Introduction

My subject is theatre directing in four internationally famous instances. The four directors—Konstantin Stanislavsky, Bertolt Brecht, Elia Kazan, and Peter Brook—all were monarchs of the profession in their time. Without their work, theatre in the twentieth century—so often called "the century of the director"—would have a radically different shape and meaning. The four men are also among the dozen or so modern directors whose theatrical achievements have become culture phenomena. In histories, theories, hagiographies, and polemics, these directors are conferred classic stature, as are the four plays on which they worked. Chekhov's *The Seagull,* Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children,* and Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* have long been recognized, in the theatre and in the study, as masterpieces. They are anthologized, quoted, taught, parodied, read, and produced constantly and globally. The culturally conservative might question the presence of *Marat/Sade* in such august company, but Peter Weiss's play stands every chance of figuring in Western repertories, classroom study, and theatrical histories until well into the twenty-first century. In their quite different ways, these are all classics of that Western drama which is part of our immediate heritage.

The intersections of these men with these plays are historical highlights of our modern theatre. In 1898 *The Seagull* confirmed the artistic seriousness of the Moscow Art Theatre's tentative first season, began the celebrated Stanislavsky–Chekhov collaboration, and was an early, revolutionary example of realistic style. Just as historic was the *Mother Courage* that Brecht developed over 1948–1951. First as his decisive move to dominate post–Nazi German theatre,

then as the keystone of the Berlin Ensemble repertory, this *Courage* prophesied that Brecht would be the teacher and Brechtism the teaching to dominate the theatre of the third quarter of the twentieth century. Kazan's *Streetcar* (1947) is another multifaceted chapter. This production established the stardom of Jessica Tandy and Marlon Brando, endorsed the greatness of Tennessee Williams, elevated Kazan to the apex of American directing, and spurred the general recognition—reinforced fourteen months later by Kazan's direction of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*—that American theatre had reached a remarkable new maturity of psychological realism. And *Marat/Sade?* What would the theatre of the 1960s have been without this German play written by a Swedish resident about the French Revolution and transformed by a British director into a work that reached fruition in America? What would the era's theatre have been without the paired influences of Brecht and Artaud so popularized by *Marat/Sade* and by Peter Brook's other work?

These four directors are vital to modern directing history because they are all intellectual figures, artists full of ideas about work and art and culture. All of them have contributed mightily, even when inadvertently, to the progressive intellectualization of theatre and directing that is a marked feature of our time. Because his ideas are sometimes derivative, often mystical, and always debatable, Brook's reputation as a theatre intellectual is wobbly. Nonetheless, it is an international reputation, won by virtue of his unceasingly radical approach to whatever ideas he argues. Particularly in print, Elia Kazan appears the least theoretical or philosophically inclined of the four, but as one of America's foremost Stanislavskians during the 1940s and 1950s, he influenced thousands of contemporaries through theatre, film, and the Actors Studio he helped found. As I write this, he is at work on a book about directing that may enable us to admire his capacities in yet another field. About Brecht's intellectual standing there is little doubt. For decades his strong analytical-critical faculties almost overshadowed his literary-poetic and theatrical abilities, to the detriment of his broader reputation. But Brecht the director proposes the same program as Brecht the theorist: a theatre of point of view, with thinking actors, interpretive directors, and audiences awakened to their stake in life. On either side of the Brechtian half-curtain, using the mind should be both a necessity and a pleasure. Finally, Stanislavsky pioneered the role of modern theatre-intellec-

tual—a researcher-experimenter-theorizer trying to rationalize the theatre's irregular, highly unconscious practices to the scientific age. By analogy, he is the theatre's Freud, its Mendel.

