a device to be used by the dramatist rather than the director. Bernard Hewitt, in an article in *Educational Theatre Journal*, discusses the effectiveness of the frame but admits no knowledge of its being used to cover scene changes. Yet, the director might find that this device can be used effectively to cover scene changes in a play in which a narrator is used.38

Films.—Film projections can be used to bridge scenes together. Gassner recommends that films, projected onto the stage, may provide documentary material which could carry on the action of the scene just played.39 Gorelik relates Piscator’s (the late German director) use of film "to add historic perspective to the script . . . and to give some of the background of the stage events."40 Shows of a documentary nature, in particular, can benefit by this use of projected pictures either moving or still. Dates, facts, headlines, statistics, or drawings can serve both the effectiveness of the play and also continuity.


39Gassner, *Producing the Play*, p. 419.

A recent article in *Players Magazine* also merits note here. According to the authors, Ralph Alswang and Paul Rudolf:

in an age of great technological and psychological discoveries, theatre needs to keep pace with man's rapidly widening horizons. It must expand, or even explode, its usual limits and limitations. A potential for achieving this is offered through the use of film combined with live stage in one complete blending.

Projected pictures could dissolve directly and smoothly into actual stage settings. Actors would literally flow through vertically louvered screen, into and out of the projected picture, cross-fading image and action and freeing the theatre from today's restrictive realism.\(^1\)

**Treadmill.**—The treadmill is a device which Gassner describes as being good for mass effects and for continuous movement. The device is a conveyor belt which runs across the stage. Scenery can be carried past the actor, and other effects such as marching, riding or driving can be achieved.\(^2\) This can be effective by displaying a changing locale, or, characters in transit—as it were—while behind this moving panorama, the new set is being prepared. Those theatres without a treadmill can achieve a similar effect by employing a traveler on which to move scenery (usually painted drops) across the


\(^2\)Gassner, *Producing the Play*, p. 427.
stage giving actual mobility to scenery.

Transitional devices, in general, provide a visual or audible bridge between scenes of the multi-scenic show. These devices can be used to give the impression that the action and mood of scenes is continuous and related to following scenes.
CHAPTER IV

METHODS EMPLOYED IN ACHIEVING CONTINUITY

The methods employed in achieving continuity in production of the multi-scenic show demonstrate the utilization of various techniques and devices by leading theatre artisans.

These particular methods were chosen for several reasons:

First, these examples represent productions of plays ranging from those of Shakespeare to those of the present day. The productions of these plays, however, were offered during this century with one exception: William Poel's productions with the Elizabethan Stage Society were given at the turn of the century. Since Poel is credited with creating the trend toward continuity in production, these examples which range from Poel to the present day represent, to some extent, an evolutionary study in continuity.

Secondly, these examples were selected because of the experimental nature of the methods. In many cases the source material offers critical valuations of the methods. The criticism of various methods will point out
that although continuity in production can often be achieved, the results are not always favorable. These sources will point out that continuity is often achieved at the expense of theatrical style, unity of production, or some other production virtue.

Thirdly, these examples will point out that very often a combination of techniques and devices are employed in production to achieve continuity. Each example demonstrates an attempt at achieving continuity in production. No other aspect of production is included.

Finally, these examples were selected because they offer additional proof that the multi-scenic show is most effective when it is presented with a fluid progression of scenes so that the play is continuous and unbroken, the unity of production is maintained, and the style of production is consistent.

**William Poel (1852-1920).**—Poel is one of the most important figures in this study. His productions with the Elizabethan Stage Society, which he founded in 1894 in London, presented Shakespeare's plays in a manner similar to Elizabethan-day practices. Reflecting upon the turn-of-the-century abuses in Shakespearean productions, Poel must have thought that these abuses could only be corrected by returning to a style similar to the one in which the plays had originally been presented.

Hugh Hunt, the British director and writer, sums
up part of Poel's achievements in restoring continuity to Shakespearean production.

