

**The convergence of influences on and  
evolving praxis of mid-twentieth century  
British theatre design (1935-1965) through a  
close study of selected works by Motley and  
Jocelyn Herbert**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines key developments in theatre design in Britain between 1935-1965 through the lens of the praxis of the design trio known as Motley (active 1932-78) and of theatre designer Jocelyn Herbert (1917-2003). Analysis of their roles in the creation of the four theatre productions that are used as case studies, *Romeo and Juliet* (1935), *Three Sisters* (1938), *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) and *Happy Days* (1962) enables an evaluation of the complex threads of influence on Motley and Herbert both from within the UK and from the USA and Europe. Furthermore, it offers a close study of their working process including their relationships with directors and playwrights considering not only what they designed, but how and why.

Critical engagement with theatre design practice has increased since the early 1990s but there is still very little evaluative literature about British theatre design during the period of this study, 1935-1965. To date there are only three books and three journal articles that specifically cover the seminal designers Motley and Herbert so there is scope for a broadened analysis and contextualisation of their practice. One of the original contributions to knowledge of this thesis is that it assesses the confluence of influences on Motley and Herbert and draws together the threads of connections between British, European and American theatre and the ethos of Michel Saint-Denis illustrating how these fed into Motley's and Herbert's work.

Whilst acknowledging the complexity of theatre practice and of reconstructing past events, this thesis assesses a combination of archival design material, such as set and costume renderings and sketches, as well as written texts, press reviews and recorded interviews, and draws on my own experience as a theatre design practitioner. The four case studies enable an in-depth investigation of Motley's and Herbert's processes and practice, the circumstances in which they operated and how they negotiated these conditions, as well as indicating how the role of the theatre designer developed across the period 1935-1965.

In approaching the four case studies from the point of view of design the thesis contributes a new layer to their intricate histories. By emphasising the significance of the professionalisation of the role of the theatre designer during this time and by revealing the connections between Motley, the London Theatre Studio, Herbert and the Royal Court Theatre it expands understanding of the period and reinforces the substantial contribution of design to British theatre history.

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Figure 1: Jocelyn Herbert and Margaret 'Percy' Harris in 1999 (Courtney, 1999)

## CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER ONE: Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>1.1 Context</b> .....	4
<b>1.2 Research background</b> .....	4
<b>1.3 Literature review</b> .....	5
1.3.1 Biographies & monographs.....	9
<b>1.4 Methodology</b> .....	17
1.4.1 Theoretical context.....	17
1.4.2 Interviews.....	19
1.4.3 Archives.....	21
<b>1.5 Brief overview of each chapter</b> .....	25
<b>1.6 Key definitions</b> .....	26
<b>1.7 Establishing boundaries</b> .....	28
<b>1.8 Summary</b> .....	29
<b>CHAPTER TWO: Motley and <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935)</b> .....	30
<b>2.1 Context</b> .....	33
2.1.1 Motley.....	33
2.1.2 Modern theatre design and New Stagecraft.....	36
2.1.2.1 Synthesis.....	37
2.1.2.2 Suggestion.....	39
2.1.2.3 Simplicity.....	40
2.1.3 Harley Granville-Barker and Shakespearean performance in twentieth century Britain.....	41
<b>2.2 <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935) case study</b> .....	43
2.2.1 Circumstances of the production.....	44
2.2.2 Motley's process.....	45
2.2.2.1 Shakespeare's scene divisions.....	46
2.2.3 Motley's designs.....	49
2.2.3.1 Set designs.....	49
2.2.3.2 Costume designs.....	56
2.2.3.2.1 Motley Ltd.....	56
2.2.3.2.2 Costume process.....	59
2.2.3.3 Lighting.....	69
2.2.4 Reception.....	72
<b>2.3 Summary</b> .....	73
<b>CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and <i>Three Sisters</i> (1938)</b> .....	74
<b>3.1 Context</b> .....	77
3.1.1 Copeau, Saint-Denis and the Compagnie des Quinze.....	77
3.1.2 London Theatre Studio.....	82
3.1.2.1 Architecture.....	84
3.1.2.2 Design training.....	90

3.1.2.3	The ground plan.....	92
3.1.2.4	The dramatic text.....	96
3.1.3	Chekhov in Britain.....	97
<b>3.2</b>	<b><i>Three Sisters</i> (1938) case study</b> .....	<b>99</b>
3.2.1	Circumstances of the production.....	99
3.2.2	Motley's process.....	104
3.2.2.1	Identifying authorship.....	105
3.2.3	Motley's designs.....	109
3.2.3.1	Set designs.....	109
3.2.3.2	Costume designs.....	116
3.2.3.3	Lighting and sound.....	125
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>126</b>
 <b>CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and <i>The Kitchen</i> (1959 &amp; 1961)</b>		
.....		129
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Context</b> .....	<b>132</b>
4.1.1	The English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre (1956-).....	132
4.1.2	The permanent surround at the Royal Court Theatre.....	135
4.1.3	The permanent wardrobe at the Royal Court Theatre.....	142
4.1.4	Repertory and ensemble at the Royal Court Theatre.....	144
4.1.5	Jocelyn Herbert.....	144
4.1.6	<b><i>The Kitchen</i></b> world premiere.....	151
<b>4.2</b>	<b><i>The Kitchen</i> (1959 &amp; 1961) case study</b> .....	<b>153</b>
4.2.1	Circumstances of the production.....	153
4.2.2	Herbert's design process.....	156
4.2.3	Herbert's design.....	161
4.2.3.1	Set, lighting and sound.....	161
4.2.3.2	Costumes.....	167
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>168</b>
 <b>CHAPTER FIVE: Samuel Beckett and <i>Happy Days</i> (1962)</b> .....		<b>170</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Context</b> .....	<b>173</b>
5.1.1	The Royal Court Theatre and Beckett.....	173
5.1.2	Beckett, performance and scenography.....	175
5.1.3	Jocelyn Herbert in 1962.....	177
<b>5.2</b>	<b><i>Happy Days</i> (1962) case study</b> .....	<b>180</b>
5.2.1	Conditions of the production.....	180
5.2.3	Herbert's design.....	181
5.2.3.1	Herbert's design process.....	181
5.2.3.2	Set designs.....	187
5.2.3.3	Costume.....	193
5.2.3.4	Critical reception.....	200
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>200</b>

<b>CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion .....</b>	<b>203</b>
<b>6.1 Key points of findings.....</b>	<b>204</b>
6.1.1 Threads of influence.....	204
6.1.2 The materials of theatre production - and what they reveal.....	206
6.1.3 The evolving praxis of Motley and Herbert between 1935-1965 .....	207
<b>6.2 Relevance to contemporary practice.....</b>	<b>209</b>
6.2.1 Directors and designers.....	209
6.2.2 My perspective as a practitioner.....	210
6.2.3 Theatre design nomenclature.....	211
<b>6.3 Reflections .....</b>	<b>211</b>
6.3.1 Archival research.....	211
6.3.2 Reflections as a researcher.....	213
<b>6.4 Further research.....</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>6.5 Contribution to knowledge.....</b>	<b>216</b>
<b>ILLUSTRATIONS.....</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>221</b>
Books, journal articles and theses:.....	221
Magazine and newspaper articles: .....	229
Manuscripts and letters:.....	232
Images and models:.....	234
Interviews and interview transcripts:.....	240
Talks:.....	241
Films:.....	241
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>242</b>
Appendix 1: Motley timeline.....	242
Appendix 2: Jocelyn Herbert timeline.....	257
Appendix 3: List of Harris/Devine books in Devine Family Archive.....	262
Appendix 4: List of copies of Wardle interview transcripts.....	264
Appendix 5: Details of <i>Design by Motley</i> exhibition.....	265
Appendix 6: Motley/contemporary <i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i> scene divisions.....	267
Appendix 7: LTS items belonging to George Devine.....	270
Appendix 8: George Devine timeline – director/lighting/actor.....	271
Appendix 9: Visual timeline of Herbert’s designs 1946-1961.....	276
Appendix 10: <i>The Kitchen</i> cast lists.....	282
Appendix 11: Image copyright information.....	284

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **Introduction**

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

This thesis is concerned with key developments in British theatre design between 1935-1965 as observed through the lens of the evolving practice of the theatre design trio known as Motley<sup>1</sup> (active 1932-1978) and theatre designer Jocelyn Herbert (1917- 2003). An analysis of the four theatre productions used as case studies, *Romeo and Juliet* (1935), *Three Sisters* (1938), *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) and *Happy Days* (1962) enables a close study of Motley's and Herbert's theatre working methods and their relationships with directors and playwrights. It also offers the opportunity for an assessment of the convergence of various strands of influence on Motley and Herbert and an evaluation of their roles in the realisation of theatre productions.

Although critical engagement with theatre design practice has increased since the early 1990s (see Aronson, 2005; Baugh, 2005; McKinney & Butterworth, 2009; White, 2009; Collins & Nisbet, 2010, for example) there is very little evaluative literature about British theatre design in the period 1935-1965 and only three books and three journal articles about Motley or Herbert (Mullin, 1991; Courtney, 1993; Mullin, 1996; Marshall, 2007; Farthing & Eyre, 2011; McMullan, 2012). This thesis builds on existing scholarship by undertaking a more in-depth analysis and contextualisation of Motley's and Herbert's practice than has hitherto been attempted. In doing so the thesis seeks to address the relatively restricted range of inquiry into theatre design that contributes to a lack of comprehension of its significance in our reading of theatre, the rationale behind its realisation and of the development of theatre design praxis. Subsequently, it aims to contribute to a more rounded understanding of the complex elements that come together to create theatre performance.

Motley and Herbert have been selected as the subjects of this research because both were significant figures in British theatre design having each been professionally active for over forty-five years and both being key in the promotion of theatre design within the British theatrical industry from the 1930s onwards. It was not only through their practice that Motley and Herbert were influential; Motley trained several generations of theatre designers at the London Theatre Studio (1936-1939), Old Vic School (1947-1952) and the Motley Theatre Design Course (1966-2011), whilst Herbert was on the committee for planning the auditoria of the National Theatre building (opened in 1976) and was responsible for establishing and maintaining the annual George Devine Award.<sup>2</sup>

The years 1935-1965 provide the framework for the focus of this thesis because they mark a period of identifiable development of the role of the theatre designer in the creation of

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<sup>1</sup> The three women who worked under the collective title of Motley were Sophie Harris (1900-66), Margaret 'Percy' Harris (1904-2000) and Elizabeth Montgomery (1902-1993).

<sup>2</sup> The George Devine Award was founded in 1966. Originally open to actors, designers and playwrights it is now an award for the most promising playwright.

theatre productions. In 1935 Motley<sup>3</sup> were introduced to director Michel Saint-Denis<sup>4</sup> (1897-1971) and were asked by him to run the theatre design courses at his London Theatre Studio (LTS) (1936-1939), the first drama school in Britain to incorporate theatre design into the curriculum. Herbert studied under Motley between 1936-1938 and began her theatre design career in 1956 at the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre (Royal Court) (1956-). The period between 1956 and 1965 covers the foundation of Herbert's design style and professional reputation and ends with the resignation of George Devine (1910-1966), first Artistic Director of the Royal Court and Herbert's partner. I will demonstrate that Motley were amongst those designers who, in the 1930s, began to professionalise theatre design as we know it today, insisting on overseeing the making of sets and costumes, and working closely with directors. By the time Herbert began practicing in the late 1950s theatre design had become an established profession and I will suggest that her ability to maintain authority amongst leading writers and directors indicates a growing acceptance of the important contribution that design can make to a theatre production. The period covers the establishment of both Motley's and Herbert's praxis, significant elements of which are recognisable to me both as a contemporary practitioner and from my involvement in theatre design education.

As a historical study this thesis acknowledges that there were many influences being brought to bear on Motley's and Herbert's approaches to theatre design at any one time. Nevertheless the thesis will argue that it is possible to unpick key elements of the complex genealogy of Motley's and Herbert's theatre design ethos. There are, for example, several threads that link them: Michel Saint-Denis, George Devine, the London Theatre Studio, and the Royal Court Theatre, as well as the heritage of British theatre practitioners such as Harley Granville-Barker and Edward Gordon Craig and theatre design influences from Europe or the USA.

This thesis will assess the circumstances in which Motley and Herbert operated and how they negotiated these conditions in order to create designs that were integral to the impact of the productions that they worked on. Through an analysis of the four case studies that combines an assessment of written texts, press reviews, archived design material and recorded interviews with my own experience as a theatre design practitioner, I will examine and document Motley's and Herbert's designs, processes and working conditions between 1935 and 1965 in order to evaluate the evolving praxis of mid-twentieth century theatre design.

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<sup>3</sup> Three people made up the group known as Motley and rather than refer to them as the Motleys, the Motley design group, the Motley trio or the Motley designers, as I consider Motley to be a partnership I will use the plural in relation to them, so that I will say 'Motley were practicing' rather than 'Motley was practicing' for example.

<sup>4</sup> Michel Saint-Denis (1897-1971) was a French actor, theatre director, and drama theorist. As well as directing he instigated or advised on the foundation of the following drama schools around the world: London Theatre Studio (1935-39), Old Vic School (1946-52), Centre de l'Est Strasbourg (1954-), National Theatre School of Canada (1960-), Juilliard Drama Division, New York (1968-).

## 1.1 Context

Motley's work spanned theatre, film, opera, musicals, dance and education across two continents and included what are now considered to be seminal productions of the twentieth century, such as: *Romeo and Juliet* directed by John Gielgud in 1935; David Lean's 1946 film of *Great Expectations*; *Rodeo* for Agnes de Mille at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, in 1942; costumes for *South Pacific*, with sets by Jo Mielziner in New York in 1949 and the 1972 opera of *War and Peace* at Sadler's Wells Opera. (See Appendix 1 for a full list of their productions).

Jocelyn Herbert's work also encompassed theatre, film and opera and included significant productions such as: *The Kitchen* (1959), *The Oresteia* (1981), the British premieres of several Samuel Beckett plays including *Endgame* (1958), *Happy Days* (1962) and *Not I* (1973); films *Tom Jones* (1961), *If...* (1968) and *O Lucky Man!* (1973); and operas *Lulu* (1977) at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York and *The Mask of Orpheus* (1986) at the English National Opera. (See Appendix 2 for a full list of her productions).

## 1.2 Research background

My own position as researcher is as a practicing theatre designer with twenty-three years experience. I am related to two members of Motley: Sophie (sometimes known as Sophia) Harris-Devine was my grandmother and Margaret Harris (known as Percy) was my great-aunt. George Devine was my grandfather and Sophie Harris-Devine's partner for over twenty years from 1932 until he left my grandmother for Jocelyn Herbert, with whom he lived for the last ten years of his life. I never met my grandparents as they died within six weeks of each other in 1966, and my mother, Dr Harriet Devine, was not involved in the theatre by the time that I was born in 1969. I was close to my great-aunt, Margaret Harris, from my starting at Central Saint Martins College of Art in 1989 until her death in 2000. Previous to that our family had visited her once or twice a year and regularly attended the end of year exhibition of her Motley Theatre Design Course. I met Jocelyn Herbert only a few times as a child, and when I graduated she asked me to do some model making for an exhibition of her work at the National Theatre (1993), so I spent a little time with her during that period.

One impetus for me to undertake this research was my curiosity about my own practice: whether I was indirectly influenced by my family connections, and if so how this could have happened and in what specific ways. I have been curious about British theatre design praxis since 1991 when I went on an Erasmus exchange to Berlin during my second year at college and was struck by the fact that we were encouraged to assert our own preoccupations in the designs rather than to carefully respect the text as we had been taught to do at Central Saint Martins. As my career has developed and I have had the opportunity, through my designs

being regularly chosen to be part of the UK exhibit at the Prague Quadrennial,<sup>5</sup> to see the work of designers from around the world and to speak to them or to hear them talk, the question of why British designers work in the way that they do has been a recurrent one for me. Additionally, being involved in the Society for British Theatre Designers for many years<sup>6</sup> has made me aware of the debates around the role of the theatre designer in the creation of theatrical performance, and of the fact that what the designer contributes to a production is little known even amongst other theatre practitioners. One motivation for this research was to contribute towards the dialogue about the designer's role within the theatrical profession.

Naturally I have always been aware of my own relationship to the subjects of this thesis and I have had to learn to approach the research with a degree of self-reflexivity. I was unprepared for the challenge to my own methodology as a practitioner, and maintaining a critical distance from this has been a personal struggle for me. However, I believe that being a practitioner has been beneficial to my interpretation of the research findings, giving me an insight that would not be possible for a researcher who was purely theoretically based. I have also been in a privileged position in that I have had access to material and to people through my family contacts that would not have been the case for everyone. One of my challenges has been to unravel family mythology, stories or statements and to try to assess what basis they had in fact and what it was about them that made them important narratives to their tellers. However, it is inevitable that, no matter how much I have tried to avoid it, I am influenced by my family history and politics. I will reflect further on this in the conclusion.

### **1.3 Literature review**

Theatre history and theory books tend to concentrate on the dramatic text rather than performance and rarely mention theatre design to any significant extent (see for example Shepherd & Wallis, 2009; Bentley, 1992; Hartnoll, 1983). The traditional approach to theatre theory has been based on literary analysis of the dramatic text, and performance has therefore been seen as a function of that text. Another reason for this customary lack of attention to the visual aspects of performance is the inherent 'messiness' of theatre practice. Jure Gantar argues that theatre performance is unstable, imperfect and constantly hovering on the edge of pandemonium (Gantar, 1996) and that it could be compared to other unstable events such as 'ecosystems or metropolitan traffic' (1996, p.541). As Gantar points out, this might mean that attempting to fully grasp the theatre practitioner's work could be seen as hopeless and more akin to trying to 'catch the wind in a net than to a serious academic enterprise' (1996, p.543). Peter Hall has described how the legacy of the Royal Court Theatre of the 1950s and 1960s

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<sup>5</sup> Held in Prague every four years since 1967 the Prague Quadrennial is a competitive international exhibition of contemporary work in a variety of performance design disciplines. My own work was selected to form part of the UK exhibit in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> I have been on the Society of British Theatre Designers committee since 2000 and was Joint Honorary Secretary between 2009 and 2011.

is more tangible through the plays as written texts than the legacy of the contemporaneous Theatre Workshop run by Joan Littlewood,<sup>7</sup> because 'her work was wholly theatrical and therefore wholly ephemeral' (Hall in Eyre, 2011, p.46). Performance exists only for the time when the audience and performer are present together in the performance space. It depends on so many variables that audience members on different nights can have quite diverse experiences. The live experience cannot be fully captured on film or in photographs or words. It is a sensory experience involving: vision, sound, light, texture, time, movement and space. What is left of the event after the performance is over are the traces that consist of the text or score, photographs or film, models or drawings by the theatre designer, the (often imperfect) memories of those who saw the performance and reviews written by critics. In many ways the dramatic text is much easier to analyse without the complications of the other layers of visual and temporal senses which performance brings.

As a theatre design practitioner I would agree with Gantar that the creative act of putting on a theatre performance is a kind of (mostly) controlled chaos and therefore that trying to answer the questions I have posed in this thesis could be seen as a hopeless enterprise. Additionally, the theatre designer's contribution to performance is inherently collaborative and cannot exist without the input of many other collaborators, such as actors, makers, technicians and directors, making the question of authorship a complicated one as will be discussed below. It is, however, important that the theatre designer's distinctive role should be explored and consequently attempts must be made to analyse theatre design processes and practices and to find ways of discussing them.

Since the early 1990s there has been an increase in books and journal articles dealing specifically with theatre design and these include monographs on particular designers (Courtney, 1993; Mullin, 1996; Koltai, 2004; Farthing and Eyre, 2011), or on theatre designers from a particular country, era or institution (Goodwin, 1990; Docherty and T. White, 1996; Davis, 2001). There are also exhibition catalogues such as for the four yearly Society of British Theatre Designers (SBTD) open exhibitions (Burnett and Hall, 1994, 1999 & 2002; Burnett, 2007; Crawley et al., 2011), or the international Prague Quadrennial (PQ) (Prague Quadrennial et al., 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011), which all tend to have little analysis or contextualisation, as well as reflective books on theatre design exhibitions (Griffiths, 2002; Aronson, 2011; Prague Quadrennial et al., 1995). Additionally, there have been several books providing critical discourse on theatre design and scenography published in the last fifteen years (Baugh, 2005; McKinney & Butterworth, 2009; Collins & Nisbet, 2010; Aronson, 2005; White, 2009). Apart from the monographs on Motley and Herbert none of these books

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<sup>7</sup> Joan Maud Littlewood (1914 – 2002) was an English theatre director, noted for her work in developing the left-wing Theatre Workshop.

mention the designs of Motley or Herbert or the London Theatre Studio, illustrating that this group of people and this period has been neglected.

An exception is Pamela Howard's book *What is Scenography?* (Howard, 2009) which is partly a personal reflection on her career and practice and partly an account of her own approach to scenography.<sup>8</sup> Howard covers one of the themes of this thesis in some detail, the relationship between the theatre designer and director, but her main focus is on contemporary practice rather than the period 1935-1965. Her conclusions are that the relationship should be a collaborative one but that this is not always realised, and that the designer often feels that their creative thinking is not recognised (2009, pp.124–130). Howard does highlight Herbert's work with Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) and Tony Harrison (b.1937) as an example of 'synchronicity of staging' (2009, pp.151–2) between the designer and director or, in the case of both Beckett and Harrison, playwright/director. Howard describes this synchronicity as a 'seamless' collaboration in which authorship is 'indecipherable' (2009, p.152). However, the need for a more comprehensive evaluation of these collaborations is highlighted by Beckett's notorious insistence on his plays being performed 'without changes or alterations' (Rabkin, 1985, p.144) suggesting the need to question the impact of Herbert's designs on Beckett's productions. This will be reassessed in Chapter Five's case study of *Happy Days* (1962). As previously mentioned, the creation of theatre production is messy, and trying to allocate authorship within its collaborative processes is at best a complicated endeavour. This will be particularly demonstrated in Chapter Four's case study of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961), a production for which none of Herbert's design artefacts have been located, although surviving photographs, accounts and anecdotes seem to point to an example of a more spontaneous working relationship with a director than appears to have been usual at this time.

Christopher Baugh's book *Theatre, Performance and Technology: the development of scenography in the twentieth century* (2005), whilst not mentioning Motley or Herbert, does cover 1935-1965 but from a predominantly European perspective rather than a specifically a British one. Baugh does however give a comprehensive overview of the relationships between the evolution of theatre design technology and theatre design practice in the twentieth century.

There have been several books published on post-war British theatre that mention Saint-Denis, Motley or Herbert (Rebellato, 1999; Roberts, 1999; Little & McLaughlin, 2007; British Library & Shellard, 2008; Shellard, 2000; Warden, 2012; Eyre, 2011; Billington, 2007) but they do not concentrate on design and only superficially cover the visual aspects of productions, or approaches to design. *The Royal Court Inside Out* (Little & McLaughlin,

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<sup>8</sup> Professor Pamela Howard (1939-) is a British theatre designer, director, educator and author. She became a lecturer in theatre design at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in 1982, eventually becoming the Course Director. She currently directs as well as designs productions.

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

2007), for example, devotes two and a half out of four hundred and fifty five pages to 'Stage and Design' (pp. 38-41), and although this section gives a sense of the aesthetic aims of the Royal Court there is not much detail in so few pages. There is little mention of design in the extensive coverage of Royal Court productions 1956-2006 outside of this part of the book. Because of George Devine's close personal relationships with Motley and Herbert,<sup>9</sup> Irving Wardle's biography of Devine (Wardle, 1978) details Motley, Herbert and Saint-Denis and is a good starting point for an understanding of their practice and philosophy, as well as of the period, events and relationships. However, as with most other books, the emphasis is on acting, directing and playwriting rather than designing, reiterating the need for this study.

There are recent doctoral theses that have focused on theatre design, including Ellie Parker's *Design and designer in contemporary British theatre production* (Parker, 2000), which analyses the process and reception of theatre design since 1980. Of particular relevance to the themes of my investigation is the final section on the director/designer relationship. Using interviews with contemporary designers and directors, and touching on notable early-mid twentieth century director/designer relationships, Parker's findings indicate that the status of the designer as compared to the director is one which continues to be of concern to theatre designers in particular (Parker, 2000, p.179); a conclusion that demonstrates that the topics that I will investigate in this thesis, although historical, are of relevance to designers today.

Elizabeth Wright's *Narratives of continuity & change: British theatre design, 1945-2003: an oral history* (Wright, 2009) uses oral history life story recordings to track threads of commonality across generations of theatre design practitioners. Wright shows that methods and aesthetic principles are transferred through the input of established designers into education and training. This thesis will consider ways that this transference occurs in theatre design practice. Wright's thesis is an important contribution to discourses around theatre design education, theatre design practice and the director/designer relationship, all of which are explored in my own research. However, although her period of study crosses with mine (in the years 1945-1965) out of the twenty-six designers included in her thesis only six were professionally active before 1965,<sup>10</sup> so that the main focus is on late twentieth and early twenty-first century practice. Wright aims for a broader sweep than I do with the large number of designers that she covers, precluding the amount of detail that I am able to allot to Motley and Herbert. For example, whilst Wright concludes from a range of interviews with designers that the director/designer relationship 'shifts from one relationship to the next, as well as within...ongoing partnerships' (2009, p.133) this thesis will build on these findings by demonstrating the complexities of particular

<sup>9</sup> Devine was married to Sophie Harris, was Motley's business manager from 1932-1936, general manager of the LTS, teacher at the LTS and OVS, became Herbert's partner in the mid-1950s and was artistic director of the ESC at the Royal Court.

<sup>10</sup> Margaret 'Percy' Harris, Ralph Koltai, Jocelyn Herbert, John Gunter, Yolanda Sonnabend, Pamela Howard.

relationships in detail. Similarly, my research into Motley's and Herbert's use of models and renderings in the case studies will add to Wright's investigation of the reasons why designers create models and costume renderings and will expand on her conclusion that practice has changed during the twentieth century.

There is very little scholarship previous to this thesis that deals with Motley and Herbert as theatre artists in their own right, and when they are mentioned it is in relation to acting, directing or playwriting, rather than to theatre design. The following sections assess the few publications that concern themselves directly with the subjects of this research, with evaluations of the period 1935-1965 and with pertinent theories. The final sections evaluate the relevant archives and recorded interviews that are available.

### 1.3.1 Biographies & monographs

*Design by Motley* (1996) is a comprehensive account by Professor Michael Mullin of the careers of the three women who worked under the collective title of Motley. Mullin was instrumental in organising the University of Illinois's purchase, in 1981, of the 5,500 items that make up the Motley archive. He curated an exhibition entitled *Design by Motley*, which toured the USA and the UK between 1986-1991, and whose aim was to 'put the designers' work before the public' (Mullin, 1988, p.8). The exhibition included original costume and set designs alongside reproductions of costumes and model boxes (see Appendix 5 for a list of items). The exhibition was divided into five theatrical genres: Shakespeare, American musical, West End Comedy, Opera and Modern Classic, and was intended to show the range of their work and to try to convey their process of visual interpretation (Mullin, 1986b). An early promotional booklet is titled *Design By Motley: An Interpretive Exhibition* (Mullin, 1986a) and shows that Mullin intended to write a two hundred page catalogue to accompany the exhibition, which was to be 'an illustrated critical study' (Mullin, 1986a). This never transpired but the *Design by Motley* book, which was published in 1996, was almost certainly the outcome of this project. The layout of the prospective catalogue is very similar to the book, although there is a central section that would have divided productions into genre under the heading 'Designer as Critic' (Mullin, 1986a).

As a biographical study of Motley Mullin's book is far-reaching as he attempts to encompass every phase of Motley's professional output, making this a comprehensive guide to their practice, especially as it includes press reviews and comments by actors or directors involved. Summaries of Mullin's interviews with Harris and Montgomery in the University of Bristol Theatre Collection illustrate that Mullin relied heavily on their memories. The existence of a draft of Mullin's book with corrections and notes by Harris (Mullin, n.d.) corroborates my own recollection that Mullin depended on Harris's proof reading to retain historical accuracy. This methodology has inherent pitfalls, not only because, as will be discussed later in this

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

chapter, memory is unstable, but also because the interviewees looking back are not ‘the same people as when they engaged in the act of creation, but must be seen as observing themselves in retrospective autobiographical mode...constructing their histories through present desires’ (Proctor, 2006, p.296). My own approach to oral history material will be discussed in the section on interviews below. A large proportion of Mullin’s book is taken up by direct quotations, anecdotes and narrative, leaving little room for evaluation or contextualisation. Additionally, his aim to encompass the majority of their output hinders him from being able to afford as much detailed study and analysis of process as my case studies contain. Further as a theatre design practitioner I suggest I am able to approach such an evaluation from a more informed viewpoint than Mullin who was a professor of English and a Shakespeare scholar. For example, Mullin describes the *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) costumes as ‘glamorous’ (1996, p.48), ‘fresh’ and ‘beautiful’ (1996, p.51) and notes that they were inspired by paintings of the Italian renaissance. Through analysis of the cut of the *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) costumes I will consider how Motley negotiated that the costumes were inspired by historical paintings and yet remained ‘fresh’ to a contemporary audience, showing that other factors were at play including the need in unsubsidised theatre to flatter the actors and make them visually appealing to contemporary audiences.

I saw Margaret Harris regularly between 1992 and her death in 2000, and through my conversations with her it was clear that although she understood that Mullin’s book provided a valuable record of the history of Motley she had hoped that it would be more like Cathy Courtney’s *Jocelyn Herbert: a theatre workbook*, published three years earlier in 1993. As a workbook Courtney’s publication presents key productions rather than attempting complete biographical coverage as in *Design by Motley* (1996).