These four are also a good study in style. So aggressive was each in this aspect of directing that each was sometimes called "only" a stylist, "merely" a stylist, as if such reviews were a countersign on the director's passport to fame. Their careers show not only stylistic force but stylistic contradiction and variety. Stanislavsky is known as the father of modern realistic theatre and appears in that guise here, but during his lifetime he had a wider and longer reputation as a sensationalist, having gained as much fame from Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird* as from Gorki's *The Lower Depths.* By contrast, Brecht was an antirealist who derived the great virtues of his theatre—clarity and density of meaning—from realist motives, especially the motive to examine human behavior in its social and socialized dimension. Kazan is famous for his "intensity"—for brawny, male physicality and for set-smashing—but his aggressive control over tone and rhythm also worked to create light, scherzo scenes, delicately evanescent emotion, and a gallery of great female performances. Brook began as a fantasist of the Anouilh-and-visual-opulence school and then developed both an attractive, somewhat Oriental plain style and that modernist temperament which provokes us to analyze his art even as we enjoy it. Such command of differing styles may not be indispensable to directors—good and great ones have a narrow range—but such diversity is notable in other modern masters, for instance, Max Reinhardt.

My four chapters present directors engaged in highly various kinds of work, at various stages, in various postures, under various contracts. An exemplary posture is the director alone with the script, the dreamer alone with the text and his imagination. Virtually all directors go through such a phase in preparing any production, but Stanislavsky's solitary study of *The Seagull* is a canonical example of that phase. Thus, in Chapter 1, I largely ignore the final production in order to concentrate on a written document, the play's *mise-en-scène* or proposed staging. I explain how a director directs for what I call a "paper stage," an artificial testing ground where the imagination becomes creatively engaged with a challenging script. Many directors prefer this earliest of production phases precisely because their imaginations are freer and more poetical then, less compro-

mised and executive. In this crucial stage of work on *The Seagull,* Stanislavsky's imagination wandering unrestrainedly through the script yielded an artistic proposition about realism and mood that profoundly influenced subsequent Western theatre.

In Chapter 2, "Bertolt Brecht and *Couragemodell 1949,*" I present Brecht as pedagogue explaining the rationale, methods, and effects of his own directing, always with a special moral: pay relentless attention to detail. *Couragemodell 1949,* the German-language "modelbook" or workbook assembled from three separate stagings of *Mother Courage and Her Children,* is an excellent study for several reasons. First, there is its sheer eminence, for the play is a masterpiece, the productions were world-famous, and this modelbook is probably his most instructive. Second, the model illustrates Brecht's mature theatrical ideas, the "dialectical" theories earlier articulated in *A Short Organum for the Theatre* that were the basis for his career's splendid final flowering. Finally, in *Couragemodell 1949* he is always concrete in his approach, translating the particular experiences of his own work into specific aids to future productions. Thus the modelbook serves as a useful reminder to the directing guild and its members who are too often jacks-of-all-trades and maids-of-all-work, too often purveyors of helpless generalizations. If you want to mean, Brecht tells us, mean particularly. Make your point in detail.

Elia Kazan's experience with *A Streetcar Named Desire* is an essential study in the complexity of high-wire directing in the high-pressure commercial zone. Here, working within a vast network of what Gatsby's friend Meyer Wolfsheim called "gonnegtions," the artist must attend to acting methods, union rules, social philosophy, knowledge of the author's heart, casting decisions, and other technologies of money and spirit. This complexity is especially evident with regard to *Streetcar* because Kazan was the only one of my subjects to direct a true premiere and because he was employed on Broadway at a time when Broadway could be believed in, when its manifold nature and intense commercial pressure were sometimes centered by the claim of art. So Kazan had to cast and create new characters, had to develop Williams's script for the stage, had to produce a hit (he was both ambitious and financially involved), and finally had to meet his constant requirement—a production that pleased Elia Kazan. In this case, the results established his mastery over serious American drama, a mastery virtually unchallenged for

most of two decades, until Kazan decided to abdicate and left the theatre.