Poel, with a small band of enthusiasts presented Shakespeare's play in simple halls, ... making use of a platform stage similar in form to the Elizabethan. He was able ..., to dispense with elaborate scenic divisions of the Italian Theatre tradition.¹

Poel was of the opinion that Shakespeare divided only a few of his plays into acts: "Even in the case of the five-act drama it was thought unnecessary to mark each division with an interval."² So part of Poel's aim was to present the play with "no waits" as he put it. This, Poel accomplished by using the bare stage. But Poel did not solve the problem of how to use scenery and still achieve a continuity of production. This problem was taken up later by directors who realized the virtue of continuity which Poel had demonstrated.

According to Hunt, Poel's influence can be traced in the work of many men who became leading English directors.³ That influence is pointed out in detail in Norman Marshall's book, The Producer and the Play, which has been an invaluable aid in this study of continuity.⁴ Six

³Hunt, p. 21.
examples from Marshall's book which illustrate methods of achieving continuity have been selected.

Nugent Monch (1877-1958).--Monch frequently staged Shakespeare at the Maddermarket Theatre in Norwich. Having served much earlier as Poel's stage manager, Monch carried on Poel's ideas for continuity in production. But Monch went even further in this endeavor than did Poel. Marshall claims that Poel did not achieve complete continuity because brief pauses were allowed at the end of highly dramatic scenes. Marshall compares these pauses to a "pause between the movements of a symphony." Monch, on the other hand, produced Shakespeare with no pauses at all except for one ten-minute intermission. Continuity was achieved by using traverse curtains which could be moved across the middle of the stage by the actors. The movement of the curtains was always combined "with the speaking of lines so no time is \textit{sic} wasted."\footnote{Ibid.}

Lewis T. Casson (1875- ).--Casson, as a young boy, played many parts in productions of Shakespeare given at the St. George's Hall, London. These productions, under the direction of Charles Fry, were given without scenery in a permanent curtain set, with an upper platform at the back. "From these performances, says Marshall, "Casson had learned how effective a Shakespeare play can
be when the action is continuous." Later, in his own productions, Casson experimented with methods of achieving continuity. In a production of Julius Caesar by Shakespeare, Casson achieved complete continuity by using a single piece of scenery—a large Roman arch which could be quickly and easily moved to different positions on the stage so as to give some slight indication of the changing locale.

Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946).—Having acted under the direction of Poel, Granville-Barker later staged successful productions of Shakespeare. In his own productions, Granville-Barker set out to solve the problem of how "the intimacy, speed, and continuity of the Elizabethan stagecraft" could be reproduced on the modern prosenium stage, and to what extent scenery and lighting could be used to enhance the mood of the play without interrupting the continuity. To accomplish this task, Granville-Barker used a specially built apron stage, an extension of the stage over the orchestra pit. Scenes could then be played alternately on the stage proper or on the apron. Although by this means continuity was achieved, an objection was raised to this type of production because it seemed a confusion of two types of presentation. The reasoning was:

6Ibid., pp. 164-165.
it is impossible satisfactorily to combine an apron stage and a picture-frame stage. They represent two utterly different kinds of stage convention. When the actor comes through the proscenium arch on to an apron stage he is literally "stepping out of the picture." But when in the next scene he withdraws again into his picture frame, the relationship between actor and audience has once more to be hurriedly readjusted. . . . The audience are jolted to and fro between two separate theatrical conventions.7

Granville-Barker's productions, however, did much to minimize this problem. He used unrealistic settings in an attempt to create no "pictures" on the main stage. Thus when the actors stepped forward on to the apron, they stepped out of the "picture frame" but not out of the "picture."8

Tyrone Guthrie (1900–), John Gielgud (1904–)

Guthrie and Gielgud, who were the first two directors to use the permanent built-up architectural settings in the English theatre, were the first to tire of this type of setting. Both men objected to the permanent set because it necessitated playing a number of scenes before a front curtain (scene drop) while behind it, furniture was changed and draperies rearranged. "The narrow shelf-like strip" of space in front of the curtain made it impossible to compose groupings and movement which were "anything but flat, repetitive and undramatic."