The first part of Courtney’s book details forty-nine of the eighty-one theatre productions that Herbert designed up until 1992. Each production is generously illustrated with Herbert’s designs and/or production photographs and begins with some explanation of the context of the play; either the stage directions, some information about the other people involved, or any special circumstances related to the staging. There then follow quotations about the production by Herbert and usually also by the director or an actor involved. The second part of the book consists of statements about Herbert herself by those who have been quoted already in relation to particular productions, as well as from other theatre practitioners with whom she worked

closely.<sup>11</sup> The selection illustrates both the calibre of artists with whom Herbert worked, and the respect in which they held her.

*Jocelyn Herbert: a theatre workbook* (1993) is unusual amongst books on theatre design and theatre designers in that, although Courtney has had to significantly edit the original interview material, Herbert's voice comes through clearly. Whether the description by Herbert and her colleagues is of the intention of the design, the circumstances of creating it, or a retrospective view of it, the reader is left with a fuller understanding of Herbert and her milieu. For example, Herbert often describes her recollection of the audience's reception of the production at the first night (Courtney, 1993, p.46), which is the first time it would be shown to the public and therefore a good barometer of how successful it would be, and this helps us to understand the uncertainty in the moment of creation, which can be hard to remember when productions have since become very well known for their success.

Courtney explains in her introduction that the book is a record of Herbert's work and that its aim is to illuminate the collaborative process between director, designer and writer and to 'show how deeply the design may influence the production values as a whole' (Courtney, 1993, p.8). This thesis shares all these aims, whilst building on and extending Courtney's publication. It does so by devoting a whole chapter each to the case studies of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) and *Happy Days* (1962). It is thus able to analyse in more detail how the productions were constructed and to illuminate the different personalities and multiple forces that designers have to negotiate at any one time in the realisation of their work. Additionally, this thesis contextualises Herbert's practice within the overall visual ethos of the Royal Court Theatre as well as the overall development of theatre design in mid-twentieth century Britain. Moreover, as a practicing theatre designer, I am able to bring a new perspective to the analysis.

*The sketchbooks of Jocelyn Herbert* (Farthing & Eyre, 2011) is part of a series looking at artist's sketchbooks which, so far, includes architect Sir Nicholas Grimshaw (1939-) and proposes to cover artists from various professions. As editor Stephen Farthing says in his introduction Herbert's sketchbooks are 'the visible trace of the processes with which Herbert engaged as she designed productions, sifted ideas, worked to remember facts and organised each day' (2011, p.26). Although there are no surviving sketchbooks from the period covered by this thesis in

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<sup>11</sup> Theatre designers Margaret (Percy) Harris, Hayden Griffin (1943-2013) and theatre designer and architect Hugh Casson (1910-1999), actors Peggy Ashcroft (1907-1991), Brenda Bruce (1918-1996), Alan Bates (1934-2003) and Billie Whitelaw (1932- ); directors Tony Richardson (1928-1991), Bill Gaskill (1930- ), John Dexter (1925-1990), Lindsay Anderson (1923-1994), Ronald Eyre (1929-1992), Peter Hall (1930- ), David Gothard (1948- ), David Leveaux (1957- ), Simon Usher (1957- ) and Suria Magito (1903-1987); and writers Samuel Beckett (1906-1989), Arnold Wesker (1932- ) and Tony Harrison (1937- ). Out of the 23 colleagues who contributed only five are not quoted in the section on productions; Suria Magito, Hugh Casson, David Gothard, David Leveaux and Hayden Griffin.

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

the Jocelyn Herbert Archive and therefore in this book, it provides insight into Herbert's later working processes and demonstrates that her design thinking was not isolated from the other aspects of her life that she processed in the sketchbooks. The interaction between theatre events and the 'surrounding conditions' (Postlewait, 2009, p.12) will be further considered in the section on methodology in this chapter.

Herbert and Motley first came into contact with each other at the London Theatre Studio, at which Motley taught and Herbert studied, and were influenced by the ideas of the man who founded it, Michel Saint-Denis. Saint-Denis wrote two books: *Theatre: the rediscovery of style and other writings* (1960) and *Training for the theatre: premises and promises* (published posthumously in 1982). The whole of *Theatre* and sections of *Training for the theatre* were reissued in one volume in 2009 under the editorship of Jane Baldwin (Saint-Denis, 2009) who had written *Michel Saint-Denis and the making of the modern actor* (2003) in which she detailed Saint-Denis's theatrical background and the work of his uncle Jacques Copeau.<sup>12</sup> The purpose of the book, as stated in the opening chapter, is to '(re)claim' (2003, p.2) Saint-Denis's place in the theatre, by which she means that although he was a respected leader in his field when alive there have not been any extended investigations of his practice since his death and that her book aims to fill that gap.

While Baldwin's intention is that Saint-Denis should be more recognised for his contribution to modern theatre, this thesis will reveal his contribution to modern theatre *design*. As he primarily wrote about and taught acting and directing, and was himself a director, Saint-Denis's contribution to acting is better known than to design. Unsurprisingly, as Baldwin's book is focused on the actor, she only acknowledges theatre design superficially. She references the technical courses at the London Theatre Studio and Old Vic School and their staff (Baldwin, 2003, pp.66 & 127) but does not go into any analysis of their approach. At both schools theatre designers, directors and stage managers did a general technical course in their first year, and those with potential were then placed on to the 'Advanced' technical course specialising in either design or directing, as will be described in more detail in Chapter Three. Motley are mentioned in relation to the sets they designed for Saint-Denis,<sup>13</sup> their close relationship with him, and Saint-Denis's influence on them.<sup>14</sup> Herbert, however, is referred to only twice, both

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<sup>12</sup> Jacques Copeau (1879-1949) was an influential French theatre director, producer, actor, critic and dramatist born in Paris.

<sup>13</sup> 1936 *Noah* (p62), 1936 *Witch of Edmonton* (p70), 1937 *Macbeth* (p71-73), 1938 *The Three Sisters* (p86).

<sup>14</sup> 'Margaret Harris, who with her associates revolutionized British Design, claimed that "it was all based on the work of Michel Saint-Denis".' (Baldwin, 2003, p.188)

times in relation to George Devine and the Royal Court (Baldwin, 2003, pp.140 & 186), and both references are cursory.<sup>15</sup>

Based on five lectures given by Saint-Denis in the United States, *Theatre: the rediscovery of style* (1960) is part theatrical autobiography, part explanation of his ideas on realism and style and part pedagogical guide, and describes the set up and training of his schools particularly at the Old Vic School. Saint-Denis explains that the aims of the three training schools he had established up to that point (London Theatre Studio (1936-1939), Old Vic Theatre School (1947-1952), Centre de l'Est Strasbourg (1954-)) were to establish an ensemble within which there was creative freedom and individual responsibility, to remain partly experimental, and to 'further the evolution of dramatic art' (Saint-Denis, 1960a, p.91). *Training for the theatre* (1982) goes into more detail about the schools and training, the majority of which relates to actors although there are sections on the 'Production Course' that was for stage managers, designers and directors.

That the way the designer's role was viewed during this period was not fixed is illustrated by the apparent contradiction in Saint-Denis's opinions about the designer/director relationship as expressed in his books. On the one hand he states that the director must know his own mind and not be dominated by the designer (Saint-Denis, 1982b, p.235), and on the other he recommends that there should be a 'collaboration' (Saint-Denis, 1960a, p.80) between them with complete freedom in the exchange of ideas, and even goes so far as to say that, 'the designer is no longer someone who just "decorates the stage;" he now makes an essential contribution to the life of the production on a par with its author and director' (Saint-Denis, 1982b, p.235). This change of position suggests that the period that Saint-Denis was writing was a period of particular flux in British theatre design, a subject that will be touched on in each of the chapters in this thesis.

Saint-Denis's view of the author and the dramatic text was also problematic. On the one hand Saint-Denis wrote that the author was the 'only completely creative person' and that 'director, designer, and actor had to understand the author's intention and submit to it' (Saint-Denis, 1960a, p.92), whilst on the other he:

...rejected the conception of the author as an 'independent genius' in favour of an author 'in constant touch with the stage' whose 'creative work' would be 'a collective effort, divided between producer, stage designer, musician, choreographer and actors'. (Saint-Denis (1947) in Cornford, 2012, p.229)

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<sup>15</sup> p140 quotes Herbert in relation to George Devine's attitude to Saint-Denis when he was running the Royal Court Theatre, whilst p186 lists Herbert amongst several Royal Court theatre designers who were London Theatre Studio or Old Vic School alumni or staff.

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

It is possible that Saint-Denis simply changed his mind about these ideas, but there are also illustrations of contradictions between his practice and theory. For example, Saint-Denis wrote that at his theatre schools ‘we were “ensemblers”’ who aimed to ‘merge [our] personal qualities into the ensemble’ (Saint-Denis, 1960a, p.92) and yet he remained decisively authoritarian both at the schools and as a director.

The interpretation of words is also a complex area. For example, the word ‘submit’ sits uncomfortably with contemporary designers and in contemporary theatre discourse. Motley and Jocelyn Herbert used similar terminology, often talking about ‘serving’ the play or the author’s intentions.<sup>16</sup> Pamela Howard highlighted the dangers inherent in such terminology in an interview I conducted with her on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012:

Where I differ from Jocelyn [Herbert] is that I never say the designer serves the play because I think it is misunderstood. I think directors will jump on that word, ‘Oh you serve the play’ therefore that’s the verb and the noun is that you are the servant, because you are serving the play. I would never use that. (Howard, 2012)

Howard implies that ‘serving the play’ can be translated into serving the director. An example of this role being assigned to the designer was seen in the British press when theatre designer Bunny Christie was named in 2013 as one of five theatre designers in *The Stage’s 100* annual power list, which details the ‘theatre and performing arts industry’s most influential individuals’. Christie’s attributes included that ‘her designs always perfectly serve the director’s vision’ (Anon, 2013). ‘Serving the director’s vision’ implies that Christie’s contribution to the production is as a translator of the director’s ideas, rather than as an independently creative collaborator, and questions around this relationship will recur throughout this thesis.

Tom Cornford’s doctoral thesis *The English Theatre Studios of Michael Chekhov and Michel Saint-Denis, 1935-1965* (Cornford, 2012) covers the precise period that I have chosen and looks closely at the London Theatre Studio and the Old Vic School. Although centring on actor training Cornford’s study shares many areas of interest with my own research and where his findings and conclusions are relevant to my thesis they will be discussed in later chapters. In an early section Cornford describes Motley’s studio and discusses its importance to Saint-Denis (2012, pp.153–158), but he does not include the theatre design courses in his evaluation of the London Theatre Studio or Old Vic School. The few places where Cornford does mention design include his statement that the design students at the Old Vic School studied what Saint-Denis termed ‘style’ (p.200) and that Jocelyn Herbert acknowledged Saint-Denis as a

<sup>16</sup> For example in her unpublished notebook JH/3/68 (Jocelyn Herbert Archive) she wrote ‘many productions do not do service to the play - but follow some course of their own, which is very often harmful (however successful) to the authors intentions’. Michael Mullin puts serving the play at the head of his list of Motley’s principles in his book *Design by Motley* (Mullin, 1996, p.53)

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

great influence on the Royal Court Theatre (p.272). Cornford also asserts that design and rehearsal were a 'fully integrated process' at Saint-Denis's schools (p.351) but provides no further evidence to support this statement. I will show that the incorporation of design into the theatrical production process was far more complex at the London Theatre Studio than Cornford suggests. I will present evidence throughout to show that creative team relationships were in a constant state of negotiation.

The few books to evaluate 1930s British theatre either do not mention Motley, Saint-Denis or the London Theatre Studio (Barker & Gale, 2000), or they are given only the most fleeting of mentions (Warden, 2012). The late 1990s and early 2000s, however, saw a flurry of books, revisionist or not, about the post-war period. Philip Roberts's *The Royal Court and the Modern Stage* (1999) gave a detailed account of the history of the Royal Court Theatre from 1956-1998 using his extensive knowledge of and access to public and private archives and interviews. Although Herbert contributed to the book, design is not specifically dealt with. Dominic Shellard's *British Theatre Since the War* (1999) adopted a revisionary standpoint on the period but did not provide any consideration of design.

One of the books that does consider the design and aesthetics of the period is Stephen Lacey's *British Realist Theatre: the new wave in its context 1956-1965* (1995), providing an analysis of the myths around *Look Back in Anger* and the Royal Court Theatre. Lacey's book looks specifically at what was called at the time the 'Angry Young Men' movement and is now called the 'New Wave'. However, as well as placing the New Wave within the wider political, social and theatrical context of the time, Lacey explores the term 'realism' as understood and applied during this period.

Lacey argues that a discussion of what the term realism means in a theatrical context is necessary because it enables us to look at the relationship of 'form' to 'political and social purposes' (Lacey, 1995, p.7). Lacey's proposition is that in theatre 'form' relates to both the design of the production and the style in which the performance is presented, whereas 'content' refers to the dramatic text or spoken word. For example, Lacey discusses the fact that *Look Back in Anger*, the play that is said to have sparked the New Wave, is revolutionary in content rather than form and that this may have been a reason why it made more impact than *Waiting for Godot*, which had its British premiere the year before and was ostensibly more radical in both form and content. According to Lacey the very familiarity of the form of *Look Back in Anger*, designed by Alan Tagg in 1956, enabled attention to be focused on the issues it raised (Lacey, 1995, pp.28 – 29). It is set in a room with an invisible fourth wall, following the traditions of naturalist drama. However, its provocation is that it is a shabby, cramped, suburban room as opposed to the middle class drawing rooms that were usual in the theatre at that time.

A contemporary audience member recalled how disconcerted she was by the ironing board that Alison uses throughout most of the play as they were not used to seeing such domestic items on stage (Shellard, 2000, p.52). However, Lacey contends that it was also the case that new forms of presenting theatre did not always suit the content or intention. He uses the example of *The Kitchen* (1962), arguing that the aesthetics of Herbert's design masked the social realist message of the play (Lacey, 1995, p.115), an assertion that will be considered in my detailed case study of Herbert's designs in Chapter Four.

Dan Rebellato's *1956 And All That* (1999) offers a comprehensive reconsideration of the established myth that *Look Back in Anger* (1956) motivated a 'big-bang' moment of change in British theatre. Rebellato cites political, cultural and financial factors, as well as influences from abroad and the impact of homosexuality as catalysts for change on post-war British theatre. Rebellato argues against the view that pre-1956 theatre design was 'an era of tyrannical and monstrous scoundrelry [sic]' (Rebellato, 1999, p.94) or that designers such as Herbert, Richard Negri and Alan Tagg were the capable hands in which theatre design 'grew up' (Rebellato, 1999, p.94). Rebellato aims to alter the received wisdom that the Royal Court 'ushered in a renaissance of British theatre, and that people were grateful' (Rebellato, 1999, p.94) and he sees the Royal Court Theatre aesthetic as controlling and disciplining in its rejection of complicated or decorative scenery. Rebellato's stance on this distorts some of his other views in relation to the Royal Court. For example, when discussing lighting design he claims that Devine was opposed to lighting designers moving out from under the dominance of the theatre director (Rebellato, 1999, p.93). This thesis will show that, on the contrary, Devine is the first person in England to have been credited as 'arranging' the lighting for a production, identifying this as a discrete role as opposed to it being incorporated into that of the director or electrician.<sup>17</sup> I will also show that Devine's support for lighting design was evidenced by his teaching of it, his understanding of its importance within a production, as well as his involvement in the revolutionary placing of the lighting box at the back of the auditorium at the London Theatre Studio theatre in 1936, which enabled the lighting operator to react to the action on the stage in a way that had not previously been possible when positioned in the wings.<sup>18</sup>

*Samuel Beckett's scenographic collaboration with Jocelyn Herbert* (McMullan, 2012) by Beckett scholar Professor Anna McMullan argues that his plays are equally as concerned with the scenographic as with the spoken word, and that Herbert's designs significantly contributed to the visual aspects of his work being appreciated in performance (2012, p.8). As well as

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<sup>17</sup> For *Richard II* (1937) directed by Gielgud and designed by Motley.

<sup>18</sup> A lighting control box was placed at the back of the Royal Court Theatre auditorium during refurbishment of the theatre at some point between 1956 and Devine's death in 1965, although I have not been able to identify the precise year that this occurred.

looking at written and spoken archival material McMullan analyses Herbert’s designs for the productions that she has chosen to focus on, including *Happy Days* (1962)<sup>19</sup> and says that ‘examining design materials can contribute to a more complex conversation about performance’ (2012, p.4). However, both the 1962 and 1979 versions of *Happy Days* that Herbert designed are dealt with in three pages, precluding the amount of detail that I will be able to allocate to the 1962 production in my chapter on *Happy Days* (1962). For example, although McMullan touches on Herbert’s costume sketches for Winnie, describing that there are many versions of Winnie’s hat, she does not go further into any analysis of the sketches as I will do in Chapter Five.

## 1.4 Methodology

### 1.4.1 Theoretical context

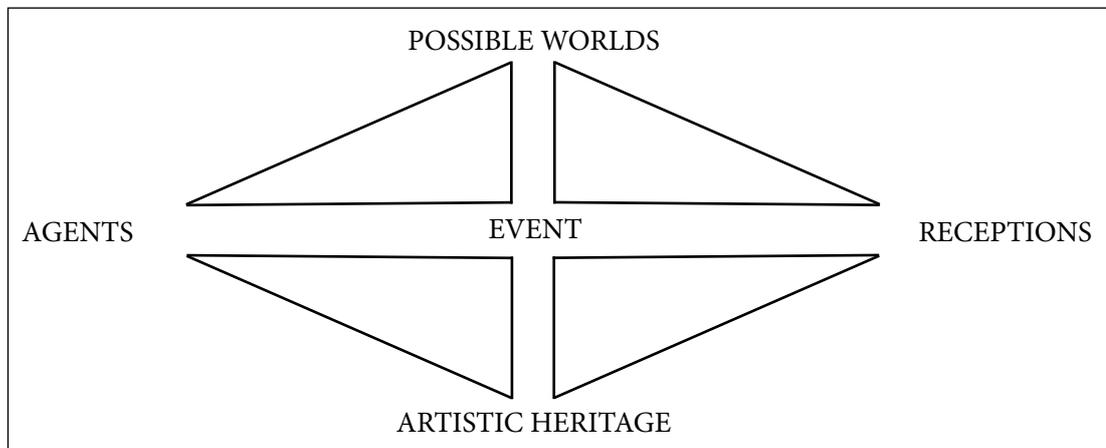


Figure 2: Model of a theatrical event and the operating conditions that influence or determine it (Postlewait, 2009, p.18)

In *The Cambridge Introduction to Historiography* (2009) Postlewait highlights some of the pitfalls that theatre historians should be aware of, including accepting anecdotes and stories ‘which tend to simplify yet distort the nature of historical events’ (2009, p.80) without investigating further. Postlewait argues that ‘our tendency to separate documentary scholarship from cultural history’ (2009, p.9) fails to take into account that all human actions and reactions occur ‘as continual negotiations...with the surrounding conditions’ (2009, p.12), and he has constructed a model that illustrates this interaction (Figure 2).

In this model ‘Receptions’ represents the comprehension of the theatrical event by various people, ‘Possible Worlds’ indicates the influences of the ‘surrounding conditions’ (2009, p.12) on the event and vice versa, ‘Agents’ are the people who contribute to the making of the event, and ‘Artistic Heritage’ encompasses the conventions and traditions of theatre and the

<sup>19</sup> The other productions McMullan covers are: *Endgame* (1958), *Krapp’s Last Tape* (1958), *Play* (1964), *Come and Go* (1970) and *Footfalls* (1976).

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

arts during the time of the event. In my own research model theatre designers are the central Agents, but I will also refer to theatre directors and playwrights. Artistic Heritage will be a key focus as I will begin by placing each case study in the theatrical context of its period. Possible Worlds will be referenced in terms of sources of funding, the organisation of theatre design practice, and the theatrical organisations that Motley and Herbert were involved in. Although acknowledged as important Receptions will be touched on but will not be central to my approach.

Academic and critic Raymond Williams<sup>20</sup> had a keen interest in theatre and wrote *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot* (1952) (revised and published as *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* in 1968) and *Drama in Performance* (1954), and integrated theatre into other writings about culture such as *The Politics of Modernism* (1989). Williams's early books on drama were written towards the end of the period I cover in this thesis and he is one of the few theorists of the era to have an understanding of performed dramatic works rather than seeing them as purely literary. He is referenced in books on post-war British theatre relating to the Royal Court Theatre (see Lacey, 1995; Rebellato, 1999).

In *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* (1968) Williams describes theatrical conventions as being central to 'any understanding of drama as a form' (Williams, 1973, p.3), and argues that:

In the actual practice of drama, the convention, in any particular case, is simply the terms upon which author, performers and audience agree to meet, so that the performance may be carried on. (Williams, 1973, p.4)

This thesis will examine the ways in which the tacitly agreed theatrical conventions of a period affected how a production was designed, as for example in Motley's design for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) that had a different set for each scene although in the post-war period they began to feel that this was no-longer necessary (Harris, 1995, n.p.). It will also illustrate how the design can signify conscious attempts to change theatre conventions, as in the permanent surround used during the early productions at the Royal Court Theatre as described in Chapter Four.

Williams also notes the advantages of a playwright being involved in the theatrical realisation of his written words (Williams, 1973, p.398) arguing that such an involvement has the potential

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<sup>20</sup> Raymond Williams (1921-1988), was a Welsh academic, novelist and critic whose writings on politics, culture and mass media had considerable influence on cultural theory. He was the founder of 'cultural materialism', a school of literary and cultural theory that differed from Marxism's materialism (which reduced culture to an effect of the civil society), in that it saw culture as being as much influenced by and having influence on society and historical context as industrial or agricultural production.

to develop theatrical conventions. This will be touched on in Chapter Five when Samuel Beckett's relationship with the Royal Court Theatre will be assessed.

Conventions and form are often assigned to particular periods or movements, when in fact they are less homogenised than this implies. For example, naturalism was derided by Saint-Denis as 'superficial' and 'satisfied with the representation of the external' (Saint-Denis, 1960a, p.50). However, according to Williams although each new generation of theatre makers is critical of those that came before they are actually rejecting previous *conventions*, and therefore there is no contradiction in practitioners who might profess to abhor naturalism simultaneously retaining certain of its principles. A further complication is seen in Postlewait's argument that the assignation of periods or movements is arbitrary and that we must guard against falling into the trap of assuming that they signal a uniform attitude.

Despite the complexity of interpreting theatre history, not least the difficulties of reconstructing a past and inherently intangible theatrical event from the tangible fragments of performance that remain, I will follow Postlewait's recommendation that the theatre historian should use rigorous research and analysis, reflecting not only on what we find but also on our methods and assumptions (Postlewait, 2009, p.268).

#### 1.4.2 Interviews

Interviews give a voice to those who are not often heard, and I have shown that theatre design and designers are rarely mentioned in scholarly works. In the case of Motley and Herbert, although each have a book dedicated to them, unedited interviews add detail, fill gaps, and throw light on to their own interpretations of, and meaning given to, their life events. As pointed out by Michael Frisch, oral history can be:

...a powerful tool for discovering, exploring, and evaluating the nature and process of historical memory – how people make sense of their past, how they connect individual experience and its social context, how the past becomes part of the present, and how people use it to interpret their lives and the world around them. (Frisch in Perks, 2002, pp.2–3)

'Life story' interviews in particular, being in-depth and several hours long,<sup>21</sup> enable interviewees to reflect on past actions and events.

Jens Brockmeier has highlighted that memories are constructions of meaning and are, therefore, inherently unstable (Brockmeier, 2010, p.13). Consequently recorded interviews

<sup>21</sup> The British Library National Life Stories Collection describes life stories as comprising: 'recorded in-depth interviews of a high standard... Each individual life story interview is several hours long, covering family background, childhood, education, work, leisure and later life' (British Library, n.d.).

will not be considered in isolation in this research and will be used in combination with evaluations of archive material, studies of the literature available, and where possible alongside interviews with others who were involved in the lives of Motley and Herbert.

The British Library Sound Archive (BL SA) contains many theatre related oral history interviews, the most notable for my own research being those with Percy Harris (Harris, 1992), Jocelyn Herbert (Herbert, 1985a), and ex-students of the London Theatre Studio such as Angelica Garnett (Garnett, 2003), as well as recordings of programmes about Michel Saint-Denis (Anon, 1971).

Cathy Courtney's extensive interviews with Harris, totalling eighteen hours and carried out between 1992-3 (Harris, 1992), help to contextualise Motley, explaining the chronology and personal narrative, in other words the spoken account of connected events, of Harris's life and practice, and demonstrate that Harris was eager to communicate Motley's process, and to explain the importance of the major influences upon them such as John Gielgud and Saint-Denis. There are times when Harris struggles to articulate concepts that were embedded in her practice, such as when explaining the visual aspects of Saint-Denis's term 'style'. Harris described it as 'against naturalism but not realism', 'based on truth above all things', and 'surrealistic in the way it wanted to stress the real but through the *arts* rather than through the *fact*' (Harris, 1992, tape 7a). Courtney mentions that Lindsay Anderson, who worked closely with Herbert, had used 'poetic realism' to describe 'style' and Harris agrees that this was 'quite a good description of it because Michel was very keen that things should have a poetic value' (Harris, 1992, tape 7a). Examples such as this show how the length and detail of the interviews can provide information that contributes to an understanding of Motley's methodology and theatrical ethos.

Herbert, interviewed extensively by Courtney between 1985-88 for a total of fourteen hours, also describes productions she designed and her working relationships, as well as describing her training at the London Theatre Studio. In this Life Story interview (Herbert, 1985a) Herbert does not give as much detail about productions that she designed during the period covered by this thesis as Harris does in her interviews, although there is another shorter set of interviews also carried out by Courtney in which she explains more about her designs for particular productions (Herbert, 1985b). There are several possible reasons why this may have been the case. Firstly, Harris had a remarkable memory for detail; she could recall the name of every student she had ever taught as well as appearing to know the names of everyone she had ever worked with. It may have been that Harris had a better memory about the minutiae of events long in the past than Herbert. Secondly, and most likely, Courtney's questions to Herbert in the Life Story interviews may have been less focused on the details of productions than her questions to Harris.

Where possible I have conducted my own interviews with those who knew Motley and Herbert: Stephen Doncaster, who was a student and then a teacher at the Old Vic School and designed sets and costumes at the Royal Court (Doncaster, 2012); theatre designer Hayden Griffin (Griffin, 2012), who was one of the first students on the Motley Theatre Design Course in 1966 and soon afterwards became a teacher on the course; scenographer and educator Pamela Howard (Howard, 2012), who was my teacher at Central Saint Martins college in the late 1980s and is the author of *What is Scenography?* (2009); Arnold Wesker (Wesker, 2013), playwright of *The Kitchen* designed by Herbert in 1959 and 1961, amongst other plays; Sally Jacobs (Jacobs, 2013), a theatre designer who assisted Herbert on the 1961 production of *The Kitchen*; and Peter Gill (Gill, 2013), playwright and director who knew and worked with Sophie Harris-Devine, Margaret Harris and Jocelyn Herbert and acted in the 1959 version of *The Kitchen*. In carrying out my own interviews I have been able to ask specific questions about the themes of this research. I have also been privileged to be able to consult several people with extensive knowledge about Motley and Herbert, including Cathy Courtney, my mother Dr Harriet Devine and playwright and director Donald Howarth, although I have not carried out formal interviews with them.

### 1.4.3 Archives

The whole history of the past (what has been called history-as-actuality) can be known to the historian only through the surviving record of it (history-as-record), and most of history-as-record is only the surviving part of the remembered part of the observed part of the whole. (Gottschalk, 1950, p.45 in Postlewait p57).

Keeping in mind the above quotation, archives have been a key element in my research. It is worth highlighting that the objects and documents relating to theatre design that are retained in an archive are not 'completed' artworks, but are tools of communication. Theatre design drawings or models were created to explain to the director, actors or makers what the final design was intended to look like or how it was to be constructed. They could also be consciously unresolved, created as a starting point for discussion as described by Herbert: 'a drawing gives you something to start with even if it gets knocked down' (Courtney, 1993, p.84). Additionally, transforming the drawn design or model into a material object or space is a vital part of the process. Sophie Harris-Devine described creating design drawings as 'only about a third' of her work, 'getting the tangible results of my drawing is the real task' (Benedetta, 1955, p.35). Therefore those items that have been preserved in the archive are not necessarily evidence of the final outcome, but rather an indication of the designer's processes and intentions.

The items in an archive were selected, often by the theatre designer themselves, to be kept whilst others were discarded. From my own experience as a practitioner I would posit that

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

this selection process may have happened at several intervals over a long time period; when the theatre designer needed to create more space where they were stored, for example, or when she revisited her past work in order to display it or explain it to someone else. Therefore the items may have passed through several appraisals as to their value, but we are unlikely to know the criteria by which they were evaluated. Questions about what archival items have survived, and why, are tackled in the thesis, particularly in Chapters Three and Four.

There are two main archives that have provided a rich seam of material. The Jocelyn Herbert Archive is the most comprehensive, consisting of designs, plans, sketchbooks, notebooks, correspondence, models, masks and press cuttings. Although Herbert sold most of George Devine's papers to Leeds University to raise funds for the George Devine Award, there are still remnants of his papers amongst her own. Notably, these include documents relating to the London Theatre Studio (JH 1/67) with specifics of timetables and course content, and to the Royal Court Theatre scheme with details of the ambitions of the Royal Court in 1953 (JH/1/36) clarifying the particulars and aspirations of these two organisations. There are also letters between Samuel Beckett and Devine relating to the 1962 production of *Happy Days* that is explored in Chapter Five (JH/1/15). The notebooks and sketchbooks in Herbert's archive do not date as far back as the 1950s or 1960s, but there are set and costume designs and production plans from that period and, in combination with production photographs and reviews by critics, these help to reconstruct the structure and look of many of Herbert's productions.