Peter Brook's version of *Marat/Sade* gives us a picture of the contemporary director, the director-*auteur* whose productions originate in his workshop. In the summer of 1963, Brook assembled a Royal Shakespeare Company "workshop," that is, a group without a production plan but with an intention, in this case to investigate the ideas of Antonin Artaud. Over the next twelve months, Brook used this "Theatre of Cruelty" group to try exotic experiments both in private and in public, then enlarged its number to stage Jean Genet's *The Screens,* and finally used workshop personnel and ideas in his production of *Marat/Sade,* a hot new German property about Freud and Marx in the age of Robespierre. The Brook story epitomizes much of recent theatre history because theatre experiment since 1960 has been dominated by productions generated from within workshops, originating to some serious extent with the interests and explorations of their directors.

The four chapters about such various activities have several aims in common. First and foremost, I want to treat these artistic incidents appreciatively and critically, thereby offering them as models. Unlike many other art works, these theatre productions are not visible, audible, or otherwise reproducible, so a certain percentage of my time is inevitably spent in describing them, re-creating the real or imagined theatrical experience as best I can. But like any other art works, these productions offer themselves for criticism. This opportunity leads me to discuss individual directors' careers and philosophies, to analyze their other works, to recount production anecdotes, and to focus on specific solutions to very particular problems. (The reader will want to have these four plays close at hand or freshly in mind.) And, because critical treatment can reveal their great strengths, these productions frequently become models—I mean, of course, models of their times, of historical styles, and of particular directors' methods. In addition—though I hasten to assert that my book is not meant to be a how-to manual—the works of Stanislavsky, Brecht, et al. reveal specific, practical ways of solving problems, using the imagination, and expressing the self.

My second intention is to raise interesting questions about directing itself. As Brecht suggests in the *Couragemodell,* "In studying what follows—a number of explanations and discoveries emerging

from the rehearsal of a play—one should, above all, be led by the solutions of certain problems to consider the problems themselves."[1] In the plainest words, I think we have little intelligent criticism or intellectual understanding of directing. This becomes particularly obvious when we compare the success of our efforts with the gyrating critical complexities that have so long surrounded arts like poetry and painting. We disagree in a muddled way about whether directing is an art, about what the art consists of, about what its kinds or "isms" might be, about its vocabulary, and about much more that is equally important to a sophisticated treatment of the subject. My four studies are offered neither as a systematic progression nor as illustrations of a particular performance theory, but as specifics moving toward, not from, a body of thought.

For example, depicting directors in what I earlier called various phases or postures gives an adequate overall image of how inherently unsystematized and fluid "directing" is and has been. But why and how is the task so unsystematized, so changeable from case to case? First, the position of "director" is no older than a century and its job description has only progressively been codified. Historical examples are very inconsistent in terms of which activities were expected of individual artists. Second, theatre is notoriously collaborative, with actors, designers, producers, and lawyers trying to influence a production's growth and style. Most often, directors are supposed to coordinate these collaborations to achieve unity and sense, but from example to example the interplay of power, art, and chance so typical of theatre creates tremendously various situations. Third, whether particular directors are temperamentally dictators or hired hands, the collaborative structure and its many media make their work a complex operation, with many voices, many parts, and an unpredictably interactive set of means and tools. Finally, directing is a process accomplished over considerable time, not a momentary lyric flash of inspiration-creation. Weeks, months, and sometimes years elapse between the initial doodling or dreaming and the final technical rehearsals with their split-second electronic calibrations. During this span of time, all ideas are influenced by changing circumstances and deadline pressures. Because of the compounding of all these factors, the director's world is confusing to casual observers and resistant to coherent intellectual or critical treatment.