7Ibid., pp. 149-150.
8Ibid.
Guthrie . . . achieved unbroken continuity without a front curtain by using the minor characters as furniture removers, but this frequently resulted in the end of one scene and the beginning of the next being frequently lost in the scurry and bustle of chairs and tables being carried on and off the stage. Since the semi-realistic set . . . remained completely unaltered throughout the performance, scene following scene without the smallest pause, without even a change of lighting to indicate a change of locale, the audience were often confused into thinking a scene was happening in the same place as the preceding scene. . . .

Marshall preferred Gielgud's approach to the same problem:

Gielgud's production . . . was a much more successful solution of the problem of changing pictorial decor without the use of blackouts or a front curtain. The lovely and elaborate settings . . . were most ingeniously designed so that they could be swiftly changed by pages during the action of the play. Some of the briefer scenes were played in graceful little pavilions set on either side of the proscenium arch.9

Both Gielgud and Guthrie have emphasized the need for continuity. To achieve continuity in their productions, they have employed the scene drop, permanent set, auxiliary stages, main-stage/forestage arrangement, and permanent set with adjustable parts. Both men objected to the use of the scene drop as a means of achieving continuity on the basis that the dramatic potential in front of the drop is too limited.

Hugh Hunt (1911—).—Hunt, directing at the Old Vic (London), sought to overcome the drawbacks of the

9Ibid., p. 208.
permanent setting without interrupting the flow of scenes. To accomplish this task, Hunt used the permanent setting without resorting to the use of the front curtain by mounting part of the scenery on small turntables. When these revolved, they formed part of the setting for the following scene. Hunt used brief black-outs to make the changes. But this method was not completely successful. The black-outs, however brief, "jerked the play to a stop between the scenes."\(^{10}\) Thus, one device can spoil the effectiveness of another. Part of the effectiveness of turntables is that they can be used in full view of the audience as has been pointed out. Subtle light changes rather than black-outs would have prevented what must be called a "psychological" break in continuity.

These six examples selected from Marshall's book pertain to productions of Shakespeare's plays. This fact seems incidental, however, since the principles governing the use of these techniques and devices for achieving continuity in production can be applied to other multi-scenic shows by other directors.

Terence Gray (1904-____).—Gray's work in Shakespearean production is praised by Norman Marshall in The Other Theatre. "One of the essentials of a Shakespearean production is continuity," wrote Marshall, and he goes on

\(^{10}\text{Ibid.}, p. 207.\)
to point out how Gray, in his productions, achieved a successful type of continuity.

His method was to build up a frankly unrealistic set on a turntable in the middle of the stage, . . . a construction of steps, platforms and ramps which pretended to be no more than a platform designed for the actors. It made no more attempt to represent time or place than did the Elizabethan stage, but by means of constant and elaborate changes of lighting it did attempt to represent to some extent the changing mood of the play. . . . On this setting continuous action was easily achieved. As the closing lines of one scene were spoken the set revolved to show another aspect to the audience with the actors already in place ready to take up their cue immediately upon the concluding lines of the previous scene.\footnote{\textsuperscript{11}}

Gray's use of the revolving unit of the stage was used—not to change scenery—but to change scenes. Also, heavy dependence was placed upon the use of light for both ariel definition and mood.

Allen Wade (1881-1955).—Marshall also commented upon productions directed by Wade at the Phoenix Theatre, London, in which "nothing was allowed to interfere with continuity of action."\footnote{\textsuperscript{12}} Wade's productions were mostly from the Elizabethan and Restoration periods.