The other key archive for my research is the Motley Collection at the University of Illinois in Champaign, Illinois, which has digitised a large proportion of the Motley designs it contains.<sup>22</sup> My visit to this archive enabled me to see items that have not been digitised, as for example the costumes for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) (351017-001-009), or that were not detailed in the catalogue, such as a rough ground plan for *Three Sisters* (1938) (Map Case Drawer/Folder 11/9). Being able to view and handle the original designs and to closely inspect them gave me a sense of Motley's working process, techniques and style of designing. Apart from designs, other items in the collection include prop lists, cast lists, press cuttings and ground plans for some of the productions, as well as details about the acquisition of the items and about the *Design by Motley* exhibition (1988-1991).

There are several other archives that hold important documents relating to this research. The University of Bristol Theatre Collection houses a small amount of papers that Harris left to

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<sup>22</sup> These are available online at <http://images.library.illinois.edu/projects/motley/>.

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Mander and Mitchenson,<sup>23</sup> which include press cuttings, production photos and slides of the designs in the Motley Collection in Illinois, as well as four of the model boxes which were made for Mullin's *Design by Motley* exhibition (1986-1991).<sup>24</sup> The Michel Saint-Denis archive at the British Library contains many papers relating to the London Theatre Studio and Old Vic School, though few of these are to do with design aspects of the courses. It does however contain photographs of productions directed by Saint-Denis and designed by Motley. The V&A Theatre and Performance Archives house the English Stage Company/Royal Court Theatre Archive, which has photograph and press files for each production between 1956 and 2007, as well as some stage management files for particular productions. The V&A Archives also have their own files on named productions and people. These sources all contribute towards analysing particular Motley and Herbert productions.

Between 2003 and 2008 I independently researched the Old Vic School and London Theatre Studio, visiting archives<sup>25</sup> and interviewing people who had attended both schools.<sup>26</sup> I amassed a personal archive that includes books, articles and magazines that mention the schools or theatre productions of those involved in the schools, photographs of school productions, programmes, press cuttings and correspondence about the schools. Once it became known that I was doing this research I was given items from personal archives such as the Old Vic School diaries of actor Edgar Wreford, who had been an acting student there, notes about the Old Vic School from Stephen Doncaster who had been both a design student and a teacher, and books and press cuttings from David Gothard who had been artistic director of the Riverside Studios when the Motley Theatre Design Course was housed there in the 1980s, and who is a trustee of the Motley Theatre Design Course. My family already owned some of the books that had belonged to Margaret Harris and George Devine (see Appendix 3) as well as some of Devine's personal letters, and when Jocelyn Herbert died in 2003 her children gave us family photo albums and production photos relating to Devine that were amongst Herbert's own papers. All of these items are referenced in this thesis as the 'Devine Family Archive'.

In the last five years of her life Harris worked on the manuscript of a book about Motley's designs for Shakespeare, which is also amongst the Devine Family Archive papers, although

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<sup>23</sup> The Mander & Mitchenson Theatre Collection is the result of the lifetime's work of actors Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson collecting the archives and ephemera of Britain's theatrical history. It is now housed at the University of Bristol Theatre Collection.

<sup>24</sup> The model boxes were made for the exhibition under the supervision of Margaret Harris and are: *Richard of Bordeaux* (1932), *Romeo and Juliet* (1935), *The Three Sisters* (1938), *A Man for all Seasons* (1960).

<sup>25</sup> Michel Saint-Denis Archive at the British Library; Theatre Museum (now V&A Theatre and Performance Collections) archives; RIBA archive, V&A.; George Devine Papers, Special Collections at the University of Leeds.

<sup>26</sup> Frith Banbury, Ann Morrish, Voytek, Stephen and Wendy Doncaster, Joe Blatchley, Laura Dyas, Bay White, Ann Heffernan, Sehri Saklatvala, Peter & Lesley Retej, Edgar Wreford, James Cairncross (by phone and letters), Peter Hicks (by phone), George Byam Shaw (by letter), Jeremy Geidt (by email).

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

other copies exist.<sup>27</sup> Harris put together details of Shakespeare plays that Motley had designed throughout their career,<sup>28</sup> including several that they had designed more than once. She stated the intention of the book as being:

...a record of the principles underlying Motley's designs for Shakespeare's plays between 1930, when we began our work, and the 1970s when we finished. To look also at the varied approaches we took to solve the practicalities of staging, at the people and ideas which influenced us over the years, and the theatrical conventions against which we rebelled. (Harris, c.1995)

The focus of the plays chosen is on productions that Harris designed alone, still under the name Motley, whilst working with director Glen Byam Shaw at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in the 1950s. Harris was mainly responsible for the sets when working with the other members of Motley, and she included plans and elevations of each of the productions, as well as details of how each scene would change, and critiques of how well each design worked alongside a retrospective opinion about it. She also included occasional details about periods or painters that inspired particular productions. Harris stated that her intention was to include reproductions and photographs of costumes, although costumes are only referenced in the text.

The introduction to the manuscript is of particular significance as it has sections outlining Motley's principles of design, and although she did not write any kind of conclusion, Harris did provide some indication of changes in attitudes to design within the short introductions she wrote for each play. For example, when describing a pre-war and post-war *Henry V* (1937 & 1951) Harris explained that the pre-war version 'stressed the historical and heroic aspect of war' whereas 'by 1951 most of the people concerned with the production had recently experienced the reality. This led to a more realistic approach and stressed the relationship between characters and between leaders and led' (Harris, c.1995). The attitudes to theatre design that are highlighted in Harris's manuscript will be discussed in more detail in the Chapter Two.

Also in my possession are photocopies of some of Irving Wardle's interview transcripts made whilst he was researching the book *The Theatres of George Devine* (Wardle, 1978), which he kindly allowed me to make (see Appendix 4 for a full list). These were mostly carried out in the early to mid-70s, and show the attitudes of the interviewees during that period which is useful

<sup>27</sup> A copy is in the Motley Theatre Design Course library (which is in storage at the time of writing), and there are almost definitely one or two copies more in private hands. My copy is labeled 'II'.

<sup>28</sup> *Henry V* (1937, 1951), *Hamlet* (1934, 1959), *Coriolanus* (1952), *Othello* (1956), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1932, 1949, 1954), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1946, 1956), *King Lear* (1959), *Merry Wives of Windsor* (1955), *Julius Caesar* (1957).

to contrast with earlier or later stances, but there are also interviews with important people who are not included in the British Library Sound Archive, and who have since died. The interviews are focused on George Devine, but because of his close relationships with Motley, Herbert, the London Theatre Studio, Old Vic School and Royal Court Theatre they contain information about design, such as memories of productions designed by Motley or Herbert, or about the London Theatre Studio and Old Vic School design courses.

## 1.5 Brief overview of each chapter

The chapters are organised to provide some context for each of the case studies; the thinking around theatre design that was current amongst those involved in the production, the history of the play itself, the point in Motley's or Herbert's career at which it occurred. I then move on to the circumstances of the production before analysing Motley's or Herbert's process and their actual designs. The reasoning behind this arrangement of the chapters is related to the idea that a theatre event is affected by the surrounding conditions, the people who contribute to making it and the conventions and traditions of theatre and the arts at that period, as discussed above.

Chapter Two uses a case study of *Romeo and Juliet* (1935), directed by John Gielgud, to evaluate how Motley incorporated contemporaneous ideas about theatre design into their practice, what their processes and methods were, and how they worked with Gielgud and with each other as a design team. Additionally, it will consider how Motley negotiated and altered existing modes of theatre design practice.

Chapter Three introduces director Michel Saint-Denis and assesses how Motley's evolving practice was influenced by him and by their involvement in the London Theatre Studio (1936-1939). The case study of *Three Sisters* (1938) will enable an analysis of the application of Motley's ideas about theatre design to a non-Shakespearean play and an evaluation of their designs within the context of contemporaneous ideas about 'poetic realism' in British theatre.

Chapter Four will examine Herbert's designs and processes for *The Kitchen* (1958 & 1961) as well as her working relationship with director John Dexter (1925-1990) and playwright Arnold Wesker (1932- ), evaluating what this indicates about Herbert's role in the production team. The influence of the London Theatre Studio, Motley and Brechtian<sup>29</sup> theatre on the visual ethos of the Royal Court Theatre and Herbert herself will be appraised as will the question of whether or not there is a connection between the poetic realism of *Three Sisters* (1938) and that of *The Kitchen* (1958 & 1961).

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<sup>29</sup> That is the theatre style created by Brecht and his designers Casper Neher (1897-1962), Teo Otto (1904-1968) and Karl von Appen (1900-1981).

The case study of *Happy Days* (1962) in Chapter Five will examine the working relationship between Samuel Beckett, in whose plays the scenography and text are intertwined, and Herbert during the period in which Beckett's process began to include the physical realisation of his dramatic works. The case study of *Happy Days* (1962) will demonstrate how Herbert visually developed the play and provide insight into her collaborative working relationship with Beckett.

## 1.6 Key definitions

*Theatre design* is used as a term to mean the design of costumes, sets and props for a theatrical performance, and *theatre designer* will refer to the person or persons responsible for these elements. If lighting or sound design is mentioned it will be identified separately as it is not usual in Britain for the same person to be responsible for all elements of the design of a performance. The names given to the role of the theatre designer have changed throughout the twentieth century and this will be discussed throughout the thesis.

The term *scenography* is of Greek origin (*skēnē*, meaning 'stage or scene building'; *grapho*, meaning 'to describe') and so literally means to describe or draw stage space. Prevalent in continental Europe, scenography has only commonly been used in Britain since the late 1990s. The word inspires continuing debate amongst performance designers, but McKinney and Butterworth use it to mean 'the manipulation and orchestration of the performance environment' (2009, p.4), and 'scenographer' describes the artists who have responsibility for all the visual and aural contributions to performance (Baugh, 2005, p.84). My own opinion, as a practitioner, is that the more involved in the overall dramaturgy of a dramatic production the designer becomes the more accurate *scenographer* becomes as a description of their role. Consequently I will generally use the term theatre designer and theatre design as this more closely relates to how Motley and Herbert would have described themselves and their work, but scenographer or scenography will also be used where I consider it to be appropriate.

I occasionally refer to the *creative team* or *production team* and by this I intend to include the director, designers of sets, props, costume, lighting and sound, as well as musical directors and choreographers.

Theatre design *practice* encompasses the action of designing for theatre, the end result of that action, the concepts and theories behind what is produced, and how it is created. Theatre design *praxis* is exclusively the practical side of practice, although influenced by the theoretical. Praxis represents what have come to be accepted as the established processes by which practice is carried out. *Processes* therefore exist as part of praxis but can also be independent of it. For example, the process of drawing a costume rendering would be considered part of theatre

design praxis, whereas making a maquette of a costume is a process but is unusual enough not to be current praxis.

Although *Britain* is used, most of the productions that are discussed were in fact based in London, England. However, I continue to use Britain as these productions often toured around the United Kingdom, and were potentially important to the development of British theatre, even to practitioners from other parts of the UK who did not see the actual productions discussed.

*Dramatic text* is used frequently and refers to a literary text that has been composed with the intention that it will be performed. Most of the theatre productions that Motley and Herbert were working on during the period 1935-1965 were based on a dramatic text, with a few exceptions as will be evidenced in Chapter Three, where it will be shown that both of Herbert's final year design projects at the London Theatre Studio were devised.

I will be using the term *visual dramaturgy* to describe the embedding of visual aspects into the realisation of a text as a performance. Traditional dramaturgy is described by Michael Chemers in his dramaturgy handbook as:

...the accumulated techniques that **all theatrical artists** employ to do three things:

1. Determine what the aesthetic architecture of a piece of dramatic literature actually is (analysis)
2. Discover everything needed to transform that inert script into a living piece of theater [sic] (research)
3. Apply that knowledge in a way that makes sense to a living audience at this time in this place (practical application)

(Chemers, 2010, p.3; my emphasis)

An example of visual dramaturgy is that Motley designed quickly changing sets for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935). Their designs contributed to the aim of presenting Shakespeare swiftly and energetically, and did so in a way that was fully integrated with the other methods of presentation such as the movement and speech of the actors. The implication of using the word dramaturgy is that the designer has analysed the dramatic text and the conditions of the production (what I would call the design brief)<sup>30</sup> and visually conveyed their interpretation in a way that affects the narrative of the piece or the understanding of the work by the audience. This kind of design is distinguished from 'décor', the name commonly used for theatre designs

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<sup>30</sup> What I call the 'design brief' would include the budget, resources, company structure, timescale, casting, aims of the production and my own skills and abilities. I would take all these into consideration when designing a production.

before World War Two, that implies a superficially decorative visual contribution.<sup>31</sup> In a typically self-effacing way, Harris liked to tell a parable of how, if a touring company arrived in a town without the sets and costumes they could still perform, whereas if they arrived without the actors they could not. In a production that incorporated my definition of visual dramaturgy, however, the performance without sets and costumes would be considerably weakened because the visual ‘could exist as a layer of meaning within the text’ and be as integral as the dialogue or musical score (Baugh, 2010, p.190). Although each case study will consider Motley’s or Herbert’s visual dramaturgy, Chapter Two in particular will provide evidence that Motley were striving for the recognition that as theatre designers they were moving away from *décor* towards the integration of their designs into the dramaturgy of the production.

I will refer to *ensembles* and *collaborations*. A theatrical *ensemble* is a group of theatre makers who work closely together over a long period of time, often several years, and who will all work on each performance rather than bringing in freelance artists. *Collaboration* means to co-operate with one, or more, other people to produce an outcome. So, the members of an ensemble collaborate with each other to produce a theatrical performance. Collaborative relationships or theatrical ensembles are not necessarily egalitarian as will be illustrated later in the thesis.

### **1.7 Establishing boundaries**

I am not attempting to make any qualitative judgments about the designs created by Motley and Herbert; my aim is to consider how the designs were produced. Neither am I trying to make any evaluative judgement between Motley or Herbert because this is patently not significant to my research.

Although both Motley and Herbert designed for film I will not be including film in this thesis, as it is a distinct medium and industry from theatre and the structure and hierarchy of the creative team is organised differently.

I have made choices about particular elements that I believe to have been key influences on Motley and Herbert, and have done so in order to examine their effect, if any, on Motley and Herbert’s practice and processes. Other researchers may choose other elements that they regard as influential, depending on their own area of interest.

Whilst acknowledging that the three members of Motley and Jocelyn Herbert were women working in the largely male dominated environment of the theatre industry, I will not be examining their work within a specifically feminist theoretical framework. Neither will I be analysing the impact of political or social factors, such as for example, class, on their practice

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<sup>31</sup> The term *décor* continued to be used well into the late twentieth century although theatre design or stage design became more common, as will be discussed in the thesis.

although it is clear that Motley's and Herbert's relatively wealthy middle-class backgrounds were advantageous to them in establishing their careers.<sup>32</sup> This thesis confines itself to a broad theatre historiographical approach to the material practices of theatre production.

It should also be pointed out that although my own position in the early twenty-first century will, of course, affect my viewpoint, I am placing Motley's and Herbert's practice within the context of their own time and will not be overtly considering it through a post-modern or post-dramatic lens. For example, a post-modern point of view would not accept Motley's and Herbert's belief that an audience would all have the same understanding of the visual signals in a performance. Whilst I will acknowledge that we now see things differently I will not be specifically analysing such differences.

## 1.8 Summary

The paucity of critical engagement with theatre design and lack of recognition of the complexities of collaborative practice, as outlined in this chapter, illustrate the need for this thesis. The traditional approach to theatre history and theory has been through literary analysis, with performance only relatively recently being considered. Even literature about theatre design seldom mentions Motley or Herbert, or makes general statements about them in passing without the comprehensive evaluation that this thesis is able to give. Literature that covers the period 1935-1965 rarely includes theatre design, with a few exceptions such as Lacey (1995) and Rebellato (1999). Existing monographs and biographies about Motley and Herbert are not able to examine particular productions with as much detailed analysis as I am able to give in the case studies in this thesis.

The period 1935-1965 has been chosen as one in which theatre design was moving towards a more professional standing, and in which the relationship between the director and designer was evolving. I will demonstrate that as Motley and Herbert developed as theatre artists they were resisting theatre design that they saw as superficially decorative and striving towards visuals that emphasised and supported the themes of the production, and that in turn this affected theatre design praxis in the period and has left a legacy on contemporary practice.

The following chapter will use the case study of *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) to examine the confluence of early influences on Motley. It will identify that these influences shared the view that design should be unified within the whole production. I will analyse how this view affected Motley's ideas about theatre design, show how these ideas were incorporated into their processes and manifested into their set and costume designs for the production.

<sup>32</sup> The Harris sisters grew up in the suburbs of London and their father was a Lloyd's insurance broker. Montgomery was the daughter of a Cambridge theology lecturer. Herbert was the daughter of the writer and law reformer A.P. Herbert (1890-1971) who was knighted in 1945. She grew up surrounded by artists and intellectuals.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

**Motley and *Romeo and Juliet* (1935)**



Figure 3: Model box, *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) balcony scene, reproduced for Motley exhibition (Motley, 1987a)

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

Dramatic criticism has had to pay an unusual amount of attention to stage setting in all the productions in which the firm [of Motley] has been concerned; and important managers such as Mr. Albery and Mr. Lion attribute an unusual proportion of the success of their plays to the fact that “Motley” were involved. (H.G., 1936b, p.15)

The 1935 production of *Romeo and Juliet* used as case study in this chapter marks a point of maturity when Motley began to establish their own style, a style that synthesised modern ideas about theatre design whilst appealing to the general public. The newspaper article quoted above, written shortly after the end of *Romeo and Juliet*'s (1935) record breaking run of performances,<sup>33</sup> indicates that it was during this period that Motley began to be recognised for their contribution to successful productions. *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) set a template for later Motley designed productions, with a simple and practical unit set that could be swiftly changed by the addition of elements such as doorways, steps, curtains and drapes (see for example their 1955 *Merry Wives of Windsor*). The production also serves as an example of their determination to be involved in the making of their designs, their interest in using innovative materials and their mediation between historical accuracy and contemporary tastes.

Starting with a brief biography of Motley this chapter will go on to examine the context in which their early career developed, including their relationship with John Gielgud, with whom they shared a vision for the theatre that embraced scenography as an integral aspect of performance. Many different modes of theatre were operating concurrently during the 1900s-1930s but there is no doubt that there were key influences and key figures that had an impact on Motley. This chapter will determine the kinds of theatre design that they were reacting against as well as assessing the extent to which they were influenced by the American New Stagecraft movement and early twentieth century ideas about staging Shakespeare as advanced by Harley Granville-Barker.

This chapter will argue that Motley's belief in a unified design, harmonious with the acting and directing, that visually conveyed the meaning or themes of the play meant that they created a visual dramaturgical framework for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935). This enabled *Romeo and Juliet* to be performed in a way that emphasised the aims of this particular production's interpretation of the dramatic text. The chapter will examine how the three Motley women worked together as a team and their processes and methods. How they worked within or changed existing theatrical practice in order to achieve their aims will be evaluated, putting into context, for example, the particular approach to costume that led them to open their own costume making workshops. Motley's designs for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) will be analysed in order to assess how they conveyed the narratives and themes of the play through their sets and costumes.

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<sup>33</sup> *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) ran for 186 performances at the New Theatre 'twenty-five more than any previous record' (H.G., 1936b, n.p.).

## 2.1 Context

### 2.1.1 Motley

The three women who were to practice theatre design under the name of Motley, Elizabeth Montgomery (1902-1993), Sophie Harris (1900-1966)<sup>34</sup> and Margaret (Percy) Harris (1904-2000), met when they attended the Chelsea Illustrators Club<sup>35</sup> and a private art school called the Queen Anne Studios<sup>36</sup> in the 1920s (Harris, 1992, tape 1b).

The three friends began to attend the theatre regularly and to have strong views about the theatre designs they saw, describing most of it as 'terribly unattractive and ugly and boring to look at' (Harris, 1992, tape 2a). Additionally they disliked sets that attempted to reproduce a location, and wanted to represent spaces rather than imitate them. Harris recalled finding the scale and texture of settings that attempted to recreate a whole place on stage, a whole bit of a castle for example, 'dreary' and 'all wrong' (Harris & Montgomery, 1986a) although she does not specify particular productions or designers. They preferred visually striking designs by the Ballets Russes and Claude Lovat-Fraser, who was the first designer that they had seen who seemed to really care about the authenticity of period costumes. He and his wife Grace cut costumes according to historical patterns and used plain colours and simple materials rather than brocades and 'rabbit fur' (Harris, 1992, tape 2a), as well as 'eliminat[ing] yards of trimming...for the sake of dramatic simplicity' (Gay & Fraser, 1921, p.ix). For *The Beggar's Opera* (1920) Lovat-Fraser created a simple permanent set that consisted of three arches behind which different backdrops could be placed to suggest different locations. These early preferences signal several of the tendencies apparent in Motley's own practice that will be seen in the *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) case study in this chapter: suggestion rather than imitation of location, simplicity in settings and costumes, involvement in the making of their designs, and as previously stated, attention to period accuracy whilst maintaining visual unity and an interest in materials.

Motley's big break came in 1932 when John Gielgud asked them to design the costumes for a production of *Romeo and Juliet* that he was directing at the Oxford University Dramatic Society (OUDS) at the invitation of its president, George Devine. Montgomery and the Harris sisters had attracted the attention of Gielgud through a combination of chance and determination,

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<sup>34</sup> Sophie (also known as Sophia) Harris will be called Harris-Devine to distinguish between her and her sister Margaret.

<sup>35</sup> The Chelsea Illustrators Club (1919-1939) was set up by Margaret Tempest and seventeen other artists in a barn off the King's Road (Paton, n.d.). It provided space for artist members to work in as well as the opportunity for help and criticism (Kaye, 1982). According to Harris it was a private art school run by Mrs Goulden (Mullin, 1996, p.23), so it is possible that they ran courses as well as providing communal space.

<sup>36</sup> Run by Miss Lettuce McMunn.

and the story has become somewhat of a family legend. The three women would go to watch productions at the Old Vic theatre and draw sketches of the actors that they would then offer to sell to them. Gielgud bought several of their drawings and when they decided to take part in an exhibition of women's work<sup>37</sup> Gielgud agreed to lend them some of the sketches he had purchased. His lover John Perry (1906-1995) happened to be the assistant to another exhibitor, Constance Spry (1886-1960), and so Gielgud saw a body of Motley's drawings when he came to the exhibition to visit Perry. The three friends were keen to break into theatre and had designed costumes for two amateur productions, *The Nativity Play* (1927) for St Martin-in-the-Field's, and Miss Vacani's (1908-2003) children's ballet (c.1927), and for several musical and dance sketches in Cochrane Revues (c.1930).<sup>38</sup> Montgomery was also commissioned to design costumes for *Romeo and Juliet* (1928) directed by Terence Gray at the Cambridge Festival Theatre. They came to Gielgud's attention again when he presented them with first prize for the fancy dress costumes they had designed for the 1930 Old Vic costume ball, after which he asked them to design two costumes for *Much Ado About Nothing* (1931) at the Old Vic. It was after they won the 1932 Old Vic costume ball that Gielgud invited them to design *Romeo and Juliet* (1932). Following this production Motley became Gielgud's in-house designers, working on fourteen out of sixteen productions that he directed between the OUDS *Romeo and Juliet* in 1932 and *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 1939.

Through repeated retelling this narrative has assumed an easy inevitability that is belied by a closer analysis. The three women showed resolve in their attempts to become theatre designers over the five years between leaving art school in 1927 and designing the OUDS production in 1932. They took every opportunity to demonstrate their skills and handiwork whilst generating an income by putting their talents to anything that came up. A newspaper feature describes how they created fancy dress costumes, street clothing, illustrations for books or magazines, masks, one-off painted furniture and styled photographic shoots for magazines during their early years (Morgan, 1935). The young Gielgud was moving into directing and on the look-out for young, talented theatre artists who shared his thoughts about how theatre should develop, and Motley's persistence paid off as their obvious talent and repeated encounters with Gielgud led him to offer them the job of designing the costumes for the OUDS *Romeo and Juliet* (1932).

Gielgud was born into a theatrical dynasty: his grandmother was actress Kate Terry, sister of Ellen Terry, and Edward Gordon Craig, the visionary modernist theatre designer, was his second cousin. Gielgud grew up immersed in the theatre and like Craig he valued scenography as integral to theatre performance. He had originally wanted to be a stage designer (Gielgud,

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<sup>37</sup> At the Royal Horticultural Halls, Vincent Square, Westminster in 1928.

<sup>38</sup> Sir Charles Blake Cochran (1872–1951) was a British theatrical manager. His revues were a combination of music, dance and theatrical sketches famous for their visual spectacle.

1976, pp.9–14) and was imbued with ideas about 'modern' theatre that will be discussed later in this chapter.

In 1933 Motley designed Gielgud's *Richard of Bordeaux*, in which he also starred, and this production was such an enormous critical and commercial success that it cemented Gielgud's career as a director as well as his matinee idol status. Motley's designs combined striking simplicity, visual unity and a more authentic cut for the period costumes than was usual at the time and critics recognised the contribution of the designs to the success of the production. James Agate, for example, wrote that he thought it possible that 'the exquisiteness of a production flowing like music...[gave]...this work greater quality than it actually possesses' (1933 review in Agate, 1944, p.313).

At around this time Motley took on a studio that became an unofficial club for like-minded people who would gather there to have 'practical and philosophical discussions of their new projects' (Morgan, 1935), as well as parties and much laughter (Wardle, 1978, p.32). The core group was made up of Motley, Gielgud and actors George Devine (1910-1966), Peggy Ashcroft (1907-1991), Jack Hawkins (1910-1973), Jessica Tandy (1909-1994), Glen Byam Shaw (1904-1986) and Angela Baddeley (1904-1976), and they would sit up through the night 'talking terribly seriously about the theatre, as young people do. We didn't think that anything anybody else did was any good' (Harris in Wardle, 1978, p.39). The studio managed to combine this function whilst remaining a place of work for Motley. It was entered through Garrick Yard at the back of 67 St Martin's Lane in London.<sup>39</sup> An eighteenth century barn that had survived in the centre of London and that had been empty for years, Motley got a group of friends together to whitewash the whole place (Wardle, 1978, p.32).

At the top of [the iron fire-escape] is what may be called the reception room for the company – a large studio-like room, painted white – tea cakes, a grand piano, tulips, shelves of books – many people dropping in casually to pass the time of day and to gossip. (H.G., 1936b, p.15)

By combining the social and practical functions of their studio, Motley, as women in a profession that was almost totally male-dominated in the area of production, provided a physical hub for theatre discourse in an environment that was focused on theatre design. This suggests the possibility that, alongside Gielgud's embracing of Craig's ideas, the visual aspects of theatre were given greater consideration than was common at the time, and that Motley might have contributed to discussions more than was traditionally the case with designers.

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<sup>39</sup> The yard remains but the studio was bombed during World War Two. There is a family story about the yard being strewn with Motley costumes some of which the firemen were wearing as they cleared up.

### 2.1.2 Modern theatre design and New Stagecraft

Modern theatre is commonly understood to stretch from Ibsen to the present, as reinforced by Raymond Williams's *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* (1973), Eric Bentley's *Theory of the Modern Stage* (1992 [1968], p.9) and Aronson's *Looking into the Abyss* (2005, p.13). Many different styles of theatre have operated across this wide period of time and the use of the label 'modern' can only signify that there are certain shared characteristics that can be identified. There are two theatre design related sources that seem particularly helpful in understanding which of the features of modern theatre relate most closely to Motley's practice in the 1930s. They are Kenneth Macgowan<sup>40</sup> in *Theatre of Tomorrow* (1921), who was amongst the critics and theorists that defined New Stagecraft<sup>41</sup> in the USA in the early part of the twentieth century, and Arnold Aronson, who summarises the dominant qualities of modern theatre design in *Looking into the Abyss* (2005, pp.13–27).

Motley read publications such as *Theatre Arts Monthly*<sup>42</sup>, saw New York Theatre Guild<sup>43</sup> productions that visited London (Mullin, 1996, p.30), and were given a copy of *The Stage is Set* (Simonson, 1932) by Gielgud, so it is clear that they were aware of the theories and aesthetics of American New Stagecraft. New Stagecraft is often cited as beginning with the Broadway production of *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife* (1915) designed by Robert Edmond Jones<sup>44</sup> and directed by Harley Granville-Barker<sup>45</sup> (Feinsod, 2010, p.163; Doona, 2002, p.57). Granville-Barker was a key influence on Gielgud as will be described in the following section. Hiram Moderwell<sup>46</sup>, Sheldon Cheney<sup>47</sup> and Macgowan consciously took up the task of explaining the objectives of New Stagecraft to the theatre-going public as well as 'promot[ing] or develop[ing] aesthetic theories in support of the movement' (Bloom, 1996, p.62). In doing so these writers established a forum in the USA for critical discussions about the theory and aesthetics of theatre design (Bloom, 1996, p.62). Although there was no formal movement in Britain at the time we can surmise from the literature that they were reading and the works that they went on to produce that Motley, alongside others, had a keen interest in modern

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<sup>40</sup> Kenneth Macgowan (1888-1963) began his career as a drama critic and writer and became a film producer in Hollywood after 1928.

<sup>41</sup> Notable theatre design proponents of New Stagecraft were Robert Edmond Jones (1887-1954), Lee Simonson (1888-1967), Norman Bel Geddes (1893-1958), and Jo Mielziner (1901-1976).