Criticism of directing would benefit from more quarreling over its canon. What do we know of an art without a body of great, authoritative instances? What does "sublime" mean in visual art without Michelangelo, in music without Beethoven, in drama without Sophocles? Will other artistic qualities make sense unless we can compare examples, Arnoldian touchstones, and *locus classicus* incarnations? What can we understand about great achievement or innovative aesthetic attack without a great productions list resembling T. S. Eliot's ideal "tradition," particularly in its open-endedness and constant revision from the present? Although not the only critical strategy, this is a useful and educational one. As my title clearly suggests, I would propose these four productions for immediate, charter membership in such a canon. Others by the same directors are candidates as well. And a few dozen additional productions come quickly to mind—famous shows like Reinhardt's *The Miracle,* Vsevolod Meyerhold's *The Inspector General,* the Living Theatre's *Frankenstein,* Orson Welles's *Macbeth,* and Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach.* When we have a body of analysis for such works that is as developed as Laurence Senelick's *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet: A Reconstruction,* we may know something significant about theatre directing.

Discussion of directing, whether it takes place in the shop or in the classroom, is normally enveloped in a terminological miasma. A simple example is the word "style." For many critics and directors, style is that bright idea or production concept that distinguishes a particular show from all others: John Gielgud's *Hamlet* in rehearsal, Brook's *Dream* on trapezes, A. J. Anton's *Much Ado About Nothing* in the style and period of Booth Tarkington. For others, style is a term always accompanied by a qualifying adjective like "realistic," "nonrealistic," "expressionist," or "postmodernist," and thus it describes a basic aesthetic, approach, or premise. For still others, style is always individual, the director's signature. W. B. Yeats often quoted the French critic Sainte-Beuve's assertion that "there is nothing immortal in literature except style"; that is, what does not dissolve in time is how we put our thoughts.[2] More technically, I see style as the shaping of theatrical image or experience: shaping by controlling its visual and aural tempo, texture, mood, pace, atmosphere, sharpness of meaning (thematic thrust), and other relevant qualities; shaping

and controlling on a momentary, juxtapositional, and overall basis; classically (though not always), shaping by releasing values implicit in a play's text; and classically (though not always), shaping in order to manipulate audience reaction.

Another example is the word "image," surely one of the most common terms in contemporary theatrical vulgate. ("The Theatre of Images" is gaining great currency as a label for contemporary experimental drama, particularly for our postmodernist attacks on narrative form.) But what, more specifically, is an image? The basic modern definition comes from Ezra Pound and other "imagists" of the World War I period, who defined an image as "a radiant node or cluster," a bounded but explosive patterning of energy (like a bomb), "which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." These fragments suggest three important qualities of the image, whether poetic or theatrical: (1) it begins as a visual impression just as theatre began as "a place for seeing," but then transcends its exclusively visual nature; (2) it can bridge not just our senses (sight and sound) but our faculties (senses, emotions, intellect), thus evoking a larger, wholer human response; (3) it is characterized by its quality of epiphany, or sudden clarity and discovery ("in an instant of time"). As T. E. Hulme said about verse images, far from being "mere decoration" or ornamentation, they are "the very essence of an intuitive language."[3] Like a line or a shot in other arts, the image is a primary unit of signification.

More terminological confusion surrounds one of theatre's simplest, most obvious facts: the basis of theatre is the presence of the human actor. However complex the theatrical style or imagery, however complicated the turn of thought, directing frequently reduces to the kind of human presence that is elicited from actors—how it is stimulated, how it connects to collective or individual audience psyches. But what is this mysterious *X* factor? Brecht and Bernhardt both called it "charm." Stanislavsky called it "the human spirit." Walter Benjamin called it "aura." Like most other English-speakers in the profession, I call it "presence," meaning something considerably richer than any individual actor's ego. I mean both *presentness* (now-ness) and *presence* (here-ness), a present tense in both space and time. Presence, I think, is the binder of theatrical imagery, and nowhere is this more obvious than in the contemporary theatre of absence and estrangement. Presence, the anthropological view ar-

gues, is also the origin of theatre, a god or spirit appearing here, now, because a ritual has evoked it. Thus a successful *Hamlet* should be a visitation, not an understanding.