\textsuperscript{7}The settings ingeniously combined the balcony and inner stage of the Elizabethan theatre with the forestage, proscenium doors and boxes of the Restoration theatre. The chief feature of

\footnote{\textsuperscript{11}}Norman Marshall, \textit{The Other Theatre} (London: John Lehmann, 1947), pp. 64-65.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{12}}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 77.
Wade's productions was their simplicity. He reduced furniture and props to a minimum.13

The use of a permanent set with multiple playing areas allowed the director great flexibility. The problem of shifting scenery was eliminated. The use of minimal properties presented no problem in continuity.

Robert Edmond Jones (1887-1954). --The work of Robert Edmond Jones, one of America's outstanding scenic designers, offers a means of achieving continuity in production of the multi-scenic show. Rosamond Gilder reports that Jones handled a play in twenty-three scenes in this way. Jones "reduced each scene (in Hasenclever's Beyond) to its ultimate irreductible meaning, by using a shadow, a spot light, the frame of a window, a silhouette against a cyclorama sky."14 In this way Jones created an "atmosphere of remote loneliness" which flowed through the play. Jones proved that the multi-scenic show can be successfully produced with simplified settings with strong emphasis upon atmosphere. With atmosphere as the dominant factor in setting, less use is made of physical materials which reduces problems in scene-shifting. Atmosphere, "which flowed through the twenty-three scenes of the play," also

13Ibid.

tends to unify the many scenes into a whole.\footnote{Ibid.}

Max Reinhardt (1873-1943).—Reinhardt proved that elaborate realistic scenery can be used in a production without losing continuity. Gassner and Allen discuss Reinhardt's ingenuity in achieving continuity in the multi-scenic show. Reinhardt employed the use of stage devices in this way:

the vast doors of a Gothic cathedral were opened which allowed the next set to be moved from within it. By means of this and another contrivance the characters were enabled to step from actuality to actuality. The second contrivance was a huge sinking stage placed in the middle of the area. This platform was made to sink so that each time it rose it could bring a complete change of environment.\footnote{John Gassner and Ralph G. Allen, Theatre and Drama in the Making (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1946), p. 730.}

Jean Louis Come Vilar (1912- ).—Vilar depends heavily upon the use of light in his productions. In a recent article in the Tulane Drama Review, the author, Albert Bermel, discusses Vilar's production techniques:

There is no curtain, the opening and closing of each act is marked by a fade-in and fade-out of the stage lights, and in some plays four scenes are contained on the stage at once, the lights picking up the one that is playing, and the others "frozen" and out of direct lighting.\footnote{Albert Bermel, "Jean Vilar: Unadorned Theatre for the Greatest Number," Tulane Drama Review, III, No. 2 (December, 1960), 27-28.}

Vilar's method of the "frozen" scene offers much,
it would seem, in meeting problems in continuity. Bermel says that in a play like The Death of Danton, in which there are thirty separate scenes, Vilar's lighting technique is almost the only successful one which can be conceived, if the complexity of Büchner's drama is not to dwindle into over-activity or confusion. 18

Eugene Gladstone O'Neill (1888-1954).—In a recent article in Tulane Drama Review, the author, Charles Brooks, attributes importance to O'Neill's design conception for Desire Under the Elms.

... O'Neill was an experimenter with settings, and Desire Under the Elms is almost a multiple set play. The essence is there: a whole house exposed to view, two bedrooms upstairs, a parlor and kitchen downstairs, a yard, wall, and road outside. O'Neill used removable panels to make one part or another of the set visible in a given scene, ... With this type of setting there is a single action interrupted only by whatever intermissions the audience is permitted. 19

O'Neill's use of the multiple set is important because, according to Brooks, "It was so much earlier than the others." Its use not only allowed continuous action to pass on the stage but presented a "world upon the stage that had a sense of wholeness." 20

18Ibid.


20Ibid.
Norman Bel Geddes (1893-1958).—In a production of Sidney Kingsley's Dead End, Kenneth Macgowan claims that the American designer, Bel Geddes, "rewrote the play" by providing a complex of integrated locales in which all the scenes . . . could be presented easily and naturally without a curtain."21 "The complex of integrated locales" allowed continuous action. Heavy emphasis was placed on lighting. As the characters moved from one locale to another, the light faded or increased. This kind of setting, which freed the production from the use of the curtain, achieved a visual continuity. Macgowan's comment that Bel Geddes "rewrote the play" means that what was a play with series of scenes became a cohesive dramatic presentation.