<sup>42</sup> *Theatre Arts Monthly* was an American periodical that ran between 1925-1939; it had formerly been named *Theatre Arts Magazine* (1919-24).

<sup>43</sup> Theatre Guild, a theatre production company founded in New York City in 1918 for the production of high-quality, non-commercial American and foreign plays to a subscription audience.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Edmond Jones (1887-1954) American stage designer and author of *Drawings for the Theatre* (1925), *The Dramatic Imagination* (1941), and, with Kenneth Macgowan, *Continental Stagecraft* (1922).

<sup>45</sup> Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946), English dramatist, actor, director, and critic.

<sup>46</sup> Hiram Kelly Moderwell (1888-1945) author of *The Theatre of Today* (1915).

<sup>47</sup> Sheldon Warren Cheney (1886–1980), American author and art critic, founder of *Theatre Arts Magazine* in 1916.

theatre design, and were conversant with the debates and aware of the emergent aesthetics coming from America.

Moderwell summed up New Stagecraft's qualities as *simplicity*, *suggestion* and *synthesis* (see Mabry, 2013, p.89) and Macgowan elaborated on these in *Theatre of Tomorrow* (1921) stating that the aim of the New Stagecraft designer was to 'visualise the atmosphere of a play' (Macgowan, 1921, p.20). Even if they agreed that these were the dominant qualities of New Stagecraft, American designers ranged between two camps; those like Robert Edmund Jones who believed in minimalist design, and those like Joseph Urban who preferred to be ornate (Feinsod, 2010, p.162). Whilst Lovat-Fraser and the Ballets Russes, whom Motley admired, could be described as ornate, Motley did not like the decorative work of their contemporary in London, Oliver Messel<sup>48</sup> (Harris, 1992, tape 4b). A close examination of the terms simplicity, suggestion and synthesis will help to clarify why Motley were drawn to some decorative design but not to others.

### 2.1.2.1 Synthesis

Synthesis had one aim, and that was to convey the play's or the playwright's themes and structures, its 'metanarrative' (Aronson, 2005, p.14). Therefore all the elements of the production, set, costume, lights, sound, direction and acting style should be in harmony with each other in order to achieve conceptual and visual unity.

[New Stagecraft's] artists aim to make, in the settings called for by the text, an emotional envelope appropriate to the dramatic mood of the author. (Macgowan, 1921, p.20)

It is significant that the designer's aim was to capture a 'mood' rather than to recreate a location. Naturalism had seen 'the literal presentation of [an] environment' as 'a means to human truth' (Williams, 1973, p.318); in other words, that carefully reproducing the external details of a setting led to a greater understanding of the characters and situations that inhabited it. In his 1906 production of *Wild Duck*, for example, André Antoine (1858-1943) insisted that the garret be made of real Norwegian pine, believing that such forensic detail would help the audience to analyse the relationship between man and society. Modern theatre, however, began to move towards the idea that studying and expressing 'the nature of things, the meaning of human life' could only be done by looking at 'what happens above and below appearances' (Saint-Denis, 1960a, p.50), namely the psychological and emotional reality or what might be described as a poetic rather than a scientific approach.

Furthermore, without an attempt at verisimilitude, the design could embrace synthesis by 'embod[ying] a fundamental concept or metaphor of the production' and provide 'a structural

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<sup>48</sup> Oliver Hilary Sambourne Messel (1904 –1978), English artist and theatre designer.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

unity to the whole production' (Aronson, 2005, p.17). Aronson explains that this could be done by using single sets, 'unit' sets, or overarching motifs (2005, p.17). A 'unit set' is made of sections that can be rearranged, for example with platforms, steps and doorways that can be repositioned, an example being Craig's screens, first designed in 1907, that were a set of monotone, freestanding, hinged canvas flats. On their own they were unremarkable but they could become animated through the use of light and were intended to represent rather than to impersonate a space. Designed to be versatile they could be moved into variable positions around the stage and their three-dimensionality related to the bodies of the actors in a way that painted, flat scenery did not. Craig intended that their positions could be seamlessly altered without the need for long scene changes. Motley's *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) set design is another example of a unit set and as will be shown below it shared several of Craig's aims: representation rather than impersonation, flexibility and versatility, and the ability to be changed with few or no breaks in the performance.

The ambition to create unity led to the ideal of an ensemble company, without a star system, in which everyone concerned with the production was working towards realising the metanarrative. In practice, as will become apparent from the case studies of Motley productions, such ensembles were often dominated by directors and/or star performers. However, I would propose that the ideal of the ensemble enabled the designer to have greater prominence as one voice amongst many in the creative team during the period 1935-1965. This repositioning of the designer amongst the creators of theatrical performance is indicated in the accreditation of designers in theatre programmes from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s.

In Henry Irving's<sup>49</sup> 1892 *King Lear* the makers of the set, J. Harker and Hawes Craven, were listed in the programme next to each scene, whilst the designer's contribution was relegated to small letters at the bottom of the page, 'From the designs by Ford Madox Brown' (Southern, 1948). This reflects the practice of some theatre designers in the late nineteenth century who would hand over their designs to theatre craftsmen and might not have anything to do with the production again until they came to the first night.

In the 1920 programme for *The Beggar's Opera* 'scenery and costumes designed by Claude Lovat Fraser' is placed underneath the scene descriptions, without any maker's name. As mentioned, Lovat Fraser and his wife involved themselves in the making of his costume designs (Thomas, 2010, p.30) but there would still have been costume makers, set builders and scene painters involved. Nigel Playfair's credit for directing the play is in large capitals, whilst Lovat Fraser's credit is in a smaller italicised font (Melville, 2007, Appendix III).

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<sup>49</sup> Sir Henry Irving (1838–1905) was an English stage actor known as an actor-manager because he supervised sets, lighting, direction, casting, as well as playing the leading roles.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

By the late 1940s Motley had been identified as being amongst a few designers<sup>50</sup> in Britain who moved towards taking responsibility for connecting the design and its realisation as early as 1933 (Southern, 1948, p.229). As will be shown later in the chapter Motley were insistent on overseeing the making of costumes, sets and props, and were very 'hands-on', and this coincides with the change of location and font size of Motley's crediting in theatre programmes. In their first major production, *Richard of Bordeaux* (1933), Motley were given a small credit next to the builders of the set, so that designers and set builders appear to be of equal status, but in the programme for 1937's *Witch of Edmonton* Motley were listed directly underneath director Michel Saint-Denis in the same font size.

Whilst this suggests that they were beginning to be recognised more for their role in the creation of the production, the fact that there were several methods of crediting running concurrently during much of the twentieth century shows that there was not a steady development of phrasing or style.<sup>51</sup> Motley continued to be credited in programmes either in the same font as the director, or slightly smaller alongside the composer or choreographer, as 'décor by', 'scenery and costumes by' and 'designed by' up until at least the late 1960s, which could reflect an entrenched tradition of programme layout or that although the role and status of the theatre designer was changing it remained unsettled between 1935-1965.

In short, according to the tenets of New Stagecraft, design should synthesise the mood, concept, themes and narrative of the production into the scenography. This was realised through simplicity and suggestion as described below.

### 2.1.2.2 Suggestion

Illusion is not so important as emotional intimacy, directness, clarity. (Macgowan, 1921, p.26)

Suggestion of a location on stage was preferred to an attempt at reproduction, and this could be achieved through the use of visual elements or signs that the audience would understand and interpret. In the case of Motley's *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) an Italianate archway was used to indicate Verona rather than the creation of a whole street or building, and other signifiers included details of colour and pattern as will be shown in the case study below.

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<sup>50</sup> Whilst there were forward thinking theatre designers such as Phillippe de Louthembourg (1740-1812) from as early as the 1770s who took such care over their designs that it is likely that they were closely involved in their realisation (Baugh, 2005, pp.14-15) Southern believed that this was not the norm at the time of his writing. The other designers Southern mentions alongside Motley are Molly MacArthur, J. Gower Parks, and himself.

<sup>51</sup> Responsibility for the wording of the programmes is unknown but I would hypothesise that it could have ranged from a standard layout used by certain theatres or producers, to a negotiation between the director and designer.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

Some modern theatre practice was moving towards the presentational, i.e. beginning to acknowledge its own workings and parameters, during the first third of the twentieth century. For example, the 'fourth wall' convention of Naturalism had assumed a barrier between the onstage room and the audience that was invisible to the audience but opaque to the actors. To a certain extent the room and the actors pretended that the theatre and the audience did not exist. In terms of design at least, *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) frankly conceded that it was placed within a stage space. Apart from the black masking, a convention that will be further explored in the case study of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961), Motley's Italianate archway representing Verona sat within the theatre without trying to hide that it was a stage set.

### 2.1.2.3 Simplicity

Simplifying aimed to foreground the actor on the stage, focusing more on their performance and on the dramatic text than on complicated or highly decorative scenery. In the example of Motley's set design for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) they simplified the architecture of the period to such an extent that it was only the structural proportions and minimal decoration and pattern that signalled the location and era rather than any attempt at verisimilitude. This simplification meant that there was more pressure on the other aspects of the production, such as costumes, props and lighting, to reveal the themes, location and period of the play. In Motley's designs props and costumes indicated the period and location but the costumes were also designed to be part of a unified stage 'picture' that expressed the development of atmosphere or mood that the production was trying to convey. I will assess their methods for achieving this in the case study below.

Although there is no record of precisely what Motley objected to in the work of designers like Oliver Messel, except that they saw it as decorative, I would speculate that the key explanation was Motley's belief that the design should convey the play's or playwright's themes. When Motley used decorative details in *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) they did so with the intention of signalling something to the audience about location, character or era. The decoration around the central tower, for example, is there to suggest the period and place of the play. Messel on the other hand had a distinctive, painterly, ornate and romantic style that some critics found 'fussy, sugary, overdecorative and out of keeping with the spirit of a work on occasions' (Pinkham, 1983, p.23). Messel's style was apparent in each production and Motley may have seen this as being imposed on the work rather than growing out of it. Whilst, according to Aronson, an identifiable designer style is one of the features of modern theatre design (Aronson, 2005, p.14), and Motley productions were certainly recognisable, they believed that their work should be integrated with the whole production and that their contribution should not dominate other aspects of it.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

Whilst I have contextualised Motley's practice within the tendencies of the period in which they worked I do not mean to imply that this was conscious or that they would have categorised themselves as New Stagecraft designers or aligned themselves with any other movement of the theatre. When asked about this in later life Harris was adamant that Motley had been 'unintellectual' and were not inspired by modern art (Eyre, 2011, p.30), but neither of these are requisites for being influenced by the era in which they lived and, as Postlewait argues, all human actions are influenced by their surrounding conditions (2009, p.12). This section has indicated that modern movements in theatre design influenced certain features of Motley's practice: designs that aimed to convey the 'metanarrative' of the play or playwright; simplified settings that suggested location and period; flexible and versatile unit sets that could be changed quickly without long scene changes; and period costumes that were cut more historically accurately than was common during the period.

A key aspect of their practice was that they aimed for the design to be unified with the whole production and, as will be shown, this paradoxically created a signature style that became more and more recognisable by the press and the public.

### 2.1.3 Harley Granville-Barker and Shakespearean performance in twentieth century Britain

We're just learning, following Granville Barker's productions and his "Prefaces", how [Shakespeare's plays] ought to be staged. (Gielgud [c.1935] in Levenson, 1987, p.47)

English playwright, actor, director and critic Harley Granville-Barker was an important influence on theatre practitioners of the twentieth century<sup>52</sup> not only through his practice but also through his writings as a theorist, particularly his *Prefaces to Shakespeare* that began to be printed in 1923.<sup>53</sup> Gielgud met and corresponded with Granville-Barker, and the *Prefaces to Romeo and Juliet*, published in 1930, inspired certain features of Gielgud's production as will be noted below.

Granville-Barker modernised British ideas about how to stage Shakespeare, in response to two different tendencies that were prevalent in the late nineteenth century. On the one hand productions by Kean<sup>54</sup> and Irving, for example, tended to be illustrative, providing expensive and complicated scenery that needed long pauses to set up for each scene. Irving's 1882 *Romeo and Juliet*, for instance, cost £10,000 (comparable to approximately £1,000,000 today) and had eighteen solid sets and three designers (Kennedy, 2001, p.30). Not only was it common for the text to be freely cut to remove lewd or contradictory passages, or those that

<sup>52</sup> Including Michel Saint-Denis's uncle, Jacques Copeau.

<sup>53</sup> The *Prefaces to Shakespeare* was not completed until 1958 when they were published in a posthumous two-volume edition

<sup>54</sup> Charles John Kean (1811-1868), English actor manager, son of Edmund Kean.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

were considered inauthentic, but it could also be cut in order to emphasise visual spectacle. In Irving's 1882 *Romeo and Juliet* all but four lines were removed after the death of the lovers in order to end the play on a striking tableau (2001, pp.30–32).

Others wanted to stage Shakespeare 'authentically', in as close as possible a manner to how they thought the plays had been originally shown. They believed in the relationship between the architecture of the Elizabethan stage, which had little or no scenery, and the swift rhythms of Shakespeare's plays (Kennedy, 2001, p.34). William Poel,<sup>55</sup> a leading proponent of this movement, tried to recreate the Old Fortune Playhouse inside the Royalty Theatre, Soho in 1893, and set up the Elizabethan Stage Society in 1895.<sup>56</sup> Poel staged *Measure for Measure* (1893) with amateur actors dressed in Elizabethan costume playing the uncut text, and to emulate the Elizabethan custom of having the audience seated on stage he placed costumed extras there.

Whilst he believed in Poel's aims, Granville-Barker wanted Shakespeare to appeal to the public rather than be slavishly historical, and his productions of *The Winter's Tale*, *Twelfth Night*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Savoy Theatre between 1912 and 1914 synthesised the reforms around Shakespearean performance that had been proposed by Poel. Granville-Barker sought 'to place the text in primary position, to treat Shakespeare as a serious dramatist who knew what he was doing' (Kennedy, 2001, p.71). For Granville-Barker's *The Winter's Tale* (1912), for example, the full text of the play was performed swiftly, without pauses and with only one interval, when several intervals were more usual. The actors performed as an ensemble, without emphasis on a star as had been common, and were encouraged to speak the text in a natural, unmannered way. Although situated within a proscenium theatre, designer Norman Wilkinson (1882-1934) created the openness of an Elizabethan stage by arranging three levels. An apron extension was built in front of the permanent proscenium with two steps leading up to the centre stage area, which stretched from the permanent proscenium to a false proscenium arch upstage. Four steps led up from this proscenium to a raised level behind it.

Not only were Granville-Barker's theories and practice influential, but his ideas about how theatre should be funded and organised were also significant. Granville-Barker and William Archer (1856-1924) argued for a National Repertory Theatre in London (see Archer & Granville-Barker, 1907), which although unrealised was the progenitor of the National Theatre, founded in 1963.<sup>57</sup> Theatre in Britain was wholly commercial, whereas German theatre, for example, was subsidised and operated a repertory system. Then as now the repertory system

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<sup>55</sup> William Poel (1852-1934), English actor, theatrical manager and dramatist.

<sup>56</sup> In 1888 their ideas about staging were influenced by the discovery and publication of a copy of Johannes de Witt's 1596 sketch of the Swan Theatre.

<sup>57</sup> Although permitted to use the name Royal National Theatre since 1988 the National Theatre does not use 'Royal' in any of its branding or communications so will be referred to in this thesis as the National Theatre.

involved a resident acting company having a repertoire of plays that could be presented in rotation, perhaps even a different one each night of the week, whilst new plays were rehearsed and added. So, for example, Max Reinhardt<sup>58</sup> was able to keep his production of *The Winter's Tale* in repertory for eleven years, whilst Granville-Barker's *Winter's Tale* (1912) had to close after six weeks. Granville-Barker attempted to set up a repertory system when he took over the Royal Court Theatre between 1904-7, but it was only made possible by 'extreme economy and limited production' and failed financially when it was transferred to the West End (Kennedy, 2001, pp.70–71). However, the 1904-7 Royal Court Theatre enterprise stimulated the foundation of repertory theatres in Britain such as Birmingham Rep in 1913, and George Devine recognised the 'fine and appropriate tradition' of Granville-Barker's tenure at the Royal Court in his planning for the English Stage Company in 1953 (Roberts, 1999, p.9). Granville-Barker also influenced Gielgud's attempts to create an informal ensemble company in the late 1930s as will be illustrated in the following chapter.

## 2.2 *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) case study

*Romeo and Juliet* (1935) came three years after Motley had established themselves professionally as a company in 1932. As art school graduates they had not had any theatre training and had to learn on the job (Montgomery, 1972, p.1). Having started out primarily working with costume they were determined to also design sets; in fact Gielgud had originally asked them to design only the costumes for *Richard of Bordeaux* (1933) but Motley persuaded him to let them do the sets as well (Harris, 1992, tape 2a). Harry Henby, head stage carpenter at the New Theatre, taught them how to do technical drawings as well as giving them an understanding of how things could be built. 'He frightened the wits out of us... "Call that a model?" he used to say ferociously. But he taught us a great deal' (Harris in Mullin, 1996, p.46). Whilst other carpenters would simply build something different if presented with a design that they couldn't understand, Henby would work with them to find a technical solution (Harris, 1992, tape 4b). Harris acknowledged that Gielgud was the biggest influence on them at the beginning (Mullin, 1996, p.51) and that his having designed plays as a boy meant that he 'knew very well what he wanted' but that he managed to combine helpfulness with flexibility (Harris et al., 1986, p.1). Their working relationship will be discussed below.

In the three years between *Richard of Bordeaux* (1932) and *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Motley had designed eleven productions, six for Gielgud, and had set up a costume workshop and studio. As illustrated at the beginning of this chapter critics recognised Motley's contribution to the success of Gielgud's productions. Several of Motley's productions had been commercial successes, including *Hamlet* (1934), which ran for 155 performances, and took £33,507 13s 11d (H.G., 1936b, n.p.) (equivalent to around £2,028,000 in today's money), whilst *Romeo*

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<sup>58</sup> Max Reinhardt (1873-1943), an Austrian-born actor and director, who dominated the Berlin theatre between 1905-1918.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

*and Juliet* (1935) was to run for 186 performances and take around £43,000 (H.G., 1936b, n.p.) (about £2,665,000 today). This showed that Shakespeare was viable in the West End, encouraging producers such as Bronson Albery (1881-1971) to continue to back Shakespearean productions. Motley were not so ahead of the times that they risked alienating audiences. Having synthesised ideas around modern theatre design as described above, they designed shows that were seen as fresh and innovative in their style and approach whilst appealing to the tastes of the general public.

### 2.2.1 Circumstances of the production

I have shown how Gielgud was influenced by Granville-Barker's ideas about Shakespeare, and he wanted to present *Romeo and Juliet* as an uncut text that focused on the rhythms of the words and which moved quickly through the play, unhampered by lengthy scene changes. The reviews of the 1935 production often draw attention to the fact that the play text was more or less complete: 'virtually an unabridged version for the first time in many years' (Anon, 1935a, n.p.); 'There are no cuts which slash the sense; there is no false emphasis on the supposed big moments' (Anon, 1935h, n.p.). Gielgud had been able to use the 1932 OUDS production to experiment with the pace he sought but, apart from the female roles, the performers in that production had all been students. In 1935 he had a full cast of professional actors that included Peggy Ashcroft, Laurence Olivier (1907-1989) (alternating with Gielgud in the roles of Romeo and Mercutio), Edith Evans (1888-1976), Glen Byam Shaw, Alec Guinness (1914-2000) and George Devine. Gielgud was by far the biggest star out of these performers, some of whom such as Guinness and Devine were just starting out, and yet he gathered around himself actors that he considered to be highly talented and in sympathy with his views on the theatre. Gielgud appears to have been fairly unusual amongst actor/managers in this respect, as they had a reputation for not employing anyone who was a potential threat to their status as a star. *The Sketch* newspaper commented that, '[*Romeo and Juliet*] is a production and not a stars' cavalcade; every detail is considered and all the smaller characters done to a turn' (1935b, n.p.). It would seem that realising the play under the best possible circumstances was Gielgud's priority and that in order to do so he gathered talented artists together. Despite his intentions however, the press did fixate on the merits of Gielgud and Olivier who shared the roles of Mercutio and Romeo, and singled out Ashcroft's and Evans's performances (see Anon, 1935c, n.p.; Williams, 1935, n.p.; Agate, 1935, n.p.; Disher, 1935, n.p.).

In the same way that Gielgud surrounded himself with actors he admired or saw as promising, he recognised Motley's potential, supported and encouraged them and 'dared' to give them a chance (Montgomery, 1972). Gielgud was keen to stress Motley's professional attitude, comparing them to scientists:

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

Most firms, if given a show like 'Romeo and Juliet' to do, start on a few of the prettier costumes. Not so the Motley. The first thing they do is to come to the [director] and cross-examine him for hours about 'angles of sight' and 'stage space' to find what he really wants to make of the production. They are a firm of scientists and they know their job. (Gielgud in H.G., 1936b, p.15)

The scientific analogy is intriguing and the suggestion that other designers would begin by working on pretty costumes indicates that Gielgud was trying to differentiate Motley from a superficial approach, whereas scientists are skillful experts who carry out definable, concrete actions that produce an identifiable result. It is possible that, as women, Motley would have been seen as only interested in costume and in making things look attractive, a view that I myself have come across as a female practitioner, and so Gielgud was trying to emphasise their competence in, and comprehension of, the manipulation of space, traditionally seen as a male field of expertise. On the other hand it could be that designers in general were identified as providing a non-essential purpose and he wanted to stress Motley's engagement with all aspects of the production.

### 2.2.2 Motley's process

The relationship between Motley and Gielgud appears to have been a lively one. Gielgud had a mercurial mind that leapt from one idea to another and he would frequently change his mind, a characteristic that actors sometimes found difficult in rehearsals (Croall, 2011, pp.185, 437) and that Motley had to develop a way of working with:

He was full of ideas, his mind raced; and we used to have to take all these marvellous ideas and sort out the ones that worked. Final ideas, including those for *Bordeaux*, came out of discussions with him. From the start he'd come to the studio and we'd have a big discussion and start making models and rough sketches. Gielgud [was] not quite as firm minded as [Michel] Saint-Denis. We could work it so that the ideas we thought were right were the ones we used. (Montgomery, 1972, p.6)

This kind of collaboration would not be unfamiliar to contemporary designers, whereby, in some cases, ideas are bandied about in discussions between the director and designer, and rough sketches and models are used to try out or explain concepts. Montgomery indicates that they were able to stand their ground with Gielgud over ideas that they thought would work. An example of this occurred when they successfully maintained that *Richard of Bordeaux* (1933) should have minimal colour instead of the primary colours Gielgud had wanted (Eyre, 2011, pp.30–31).

### 2.2.2.1 Shakespeare's scene divisions

Shakespeare wrote for what is usually called architectural scenography, the theatre building itself provided the design for the production of his plays. (Kennedy, 2001, p.25)

In Shakespeare's time a play was written to be performed rather than published, and so what we now call a text 'by Shakespeare' is taken from quartos and folios written either by people who saw the plays and later recorded what they remembered, or copied from the actual prompt books. Through the centuries editors have added scene divisions, and often scene locations, that were not present in these earlier versions. There are not, therefore, any stage directions given by Shakespeare, in the sense of being told where a scene is taking place or when it should change. When designing Shakespeare today these details are gleaned from clues in what the characters say, what Bert O. States calls 'rhetorical scenery' (States, 1985, p.54), although the scenes and act changes are not usually disputed. In 1935 the New Temple editions of Shakespeare that Motley used did contain scene descriptions, such as 'A street in Verona' or 'Capulet's Orchard', but as will be illustrated below there is evidence that Gielgud and Motley, following the ideas of Granville-Barker, would decide on Scene and Act changes for themselves.

It is clear from the text that the play is set in the city of Verona, Italy, and that it moves between public and private spaces. Gielgud noted that it is scenically difficult to stage, particularly because of the need for an upper level or balcony for Act II Scene 3 in which Romeo speaks to Juliet who is outside her window (Gielgud, [1939] 1976, p.159).<sup>59</sup> Either the balcony needs to remain on stage throughout the play in which case it is difficult to position it so that it is unobtrusive for the other scenes and yet powerfully placed for the scenes in which it is needed, or it needs to be brought on in a scene change, causing a long interruption between scenes.

According to Levenson the whole production period was three weeks, from 'taking the book off the shelf', through rehearsals to the opening night (Levenson, 1987, p.62). This seems a very short time by today's standards when rehearsals are typically three weeks minimum, and the designer and director would have been working for at least three weeks prior to rehearsals, usually substantially longer. However, there is evidence that very brief rehearsal periods were not uncommon during this time and Mullin mentions Komisarjevsky's 1933 *Macbeth* as an example where the actors only had six days of rehearsal (Mullin, 1974, p.20). The implication of this short production period is that Motley had to work quickly to create and realise their designs.

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<sup>59</sup> We know that the window is raised above ground as Romeo says 'One kiss and I'll descend' in Act III Scene 5 (Shakespeare, 1985, p.128).

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

Motley's process is described in detail in a *Theatre World* article (Johns, 1937) and although this was written two years later than this production of *Romeo and Juliet* I would surmise that their process would not have changed noticeably. The article explains that Motley began by discussing the play with the director to make sure that they were aiming for the same interpretation and to discuss the placing of the intervals. Today a discussion about the interval would be much shorter as there would either be no interval or only one, but at that period several intervals were provided in order to facilitate large sets to be changed.

According to Gielgud, Motley created three possibilities for the set over three days, but none seemed satisfactory (Gielgud, 1976, p.159) although there is no record of what was wrong with them. The answer came when they glanced over at the model of an abandoned project, *A Tale of Two Cities*, whose basic scheme offered the solution of a central tower with acting areas at either side (Levenson, 1987, p.57). In terms of their process, a collaborative relationship with Gielgud that would be recognisable to many contemporary designers is indicated. It also illustrates the serendipity that occasionally happens when designing; sometimes apparently inconsequential and accidentally encountered items or details suddenly fall into place as solutions to design problems. In my experience this kind of occurrence would only happen in a situation in which the designer and director felt relaxed enough in each other's company to suggest what might seem at first to be absurd or frivolous ideas, and would tend to happen at an early discussion stage and be communicated verbally, through drawings or rough models.

However this anecdote also tells us something about both Motley's process and the kind of set designs that they were creating. For *A Tale of Two Cities* they needed to create many locations without long or complicated scene changes, so they developed the idea of a two-sided structure that could have elements that came in and out to change location. In a sense this was a formulaic structure because the elements could be varied according to the needs of the particular play. In becoming less realistic and more suggestive the specifics of the set were less important than the structure and fluidity of changes. As mentioned previously, the parts of the design that indicate that this is *Romeo and Juliet* are architectural details, such as the shape of an arch or window, or the patterns and colours. All of these could be altered to suit another play entirely. Indeed Harris later commented that when working on Shakespeare productions:

Our settings were intended to form a framework for the action rather than make a statement about time or place, but in their details and decoration the sets usually followed the period described by the costumes and the props and the furniture were in harmony with this. (Harris, 1995, p.10)

Certainly in the case of *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) the set fulfilled the role of being flexible and merely suggesting location, whilst the props and costumes carried the weight of

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

signalling period and mood. In this approach Motley were following Granville-Barker's ideas about staging Shakespeare as discussed in the previous section. In other words because a Shakespearean stage consisted of permanent architecture, and the only things that were thought to have changed between scenes were props and costumes, Motley developed a technique for designing Shakespeare that emulated this to a certain extent. However, they were not attempting to replicate an Elizabethan production, in the manner of Poel. They wanted the designs to appeal to a modern audience and they worked within a proscenium arch, picture frame stage, and implemented modern theatrical conventions as will be described below.

Motley had various techniques to maintain visual unity in their designs, including the use of colour and of artworks as inspiration. After initially deciding on the structure of the set Motley would go into specific details about each scene (Johns, 1937). In their studio they would roughly sketch the scenes and work together to make colour charts of the play from swatches of fabric, creating schema for each scene in order to ensure that the colour was well balanced throughout the play. For example, by looking at a set of swatches from a 1951 production of *Othello* (Figure 4) it is evident that Motley were working with groups of colours, and using the swatches to ensure that certain groups would stand out either through colour, tone or their proportion in relation to the other groups.



Figure 4: *Othello* (1951) costume and colour scheme swatches (Motley, 1951)

Motley often found inspiration in paintings or artworks of a particular artist or period and Harris later described that:

Having found or made an image we found it useful to have it pinned up near the work space as a continual reminder of the basic idea, so that in developing the design and carrying out the practical work of building the model box you do not lose sight of the fundamental source of inspiration (Harris, 1995, p.5).

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

This quote is not contemporary to 1935 but I would hypothesise that this was a technique that Motley used during that period. This process does not sound unfamiliar to me as a contemporary theatre designer but it is significant in pointing out the methods that Motley used to work together as though they were one designer. The colour charts that they created for scenes would have related closely to the colour plots for the costumes as will be described below and were not only a way of controlling the design but of ensuring that they were all working towards the same ends.

After discussing the costs and practicalities with the stage manager,<sup>60</sup> Motley would build the model (Johns, 1937) and Montgomery would often be the one who painted it (Harris, 1992, tape 2b).

### 2.2.3 Motley's designs

The two books that cover *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) most comprehensively are Mullin's *Design by Motley* (1996) and Levenson's *Shakespeare in Performance: Romeo and Juliet* (1987). Levenson's book looks in detail at five productions of *Romeo and Juliet* considered influential.<sup>61</sup> Written after the Motley designs had been purchased by the University of Illinois and before Mullin's book, Levenson attributes Harris's 'keen recollection' as vital in shaping the available materials 'into a likeness of the production' (Levenson, 1987, p.49). The book is thorough and comprehensive, covering influences, aims, performance style, and explication of the set and costumes, but it does not analyse the sets and costumes in any detail as I will do below.