These three examples of the profession's need for a new lexicon are all complicated by a more general problem, which Andrew Sarris describes in writing about film: "In addition to its own jargon, the director's craft often pulls in the related jargons of music, painting, sculpture, dance, literature, theatre, architecture, all in a generally futile attempt to describe the indescribable."[4] The use of these same vocabularies in theatre criticism is not made any more palatable by the late-twentieth-century belief that analogies between arts are critical barbarisms. However, unless we can be content with social-scientific jargon or French phrases, we may have to accept for now that directing does have a painterly aspect after all, that thrust or round theatres bring out a sculptorly function, that musical comparisons are usually illuminating, and so on. Words like "color," "tempo," "composition," and "theme" will be appropriate so long as they are useful, and so will the many terms we borrow to describe the small units of directing, its elements or pieces: "moment," which implies that directors arrange pieces of time; "picture" (or "image"), which stresses visually separable units; "detail," which emphasizes relations of part and whole; and "beat," which is used to parse action and anatomize motive.

But these terminological difficulties pale beside the intellectual confusion over a simple, fundamental problem: is directing truly an art at all? How can a director be said to create if the assignment is merely to stage someone else's play? That is not creating to a very meaningful degree, is it? This argument usually includes a distinction between creation and interpretation, and the introduction of an interpretive category within the arts has led to frequent comparisons between directing and orchestral conducting, both of which came to be regarded as professions in the same period. However useful, particularly to the spread of culture over time and space, both professions seem to be some aesthetic distance from the picture of the Romantic poet dream-creating his pleasure dome, eyes aflash and hair afloat in the inspirational breeze. Coleridge comes to mind here because it is his aesthetic that is in question: art is imaginative product, and since human imagination, in Romantic theory, echoes the Universal Imagination of Creation Itself (the source of galaxy and proton), poetic

imagination can (should?) create like the Deity *from nothing,* imagining into existence new entities, things never known before. To the Coleridgeans, which means to most Anglo-American intellectuals of the twentieth century, theatre directing might best be called the exercise of "fancy"—shuffling the counters of memory and association, rearranging the fixities and definites of another's creative vision (the director as museum curator).

There are two lines of disagreement with this familiar argument. First, Coleridgean aesthetics are founded on an idea of Creation that few intellectuals now accept. Consequently, the Coleridgean position is continually undermined by the contemporary awareness that Shakespeare did not "make up" his stories, that Michelangelo invented neither the marble of his statue nor the iconography of his fresco, and that Virgil had no hand in creating the epic form that determined so much of his poem's nature and success. And what was the name of that genius who designed Chartres? "Originality," "organic art," and "the artist-god" are critical notions that fit nicely into the particular phase of bourgeois individualism from which they come, but they are not ideas sufficient for every day. If we live under the shadows of Flaubert and Beckett (watching fingernail clippings decompose on the floor of an empty room), we are also contemporary with John Cage and with Julian Beck and Judith Malina—with collective creation and creative chance. There is more to art than its inventiveness quotient.

Second, directors do create in the Coleridgean sense, making a new entity—if not from nothing, an original nevertheless. They create theatre productions, which never existed before 8:00 P.M. and turn into vapor after midnight. Directors make actual in one world (the theatrical) something only projected or imagined in another (the literary). Thus the frequent literary objection that literature is compromised in the theatre is countered by the theatrical certainty that dramatic literature is once and for all realized there. David Cole makes this point in his book, *The Theatrical Event:* "Theatre . . . provides an opportunity of experiencing imaginative truth as present truth."[5] Meyerhold is more doctrinaire: "Words in the theatre are only a design on the canvas of motion."[6] Staging a script is so different from conducting a musical score (for instance, compare the precision of musical and script notation) that the analogy is worth very little. Playwrights have been and can be the creative figures in theatre, but almost always have played an ancillary role. Note how re-

cent and tentative the idea of "textual authority" is, even for classical drama, and how even more recent and tentative is the idea of granting living plays and playwrights any literary value and stature whatsoever. (Intellectual reviews and university English departments still treat drama as the poor, lame sister—or the disreputable one—among the genres.)