Hilton Edwards (1902--).—Edwards, in 1962, directed Sam Thompson's (the late Belfast playwright) The Evangelist, a play in many scenes. Edwards used a simplified type of setting which suggested locale but did not attempt to duplicate it. To facilitate scene changes, Edwards used a constructed wall which operated on the same principle as the scene drop. When lowered, this wall joined with the entrance to a house to form certain exterior scenes. Action from this scene passed to other scenes without interruption or pause when the wall was

raised. This seemed particularly effective since the characters in one scene were frequently in transit, as it were, to the very scene which was revealed when the wall was raised. The most effective use of this device was demonstrated in a scene in which "sinners" gathered to march in procession to the revival hall. A small thrust stage and various stair units leading to the apron from the pit provided additional playing area for this "growing crowd of sinners." Singing, carrying banners, Bibles and tambourines, this crowd achieved a sense of motion while essentially they remained in one place—until such time they were to arrive at the mission hall. Just prior to that point the sounds of the revival became audible and increased as the crowd drew nearer. From within we were told that: "...is, at this very moment leading a procession of sinners here to the hall." The wall raised to review the revival in progress, at which point the two scenes became one. This example is typical of the kind of cohesive sequence Edwards achieved: by the time any scene had ended, another was beginning, or had begun. To achieve this fluid type of production, the author and director worked together toward that end. Some re-writing was necessary to implement Edwards' plan for a production which could be presented in an unbroken pattern.22

22The author was employed as assistant director, 1963.
Jo Mielziner (1901-__).—Mielziner's multiple set conception for Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is now a famous example (of that type of setting), according to Kenneth Thorpe Rowe, the author of several books on playwriting. In the script of *Death of a Salesman*, Miller implied the need for some nine or ten separate settings or locations. And in some cases several areas were to be used simultaneously. Mielziner eventually evolved his plan for the multiple set because he (along with Miller and Kazan, the director) agreed that "even the most efficient of scene-changing devices might impair the flow of action and the unity of the play." 23

In *The Glass Menagerie*, by Tennesee Williams, according to a review of the play's premiere, "Jo Mielziner has gone out of his way to supply a setting which, with the use of scrim, lights and imagination, is as fluid as a motion picture background." 24 The scrim was also employed in Sidney Kingsley's *Darkness at Noon*.

The basic principle was a fairly shallow front stage space for the prison cell. . . . The back wall of the cell was a gauze curtain in which the front side of which the huge blocks of gray stone were painted in transparent colors; behind the curtain a raised rear stage. For scenes in the cell the curtain lighted only from in front appeared as solid wall. For the


memory scenes the cell space was darkened, light came up behind the scene on the rear stage was visible through the gauze.\textsuperscript{25}

In regard to the same production, Robert Coleman, the New York Drama critic, says: "There is an impressive three-level setting . . . which gives fluidity to the production, and eliminates lulls for scene changes."\textsuperscript{26} John McClain, in his review of the same show, noted that while the action takes place in a Russian prison:

the complicated scene is so devised that the continuity within the jail is played in half the stage, yet at any point . . . the actor can move into the other half to enact the flashback episodes . . . \textsuperscript{27}

\textbf{Alan Schneider (1917—).—}The treadmill, which is thought to be old-fashioned, was used recently in the New York production of \textit{Malcolm} by Edward Albee. The production was directed by Schneider with settings by William Ritman. According to critic John Chapman:

\textit{The} scenic scheme, perfect for the swift changes of time and place, is the same one used by Robert Edmond Jones in "The Green Pastures"—two treadmills which take people and sets on and off with a minimum of fuss.\textsuperscript{28}

\textbf{Jose Quintero (1924—).—}In a recent production of \textit{Marco Millions} by Eugene O'Neill, Quintero employed the