#### 2.2.3.1 Set designs

Granville-Barker's advice in his *Prefaces to Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet* (Granville-Barker, [1930] 1969, p.73) was that as there are no act or scene pauses in the original folios, performing the play uncut and without pauses carries it forward under its natural momentum. According to Harris, Gielgud 'wanted us to encourage the audience to use their imagination, to suggest rather than fill the stage' (Croall, 2011, pp.159–160). For *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Motley designed a unit set that could be transformed by the addition and removal of elements such as arches, doors and hangings, with minimal time needed for scene changes. In order to analyse the practicalities of the scene changes I have used the available archival material of sketches

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<sup>60</sup> This would now be discussed with the production manager so it is possible that the stage manager fulfilled the role we would now describe as production manager during the 1930s.

<sup>61</sup> Productions by David Garrick (1748), Charlotte Cushman (1845), John Gielgud (1935), Peter Brook (1947) and Franco Zeffirelli (1960).

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

(Motley, 1935a-i; Motley, 1935r, Motley, c.1985-1990),<sup>62</sup> production photographs (Anon, 1935i) and the recreated model box (Motley, c.1987) (Figure 3) to create a digital model of the first five scene changes (Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 8, Figure 9, Figure 12).

The numbering of the scenes on both the 1935 and the c.1985-1990 sketches do not compare to the usual scene allocation of the play. I have created a chart to compare each set of scene numbering that has enabled a definitive translation of the Motley numbering into those published in modern texts (Appendix 6). This chart has revealed that Motley numbered their scenes according to where the interval was placed, and therefore all scenes up to the interval are named 'Act 1 scenes 1-13', and in the second half 'Act II scenes 1-12'. An added complication is that an extra scene appears to have been created at the beginning of Act 1 Scene 5, separating out the servant's conversation, before the party. Levenson notes that this section was played in front of the two downstage black curtains while the party setting was prepared behind them (1987, pp.59–60) which explains the inclusion of this as a unique number. However the renaming of scenes appears to have been habitual to Motley, as can be evidenced from existing annotated copies of other Shakespeare plays of the period that they designed (Shakespeare, 1919).<sup>63</sup> It is not particularly unusual to rename Shakespeare's scenes as part of the production process. This could be either for the sake of shorthand; Act I scene 4 of *Romeo and Juliet* is often given the nickname 'the Queen Mab scene' as it contains Mercutio's Queen Mab speech; or for structural reasons to indicate the number of scenes in each section divided by the intervals, as is the case here. Other than the addition of an extra scene at the beginning of Act 1 Scene 5, that, as mentioned, enabled a scene change, each of Motley's numbered scenes corresponds with a scene in the published play.

The four-sided tower in the centre of the stage had various openings that could be closed off with curtains, flats, shutters or doors (Figure 3). Stairs or different levels could also be trucked in to the sides of the tower. It was positioned in a diamond shape at the centre of the stage, and other elements such as walls or archways could be brought in on diagonals at either side to change the scene. There were two sets of black curtains that could be brought in, one set to stretch from the side of the proscenium arch to back of the tower, the other from the

<sup>62</sup> The Motley Collection in Illinois contains nine set renderings in white and coloured pastel pencils on black card and one in watercolour (Motley, 1935t) that appears to be a preliminary sketch as it does not show a configuration that existed in the production. These all date from 1935, but there are also fifteen sheets of rough floor plans in pencil and biro titled 'Rough Reconstructed Plans of Romeo and Juliet' (Motley, c.1985-1990) that were certainly drawn up by Harris around the time of Mullin's research for the Motley book or exhibition. These later sketches include some notes with additional explanations as to the positioning of the curtains and which scenes should be changed behind them as well as references to pages in *TheatreWorld*.

<sup>63</sup> I have a set of Temple editions of Shakespeare that belonged to Harris (see Appendix 3). The majority date from the 1930s and those plays that were designed by Motley are annotated accordingly, marking any cuts in the text for example. Unfortunately, *Romeo and Juliet* is not present amongst these books.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

proscenium to the front of the tower, enabling half the stage to be reset out of view, whilst a scene continued at the other side of the stage, or in front of either set of curtains. For example, the Prologue (Figure 5) took place in front of the downstage black curtains.

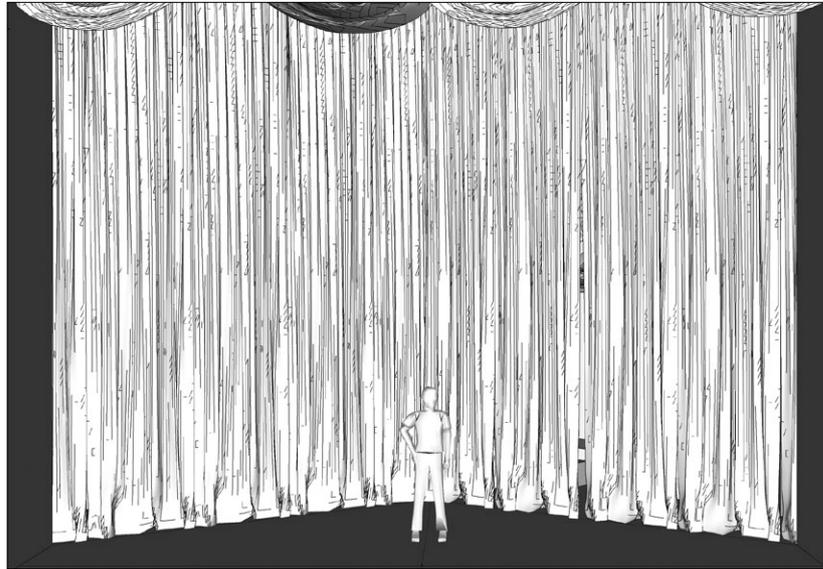


Figure 5: Digital model of *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Prologue

These opened to reveal Act I Scene 1 (Figure 6, Figure 7), which had all the sides of the tower closed off, with stairs placed stage right winding around the tower, and diagonal walls on either side with arched doorways through them. The scene is a public space in Verona where the Capulets and Montagues fight and are admonished by the Prince.

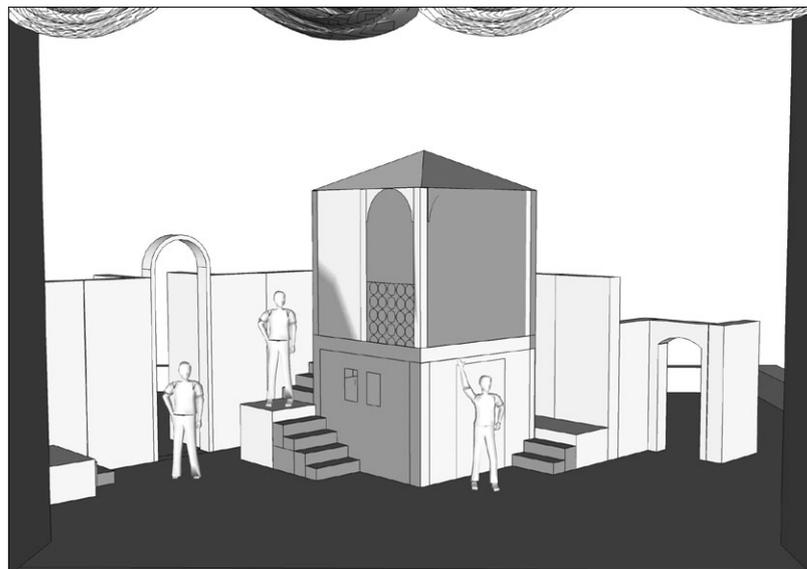


Figure 6: Digital model of *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Act 1 Scene 1



Figure 7: *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Act 1 Scene 1, *Theatre World* December 1935, p26

Then in the following scene, Act I Scene 2 (Figure 8), in which Paris and the Capulets arrange Juliet's marriage to him, a curtain was drawn across the stage-left half of the set and the scene was played out in front of the stage-right half.

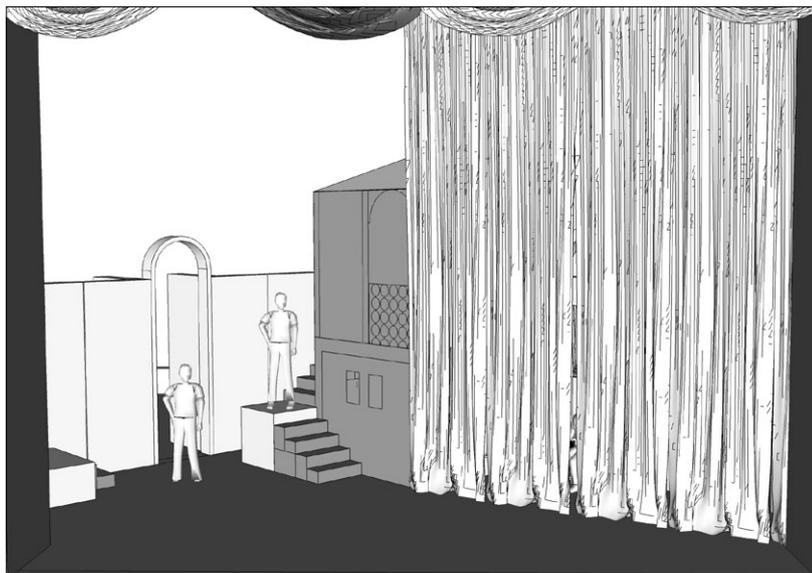


Figure 8: Digital model of *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Act 1 Scene 2

When the stage left curtain opened again for Act I Scene 3 (Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11) a small, almost domestic area had been arranged for a more intimate scene in which Lady Capulet tells Juliet that she is to marry Paris. The Nurse sat on a low bench in front of the opened up bottom stage-left portion of the tower, with a curtain drawn across it. Two arched doorways were placed on the stage-left corner of the tower and brocade curtains were hung inside the larger doorway nearest to the tower. In front of this was placed a high backed throne-like seat for Lady Capulet, and to her left Juliet sat on a low bench.

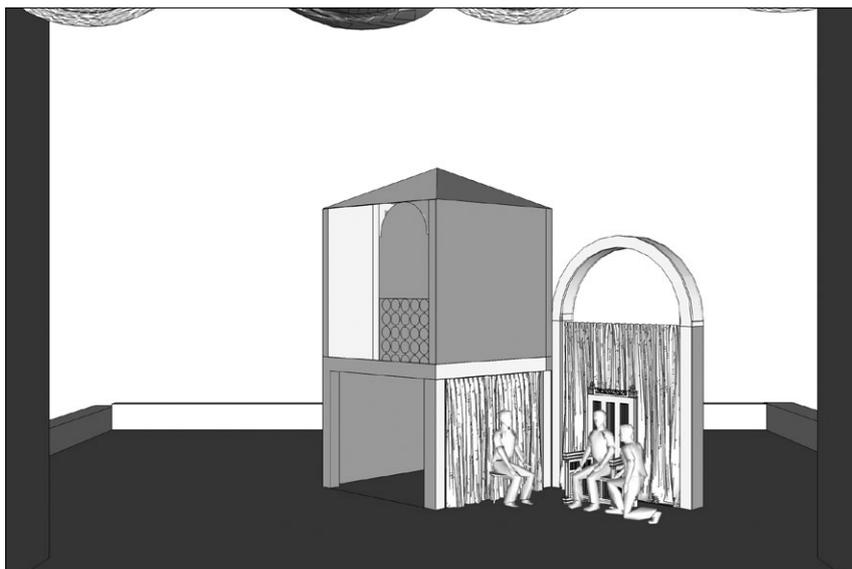


Figure 9: Digital model of *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Act 1 Scene 3

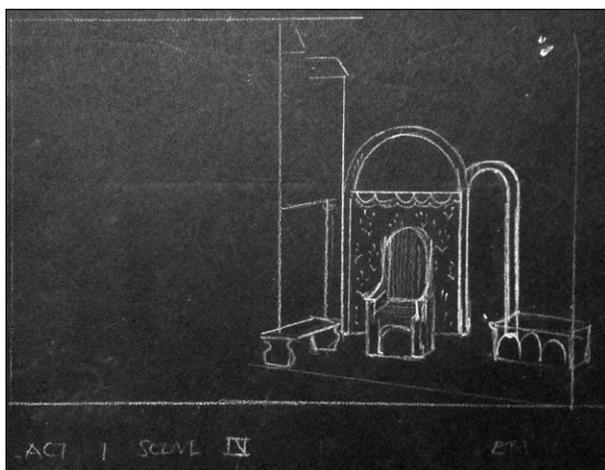


Figure 10: *Romeo and Juliet*, sketch of Act I Scene 3 (Motley, 1935q)



Figure 11: *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Act 1 Scene 3 (Anon, 1935i, p.269)

Drawing the down stage, stage left, black curtains, Act I Scene 4, the Queen Mab scene, was played out in the same configuration as Act I Scene 2 (Figure 8). The down stage, stage right, black curtains were drawn across as well for the servant's conversation at the beginning of Act 1 Scene 5, (as in the Prologue, Figure 5), whilst the party was set up behind them. For Act I Scene 5, the party scene, (Figure 12, Figure 13, Figure 14) the black curtains were drawn back to reveal pennants, curtains and coloured drapes hanging in the space.

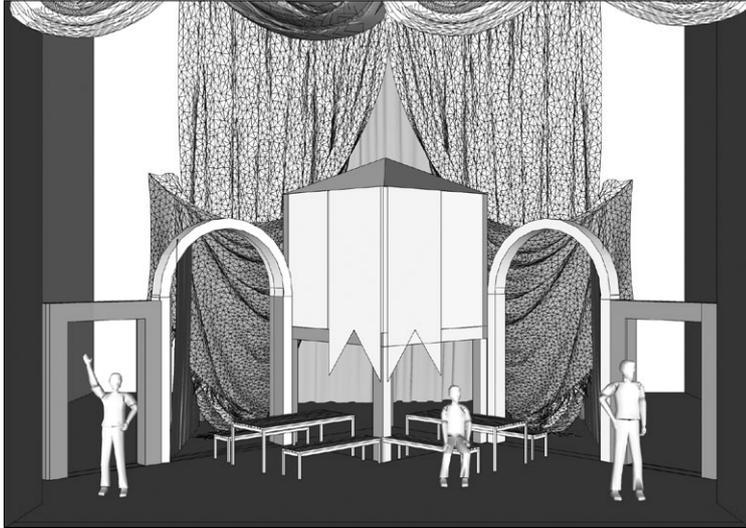


Figure 12: Digital model of *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Act 1 Scene 5

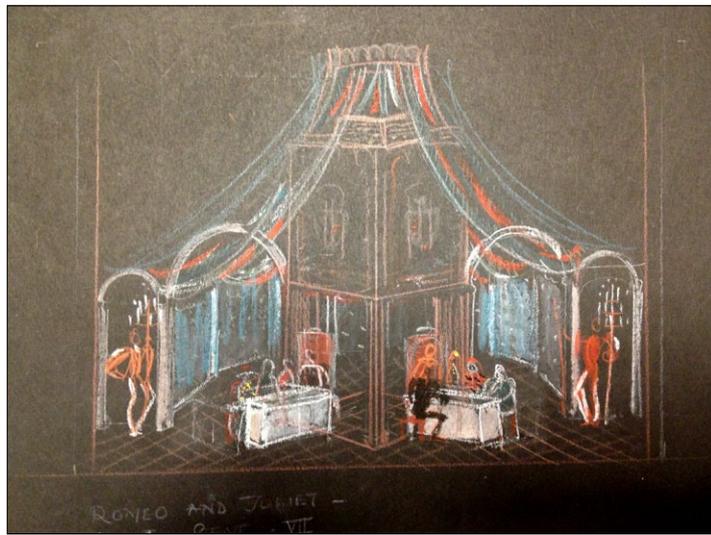


Figure 13: *Romeo and Juliet*, sketch of Act I Scene 5 (Motley, 1935r)



Figure 14: *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Act 1 Scene 5 (Anon, 1935i, p.270)



Figure 15: Carpaccio, *The Dream of Ursula* (1495)

That Motley were inspired by Italian Renaissance paintings can be clearly seen by looking at *The Dream of Ursula* (1495) by Carpaccio (Figure 15). The shapes and proportions of the *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) arches can be seen in the windows, whilst the round pattern of Motley's metal balcony is echoed in the glass roundels in the circular window at the top of the painting. The gold patterns on the pillars of the *Romeo and Juliet* set could be simplified versions of the pattern along the edge of the bed in the painting. The colours of Motley's set also refer to paintings of the period with the dusty pink of the arches, cobalt turquoise of the top section of the tower and pale blue shutters, clearly identifiable colours in paintings such as Ghirlandaio's *A Legend of Saints Justus and Clement of Volterra* (1479), as are the gold highlights.

The colour scheme and the architectural details were deliberately controlled and Motley kept the palette to a limited range of carefully balanced hues that were highlighted by simplified patterns and details in order to unify the stage picture. The door and archways have enough detail of architraves or pedestals to suggest the period but remain extremely simplified. The sketches and production photographs show that this simplicity was augmented by items of furniture and props as Harris had described. The simplicity of the set was partly a technical solution for changing the scenes with minimal disruption but it also reflected Motley's views about theatre design as described at the beginning of this chapter: they wanted to suggest

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

rather than imitate the location, to maintain visual unity across the production and to feature period accuracy whilst appealing to contemporary tastes.

Although Motley had designed the set to change scenes quickly and ingeniously they were adhering to the theatrical conventions of the time that dictated that each scene needed a new setting. They later became aware of this when Harris described the difference between two productions of *Antony and Cleopatra* (1946 and 1956) that she designed for Glen Byam Shaw. In the first (1946) she says that they were 'trying to reassess what had gone before, thinking that we had been too narrow in our method of adhering to changes of location' (Harris, 1995, n.p.). By the time of the 1956 version 'our thinking had developed and we realised that... the play makes no scenic demands, all that is necessary is a space which can be transformed by means of light, colour and costume' (Harris, 1995, n.p.). The post-war process that Harris describes, of moving towards a very minimal setting, is shown to have already begun in Motley's *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) sets that through their simplification relied more on lighting, props and costumes.

### 2.2.3.2 Costume designs

I have shown that within simplified sets the costumes became more important in signalling period, place, mood and character. This section will assess Motley's ideas about costume and how these affected the foundation and organisation of their business before evaluating their costume design and making processes. Finally it will analyse the *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) costumes to establish how they mediated between period accuracy and contemporary visual appeal, and how they used costume to contribute towards the overall dramaturgy of the production.

#### 2.2.3.2.1 Motley Ltd

Methods of organising theatre production in the 1930s affected Motley's ability to realise some of the ideals that they strove towards. *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) illustrates the ways that Motley altered some of these systems by setting up their own costume making workshop for example, which was the result of wanting to change the way that period costumes were constructed as well as closing the distance between designer and maker that was common at the time.

Motley were perhaps distinctive amongst designers of the period in that they consisted not only of Motley the design trio, but also of Motley Ltd. 'A unique distinction of the house of Motley is that their work is not only designed but made on the premises' (Morgan, 1935). Motley Ltd was a costume-making workshop set up so that Motley could oversee the realisation of their costumes. In a 1972 interview Montgomery explained that they made everything themselves because:

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

We decided that we couldn't bear the costume shops because they were working in such an old fashioned way and we wanted to go to the museums and cut [the costumes] in the way that they used to be cut. (Montgomery, 1972, p.3)

She went on to explain that contemporaneous costume making workshops would cut according to modern patterns, so for example they would cut an eighteenth century man's suit with 1930s style padded shoulders rather than the narrow shoulders appropriate to that period. The idea of looking at historical clothing in order to cut period costumes appropriately had been developing since the late nineteenth century. In 1888 Auguste Racinet published *Le Costume Historique*, covering the world history of costume, dress, and style from antiquity through the end of the 19th century, although not specifically addressing construction, and Carl Köhler's *A History of Costume* which included details of the construction of historical clothing, was published in English in 1928 (Kohler et al., 1928). During the 1930s, on the costume course at Central School of Art, Jeanetta Cochrane, Norah Waugh and Pegaret Anthony<sup>64</sup> stressed the importance of historical study of clothing. Waugh went on to publish *Corsets and Crinolines* (1954), *The Cut of Men's Clothes* (1964) and *The Cut of Women's Clothes 1600-1900* (1968), all still definitive books on costume construction used by designers and makers today. By the time that Motley were designing in the early 1930s it is clear that there was an increasing interest in understanding period costume construction. Motley shared this interest and moreover considered it important enough to want to take control of the making of their costumes.

A further motivation for Motley employing their own makers was that the costume making workshops were reluctant to use the unconventional materials that Motley wanted to work with, a problem that Herbert also had to deal with in her sets in the late 1950s (see Courtney, 1993, p.41). Motley felt that places like the Old Vic Theatre, which rarely made new costumes for productions, (instead the actors themselves would choose them from the stock of previously used items), epitomised what was wrong with theatre costume. Gielgud described how the Old Vic always used costumes and sets from their stock, and that a new production there would be allowed two new costumes or one new backdrop (Gielgud, 1973, p.5). Motley objected to the Old Vic's 'old furnishing brocades in dark rusty colours, with bits of rabbit-fur trimming, tinselly chains and artificial jewellery' (Mullin, 1996, pp.28-29).

The Harris sisters had always had an interest in creating clothes of different periods and styles, perhaps instilled by their mother, who, according to family photographs, would dress them up in the style of game hunters, for example, and then photograph them. Once they themselves began to make costumes they had used ingenious materials to try to emulate the behaviour of more expensive fabrics. In a letter to the Devine family after Margaret Harris's death a woman who had been a child in Hayes, Kent, recalled a fancy dress party c.1926 at which the Harris

<sup>64</sup> Pegaret Anthony taught on the Motley Theatre Design Course between 1980-1999.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

sisters arrived dressed as a Dresden porcelain shepherd and shepherdess (Anon, 2000). Their clothes were made of American cloth 'sold for kitchen tables etc. which had a smooth shiny surface, usually patterned, and was, in fact, just like the plasticized fabrics now sold for the same purpose', and it gave the impression of the look and texture of porcelain figures (Anon, 2000). When designing the *Nativity Play* at St Martin in the Fields in 1927 they made the angel's dresses out of white rubber sheeting which hung in sculptural folds, whilst the kings were dressed in casement cloth appliqued with gold or silver American cloth patterns (Harris and Montgomery, 1986, p.5-6).

Motley became well known for their use of innovative and inexpensive materials. Shylock's costume for their 1932 design for *The Merchant of Venice* at the Old Vic was made from dyed dishcloths, for example (Harris, 1992, tape 5a). Other British designers such as Oliver Messel also experimented with non-traditional materials (Messel & Laver, 1933, p.27) as did Norman Bel Geddes,<sup>65</sup> a notable American New Stagecraft designer:

When working in the theater, it was my endeavor to handle any materials in terms of my own time rather than that of my grandparents. As a matter of fact, I have felt a sense of duty about it. I have felt, and still feel, that it is primarily laziness and a lack of courage on the part of many of my colleague designers that they fail to do so. (Geddes (1932) in Mabry, 2013, p.117)

It is rare to find a discussion of the materials used for costumes by designers in literature on theatre design. Motley's interest in unusual fabrics illustrates their openness, creative imagination and resourcefulness as well as a willingness to deviate from traditional methods.

Motley Ltd became a large concern and in order to meet the weekly wage bill for their 30-40 employees an income of £200 a week (equivalent to approximately £6000 today) was required before the three Motley designers received any wages. In an attempt to achieve this revenue Motley Ltd would make up costumes for other designers under the label 'Dix'. Motley Ltd became so successful that established design house Nathans came to discuss a takeover, which Motley refused. The emissaries from Nathans, however, were shocked to find the directors of the company, the three Motleys, 'crawling about on the floor' cutting out 'enormous cloaks' (Wardle, 1978, p.32). Two interesting points can be gleaned from this story that are pertinent to this research. Firstly, that although they employed a large staff in their workrooms, Motley were still fully engaged in the practicalities of realising their designs. Secondly, that it was either not expected for designers to be the directors of the company or that it was not

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<sup>65</sup> Norman Melancton Bel Geddes (1893-1958) was an American theatre, film, product and industrial designer. He designed the Futurama Pavilion for the 1939 New York World's Fair.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

usual for designers to be so 'hands on'. That Motley understood the practicalities of costume construction is illustrated in the costume designs that will be discussed below.

In addition to Motley Ltd, a couturier shop was opened in Garrick Street (1936-1939), that although increasing the number of staff required, could use existing resources and expertise for making clothing, and would cater for the rising number of actresses and society women who commissioned one-off outfits from Motley (Jump et al., 2006). Harris-Devine took charge of the couture house and she and Montgomery designed the collections. Photographs indicate that the clothes had a theatrical twist to them and this was reflected in Marcel Breuer's design for the interior of the shop and changing rooms, which had a distinctly modernist aesthetic (see Jump et al., 2006).

George Devine was Motley's business manager from 1933 until 1936, and introduced book keeping systems as well as devising methods of costing costumes and props and analysing overheads in relation to time spent on jobs (Wardle, 1978, p.35). This demonstrates some movement towards the professionalisation of Motley as theatre designers. In the USA theatre designers had joined the United Scenic Artists Union in 1928 (Larson, 1989, pp.72-73), whereas in Britain no attempt to form a designer's organisation was made until 1946<sup>66</sup> (Southern, 1948, p.230), and designers did not join with Equity, the performing arts union, until 1977 (Cockayne, 2013, p.26). The forming of an association or society ensures the designation of an activity as a profession by defining benchmarks of professional practice, whilst unionisation provides standard contracts and rates of pay. By setting themselves up as a limited company, with their own workshops, Motley were part of the movement towards the professionalisation of theatre design in Britain.

### 2.2.3.2.2 Costume process

I have shown that Motley created an overall colour scheme and a chart for each scene in the play in order to ensure that the colours and their proportions achieved the balance that they were aiming for within it. This related to both the settings and the costumes and the approach shows how they were able to control the colour plot and that they saw colour as integral to the dramatic progression and mood of the play.

According to Harris, Montgomery initially took the lead in deciding on the overall look of the designs (Harris, 1992, tape 2b) and after initial discussions they would divide the costumes to

<sup>66</sup> This was the 'Association of Theatrical Designers and Craftsmen. The first item in the Code of Professional Practice specified that, 'All designers must supply sufficient working drawings or models to craftsmen. Artists who do not carry out their own working drawings must assume the responsibility of providing, where necessary, proper working drawings, or models, at their own expense.' The first council consisted of Edward Craig (chairman), Roger Furse (vice-chairman), Hugh Stevenson (hon. sec.), John Gower Parks (hon. treas.), Doris Zinkeisen, Margaret [Percy] Harris, Andree Howard, Morris Kestelman, Osborne Robinson, Edward Delany' (Southern, 1948).

be designed between the three of them (Harris, 1992, tape 2b).<sup>67</sup> The costumes would first be sketched in pencil then painted with gouache and have fabric swatches of the appropriate colour and texture pinned to the edge of the page. There are many small holes in the paper of the costume designs, indicating that they were repeatedly pinned up on walls or boards suggesting a method for co-ordinating the process of designing so that all the costumes appeared to be designed by one person. They may have been positioned in a group so that the three women could see the costumes all together, or they may have been moved from the workspace of one woman to another. Once the finished costumes were agreed between the three designers, they would discuss them with the cutters and fitters in their workrooms. Johns mentions that they would provide a set of 'technical sketches' for the cutters, but there is no evidence of separate sketches and so I believe this to refer to the notes and explanatory diagrams that are sometimes pencilled onto the designs (Johns, 1937).

The costume designs I have located are all pencil and gouache and are either drawn directly onto a vellum type paper, or onto very thin newsprint paper and then stuck onto vellum.<sup>68</sup> When they have been attached to the vellum this intimates that there was an older version underneath, either a pencil sketch or fully coloured design. Evidence of the functionality of the designs can be seen from a detailed look at the composition of many of them. On the design for 'Guest at Party' (Motley, 1935o) (Figure 16), for example, there are pencilled notes and a drawing of the back of the collar of the dress. Drawn in pencil and painted with gouache, the female figure is wearing a high-waisted, long sleeved, floor length red dress with a white scalloped pattern in stripes all over it. The notes explain that the scallops are to be made out of 'strips of white velour scalloped', and show a pencil sketch of the pattern. The bottom of the dress has a white border, described as padded velour in the notes, and the cuffs of the sleeves are also white. There is a pencil sketch of the back of the collar to show that it plunges into a shallow v. The figure is lifting her skirt to reveal a mustard coloured underskirt that

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<sup>67</sup> This may have been because Montgomery had been trained as an artist from an early age, as mentioned, and was skilled in drawing and painting, so that the Harris sisters bowed to her opinion, at least in the early days of their collaboration. Margaret Harris never believed that she had more than a rudimentary drawing ability, although paintings and sketches found amongst her papers belie this conviction.

<sup>68</sup> There are eight 1935 *Romeo and Juliet* costume designs in the Illinois collection (Motley 1935, j-o). In Motley's book *Designing and Making Stage Costumes* there are also two black and white reproductions of *Romeo and Juliet* 1935 costume designs (Motley, 1992 [1964], pp.22-23). A design for the Nurse in the Motley costume book has the date 1932 and OUIDS written on it in pencil although the caption refers to it as being from the 1935 production (p.23). None of these designs are for major characters. This implies that the designs for the other characters were given to friends and colleagues, or were sold or discarded before 1981 when Illinois purchased the collection. There is no information in the Motley costume book about the location of the designs that are reproduced there, but the fact that they were available to be photographed when the book was originally published in 1964 means that Motley knew their whereabouts. Further information found in Mullin or Levenson must therefore have been sourced from personal interviews with those involved in the production, or from designs that they were able to locate that are now unavailable.