Surely directors do create works of art, sometimes using plays as playwrights sometimes use stories and as storytellers sometimes use experiences from life. What do we frequently say about our best classic revivals? "It was the play as I had never understood or imagined it before." "It was a new work." And sometimes, particularly since 1960, directors do not use plays at all. Here is a very typical example of how we define directing today, from J. Robert Wills's *The Director in a Changing Theatre* (1976): "Directing for the theatre may be described as the process of transforming personal vision into public performance. . . . The director must first develop a capacity for creating vision, an ability to fuel his imagination from many sources; he must then be able to transform his vision into a theatrical reality, using his mastery of many theatrical crafts."[7] The alert reader will already be commenting that the words "script" and "play" appear nowhere in this definition. Yet this is a valuable formulation precisely because Wills defines the job as that job now exists, as an activity that no longer depends on preexistent literature.

Directing admittedly involves a tension between the primary-imaginative creation *ex nihilo* and a secondary-imaginative interpretation or intermediation. But instead of using that tension to demonstrate that directing is not an art, I prefer to see it as central to an understanding of how directing is and has become an art. Creative-interpretive tension is fundamental to many directing landmarks and many individual careers, as shown by Kazan's move from writer's director to writer and Brook's transition from daring interpreter to independent maker of texts. If we can hold onto the dialectic truth of that tension (film critics call it *metteur en scène* v. *auteur*), we can understand why some of directing's great choices were made, and why and how directors become independent artists. We can even understand the historical aspect of Harold Clurman's genial and accurate definition of directing: "a job, a craft, a profession, and at best, an art."[8]

The belief that directing is an art has stimulated one of the most publicized controversies of mid-twentieth-century theatre—the

argument over "directorial authority." Surely contemporary theatre's single most remarkable feature is the powerful control exercised by its directors. This new "directors' theatre" has given us Jerzy Grotowski, Joan Littlewood, the Living Theatre, *A Chorus Line,* and Patrice Chereau, but it has also created alarm, particularly among critics and playwrights. On any Sunday you might hear the lament that directors, in seizing so much power so quickly, have driven theatre off its historical rails. These now-independent theatre "artists" were not long ago stage managers, straw bosses to the stars, ink-stained wretches recording and reviving the blocking plan that always had the actor-manager up center and everyone else artistically dispersed. "A baby in the theatre," Stella Adler calls the director, noting that "there had been a lot of very good theatre before he came along."[9] Who granted these myrmidons the power to write—for that is what it comes to, as in the *auteur* controversy of film criticism—and whence all this talk about the "art" of directing?

Such reactionary criticism ignores two obvious points: playwrights too have earned considerably more power than they had a century ago, and directors everywhere still serve at the mercy of the money changers. But most important, the lamenters try to unwrite history, and in favor of what better model is seldom clear. I am inclined to accept the historical fact that directors have become central to modern theatre and then to consider a corollary, that modern theatre is no doubt more sophisticated and more artistic for that change. When we need a new system, we will certainly create it. For now I think we should attempt to understand the one we have.