\textsuperscript{25}Rowe, p. 72.  
\textsuperscript{26}\textit{New York Drama Critics Reviews}, 1951, p. 391.  
\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 390.  
\textsuperscript{28}\textit{Ibid.}, 1966, p. 394.
manual system of scene changing. This practice was received as being practical, theatrical and effective. Critic McClain wrote in his review: "The actor-stagehands run up sails, climb ropes and move the premises to suggest a variety of locale." 29

Noel Willman (1918—__).—Willman was director for the very successful production of A Man for All Seasons by Robert Bolt. This production also employed an actor to assist in the change of scenery. This was done as part of the action of the play by the character, Everyman. Although credit is due entirely to the playwright for this effective device, it may be that such a method can be adapted to work for other plays as well. Mention must be made, too, of the work of Motley (Elizabeth Montgomery, Audrey Harris, Margaret Harris) who created the setting for the play. The Journal-American made mention of the many virtues of this setting.

Motley has contributed a most resourceful single setting, a central ramp and assorted chairs, tables and flying insignia which ... can come to represent everything from a Thames-side dock to the Lord Chamberlain's chamber. 30

The result of this type of setting was summed up in the words of Robert Coleman: "A simple setting that avoids lulls." 31

31Ibid.
Herbert Blau (1926—).—Blau recently directed Büchner's Danton's Death at Lincoln Center. A reference to the use of light (by Mielziner) was made in Chapman's review: "The lighting was superb but unobtrusive . . . as scene followed scene with quiet swiftness."32 Also in this production, mention was made of the use of elaborate stage machinery. According to critic Norman Nadel, motorized platforms were used which rested high above the playing area. In that position the platforms were illuminated. As one of these platforms was needed, it would descend "from light into darkness, into light. . . ."33

Tony Richardson (1928—) and George Devine (1910—).—Richardson and Devine, the British actors and directors, staged the London and New York productions of A Taste of Honey by Delaney. The production made use of music between the scenes in an unusual way. Taubman, critic for the New York Times, described this use of music in his review: "A jazz foursome . . . sits at the side of the stage, and with its playing binds the scenes together into an emotional harmony."34 Taubman went on to point out that such a musical device was used effectively in two other recent Broadway productions, but warned that

32Ibid., 1965, p. 301.
33Ibid., p. 303.
34Ibid., 1960, p. 226.
a careless use of this device would result in cliche. 35

Stuart Vaughn (1925- ).—Another effective use of music occurred in Vaughn's production of Peer Gynt by Ibsen. According to Frank Aston's New York review: "On an imaginative stage arrangement countless scenes actually thirty-eight flow easily by grace of . . . incidental music. . . ." 36

Methods for achieving continuity—showing a practical application of techniques and devices for achieving continuity—have been presented. In many cases a method of continuity consisted of a combination of techniques and devices. These methods which directors and designers have employed in achieving continuity were accompanied by critical commentary, which gave a reaction to the effectiveness of each method.

In all cases critical reaction is in favor of productions which achieve unbroken continuity. However, criticism was voiced against a psychological break in continuity—such as the use of blackouts. Criticism tends to admire "the ingenious" methods employed in achieving continuity such as Reinhardt's cathedral doors which opened to emit another setting. But ingenuity runs to simplicity as well, such as the use of a "single Roman arch"

36 Ibid., p. 394.
which can be moved to a variety of positions, or the multi-locales represented in *A Man for All Seasons*. The ingenuity of any method of achieving continuity is best received when it becomes a part of the action of the play. This is done by the revolving stage, scenery lowered from the flies, scenery moved by the use of treadmill or actors assisting in the scene changes. All types of settings were used in the methods demonstrated, from fully realistic settings, to permanent, semi-permanent, and multiple. The choice of setting should be made from the point of view of establishing continuity in production as in the case of *Death of a Salesman*. The use of the scene drop has become a last resort in achieving continuity. Directors often try to avoid the scene drop because playing in front of its flat surfaces offers little dramatic scope and because it does not fit into the scheme of structural scenery. Vilar's use of light and the use of music in *A Taste of Honey* provide emotional continuity.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