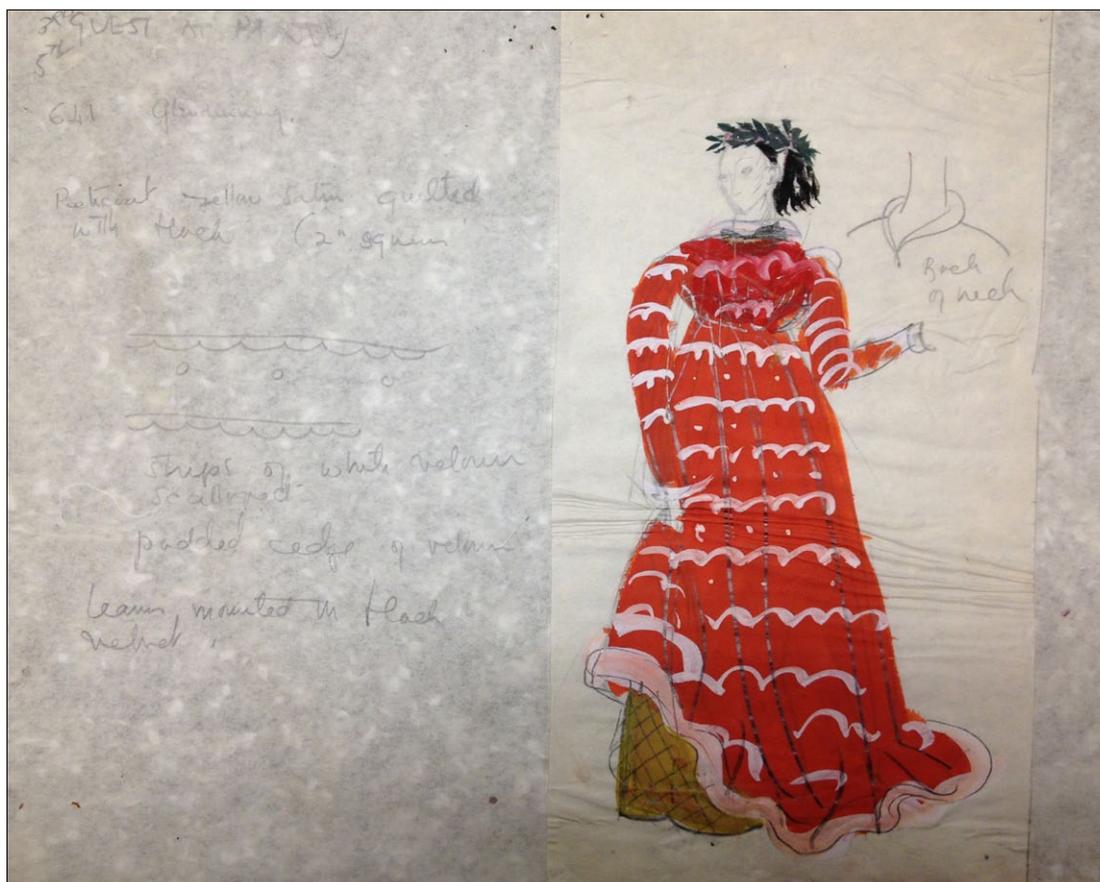


Figure 16: Guest at a party costume design (Motley, 1935o)

the pencilled notes explain is 'petticoat yellow satin quilted with black (2" squares)' (Motley, 1935o). She is wearing a circlet of leaves on her head, which are described as 'mounted in black velvet'. The detail of the notes as regards the construction of the costume and the fabrics that it should be made from indicate that Motley were aware of the interpretive process that the makers would need to go through, as well as that the document was seen as a tool towards the creation of the actual item of clothing.

Motley would conduct fittings of the costumes onto the actors in their studio and once they were completed a dress parade would take place at the theatre. Motley organised 'a small army of women from [their] workrooms' to take over the dressing rooms and 'to show the dressers how the clothes should be worn' (Johns, 1937). This shows that Motley had a professional approach to the costume parade, ensuring that they were as prepared as possible for the showing that involved the actors coming on stage in their costumes and being viewed by the creative team, and possibly also the producer. Johns describes the costume parade as 'perhaps...Motley's worst nightmare' (Johns, 1937) and that 'about two rows of people in the stalls "pick flies"' about the costumes (Johns, 1937). Motley would view the costumes all together, take notes on the comments and make adjustments before the first dress rehearsal. 'Picking flies' implies a rather negative, meticulous criticism of the costumes, and there is no information about who filled the two rows of the auditorium. However the wording may have been John's rather than Motley's choice, and the dress parade would have been the first chance

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

that they would have had to see all the costumes together on the actors, and a last chance for them to note down any adjustments that they themselves felt the need to carry out.

I am not aware of dress parades taking place in theatre, even in opera or the West End today, although they still occurred up to twenty years ago. It is now preferred that the costumes will be seen on stage during the technical rehearsal (known colloquially as a 'tech', or 'tech-week'), as part of the whole production with set, lights and movement. What Johns calls the 'lighting rehearsal' in 1937 is described as only taking twelve hours, usually overnight, and leading directly to the dress rehearsal (Johns, 1937). Lighting and technical elements have become more complicated since the 1930s, and consequently technical rehearsals are longer and more integrated into the schedule so that they are rarely carried out without actors on stage, and take place over several days leading up to the dress rehearsal. Today a contemporary designer and their team of costume supervisor and makers would provide the costumes for the tech, during which time they would expect to receive notes about the costumes from the director or choreographer. There could also be notes from the actors concerning comfort, fit and costume changes. In a modern day tech the costume team have the authority to stop the rehearsal if a costume problem, such as a quick change, needs to be sorted out.

From a contemporary viewpoint the isolation of the costumes into a parade separate to the action of performance, lighting or the set suggests that they were not seen as related to these other elements. It also suggests that the physicality of the actors was limited enough not to require that their movements be tried out in the costumes, an area that will be discussed further in Chapter Three. However, I have not come across any evidence about systems for assessing the costumes prior to this date and it may be that seeing the costumes together before the dress rehearsal was a progressive step that acknowledged that they should be seen as a group rather than individually.

As has been stated, Motley created unity within their designs by using the work of a particular artist or group of artists as inspiration and Mullin remarks that the 1932 *Romeo and Juliet* was based on Botticelli (c.1445-1510), whereas the 1935 version was based on Carpaccio (c.1460-c.1525) (Mullin, 1996, p.48). Motley believed that they were staying close to the period but they later became aware that this was not possible and that they were interpreting the period through their own times:

We thought we were doing period style, but in fact, our costumes were tremendously influenced by our own period. Unconsciously they were expressions of the present. The same period portrayed in the theatre now wouldn't be the way we had done it then. For the 1930s for instance, the clear, light colour we used was very typical of [that] period. (Harris in Mullin, 1996, pp.51-52)

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

Although Harris states that they thought they were 'doing period style' she does not mean that they were attempting to replicate the period and there is a significant difference between this and Poel's historically 'authentic' Shakespearean productions. Motley were consciously manipulating aspects of the colour and detail to emphasise character and mood.

An example of the way Motley adapted period cut and detail can be seen in the 'day dress' costume worn by Juliet in 1932, and this example also illustrates the potentially unconscious influence of their own period's aesthetics on a costume. There are no costume designs of this dress but there are several photographs of Ashcroft wearing the costume and helpfully these show the dress that was inspired by Botticelli's *Primavera* (c.1482) (Figure 20) (Mullin, 1996, p.48) from several different angles (Coster, 1935a; Coster, 1935b) (Figure 18 and Figure 19).



Figure 17: *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) 'marriage scene' staged for press photographs (Park, 1935)

The dress is worn as part of the photo shoot for the 1935 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, despite there being no evidence that it was worn in this production, illustrating the unreliability of photographs as evidence. As Dennis Kennedy has pointed out, production photographs cannot be relied upon as accurate representations of what was shown on stage, particularly at this period of what he calls the 'posed photo call' when half a day would be put aside for the photographer who would probably set up his own lighting equipment (Kennedy, 2001, pp.20–21). An example of this inaccuracy can be seen in a photograph of Olivier as Romeo and Ashcroft as Juliet kneeling in a prayer-like pose before Friar Lawrence who has an open bible and is blessing them, as if they are being married (Figure 17). There is actually no marriage scene in *Romeo and Juliet* and Juliet is wearing the dress that she is to wear in the final 'tomb' scene, illustrating that this photo of an off-stage event was taken for the delectation of

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

the press rather than documentation of the performance. This would suggest that Ashcroft wore the 1932 'Primavera' dress for a publicity shot.

The 1932 dress has large flowers painted on it in the style of Flora's dress in *Primavera* although much simplified and larger in scale. The material that the dress is made from is hard to ascertain; it could be a wool crepe, but it is certainly much heavier than the gauzy fabric in the painting. The dress itself is also much simpler in shape than Flora's in *Primavera* and does not have the same frills around the hem and sleeves. The dress in the painting is high-waisted, but the Motley dress is quite tight fitting around the bodice and has no waistline at all, instead skimming the body until the hips and then hanging in folds to the floor, with a train behind. The sleeves are gathered at three points down the arm in a renaissance style and this echoes the dress worn by Venus in *Primavera* or the sleeves of Pallas in Botticelli's *Pallas and the Centaur* (c.1482) (Figure 21). The dress in fact, looks like a 1930s gown with Italian Renaissance sleeves. Motley had taken the aspects of the Botticelli dress that they felt signified the period and adapted them in the aesthetics of their own era. The implications of this will be discussed below.

The changes that a costume went through from a design to the final outfit can be seen in Juliet's party costume. The design shows a high-waisted gown covered in a paler pattern (Motley, 1992, p.22) (Figure 22). The neckline is flatteringly wide at the shoulders and has an almost sweetheart shape. Juliet is in a romantic pose, her dress and cloak billowing to the left of her and her head on one side. A painting of Ashcroft in the finished dress shows the dress to be red with gold stars and a gold braid detail at the neck and down the centre of the bodice (Gabain, 1935) (Figure 23). She has a white chemise underneath the bodice that peeps out towards the bottom of the neckline. The sweetheart shape is gone and the neckline is more rounded and less open at the shoulder. There is a small belt at the waist of the same material as the dress. More accurate detail can be seen in publicity photographs (Coster, 1935d; Coster, 1935c) (Figure 24 and Figure 25) in which the chemise is pleated and comes much higher up the neck than in the painting, and appears to be made from some kind of organdie. The gold stars on the dress are painted onto the fabric along with little gold dots. It is clear that the neck and wrists have gold braid around them. The fabric of the dress is hard to assess; it seems quite stiff and so it could have been a light canvas, heavy cotton or a heavy silk although it was unlikely to have been an expensive fabric. Harris later wrote that:

We reacted strongly against soft silks and satins and man made [sic] fabrics, which in our time were flabby and without body or texture... we used scenery canvas, unbleached calico, cotton organdie and cotton velveteen (lined for trimming), also felt, even carpet felt and furnishing fabrics. Used liberally these materials, dyed, painted or sprayed gave us the results we wanted. (Harris, 1995, p.11)



Figure 18: Ashcroft as Juliet in 1932 dress (Coster, 1935a)



Figure 19: Back view of Ashcroft in 1932 Juliet dress (Coster, 1935b)



Figure 20: Detail of Botticelli's *Primavera* (Botticelli, c.1477)



Figure 21: Botticelli's *Pallas and the Centaur* (Botticelli, c.1445)



Figure 22: 1935 Juliet costume design (Motley, 1992, p.22)



Figure 23: Painting of Peggy Ashcroft as Juliet (Gabain, 1935)



Figure 24: Photograph of Ashcroft as Juliet (Coster, 1935d)



Figure 25: Ashcroft as Juliet (Coster, 1935c)

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

The sleeves are puffed at the top and gathered down the arm. The skirt is tapered from small gathers at the waist to full folds at the hem. The bodice is lower waisted than either the design or the painting, ending only slightly higher than the actual waist.

This is a flattering look, emphasising Ashcroft's bust and slim torso, but it is not historically accurate. Such changes in costume to flatter the actor are still common today; for example Kiera Knightly's dresses in *Pride and Prejudice* (Wright, 2005) should have had a waist that ended just under the bust in order to be accurate to the early nineteenth century, but she wears dresses with a slim bodice ending at the waist. Motley were not only suiting the look of their time but also using costume as a visual signifier, through, for example, using vibrant red and gold to suggest Juliet's youth and passionate nature. If sticking rigidly to the historically accurate costume would not be serving their ideas about the narrative and character, then they would change the costume, keeping enough detail or silhouette to suggest the period. This illustrates that Motley were simultaneously attempting historic accuracy, being aesthetically pleasing, and conveying the narrative through the costumes.

In later life Harris reflected on the necessity of visual appeal in theatre design between the 1930s and 1970s, stating that the audience tended to want:

...an easier and perhaps more visual experience, the performers were expected to look ideal, and had often to be reshaped by judicious padding, it was important that they were becomingly and colourfully dressed. (Harris, 1995, p.10)

Harris went on to explain that when men wore tights as part of their costumes they would usually have to wear sheepswool footless under-tights that 'could be clipped to achieve a perfect shape' (Harris, 1995, p.10). According to Mullin these leg pads are known as 'symmetricals' in the USA (Mullin, 1996, p.52) but these tights are not something that I have ever come across. However, they illustrate the desire for a pleasing effect that was sought.

Motley's manipulation of Ashcroft's Juliet costume to make it more flattering at the expense of historical accuracy should be regarded in the light of the commercial pressures they were subject to. Before the Second World War there was no public funding of the arts. Theatre productions were facilitated by private investment largely consisting of producing companies such as H. M. Tennent (founded in 1936) and theatre managers. The best managers found a balance between innovation and box-office returns but the pressures to succeed financially could have overt impact on theatre designers. When Motley designed *Charles the King* (1936), for example, there were disagreements with 'the management'<sup>69</sup> over their designs, culminating in Motley having to have the King's costume remade at their own expense (Mullin,

<sup>69</sup> In this case the producer was 'Binkie' Beaumont (1908-1973) co-founder of H. M. Tennent.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

1996, p.57). Some theatre managers did support theatre artists in work that carried more financial risk. Bronson Albery, for example, was a West End theatre manager who controlled the Criterion, Wyndham's and New theatres but was also director of the Arts Theatre that presented more experimental work and that hosted Michel Saint-Denis and his Compagnie des Quinze in the early 1930s. Albery also supported Gielgud's directorial career by signing an extended contract with him after the success of *Richard of Bordeaux* (1933).

Although only a few of the *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) costume designs can be sourced today, Mullin explains that there were changes in costume throughout the play which were to indicate development, state of mind or changing circumstances of characters (Mullin, 1996, p.48). The colours of the *Romeo and Juliet* costumes indicated the difference between the houses of Capulet and Montague, with Capulets represented as nouveau riche and therefore in bright reds, blacks, whites and greens, whilst the more established Montagues were in blacks, browns and greys. An aspect of the play that Gielgud wished to emphasise was the youthfulness of Romeo and Juliet, and Motley dressed the younger generation in 'light, fresh, clear colours' (Levenson, 1987, p.60), which I have shown that Harris later realised was more to do with 1930s fashion than period accuracy. Given the lack of colour photographs and the few costume designs that remain, Levenson's description of these colours must have come from her interviews with Harris. Without knowing the exact shades of these colours it is hard to know how closely any of them related to renaissance paintings.

Through many costume changes, the mood of the play developed and ended in a sombre tone with a completely black colour scheme to reflect the deaths of Tybalt, Romeo and Juliet. This can be seen in the only costume design that survives of Lady Capulet (Motley, 1935j) (Figure 26), labelled 'Lady Capulet Tomb', in which she is wearing a black high-waisted dress with a full skirt, with a hooded headdress and stands in a mourning pose with her head bowed. She is pictured from the side and so we are able to see that her skirt falls in large folds behind her. There is a white band around her shoulders and sleeves, with a diagonal black stripe on it and her cuffs are white with black spots.

Character development was also emphasised through changes in costume. Romeo, for example, began the play despondently and was dressed in 'sober dove-grey and pale blue short tunic' (Levenson, 1987, p.61), though he had a yellow hat to indicate his propensity to come out of his gloomy mood. He changed outfit for the ball scene, according to Levenson into a 'palmer's costume'. The production photographs do not indicate this change, he wears the same from the beginning until Act V scene 1, but as has been discussed the photographs cannot be relied upon for accuracy. This costume remained unchanged until Romeo's banishment to Mantua (Act V Scene 1) when he wore a 'blood red velvet tunic...with dark blackberry-coloured tights' (Levenson, 1987, p.61), the colours echoing his despair.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

As with the settings Motley maintained firm control over the colours and details of the costumes in order to sustain visual unity, and to indicate mood and character. They balanced period accuracy with a style that would appeal to modern audiences, though they were also subject to working within the aesthetics and style of their times as indicated by Harris above.



Figure 26: Lady Capulet tomb scene costume design (Motley, 1935j)

### 2.2.3.3 Lighting

Developments in technology as well as simplified and less realistic settings put increasing importance onto lighting. Motley were not responsible for the lighting of productions that they designed, but lighting as another visual element had the potential to affect how Motley considered the use of the stage and the costumes. This section introduces George Devine's interest and expertise in lighting, which will continue to be explored as having an influence on Motley's and Herbert's designs in later chapters.

The first British theatre to be fully lit by electric lamps was the Savoy in 1881 (Morgan, 2005, p.42), and although lighting with gas had become increasingly controllable, with intensity, colour, fading, blackouts and movement being possible, the development of electric light allowed for brighter, safer, more precise stage lighting. At this time, Directors would usually light the show with the Chief Electrician of the theatre providing technical support. As lighting became more essential to the production it became more of a specialism.

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

George Devine is the first person known to be specifically credited for arranging the lighting for a theatrical performance in Britain in the programme of Gielgud's *Richard II* designed by Motley at the Queen's theatre in 1937 (Morgan, 2005, p.208). By 1935 George Devine was Sophie Devine-Harris's partner and the Motley's business manager but there is no evidence that he was involved with the lighting for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935).



Figure 27: Motley portrait with model box in background. Left: Sophie Devine-Harris. Centre: Elizabeth Montgomery. Right: Margaret (Percy) Harris (Coster, 1935e)

## CHAPTER TWO: Motley and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1935)

Wardle tells a story about 'Devine's' model theatre being set up in a corner of Motley's studio for the *Richard of Bordeaux* (1933) party that Gielgud threw to introduce them to the theatre community. It shorted all the lights when someone fiddled with it, indicating that the model had electrical lighting inside it (Wardle, 1978, pp.38–39). This box or one very like it can clearly be seen, complete with electrical lights, in the background of a 1935 portrait of Motley (Figure 27).<sup>70</sup> That this model box was situated in Motley's studio, and that Devine was involved in the company, suggests the possibility that Devine and Motley would discuss how their designs could work under lighting, perhaps even trying them out in the model, or at the very least they would have witnessed his experiments in the model box. Concurrently with the production of *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) in which he played the role of Peter, Devine was heavily involved in setting up the London Theatre Studio with Michel Saint-Denis and he organised and paid for the lighting equipment for the LTS out of his own pocket (Wardle, 1978, pp.69–70), indicating that he had a good working knowledge and confidence about lighting by this point. This will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

According to Levenson, Gielgud lit *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) with the head electrician (Levenson, 1987, p.62) and there were some initial hitches with the lighting effects. Reviews from the press night commented on the gloom of the lighting:

...gone were the sun and warmth of Italy and the whole thing appeared to happen at night, the tomb being the cheerfulest [sic] of all! (Agate, 1935, n.p.).

My only other complaint about Mr. Gielgud's production is that the stage is nearly always dimly lit against a background of night. (Anon, 1935d, n.p.)

The background to the set started out as a black curtain along the back wall but when Michel Saint-Denis came to see the production a few days after it opened he advised against the dark background saying that it destroyed the feeling of sunlight that would be expected in Verona in Southern Italy and the backdrop was removed and replaced with a sky cloth during the daylight scenes (Harris, 1992, tape 4b). The sky cloth would allow more light to bounce off it onto the stage giving a less gloomy effect and I would speculate that the general lighting levels would have been raised to counter the dimness that was remarked on in the reviews and in Saint-Denis's comments. Saint-Denis's care over lighting, in association with Devine, will be described in relation to the case study of *Three Sisters* (1938) in the next chapter but it is noteworthy that his advice was acted on at this point.

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<sup>70</sup> Dr Harriet Devine recalls that her father, George Devine, had a red Meccano model box with working flies in his office just after the war (Devine, 2006, p.17).

#### 2.2.4 Reception

Most of the reviewers who mentioned Motley's designs for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) were admiring of the pleasing aesthetics; 'As for the visual side of the production, the costumes are delightful, the sets and their swift alternation above praise' (Fleming, 1935, n.p.), but the look of the play was never mentioned without reference to the ingenuity of the scene changes.

*Romeo and Juliet* opened in October 1935, but because of the swapping of Olivier's and Gielgud's roles it effectively had another press night at the end of November when Gielgud took over the role of Romeo, and the production went on a regional tour from March 30– 27 April 1936.<sup>71</sup> Subsequently a large number of press reviews of the production appeared, nearly every one of which commented on its pace and continuity (see for example: A.S.W., 1936, n.p. ; Agate, 1935, n.p. ; Brown, 1935b, n.p.). Reviewers recognized that Motley's set design facilitated the speed of the action; for example the *Manchester Guardian* noted that Motley were 'clever and resourceful young ladies' and that 'the setting is discreetly adaptable to the play's swift progress so that there are no waits and but one interval' (Anon, 1935g, n.p.).

Despite the reception of the play by the critics being overwhelmingly positive: 'the best [*Romeo and Juliet*] I have seen' (Anon, 1935d, n.p.); 'one of the most memorable experiences the stage of our lifetime has had to offer' (Disher, 1935, n.p.); '...one of those productions whose memory the true theatre lover will carry with him to the grave' (Darlington, 1935, n.p.), there were some who criticised the design. The central tower was accused of 'looming' (Anon, 1935d, n.p.) and of looking like a 'signal box' (Anon, 1935d, n.p.), a 'conjurers box' (Anon, 1935e, n.p.) or a 'hotel lift which has got stuck halfway up to the mezzanine floor' (Agate, 1935, n.p.). The use of different sides of the stage was also commented on as causing the stage to feel 'cramped' (Anon, 1935e, n.p.), or that 'the action seemed to take place not so much in Verona as in a corner of it' (Agate, 1935, n.p.). However, there were few who did not admit that the device was 'successful once one has accepted the convention' (Anon, 1935g, n.p.).

Several critics made reference to historical productions of Shakespeare with Gielgud's production seen favourably in comparison:

Thirty years ago Shakespeare-on-the-stage was usually a collection of famous parts, famous scenes, famous passages. In fragments, in sumptuousness [sic], in personal warmth and bravura it could be magnificent. But organically it did not exist. Now the play is allowed its own life. (Brown, 1935, n.p.)

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<sup>71</sup> 30 March, Golders Green Hippodrome; 6 April, Kings Theatre Glasgow; 13 April, Opera House Manchester; 27 April, Streatham Hill Theatre.

Many critics were alert to the compromise that the sets achieved between what they saw as the simplicity of Shakespearean staging and modern design styles (Anon, 1935f, n.p.; Agate, 1935, n.p.; Eaughan, 1935, n.p.). The production appears to have brought Shakespeare to life for a modern audience, making it exciting, vital and relevant. 'No one could watch this as one used to watch the old Shakespeare, with a numbed sense of attendance on a ritual' (Brown, 1935, n.p.). It is apparent from the reviews that in their *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Motley and Gielgud had achieved both commercial and artistic success. The production appealed to the general public as well as realising contemporary theories about Shakespeare performance.

### 2.3 Summary

Motley were inspired by movements in theatre design such as New Stagecraft that considered the sets and costumes as part of a unified stage picture, one that simplified and suggested rather than imitated location whilst paying attention to period accuracy. They involved themselves in overseeing the making of their designs, setting up a costume workshop in order to be more fully in control of the realisation of their ideas. Whilst their sets and costumes were visually appealing they responded to and visually supported the themes and narratives of the play. Motley did not want to provide superficially decorative backgrounds in the manner that they judged some of their peers to do, but rather for their work to be fully integrated within the production.

Their use of colour was carefully composed and apart from being a technique to unify the stage picture, it also conveyed recognisable meanings to the audience: that the self-made Capulets were in brighter, brasher colours than the more restrained, aristocratic Montagues, for example, or that Romeo moved from sober colours through to passionate reds.

By the time of *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Motley had developed a distinct and recognisable style of designing Shakespeare: ingeniously simple sets that changed quickly with minimal disruption; deliberate use of colour that emphasised mood and character; use of unusual fabrics; involvement in the realisation of their designs; and noticeably supporting the dramaturgy of the play although aiming to become integrated with the acting and directing of the productions.

Modern ideas about theatre design as well as about how to stage Shakespeare were synthesised into their designs combining this forward thinking with a style that appealed to contemporary audiences.

The next chapter will examine Motley's involvement with Michel Saint-Denis and his London Theatre Studio, and how they approached designing *Three Sisters* (1938), a Chekhov play that had very different requirements to Shakespeare.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **The London Theatre Studio and *Three Sisters* (1938)**



Figure 28: Model box front view, *Three Sisters* (1938) Act I, reproduced for Motley exhibition (Motley, 1987b)



Figure 29: Model box top view, *Three Sisters* (1938) Act I, reproduced for Motley exhibition (Motley, 1987b)

### CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

Often people say to me, “Do you think there’s a style in the English theatre? Is there an English style?” And the answer is “Yes; but it’s French”. (Harris, 1973, p.18)

The 1938 production of Chekhov’s *Three Sisters* designed by Motley is used as a case study in this chapter to evaluate how Motley’s evolving practice as theatre designers, as discussed in Chapter Two, was applied and adapted to a genre of theatre that differed significantly from that of Shakespeare. In the quotation above Harris is referring to the French director of *Three Sisters* (1938), Michel Saint-Denis, and it is clear from what she says that she saw him as being a fundamental influence on what she terms *English* theatre. This chapter will assess Saint-Denis’s introduction of a European perspective on theatre design in Britain in the late 1930s and its impact on Motley’s developing design practice.

Motley were first introduced to Saint-Denis when they worked with him on *Noah* in April 1935. During the period that Motley designed *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) he and George Devine were engaged with the planning and foundation of the London Theatre Studio (LTS) (1936-1939). Motley ran the theatre design courses at the LTS and by the time that they designed *Three Sisters* (1938) they had been teaching there for two years.

Saint-Denis’s approach to theatre developed from the theatrical vision and reforming zeal of his uncle Jacques Copeau, a French theatre director and theorist, whose approach to the creation of theatre performance shared many of the fundamental characteristics of American New Stagecraft, which had itself been influenced by European theatre. Saint-Denis’s emphasis was, however, different in a number of ways. For instance, whereas New Stagecraft did not overtly include theatre technicians as encompassed in an ensemble with directors, designers and actors, the London Theatre Studio recognised that technicians had an artistic contribution to make to productions, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter. The curriculum of the LTS encouraged respect between everyone working in the theatre; for example, designers observed or took part in actors’ classes and actors assisted designers in the end of year shows. Saint-Denis becomes increasingly important in this thesis, as will be seen in Chapter Four which will illustrate that the effect of his philosophy extended to Jocelyn Herbert’s practice at the Royal Court Theatre.

In this chapter the theatre design courses at the London Theatre Studio will be analysed for what they reveal about Motley’s processes and for their impact on Motley’s development as designers. In order to teach others Motley had to articulate their practice, considering how and why they designed as they did, and to combine this with Saint-Denis’s attitude to theatre design. I will suggest that their perspective was broadened by their involvement in the LTS as an organisation, giving them an awareness of how theatre design related to the acting or technical courses for example. With a full-scale stage and end of year student productions that

were initially designed by Motley the LTS was also an opportunity for them to experiment outside of commercial pressures.

*Three Sisters* (1938) was the most critically acclaimed production that Motley designed for Saint-Denis and their last unqualified success before the outbreak of the Second World War, after which they were never to work as a complete team again although they continued to use the name Motley as individuals or in pairs.<sup>72</sup> The unusual conditions of the production, with an ensemble company and longer than normal rehearsals, will be evaluated in detail to ascertain how these conditions affected the process and final appearance of the design.

The realisation of the design for *Three Sisters* (1938) exemplifies the principles of New Stagecraft underpinned by Saint-Denis's notion that design should submit to the intentions of the playwright (Saint-Denis, 1960, p.92). In this production Motley were working towards synthesising Saint-Denis's approach with the values that were established as influencing them in the previous chapter. This chapter will demonstrate how Motley manipulated space, colour and detail to support the dramaturgy of the production and that lighting and sound were of increasing importance in establishing the mood of the play.

As in the previous chapter I will begin by laying out the context of the case study, examining Saint-Denis's background and theatrical heritage, the reasons why he set up the London Theatre Studio and how theatre design was taught there. A brief background to the history of Chekhov productions in Britain will be given before the circumstances of the production are described. The case study of *Three Sisters* (1938) will introduce the concept of poetic realism before assessing how it was illustrated in Motley's set and costume designs.