How do we explain the historical change to a directors' theatre? Prior to the late nineteenth century, aesthetic decisions were handled mainly by actor-managers, men and women who controlled everything in their theatres from corporate finance to costume material to starring roles. A product of the rebirth of European theatre around 1600, this sturdy system eventually faced unprecedented challenges. As theatres relentlessly grew in size throughout the nineteenth century, the actor-managers became committed to large auditoriums, sizable profits, star casting, and spectacular proscenium staging. Mechanically, this meant that theatrical means were now so materially huge and so aesthetically complex that they no longer fit easily in the hands of a leading actor. Specialization set in, as it did in many other lines of production. By the end of the century, the artistic challenge

to the old system was even more formidable. Revolutions were taking place in theatrical taste—about what could be discussed or shown on stage, about the critical relation of theatre to society, about the importance of ensemble performance and unified production, about realism and abstractionism, and about the shape, size, and function of theatre buildings past, present, and future. Modern productions suddenly faced questions that had been avoided for centuries. Which kind of theatrical arrangement best suits this production? Which kind of scenic aesthetic fits this particular play? This kinetic, confusing period, with its new information, questions, and theories, was the setting for a revolutionary idea, generated by predecessors, derived from examples and myth: some figure who was neither writer nor actor could control what a piece of theatre might be like.

Inherent in the idea was the implication of inevitable artistic control. In 1905, when the conception of directing was still very young, Gordon Craig enunciated the basic logic: if theatre is an art, then there must be "an artist of the theatre," and if this artist is granted the customary courtesies accorded an artistic position—jurisdiction over meaning, form, and style, and the freedom to use his or her own material—then we are talking about as full an imaginative license as need be.[10] Today's personally expressive, independently creative directors testify to the historic reality of this drive for imaginative freedom, that is, to the most self-consciously artistic impulses within the ranks. Another testimony to the urge for control is the large number of directors, from Charles Kean to Charles Marowitz, who have experimented with theatrical form by reworking classic texts, for dead authors simply have less power than living ones. A final testimony is the new power directors take in developing scripts by contemporary playwrights—power used in readings, workshops, rewrites, and showcases. At least in the United States, it seems that the director has moved a desk into the playwright's workroom, the better to channel inspiration from the beginning.

So "directorial authority" comes down to independence and power. The independence I describe is not only from script or collaboration, but just as importantly from dead traditions and bad habits, from rotten clichés, stale thoughts, and poor assumptions about what theatrical art can or cannot be. That is why good actors need and want good directors, why aggressive theatres hire them, why we all—no matter how we are disposed on other matters—yearn for productions

that are well directed, that enliven contemporary works, peel the old wallpaper off the classics, and show action, word, and character in all their presentness. The fact that directors have powerfully influenced modern theatre because they have taken and been given the power to do so is poorly understood in theatre writing and in the theatre generally. Of course, whatever we think about theatrical power situations will be influenced by our own politics. An autocratic aesthetic will come easily to a court theatre like the Meininger or to an heir of the actor-manager tradition like Craig. A romantic-collectivist like Grotowski may be expected to counter his strongly creative behavior with a critique of the diplomacy, manipulation, and "tactical *savoir faire*" demanded in directing.[11] In the chapters that follow, I hardly touch on the ramifications of the power of the four directors, for I want to emphasize aesthetic results. But until we have a directing history or a theatre history that anatomizes certain questions (Where did creative control reside in earlier theatres? How and why did directors gain it in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century? What are the systematic, aesthetic, and moral dimensions of this change?), we will not understand well enough what we are discussing.

Finally, let us return to the corollary stated earlier, that because directors have gained control over stylistic and interpretive questions, theatre in the twentieth century has become more sophisticated, more artistic. Does this Macaulayesque claim of progress seem extravagant? Not when we consider that (1) 1880–1980 is the third great age of Western drama, an era comparable or superior to the eras of Sophocles and Shakespeare in such respects as duration, number of productions, cultural reverberation, and artistic achievement; and (2) the same century has been the century of the director. Directors have rescued, championed, and protected scores of new and unusual dramatic visions that would unquestionably have been relegated to the closet in earlier ages. They have been the primary cause of acting's modern sophistication, especially its extension throughout an ensemble. And they have created in vast numbers what the actor-managers could manage only occasionally—productions that are well thought-out, unified, and satisfactorily artistic.

Believing this, I naturally take pleasure in introducing four such productions by four of the geniuses of the business.