In presenting this study in continuity, reference has been made to the fact that the advent of realistic-type scenery imposed upon the multi-scenic show resulted in a loss of continuity. Shakespeare's plays were used as an example to illustrate that their inherent continuity was destroyed when, to please eighteenth- and nineteenth-century audiences, elaborate, realistic-type scenery was used. The problem of continuity was recognized as a "problem" by Poel, who then attracted the attention of connoisseurs of Shakespeare by presenting those plays without scenery and, hence, without pauses for changes of scenery. But, despite the good work of Poel and his admirers, the problem of continuity in the multi-scenic show remains to this day a problem with no absolute answers.

Today, however, one will find few accounts of productions to parallel those of the nineteenth century which have been cited in this paper.¹ Nineteenth-century audiences at the Haymarket and Her Majesty's, whom Guthrie claims were certainly not country hayseeds,

¹See Chapter I, pp. 5-7.
tolerated abuses to Shakespeare's plays; as compensation for cut versions, rearranged scripts, and very length performances, audiences were offered the ultimate in novel realistic effects such as "real" Italian gardens, floating gondolas, a stage with live rabbits and deer.2

The nineteenth-century approval of these things only denotes an acceptance of a style of production. Continuity—among other things—was not a part of that style.

But styles change, and this delight for novel, realistic effects was to pass, just as continuity was to become a vital concern of theatrical production. Thus, when Poel made the "connoisseurs of Shakespeare" conscious of continuity, a new concept in production came into existence, or at least was revived. Shakespeare's plays could then free themselves from "the archeological detail" which had buried them.3 Eventually, a compromise between Poel's bare stage and the unobtrusive use of scenery came to be the standard for Shakespearean production. This compromise was important. Attention was directed away from elaborate scenery, allowing the play itself to become

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3See Chapter I, p. 6, note 1.
dominant. Free from realistic scenery, Shakespeare's plays were again produced with a type of continuity similar to that of the Elizabethan practice. The realistic mold was broken. If Shakespeare's plays were afforded a "special" type of production, other plays would merit special approaches. Plays could then be approached as individual works. A type of production was determined by the nature of the play itself—not by the type of scenery thrust upon it. For despite the fact that the theatre, by mid-eighteenth century, had become "visual," this quality was meant to be in addition to—not instead of—its auditory appeal.\(^4\)

Granville-Barker, Casson, Guthrie, and other directors experimented with methods of using scenery whereby Shakespeare's plays could be produced with continuity. But this task was not difficult. The Elizabethan-type production served as a guide. Scenery, being basically unnecessary in Shakespearean production, had only to be kept out of the way of the action.

But this idea—for all its oversimplification—may be the key to continuity in the multi-scenic show. Scenery must not get in the way of the drama, but must remain subordinate to the play itself. When the scenes of the multi-scenic show become victims of their own

\(^4\)See Chapter I, p. 8, note 2.
environments, the answer may lie in some degree of compromise with Granville-Barker's comment that the best basis for any production is a bare stage.\(^5\)

Although devices and techniques exist for solving almost every problem in continuity, these should not be employed to the degree that they too create problems. In a sense, each production in choosing its scenery can create or eliminate problems in continuity. Scenery has been pointed out as being the major cause of the problems in continuity, the right type of scenery—and scene change—as the solution. Because the multi-scenic show is different in form from the ordinary two- or three-act play, its whole approach to production should be different.

"A volley of short scenes, . . . connected only by a thread of life itself," said Rosamond Gilder in describing the multi-scenic show.\(^6\) Unlike the careful unfolding of events in the well-made play, the multi-scenic show needs a different kind of treatment—although both plays may attempt to achieve the same end.