### **3.1 Context**

#### **3.1.1 Copeau, Saint-Denis and the Compagnie des Quinze**

Motley were introduced to Michel Saint-Denis in early 1935 when Gielgud invited him to direct an English language version of André Obey's (1892-1975) *Noé* (1930) with Motley as designers, and Gielgud in the title role. Devine, who was on tour with Gielgud's *Hamlet* (1934, tour April 1935) wrote to them that:

It really seems as though St. D is heaven sent to you my darlings... It is such a wonderful compliment for him to pay you re: *Noé*. I can't think of anything that should please you more...you are sure to be able to work well for someone you

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<sup>72</sup> Margaret Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery worked in the USA during the Second World War, and Sophie Harris-Devine in Britain, all under the name of Motley. After the war Harris returned to Britain and she and Harris-Devine operated as Motley whether working together or separately, whilst Montgomery, who had remained in the USA, used the name Motley for her practice there.

admire and like and believe in as much as him... What a lovely time you are having with him reading the play to you. (Devine, n.d., [c.1935])

Saint-Denis and his Compagnie des Quinze (the Quinze) had visited London to great acclaim between 1931 and 1934 (Saint-Denis, 1961, p.30; & 1982, p.42).<sup>73</sup> As Devine's letter implied, Motley were familiar with Saint-Denis's work having seen and admired his productions in the early 1930s (Mullin, 1996, p.44).

In order to evaluate the impact that Saint-Denis had on Motley it is necessary to analyse what was different about the work of his company. The Quinze had lived and worked together for over ten years in the Burgundy countryside and they had developed a physical, at times choral, presentational style of performance on minimal sets. Most of the company originated in Jacques Copeau's (1879–1949) Vieux Colombier School, going on to form Copeau's company Les Copiaus. When Copeau disbanded his company some of its members regrouped in 1929 as the Compagnie des Quinze under Saint-Denis's directorship (see Baldwin, 2003) and lived and worked together as an ensemble. As discussed in the previous chapter the ideal of an ensemble or permanent company was one that was shared by many English theatre practitioners and one of the reasons for the Quinze's success in London could have been their embodiment of this goal. Additionally, as a 'starless' company (Saint-Denis, 1961, p.29), 'united through artistic convictions' (1961, p.31) each member of the Quinze was trained to be able to take on any part. They could sing, dance, do acrobatics and work with masks, and this versatility enabled a flexibility and inventiveness of expression that was not usual in British theatre of the time. Jacques Copeau, an influential French theatre director, producer, actor, critic and dramatist born in Paris, was Saint-Denis's uncle. Copeau started as a theatre critic but in 1912 became a practitioner in order to put his theories about theatre into practice. Saint-Denis was steeped in his uncle's work from a young age, mixing with French and British writers and artists such as Marcel Proust (1871-1922), Paul Claudel (1868-1955), André Gide (1869-1951), Granville Barker, painter Duncan Grant (1885-1978) and art critic Clive Bell (1881-1964) (Saint-Denis, 1961, p.29). This background is likely to have given Saint-Denis confidence in both the practical and theoretical aspects of theatre. In this sense Saint-Denis differed from Gielgud who claimed that his style of directing was 'mad off-the-cuff; changing my mind every five minutes' and that he 'never learnt basic rules or had theories' (Gielgud, 1973, p.14). We have seen in Chapter Two that this was not strictly true and that Gielgud was influenced by Granville-Barker's and Gordon Craig's ideas, but Gielgud appears to have identified himself more with practice than theory whereas Saint-Denis was comfortable being situated in both camps.

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<sup>73</sup> In 1931 they showed *Le Viol de Lucrece*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*, and Obey's *Noé* at the Arts Theatre. In 1932 Obey's *La Bataille de la Marne* ran in rep with *Noé* and *Lucrece* at the New Theatre. In 1933 Obey's *Loire* and in 1934 Obey's *Don Juan*.

### CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

In the wake of naturalism in France, as promoted by practitioners such as André Antoine as mentioned in Chapter Two, Copeau sought to peel away the layers of tradition which he believed had been laid onto theatre practice both in the 'tricks of the trade' (Rudlin, 1986, p.9) used by actors and in the complicated scenery used on stage. He believed that such complications needed to be cleared away to allow the actor to 'give true "reality" to their characterisations' (Saint-Denis, 2009, p.45). Although sharing this aim of simplification with others such as Edward Gordon Craig, he differed from Craig, for example, in his attitude to the visual in performance. For instance, in 1915, Copeau described seeing Craig's drawings for the Players in *Hamlet*. Craig wanted them to seem like 'birds flying about in a storm of feathers' and drew them like birds with wings. Copeau believed that 'it is the actor, through his gracefulness, his air, his acting, his delivery who should make the spectator say: "like birds in a storm of feathers"' (Copeau et al., 1990, p.19). Although Craig advocated simplicity and suggestion and all aspects of performance being synthesised, his emphasis was on the scenography. Copeau, on the other hand, believed that simplicity could be taken even further so that the accent was on the actors and that they could physically convey the idea of birds without any help from costume. In the previous chapter I showed that one of the characteristics of Motley's style was that they aimed for the design not to dominate the play, but that paradoxically their designs were noticed for the contribution that their carefully controlled visual aesthetic gave to the success of productions. Copeau leaned even further towards minimal and unobtrusive stage design as will be illustrated below.

Copeau opened a school in 1921 in order to train a new generation of actors in the techniques he believed would allow them to perform in a less artificial way, without '*cabotinage*' or overacting. The systems of employment for actors in France at that time were for star performers to be hired to play 'their "set pieces" alongside companies of jobbing actors' (Evans, 2006, p.11), but Copeau intended to train his students to work as a disciplined ensemble without stars. In order to do so he introduced physical exercises, mask work and improvisation. The Vieux-Colombier School ran until 1924 and Rudlin (1986) and Baldwin (2003) describe it in detail, but it should be pointed out that Copeau's teaching method was unlike other dramatic training in France at that time (Baldwin, 2003, p.20) .

Copeau's Vieux-Colombier school did not include a course in theatre design, although Copeau had firm ideas about how he wanted to stage productions, which were carried out on the stage of the Vieux-Colombier theatre. It is important to look at these in detail because of the influence they had on Saint-Denis and his attitude to scenography. In 1913 Copeau published an article in *Nouvelle Revue Française*<sup>74</sup> entitled *Un Essai de rénovation dramatique* [An

<sup>74</sup> *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (NRF) (1909-) founded by André Gide, Jacques Copeau, and Jean Schlumberger (1877-1968). A leading French review of literature and the other arts, its founders aimed to emphasize aesthetic issues and to remain independent of any political party or moral or intellectual school.

Attempt at Dramatic Renovation] (Copeau et al., 1974) in which he explained his belief that complicated scenery was not necessary:

The restrictions of our stage and its crude resources will impose a discipline on us, by obliging us to concentrate true meaning in the emotions of our characters. For this new work all those tricks [of complicated scenery] can be dispensed with: just leave us a bare stage! (translation in Rudlin, 1986, p.7)

This last sentence '*pour l'oeuvre nouvelle, qu'on nous laisse un tréteau nu!*' (Copeau et al., 1974, p.32) is translated by Saint-Denis as: 'for the work of the future let us have a bare platform!' (Saint-Denis, 1960, p.40). Copeau believed that a simplified theatre space and settings would allow the truth of the dramatic text to be conveyed through the actors.

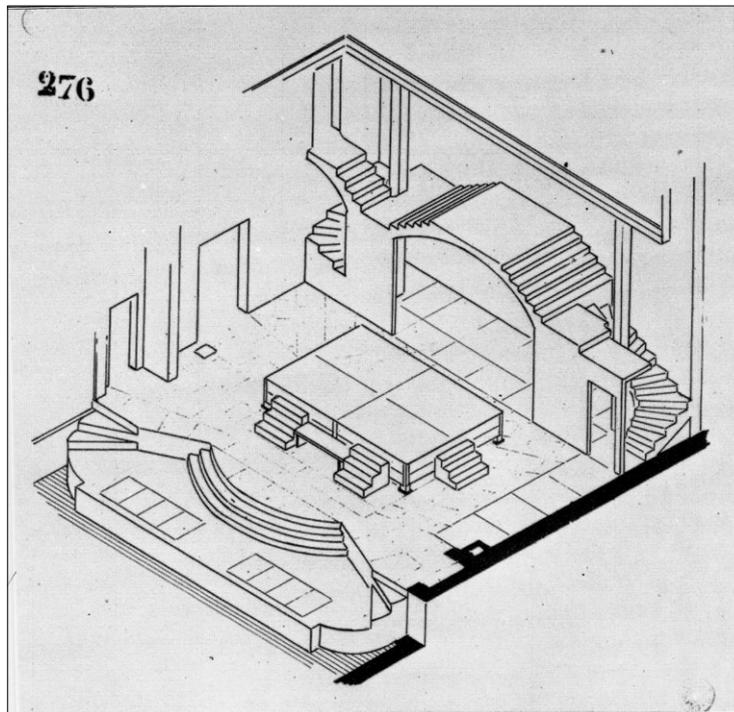


Figure 30: Stage of Copeau's Theatre Vieux Colombier (Jouvet, 1919)

Copeau and his colleague Louis Jouvet<sup>75</sup> worked on simplifying the Vieux-Colombier stage from 1913 onwards. In 1919 they took out the proscenium arch completely and added a permanent set (Figure 30).<sup>76</sup> According to Bablet the Vieux Colombier stage was inspired by a combination of 'music hall' and the Elizabethan stage (Bablet, 1977, p.68). Copeau and

<sup>75</sup> Louis Jouvet (1887-1951), French actor, director, designer, and technician.

<sup>76</sup> Note that the platform in the centre of the stage in Figure 30 is not part of the permanent stage but a wooden trestle stage that was occasionally added to create more levels.

### CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

Granville-Barker were in communication<sup>77</sup> and so it is possible that Copeau and Jouvet had incorporated Granville-Barker's ideas about staging Shakespeare into the stage.

The thrust stage had no wing space and lighting was in full view. Michel Saint-Denis described it thus:

It was both wide and high and every part of it was open to the auditorium. A forestage – on the same level as the main stage – projected into the auditorium to form another acting area, easily recognisable as such. It was designed for physical acting; its form, its many levels, its steps and aprons, allowed for a greater variety of staging. The whole stage was an acting area, in contrast to that “box of illusions” – the proscenium stage. It gave an equal authenticity to classical farce, poetic drama and “anti-theatrical” plays. It rejected any kind of painted or visual illusion, any kind of naturalistic décor created by sets and complicated lighting. Stage screws could get no footing in its cement floor. (Saint-Denis, 1982, p.27)

The floor was literally made of cement, creating an environment that could hide nothing, with no trap doors, apart from two in the apron, no wings or borders. Such simplicity threw the performers into relief, and Copeau believed that it stopped actors relying on sets and props and forced them to find a way to express ‘human “realistic” truthfulness’ (Saint-Denis, 1960, p.41).

Although Copeau did not include theatre design in his own theatre school it is significant that he worked closely with Jouvet to alter the Vieux Colombier stage and that certain theatre design elements were part of the daily routine of the Copiaus (Baldwin, 2003, p. 32).<sup>78</sup> Cornford suggests that whilst Copeau was undoubtedly the foremost influence on Saint-Denis's incorporation of theatre design into the collaborative model at the LTS, Saint-Denis ‘could not have generated interest in such an approach or managed to implement it at the LTS without the example and co-operation of Motley’ because their studio represented a ‘communal’ and ‘egalitarian’ example (Cornford, 2012, p. 158). Egalitarian because the three women worked under one name, and communal in the way that their studio doubled as a work and social space. Whilst the collaboration between the three Motley women will be shown in this chapter to have been a synergic combination of their individual talents, I will illustrate that the designer's role in the creative team at the London Theatre Studio, particularly in relation to the director, was more complex and less harmonious than Cornford implies. The inconsistency of Saint-Denis's directorial approach to rehearsals for *Three Sisters* (1938), in which he meticulously

<sup>77</sup> Granville-Barker was impressed by Copeau's production of *Twelfth Night* (1913) (Aykroyd, undated, p. 15).

<sup>78</sup> Maïéne Copeau (1902-1994) and Madeleine Gaultier designed sets and costumes (Baldwin, 2003, p. 30) and the women of the company were required to make the costumes (Baldwin, 2003, p. 28).

blocked the script in advance but conducted improvisations, has been documented (Baldwin in Saint-Denis, 2009, p.13; Cornford, 2012, p.247) and this thesis will demonstrate that such contradictions extended to Saint-Denis's method of working with designers.

Motley's articulation of their own practice in order to teach theatre design at the London Theatre Studio gives an insight into their attitudes and processes during this period and suggests that they were developing a theoretical framework and praxis for theatre design that will be explored in the following section. Additionally their involvement in the LTS as an organisation gave Motley the opportunity to consider how theatre design related to acting, directing, stage management and theatre architecture, as well as a chance to experiment outside of commercial theatre.



Figure 31: Rehearsals for *Romeo and Juliet* (1932) showing rehearsal clothing of the period (Anon, 1932)

### 3.1.2 London Theatre Studio

When Saint-Denis directed *Noah* in early July 1935 he found that the English actors could not achieve the versatility of his Quinze troupe, in part due to their training and to the rehearsal methods that were in place. If trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art or Central School of Speech and Drama during this period they would have been given 'conventional classes in voice, elocution, dance, gesture, and physical deportment' (Baldwin, 2003, p.192) whereas the Quinze had been used to all kinds of physical classes from ballet to gymnastics, as well as improvisation and mask work (Baldwin, 2003, p.21). Expecting physicality in the English actors Saint-Denis told the cast to wear bathing suits for rehearsals. English actors were unused to wearing special rehearsal clothes at this time, instead they would wear their normal day clothes such as suits and ties or skirts and high heels. Photographs of the OUDS *Romeo and Juliet* rehearsals in 1932 show that plus-fours were the greatest concession that any of the actors in that production made to clothing that enabled more physical movements (Anon, 1932) (Figure

31). There was dissent about wearing swimsuits amongst the cast of *Noah* and so Saint-Denis exempted those playing humans, in other words the more established actors. Consequently, the performers who were playing animals would be crawling on hands and knees in bathing suits, whilst those playing humans, such as Gielgud, remained 'immaculately [dressed] in a dark suit and trilby hat' (Read, 2003, p.50). This is a strong visual illustration of the difference between Saint-Denis's style of theatre and that of the English actors. Apart from showing that rehearsals in the 1930s must have been far less physical in comparison to today's rehearsals when actors are almost always expected to wear clothing they can move around in, it also shows that although Gielgud was leaning towards collaborative practice, it was not egalitarian and the hierarchy or star system was still entrenched in British theatre so that established actors could influence the method of rehearsals.

*Noah* was well received by the press and ran for ten weeks (Baldwin, 2003, p.62), but did not elicit the same enthusiasm as the *Quinze* production had done (Guthrie, 1961, p.84). There had been many financial problems and internal tensions for the *Quinze*, France itself was in the grip of the economic crisis of the late 1920s and 1930s, the Great Depression, and this in turn prompted political unrest. Saint-Denis eventually conceded defeat and disbanded the company in 1935 (see Baldwin, 2003, pp.41–56), spending much of that year in London directing *Noah* and then considering his options. His British friends, including Devine, supported and encouraged him to set up a school or company in England (Saint-Denis, 1961, p.34). Saint-Denis's experience with *Noah* had persuaded him that in order to work in England he needed to train actors with the skills he required and so he decided that a school and company must be combined: 'I longed for new actors; [the] experience [of *Noah*] confirmed me in my resolution to open a studio' (Saint-Denis, 1961, p.34). This was the origin of the London Theatre Studio. The LTS prospectus of 1935 sets out his principles clearly:

No valuable theatrical ensemble can be achieved without the existence of a permanent company of actors, accustomed to work together and to play a varied repertory which is constantly being increased and renewed. The school should supply the basic elements of the permanent company, and always act as reserve of talent. The group of artists and technicians will collaborate in preparing for the productions; they will have the time and the means to evolve various methods of presentation through practical experience. (Saint-Denis & Devine, 1935, p.2)

The prospectus makes it clear that the idea behind the LTS was ultimately to have a permanent ensemble company with a repertory of plays that would be added to, in the manner of European theatre makers such as Reinhardt (as discussed in Chapter 2). The company would be collaborative and made up of graduates of the LTS. It also shows that the LTS was seen as an opportunity to experiment with 'methods of presentation'. The name Studio, from the Latin

for a place to study, was chosen deliberately, and is an indication of this experimental aspect. In 1905 Meyerhold<sup>79</sup> had started a short lived Studio for the Moscow Art Theatre and had coined the term 'Theatre Studio' to signify that it was 'not a proper theatre, certainly not a school, but a laboratory for new ideas (Leach in Cornford, 2013, p.712) and Stanislavsky formed the First Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre in 1912. Other theatre makers in the 1930s in Britain, such as Michael Chekhov, also used the word.<sup>80</sup> The purely commercial nature of British theatre before the Second World War and its potential impact on theatre designers as outlined in Chapter Two indicates that the LTS provided a valuable opportunity for experimentation for Motley. It is also significant that technicians were involved in the collaboration alongside artists at the LTS, and this will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

### 3.1.2.1 Architecture

As there was no state funding of arts education until after World War Two the LTS opened in January 1936 with the help of investments and loans from leading actors and theatre producers,<sup>81</sup> so that although it was experimental it also depended on private sponsors, loans and student's fees. Without permanent premises the LTS held classes at 14 Beak Street, in a studio that had formerly been Diaghilev's practice room. Following a generous loan of £3,500 (equivalent to over £200,000 today) by Production Course student Laura Dyas, a three year lease was signed on a building in Providence Place in Islington at the end of April 1936. The Bauhaus architect Marcel Breuer (1902-1981) was recruited to start work on adapting the site, which had been an unused Methodist Chapel. Breuer, a Hungarian-born architect and furniture designer of Jewish descent, was head of furniture design at the Bauhaus. Forced to flee Germany by the Nazis, he worked in Britain between 1935-1937 before emigrating to the USA.<sup>82</sup>

The auditorium is tiny... The stage on the contrary takes up most of the building and is as large as that of many West End theatres. Behind it has been built out a series of rehearsal rooms, music rooms, scene-painting rooms and dressing rooms. "About forty rooms in all," says M. Saint-Denis, with some pride. (H.G., 1936, n.p.)

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<sup>79</sup> Vsevolod Emilevich Meyerhold (1874-1940) was a Russian theatre director, actor and producer.

<sup>80</sup> Mikhail Aleksandrovich 'Michael' Chekhov (1891-1955), nephew of Anton Chekhov, was a Russian-American actor, director author and theatre practitioner. Between 1936 and 1939 he established The Chekhov Theatre Studio at Dartington Hall, in Devon, England.

<sup>81</sup> Bronson Albery, Tyrone Guthrie, Laurence Olivier, Gielgud and Charles Laughton made investments and loans and there was a supporting committee of Albery, Gielgud, Guthrie, Olivier and the banker Ian Black.

<sup>82</sup> Breuer was amongst many other European artists (including Bertolt Brecht, László Moholy-Nagy and Walter Gropius) compelled to leave Germany during the 1930s.

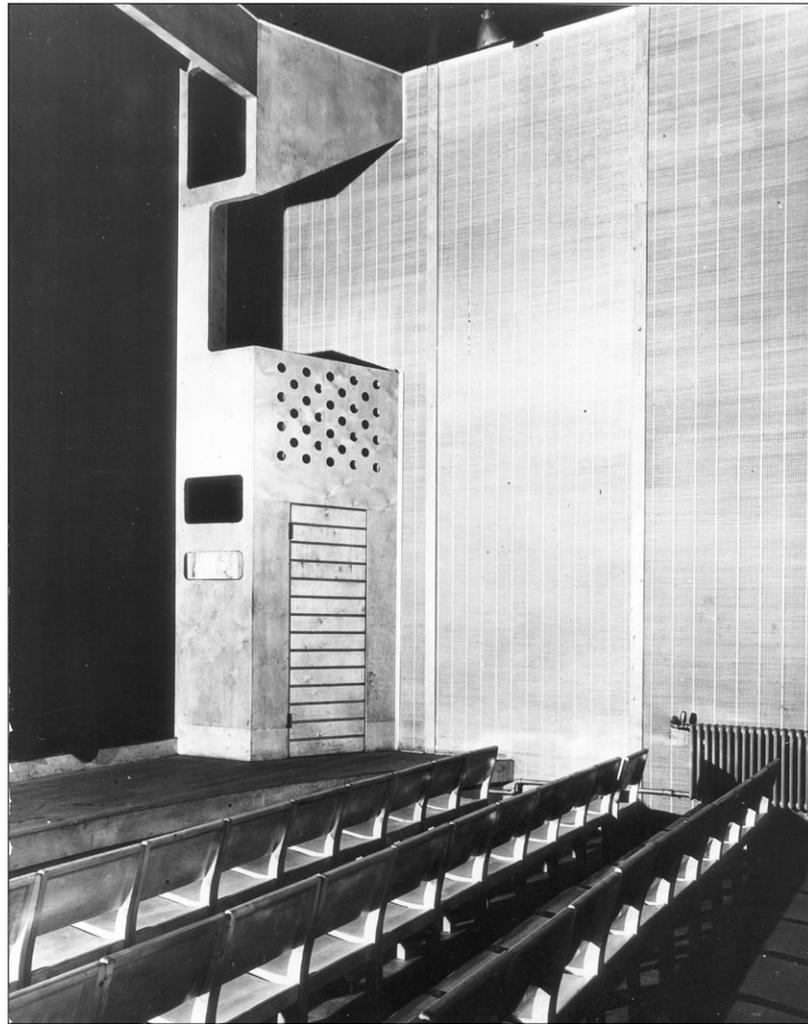


Figure 32: London Theatre Studio stage left proscenium arch (Breuer, 1936b)

Half of the available space was taken up by the stage, and the auditorium was small in comparison to it with only 190 seats. According to Wardle the whole space including auditorium and stage was 42 foot by 32 foot (12.8m x 9.75m), and the proscenium opening was 32 foot (9.75m) wide whilst the stage extended 22 foot (6.7m) deep to a moveable screen wall (Wardle, 1978, p.54). The seating was steeply raked and the front row came to within two feet (60cm) of the forestage creating an intimate environment between the audience and performers (Saint-Denis, 1982, p.49; Wardle, 1978, p.54) (Figure 32). My research has revealed that Breuer, who was simultaneously working on the prototype for his 'Long chair' for Isokon, imported stackable plywood chairs designed by Alvar Aalto, as well as plywood stools by an unknown Estonian designer. Both designs are still manufactured today, as 'Aalto Chair 611' and the 'Isokon stool'. Harris believed that these chairs were the first stackable plywood chairs to be used in Britain,<sup>83</sup> and whether or not this is true their functionality meant that the seating could be cleared from the auditorium so that it could double as a rehearsal space. This flexibility of space reflects the flexibility required of the actors and of the scenography.

<sup>83</sup> According to the research I carried out for the exhibition *When Marcel Met Motley* (2006) Harris was correct that Isokon first imported these chairs for the London Theatre Studio.



Figure 33: Louis Jouvét with a model showing his adaptations of the Garrick Theatre, New York 1917 (Rudlin, 1986, p.57)

Harris suggested that the LTS theatre might have been based on the Vieux Colombier theatre, as although 'it became a picture frame stage and did have a proscenium [it was] a fluid one' (Harris, 1992, tape 6b) with a forestage in front of the proscenium allowing for greater variety of staging. However, the configuration had more similarities to the adaptations that Copeau and Jouvét made to the Garrick Theatre, New York, in 1917 (see Anon, 1917) (Figure 33). On either side of the LTS's proscenium arch there were tower-like structures, each containing spaces for lights to be placed and, as in Jouvét's Garrick adaptation, a door and a balcony that could be used as a window (see Figure 32). A key difference in approach to Copeau's theatres was that the LTS stage was purposefully built at such a large size in order to facilitate a direct transfer to the West End, a fact that illustrates the integral idea that the Studio would lead to a company and was alert to commercial possibilities.

Harris recalled that there was little wing space and that Motley designed a permanent structure for the stage for masking. It is unclear whether this refers to the 'moveable wall' that is marked on Breuer's London Theatre Studio ground plan of the stage (Breuer, 1936a) as there is, unfortunately, no further evidence of this structure. It will be explored in detail in Chapter Four when the permanent masking of the Royal Court Theatre is discussed. However, Harris also stated that, 'there was a strange ceiling which was made of a frame with webbing stretched over it, webbing trellis work, which you could light through' (Harris, 1992, tape 6b). Figure 34 appears to show the shadows thrown onto the LTS stage by this webbing. There is no way to know whether the webbing was meant to be visible in this way or whether the photograph



Figure 34: Shadows of webbing ceiling on London Theatre Studio stage (Anon, 1936b)

captures the shadows being thrown by working lighting, although the unfinished state of the set suggests the latter.

Innovatively, there was an elevated gallery at the back of the auditorium for the stage manager to control lighting and sound (Saint-Denis, 1982, pp.48–49) (Figure 35 and Figure 36). Previously stage-managers would have to control the show from the wings, but they now had full view of the stage, and were able to react instantly to the action on it as mentioned in Chapter One. This was possibly the first theatre in Britain to build an auditorium with such a permanent placement of the lighting board. The theatre that Breuer would have been most familiar with, at the Bauhaus in Dessau, had two small rooms at the back, one of which, according to the current Director of the Bauhaus Stage, was specified as a 'projection room', and although these rooms would have been an optimal location for lighting controls there is no proof that they were used for this and it seems unlikely given that evidence points to simple lighting equipment that was often borrowed from other departments (Blume, 2014). There is similarly no evidence of where the lighting controls were positioned in Copeau's Vieux Colombier theatre, and from looking at the diagrams of the stage (Figure 30) it seems unlikely that they can have been placed at the sides as there is so little wing space for them to have been hidden behind. It is therefore possible that the controls were placed at the back of the auditorium at the Vieux Colombier and that the idea for their placing at the LTS came from Saint-Denis.



Figure 35: Inside the London Theatre Studio lighting control booth (Anon, 1936a)



Figure 36: Lighting control booth at London Theatre Studio (Felton, 1936)

### CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

The implications of this positioning of the controls are that the stage managers, by being able to react to the performance, were seen as having a contribution to make to the production. This reinforces the collaborative practice of the Studio, and that technicians were included as well as designers and directors. According to Jocelyn Herbert, who studied at the LTS between 1936-1938, Saint-Denis encouraged all of those working in the theatre to value and understand the work of everyone else.

Michel's attitude to theatre was as a way of life, a search for perfection in which everyone's talents contributed. He taught that people involved in the theatre should know how to value the work of each person involved and what it entailed, whatever their department. (Herbert in Courtney, 1993, p.15)

This was exemplified by the way that students from different courses would interact at the LTS, as will be described later in the chapter.

Devine put £400 of his own money (equivalent to over £24,000 today) into lighting and sound equipment for the school (Herbert, 1985b, tape 8a).<sup>84</sup> Devine gave classes in lighting for the students as well as evening classes for the public (Saint-Denis & Devine, 1937). Harris recalled that:

[Devine] used to light all the shows [at the LTS], and he used to try out all sorts of things. I can remember hours being spent with him trying to get an equivalent to candle light, for some bit of Chekhov they were doing...and he used to do a lot of experimenting with colour there. There were only a few lamps, but he did wonders with them. (Harris, 1992, tape 6b)

This indicates that Devine used the Studio theatre as a full-scale model to experiment with lighting and its possibilities. This chance for experimentation was reflected in his increasing skill in lighting. He was credited as arranging the lighting for *Richard II* (1937), as mentioned, and he is credited as lighting several other plays between this and the Second World War, including *Three Sisters* (1938).<sup>85</sup> The effect that Devine's experimentation might have had on his lighting design will be discussed in the case study below. Although there is no evidence that Motley carried out similar experiments on the stage, they designed several end of year

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<sup>84</sup> Appendix 8 shows a list of the equipment that belonged to Devine (Devine, 1936).

<sup>85</sup> *Macbeth* (1937) (not in programme but listed in Saint-Denis, n.d.), *Merchant of Venice* (1938), *Dear Octopus* (1938), *Three Sisters* (1938). Devine is consistently listed as 'arranging' rather than 'designing' the lighting in the programmes, apart from *Dear Octopus* (1938) that says 'Lighting by George Devine' (Anon, 1939).

productions<sup>86</sup> that had no commercial pressures. This potentially offered them the chance to try out ideas. Additionally, Motley were involved in discussions with Breuer and Saint-Denis about the layout of the new theatre (Harris, 1992, tape 6b), including, as at their studio, combining the formal and informal by inviting Breuer to join them on holiday in 1936.<sup>87</sup> Their involvement in the development of the LTS theatre would have introduced them to thinking about theatre architecture's affect on performance as opposed to only thinking about what was placed within it.

### 3.1.2.2 Design training

Apart from training actors over two years, there were courses in Production (what we now call directing) and Décor (theatre design). The London Theatre Studio was the first school in Britain to bring a design course, run by Motley, within the main body of a drama school. Although Harris did not recall being involved in the planning of the LTS, '[Saint-Denis] knew what he wanted the design course to be...he made the arrangements of roughly what the course should be and then left us to do it' (Harris, 1992, tape 7a), Devine was closely involved in setting up the LTS and he was to become the General Manager as well as teaching there. As Devine continued to be the Motley's business manager until the LTS opened it is reasonable to surmise that Motley were informally involved in conversations that took place at their studio around the formation of the LTS and of the courses.<sup>88</sup> All three Motleys participated in teaching to some extent, but according to Harris she was the most engaged in the school. Montgomery did not enjoy teaching and Sophie Harris-Devine was very involved in the Motley dress house, although she did work a lot with students on how costumes should be worn (Harris, 1992, tape 7b).

Previously, people with ambitions to design for the theatre might possibly attend art school to study fine art, but would always have to approach designing either through scene painting or by making contacts with directors or producers: the latter being the experience of the three Motley women (see Chapter 2). The only contemporaneous courses related to theatre design were attached to art schools; scene painting at the Slade School of Fine Art, theatre design at Wimbledon School of Art and costume design at Central School of Arts and Crafts. However these were all geared towards training theatre technicians rather than creative collaborators (Wright, 2009, p.11).