Elaborate, realistic-type scenery is rarely used today in the multi-scenic show, except in the case of the


\(^{6}\)See Chapter I, p. 3, note 1.
multiple setting. The absence of this type of scenery indicates some recognition that the multi-scenic show is a unique dramatic form. And since the concern for realism does not dominate the stage to the exclusion of all other styles of presentation, selective realism (attempts to ensure an *impression* of reality) offers an "out" from pure realism and a production concept that is harmonious with the multi-scenic form.

"To reduce each scene to its ultimate, irreductible meaning" and to give it expression by means of "a shadow, a spotlight, a window frame . . . " describes Jones' approach to the multi-scenic show. Being shown the essence of a scene (by its design), rather than elaborate detail, the audience can more easily grasp the scene's meaning and see it—not as a thing isolated—but as something related to other scenes—tied, as it were, by the "thread of life itself."

The problem of continuity has been pointed out as being a technical problem but that a lack of continuity in production has a psychological effect upon an audience. The problem is not only that an audience must endure these pauses, but that the theatre has not found a thoroughly satisfactory means of overcoming this problem. Pauses and

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8Robert Edmond Jones: See Chapter IV, p. 60.
delays in production are objectionable to an audience because they are accustomed to the technical achievements of the films. The "flight" from one fantastic level to another is done in films with no break in continuity. Not disregarding the real essence of live theatre, one must admit that a production which has to stop to change scenery would seem to the audience of this highly technological age--terribly pedestrian.

The fact that a type of production can succeed only if it "avoids lulls," and "moves rapidly from one scene to another" may be only a comment upon the age in which we live. Audiences have come to demand a particular style of production as has every audience in every age. The audience today may not recognize that certain productions are hindered by a lack of continuity; they only know when a production is slow and tedious, disrupted and confusing, or too long. The specific reasons for these reactions (insofar as they result from a lack of continuity) have been pointed out and involve sufficient risk to successful production that they need to be overcome.

Whichever method one employs to overcome problems resulting from a lack of continuity, these should not be used at the expense of other production values. Inconsistency of style has been pointed out as being in itself as great a liability to successful production as is a lack of continuity. To solve the problems in continuity at the
expense of style is no answer. This may be a technical triumph which ignores the psychological aspects of continuity.

In regard to ultimate answers for solving problems in continuity, one of these might lie in the technical facilities of theatre plants. The director must have facilities to produce what the playwright demands. Additional stage invention or the perfection and further development of that which exists may provide the technical means to eliminate entirely problems of continuity. Further development of technical means need not be feared as "the death of the poet." Quite to the contrary, technological advances could allow an unknown freedom and flexibility in our theatre. For despite the fact that tradition lays a heavy hand upon the theatre, twentieth-century productions only sometimes achieve the fluidity of Elizabethan-style production.

Another answer to the eventual elimination of problems in continuity rests with the playwright. While some implication was made that problems in multi-scenic productions result from "unreasonable" demands from the playwright, no implication is intended that limitations should be placed upon the playwright or upon the form he chooses. He, like the director, needs additional freedom. The current trend toward popular production of the small-cast, single-set show is little encouragement to the
dramatist to venture beyond that comfortable form. That many production groups ignore the multi-scenic production is less encouragement to the dramatist. However, Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, the contemporary American playwrights, have written multi-scenic shows which are easily produced with a continuous flow of action. The fact that dramatists now incorporate into their scripts such techniques and devices as the multiple set, special musical accompaniment, projections, and narrators indicates a new awareness and concern for continuity in production. The playwright, of course, can solve problems in continuity by not creating them. Furthermore, only the elimination or mastery of these problems in continuity will give rise to further experimentation and development of the multi-scenic form.

Methods of meeting problems in continuity have been pointed out, the nature of the problems explored, and the importance of continuity stressed. The final concluding comment is that only a mastery of these problems of continuity in the multi-scenic show will help to blaze a trail to the theatre of the future, in which shifts in time and place (and space) will open up new dramatic horizons—and new problems in continuity.
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