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<sup>86</sup> In 1937 they designed *The Beaux' Stratagem*, *Hay Fever*, *L'Occasion*. In 1938 they designed *Ariadne*, *Electra*, *Judith* and *Holofernes*. All directed by Saint-Denis.

<sup>87</sup> Those present at the holiday in Emlyn Williams's cottage near Staines were Motley, Breuer, Devine, Saint-Denis, actress Vera Poliakoff (1911-1992) and Saint-Denis's children Jerome and Christine.

<sup>88</sup> By the time of the Old Vic School (1948–52) Harris and Byam Shaw were responsible for choosing students and Harris had been closely involved in the planning of the design course (Harris, c.1990).

### CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

The Décor and Production courses ran for one year with the best students being given the opportunity to carry on for a further advanced or extended year.<sup>89</sup> Whereas the first year design students had shared classes with the directing and stage management students those selected to continue onto a further year of study would become more focused on theatre design and would be chosen to design the end of year shows. From the Production course directing students would be assigned as assistant directors to the professional directors who were brought in for the end of year shows, or those directing students who went on to a further year might occasionally be given a small piece to direct themselves. For the end of year shows, which took place in front of the public, the first year designers would be in charge of organising first year acting students who made sets, props and costumes to the specifications of the second year designers. The first year actors would also be dressers, stage-hands and electricians for these productions.

Students from the Décor and Production courses attended Saint-Denis's lectures on 'principles of production; the play; scenery and costumes; the actor; all the collaborators of the stage' (Saint-Denis & Devine, 1937), whilst the Décor course had additional lectures and practical work on:

History of Scenery and Costumes and Origins of Theatre Lectures, Stage Design, Ground Plans, Sections, Sight Lines, Model Making, Stage Equipment and Apparatus, Scene Painting, Period Cutting and Fitting, Dyeing, and Costume Properties. (Saint-Denis & Devine, 1937)

It is evident that the Décor course had both theoretical and practical aspects to it. I would deduce from this that the designer was being trained to know how to make what they designed. Saint-Denis's lectures were theoretical talks about the principles of theatre as he saw them, although he also appears to have touched on practical matters and the history of theatre (Herbert, 1936a). These would have been the times when all students would have had the opportunity to receive clarity about his aims and ethos. In terms of the historical lectures, Motley would not themselves have been formally taught these subjects, not having trained in theatre, although they may have picked up the information from their own readings and conversations. It is possible that their involvement in the LTS may have been an education for them in these areas as well as for the students, although it is unlikely that they had time to attend all the lectures.

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<sup>89</sup> In 1935 the LTS prospectus called the advanced design course the 'Décor Course Extension'. It also listed a separate course for stage-managers but by 1937 it appears that they were incorporated into the Production course, so that the Production course included stage managers and directors.

The combination of theory and practice reflects in part Saint-Denis's idea that all collaborators of the theatre should appreciate each other's contributions, but also chimes with Motley's practical need to understand the construction of sets and costumes. Chapter Two has shown the development of their awareness about set construction via their early career encounters with Harry Henby at the New Theatre and that they thought it necessary to set up a workshop in order to oversee the construction of their costumes. Motley's methodology had developed to encompass practical knowledge that would enable them to design costumes and sets that were technically achievable and would help them to communicate with the people who were actually constructing their designs. I would hypothesise that by combining Saint-Denis's theories about theatre with their articulation of their own methodology Motley were clarifying and reinforcing ideas that were already present in their practice. However the issue of who generated the ground plan and at what stage in the process demonstrates that some areas continued to shift and fluctuate throughout the period from 1935 to the late 1960s.

[Saint-Denis] wanted [the LTS design students] to be able to be very practical...He used to base it tremendously on the ground plan, because he used to say that unless the plan is right you can't [direct] it and you can't evolve the set. (Harris, 1992, tape 7a)

### **3.1.2.3 The ground plan**

For Saint-Denis the ground plan was the 'embryo of the production of a play' (Saint-Denis, 1982, p.222) and according to Herbert, 'he used to make the most detailed ground plan himself and then give it to the designer and you had to build something on that' (Herbert, 1985a, tape 8b). The question of who generates the ground plan is an important one as it is a tangible site of negotiation of control between the designer and director.

As with the other drawings and objects created by the theatre designer during the design process, the ground plan is a method for communicating an idea. It is a plot of where entrances, exits, levels and walls should be placed, but it does not typically give information about height, texture or colour. Another drawing, the elevation, is usually provided to show what the set would look like from the front and/or the side, and the model box is built to explain layout, colour, texture and detail in three dimensions. A ground plan may begin as a rough scribble but the designer has to submit a precise and accurately measured version to the set builders. Building a set is expensive and time consuming and so the purpose of the plans and models is to ensure that everything has been carefully thought through to avoid costly mistakes.

Additionally, the ground plan provides a framework for a production, defining some fundamental aspects such as what kind of space it should be and the size and dynamics of the acting areas. In the kind of theatre that is being discussed in this thesis, that wishes to convey

a unified meaning to an audience, the spatial arrangement of the stage should support the dramaturgy of the play. For example, where a door is positioned in a space will determine how characters enter and leave the stage, perhaps in a powerful and dramatic, or conversely, an imperceptible manner.

In order to make informed decisions about the arrangement of the space the designer or director needs to have read the play and made an interpretation of its meaning that is translated into a spatial configuration. They must have been through the play and pictured the actors in the space they are proposing; imagined their movements across, around and through it, their entrances and exits to it, and how all this relates to specific moments in the play. This is true even if they create a space in which many different kinds of action and movement are possible. In every case the decisions about the layout of the stage will dictate, to greater or lesser degrees, how the director might move the actors within it. For example a door placed centre stage would demand to be used for impressive entrances. If a director believes that these decisions are a key element of their job, or do not consider that designers have sufficient dramaturgical skills to make such assessments, then they would resist submitting the task to them.

From a contemporary standpoint it would seem unusual and prescriptive for the director to give the designer a detailed ground plan to work from, although the director would almost certainly have thought about where entrances, exits or key scenes should be placed. It has been my experience as a practicing designer that it is now seen as part of the *designer's* job to work out the layout of the set and acting area in negotiation with the director.<sup>90</sup> Charles Erven has described how the director 'designs' a production by putting all the pieces of it together, whilst a designer 'directs' by 'anticipating and offering directorial choices, providing spatial and compositional options and laying a foundation for the final shape and image of the production' (Erven, 2009, p.25). However it is clear that even today individual director/designer relationships vary, and with each production demanding a different way of working, perhaps with one or the other taking the lead on the design or with them working together in close collaboration (see Murray, 2012, pp.19–20 for example). Pamela Howard has noted that taking a production out of a theatre building, or using the theatre as a site, immediately changes the designer's position in the relationship because they can 'no longer be a decorator of directorial concepts' (Howard in Oddey & White, 2006, p.72) but rather must have a 'real and vigorous understanding of the needs of the text' (p.72), indicating that there are still tensions within the relationship when a production is placed in a conventional theatre space.

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<sup>90</sup> Elizabeth Wright's findings reflect my own experience: 'Several interviewees describe how, during the early stages of collaboration, the theatre designer's role involves creating a structure within which the performance will take place: both literally in the form of a proposal for the set, and conceptually in the sense of developing the dramaturgical framework for the piece' (Wright, 2009, p.130).

It takes a significant shift in the designer/director relationship to go from the director being in charge of generating the ground plan to it being seen as primarily the responsibility of the designer, or even for it to be perceived as a joint enterprise. For the director to have decided on the layout, leaving the height, detail and colour of any structures to the designer, infers a residual view of the designer as decorator. In order for this to change the concept of the role of the designer must begin to include that they share some of the director's skills. For instance that they can understand the themes or meaning of the play, as well as recognising how space and movement can reinforce or support these. In other words that they can create a spatial dramaturgy for the production that supports their interpretation of the meaning of the play. In addition, with the designer being given more responsibility, an increasing acknowledgement of the contribution that the visual makes to a performance is indicated.

As will be shown throughout this thesis the designer/director relationship continued (and continues) to fluctuate, but as regards the ground plan the evidence below implies that Saint-Denis's method was not definitive and that it was not unquestioned by Motley. The following chapter will demonstrate that by the 1960s Jocelyn Herbert worked closely with director John Dexter to create the layout of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961).

Motley indicated that in their own practice at this time they were generating the ground plan themselves (Johns, 1937) and how Motley taught process at the LTS is recorded in Jocelyn Herbert's notes made whilst she was a student there. Students were recommended to read the play and make notes of the practicalities of settings, such as who is in each scene and what the scenes were about, before working out a ground plan. But Motley also discuss working closely with the director and questioning 'why he wants what he does? And why he has put each thing where he has put it' (Herbert, 1936a). From this one can infer that Motley advised designers to generate the ground plan themselves but also to work closely with directors who might produce one as well.

It would therefore seem that there was some variability between whether the designer or the director generated the ground plan and the question seems to have continued to be unsettled until at least the 1960s. In a 1961 article on contemporary theatre design, Timothy O'Brien described that it had been the practice for the director to give the designer a ground plan 'to decorate as best he could', whereas he notes that, at the time of his writing, a designer could be 'safely' left to work out 'a spring board for the action of the play in his ground plan' (O'Brien, 1961, p34). From this one can infer that in O'Brien's experience this was still novel enough in 1961 to be worthy of comment, but does not discount that there was some flexibility before this date. For Saint-Denis it would appear to have been a site of tension in the designer/director relationship from this period until the late 1960s. In his book *Training for the Theatre* (published posthumously in 1982), Saint-Denis warned against the designer dominating

the director and cautioned the student director to devise a ground plan for the action of the play, and that he must do this fairly swiftly.

If he hesitates or is slow in deciding upon his staging, he may find that the designer has proceeded independently and he may, therefore, be limited to the plan the designer has devised. (Saint-Denis, 1982, p.235)

Saint-Denis died in 1971 but this quotation denotes that until then he was still advocating that the director should devise the ground plan, that it had begun to be more common for the designer to take on this job, and that he did not see such a development as wholly positive.

The practice of creating the ground plan as the *beginning* of the design process was another contentious area. Herbert explained that as a student at the LTS she found starting from the ground plan restrictive (Herbert, 1985b, tape 8) and, although Motley are described as using this process in 1937 (Johns, 1937), Harris later came to believe that it risked limiting the imagination (Harris, 1992, tape 11a). When Harris set up the independent Motley Theatre Design Course (1966-2011) at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in 1966, Hayden Griffin (1943-2013) was one of the first students and went on to teach on the course almost immediately after graduating. Griffin felt strongly that designers should creatively interpret the play before working on the technicalities and so the course began to encourage students to do sketches as a first response to the text (Harris, 1992, tape 11a). By 1980 it was clear that the Motley Course placed emphasis on the imaginative development of the student in relation to theatre events (Harris & Griffin, 1980).<sup>91</sup> However, the implication is that until c.1967 Harris was still recommending the method of working on the ground plan first. My experience from my own training, as well as from observing teaching methods as a visiting lecturer on several theatre design courses, is that contemporary students are encouraged to be creative initially and to develop the ground plan alongside the refining of their creative ideas.

The balance between creative input and technical proficiency in the theatre designer would seem to have been another site of fluctuation during the period covered by this thesis. When Motley began working they were trying to establish themselves as more than just decorators,<sup>92</sup> grappling with the practicalities of construction as well as aiming to embed the dramaturgical framework of the play into their design. They were, therefore, bridging both the creative and technical in their practice. At this early stage they might have been more prepared to accept that the process of visually interpreting the dramatic text should begin with a layout of a stage

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<sup>91</sup> 'At all stages of the work students are encouraged to develop their individual imagination and ability to interpret [the theatrical] event visually. This is backed up by as much technical help and advice as can be arranged' (Harris & Griffin, 1980).

<sup>92</sup> We have seen that Gielgud described them as 'scientists' for example (Gielgud in H.G., 1936b).

rather than a creative response as this would reinforce the technical aspect of their work. Once it became accepted that designers had technical capabilities Motley may have been more at ease with the imaginative reaction to a text being a springboard for designs. However, binaries between the creative and technical in theatre design practice are unhelpful as ideas can be generated in the process of working out technicalities and technical difficulties can be overcome through creative thinking. Saint-Denis's insistence on starting the design process by creating a ground plan may have made him more comfortable as a director but it would seem that Herbert and Griffin disliked the fixity of deciding on the layout first. In my experience contemporary practice and pedagogy encourages an ebb and flow between imaginative and technical aspects.

#### **3.1.2.4 The dramatic text**

It is clear that the designers at the LTS were expected to familiarise themselves with the text and to base their designs on it. Herbert's notes show that Motley advised that the designer should not 'adapt [the] play to [the] idea', but should 'bring out [the] meaning of [the] play – let it give you ideas' (Herbert, 1936b) but I have already shown that Saint-Denis advocated that the author was the only 'completely creative person' in the theatre (Saint-Denis, 2009, p.84). Motley emphasised that the mood of the play was to be realised through the spatial configuration of the sets as much as through colour and light and consistently reiterated that the set's function of supporting the play and the actors must come before consideration of visual appeal (Herbert, 1936b). How Motley realised this advice will be illustrated in the case study of *Three Sisters* (1938). This emphasis on the prominence of the dramatic text in turn explains the importance placed on the teaching of theatre history. It was believed to be important for the designer to understand the shape of the theatres for which a play was written so that they could 'properly understand the shape and movement of the play' (Herbert, 1946), in other words understanding the play spatially and temporally.

It was stressed that the costumes and sets should work in harmony with each other (Saint-Denis, 1960, p.82) and in the same way that the LTS taught that the set should convey the meaning of the play it taught that costumes should help to convey character. Saint-Denis's terminology about this implies an undercurrent of anxiety about the designer dominating through their designs when he discusses that the actor should not have a character 'imposed' on him by the costume so that he is 'imprisoned' by it (Saint-Denis, 1960, p.82). Instead Saint-Denis saw the ideal costume as supporting the actor's attempt to portray the character.

As previously described, design students were taught a combination of practical and theoretical classes including cutting, dyeing and the different properties of fabrics as well as costume

history.<sup>93</sup> Herbert's notes show that students designing period costume were advised to consider the characters as real people who 'still thought – felt – loved & hated' (Herbert, 1936a). They were also recommended to find a contemporary equivalent to a period character (1936a), presumably in order to feel less distanced from a historical one. Having been taught the history of costume, designers were counselled to create costume designs that differed from the paintings or fashion plates from which they may have sought inspiration, but that had some life in them, and to think of the costumes in movement (Herbert, 1936a). To this end students were also given classes in the wearing of period costume to enable them to understand what it felt like to wear the clothing and how it changed the movement that was possible (Saint-Denis, 1960, p.82).<sup>94</sup>

How Motley suggested character and technical understanding in their costume renderings for *Three Sisters* (1938) will be discussed in the case study below but Motley advised the LTS students that costumes could suggest character through cut, colour and texture, and it will be seen that this was the technique they applied in their *Three Sisters* (1938) costumes.

### 3.1.3 Chekhov in Britain

Few British directors have come to prominence in recent years without working on Chekhov's plays. (Russell Brown, 1993, p.7)

Whilst the quotation above suggests Chekhov's importance in the contemporary British theatrical canon, prior to the First World War Chekhov productions were not well received in Britain. Russian director and designer Theodore Komisarjevsky initiated the British recognition of Chekhov as a major playwright when he put on several Chekhov plays<sup>95</sup> at the Barnes Theatre, London between 1925 and 1926 (Tracey, 1993, p.65). He was later invited to direct *The Seagull* at the New Theatre in 1936. According to Gielgud this was 'the first Chekhov production in the West End to be given the full honours of a star cast and expensive décor' (Gielgud, 1988 [1963], p.88).

Robert Tracey has shown that in the Barnes season Komisarjevsky romanticised and Anglicised the plays considerably to appeal to British audiences as well as making many cuts and alterations to the texts (see Tracey, 1993). For example, Komisarjevsky, who usually designed as well as directed his productions, changed the period of the Barnes Theatre *Three*

<sup>93</sup> A study of the 'history of costumes' meant looking at clothing in a style typical of a particular country or historical period, rather than at theatrical costume. It could now be referred to as 'history of costume' or 'history of fashion'.

<sup>94</sup> Scenography students at the National Theatre School of Canada, founded in 1960 under the guidance of Saint-Denis, still do sessions on the wearing of costume.

<sup>95</sup> The plays Komisarjevsky directed at Barnes between 1925-6 were *Ivanov*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Cherry Orchard* by Chekhov, *Katerina* by Andreyev and *The Government Inspector* by Gogol (Komisarjevsky, 1930, p.42).

## CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

*Sisters* (1926) from around 1900 to the 1870s, ostensibly to make the costumes more visually appealing. In the same production he made the men more attractive so that Gielgud's Baron Tuzenbach,<sup>96</sup> was transformed from 'a drab young officer to a "neurotic Adonis who might well have fascinated Irina"' (Tracey, 1993, p.65). Peggy Ashcroft saw and admired the production but was 'horrified by Komisarjevsky's explanation that the English could not have understood Tuzenbakh [sic] as actually written by Chekhov' (McVay, 1993). Gielgud himself was puzzled by Komisarjevsky's interpretation (Gielgud, 1988 [1963], p.87) but admired the director sufficiently to invite him to direct the 1936 *Seagull*.<sup>97</sup>

Ashcroft felt that Saint-Denis was more faithful to Chekhov than Komisarjevsky (McVay, 1993, p.86) and Saint-Denis's approach, as examined in the case study below, addressed several of the problems that have been identified as facing British practitioners when tackling Chekhov (see McDonald, 1993; le Fleming, 1993).

There are no climaxes, no 'points' to make, no exits to bring applause; one first of all has to absorb the atmosphere and then to listen to the other characters. (Gielgud in Anon, 1938a, p.3)

Gielgud's description of working on *Three Sisters* (1938) reveals the conventions of British performers that Saint-Denis was able to counter by having an ensemble of actors within a repertory system that enabled longer than usual rehearsal times. The British system involved established actors playing the main roles and younger actors playing smaller parts, but as Gielgud pointed out 'there are no insignificant parts' in Chekhov (1938a, p.2) and Saint-Denis was able to spend time working in detail with all the actors so that they understood that every part was important. In the quotation above Gielgud indicates that British actors expected to include intense moments in their performances that would highlight their acting skills and, in contrast, he goes on to say that in Chekhov 'some uninteresting line spoken, perhaps with one's back half-turned to the audience, is found to be of great importance' (1938a, p.3), and the extra rehearsal time may have allowed the actors to assimilate this concept. The circumstances of the 1938 production and Saint-Denis's attitude to Chekhov resulted in a production that appealed to British audiences, contributing to the description of him in 1963 as 'perhaps the most perceptive interpreter of Chekhov in the theatre of the West' (Introduction to Saint-Denis, 1963, p.77).

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<sup>96</sup> Due to the fact that there is no standard transliteration (or Romanisation) of Russian Cyrillic there is no standard way of spelling names in Chekhov's plays. I will use the versions as listed in the *Three Sisters* (1938) programme unless quoting another source.

<sup>97</sup> Seven of the actors who were later to star in Saint-Denis's *Three Sisters* (1938) were also in Komisarjevsky's 1936 *Seagull*: Ashcroft, Gielgud, Devine, Guinness, Frederick Lloyd (1880-1949), Leon Quartermaine (1876-1967) and Michael Brennan (1912-1982).



Figure 37: Scene from *Macbeth* (Motley, 1937)

## 3.2 *Three Sisters* (1938) case study

### 3.2.1 Circumstances of the production

In the three years between *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) and *Three Sisters* (1938) Motley designed twenty-four plays including three student productions directed by Saint-Denis at the London Theatre Studio, *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1937), *Hay Fever* (1937) and *L'Occasion* (1937) and two professional productions of *The Witch of Edmonton* (1936) and *Macbeth* (1937) directed by him at the Old Vic Theatre.<sup>98</sup>

*The Witch of Edmonton* (1936) and *Macbeth* (1937)<sup>99</sup> were not well received by critics.<sup>100</sup> Saint-Denis believed that the 'conservative' English view at that time of European developments in theatre made it 'difficult for a foreigner to succeed with [Shakespeare]' (Saint-Denis, 1961, p.36). Certainly Motley's monochrome set renderings for *Macbeth* (1937) (Figure 37) are brooding and expressionistic, reminiscent of the haunting and atmospheric sketches of Craig or Adolphe Appia (1862-1928).

<sup>98</sup> They also worked with the following directors: John Gielgud, A.R. Whatmore (1889-1960), Wendy Toye (1917-2010), Stephen Thomas, Irene Hentschel (1891-1979), Maurice Colbourne (1894-1965), Norman Marshall (1901-1980), Oliver Reynolds, Tyrone Guthrie (1900-1971) and Emlyn Williams (1905-1987).

<sup>99</sup> The BBC screened thirty minutes of *Macbeth* (1937) in 1937 (Brooke, n.d.), one of the first of a series of Shakespeare plays that were transmitted from the BBC's inception in 1936 onwards. Unfortunately, television shows were not recorded at this period so there is no record of it.

<sup>100</sup> *Macbeth* (1937), starring Laurence Olivier, has been described as 'disastrous' (Mullin, 1996, p.63) and 'fussy' (Trewin, 1960, p.115) but was successful enough with the public to be transferred from the Old Vic to the New Theatre in the West End for an extended four week run (Anon, 1938b, p.9).

### CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

Each commercial production was a chance to use the techniques and ideas developed at the LTS in a public arena. Masks, for example, which were part of the curriculum at the LTS, were used for Banquo's ghost in *Macbeth* (1937) so that several actors wearing the same mask could appear in different places around the room. Baldwin suggests that both *The Witch of Edmonton* (1936) and *Macbeth* (1937) were experimental and European in style, that Saint-Denis's staging broke with tradition and that, 'as a Frenchman he was unfamiliar with the conventions of British theatre; as an innovator he sought to replace outworn practice' (Baldwin, 2003, p.71).

*Three Sisters* (1938), on the other hand, met with almost unanimous, and often lyrical, approbation.

So exquisitely balanced, subtle and unexaggerated is the touch of M. Saint-Denis that it is difficult to say why no other production has been so satisfying, so right in every respect. (Anon, 1938c, n.p.)

One is so overwhelmed by the poignant beauty of the production that anything written or spoken must fall far short of what one feels. (Farjeon, 1938, n.p.)

Saint-Denis believed that Chekhov 'awakened an echo in the English soul' because the English were nostalgic, had a taste for the domestic and could combine melancholy and humour (Saint-Denis, 1961, p.37).

Chekhov's plays are not only concerned with external circumstances and locations, but also with the interior or psychological realities of their characters. According to Aronson, Chekhov was 'a symbolist playwright trapped in a naturalist theatre [sic]' and his settings were described with 'a stark, yet poetic minimalism and could be seen as part of the symbolist project to fuse interior and exterior states of mind (Aronson, 2005, p.117). Bert O. States writes that although Chekhov asks for several scene changes throughout his plays the logic of these changes is only to do with 'a merciless commentary on human possibilities...Chekhov's people remain the same wherever they are' (States, 1985, p.71).

Saint-Denis used the term 'poetic realism' to describe Chekhov's plays (Saint-Denis, 1961, p.37; Saint-Denis, 1963, p.77), and his criticism of Olivier's 1963 production of *Uncle Vanya*, set on a thrust stage and designed by Sean Kenny, reveals what this meant to him in terms of the scenographic interpretation of Chekhov. He saw the 'excessive austerity' of the set design of *Uncle Vanya* (1963) as 'missing a certain sensitivity, like a breath of the ephemeral' (Saint-Denis, 1963, p.79) that should be sensed in the relationship between the characters and 'their furniture' and 'familiar possessions' (1963, p.79).

### CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

I did not observe the life of things. I did not hear any of those silent conversations which can occur between three armchairs, a carpet, and a table touched by the reflections of a convalescent light which takes advantage of a window to introduce the exterior world into this solitude, momentarily animated by objects alone, before human beings enter to disturb it. (Saint-Denis, 1963, p.79)

Saint-Denis describes a mediated realism whereby real objects are meticulously chosen to communicate the emotional as well as material conditions of the characters, and the composition of the set and the objects on the stage emphasises the narratives, themes and mood of the play. The poetic realism of French 1930s film and mid-century American theatre can be seen to relate closely to this concept.

The poetic realism of a theatrical movement in the USA that began with Tennessee Williams's 1945 *The Glass Menagerie*, designed by Jo Mielziner, dealt with social issues and centred around the interplay between naturalism and symbolism, the prosaic and the poetic, the desire to evoke rather than represent (Doona, 2002). The poetic realist French film movement of the 1930s included the proponents Jean Renoir,<sup>101</sup> Jean Vigo<sup>102</sup> and Marcel Carné.<sup>103</sup> A key way of describing 1930s poetic realism in film focuses on the set which tends to be 'realistic in that it reproduces the environment of the real world, and it is poetic because the careful orchestration of visual techniques heightens the characters psychological reality' (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2005, p.91). In both the American theatrical and French film movements the importance placed onto the visual expands the role of the designer within the creative team, and this, as has been shown to be the case at the LTS, points towards a collaborative model of practice. I will examine how Motley expressed poetic realism in my analysis of Motley's designs for *Three Sisters* (1938) below.

*Three Sisters* (1938) was Motley's first Chekhov play, and Saint-Denis had not directed Chekhov in the professional theatre before. He had however widened the kinds of plays he tackled at the London Theatre Studio<sup>104</sup> and had directed Act I of *Three Sisters*, designed by Anthony Boyes, for an end of year show in 1937 (Saint-Denis, 1961, p.37). Unfortunately there is little record

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<sup>101</sup> Jean Renoir (1894-1979) a French film director, screenwriter, actor, producer and author, known for *La Grande Illusion* (1937) and *La Règle du Jeu* (1939).

<sup>102</sup> Jean Vigo (1905-1934) a French film director, known for *Zéro de conduite* (1933) and *L'Atalante* (1934).

<sup>103</sup> Marcel Carné (1906-1996) a French film director. One of his best known films is *Les Enfants du Paradis* (1945).

<sup>104</sup> The plays produced at the LTS were predominantly classics ranging from Euripides to Granville Barker, with some devised pieces. Noel Coward's *Hay Fever* stands out as an unlikely part of the 1937 end of year show, as Harris reported that Coward was seen by Motley and Gielgud as superficial at that time (Harris, 1992, tape 3a). This indicates that Saint-Denis was attempting to broaden the kinds of plays presented at the LTS in keeping with the aim of producing potential transfers to the West End.

CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

of the LTS *Three Sisters* apart from a small pencil sketch by an unknown audience member that I discovered in a programme and recognised as a plan of the set (Figure 39),<sup>105</sup> and a small photograph of the LTS rehearsals in George Devine's photo album (Figure 38).



Figure 38: LTS *Three Sisters* (1937) rehearsal photograph (Anon, 1937b). From left: Marriot Longman as Olga, Ann Heffernan as Natasha, Genevieve Jessel as Masha and Yvonne Joseph as Irina.

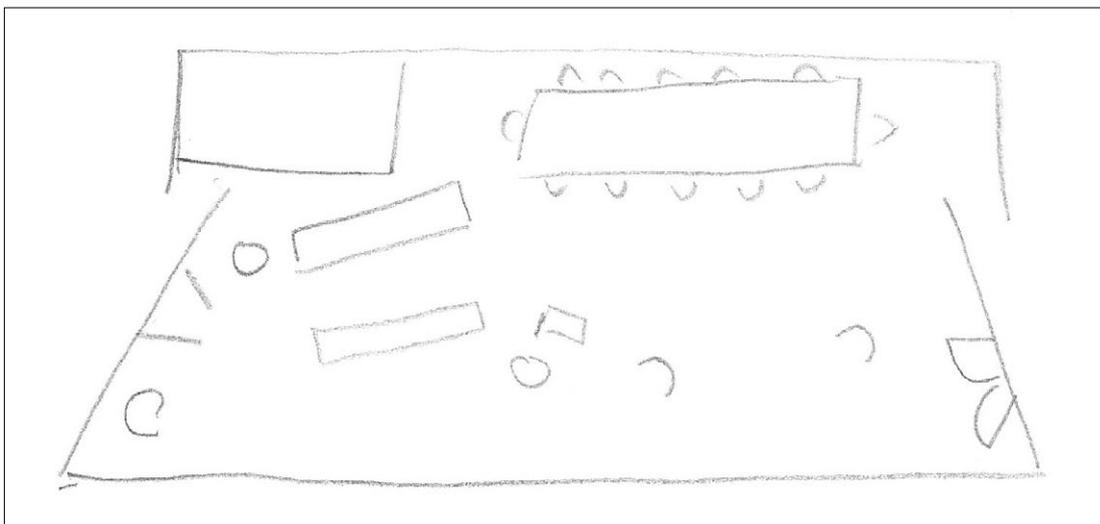


Figure 39: Sketch of the LTS *Three Sisters* (1937) ground plan in London Theatre Studio programme: first show (Anon, 1937a)

<sup>105</sup> Figure 39 is a hand drawn copy of a sketch that was found in an LTS First Show programme at the Theatre Museum (now Theatre and Performance collections at the V&A). The file containing it, 'London Theatre Studio', is currently unavailable as it has been misplaced.

### CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

Gielgud asked Saint-Denis to direct *Three Sisters* after seeing Act I at the LTS. According to a letter Saint-Denis wrote to Gielgud agreeing to direct the production, he had been reticent about accepting because of concerns that comparisons would be made with Komisarjevsky's successful *Seagull* (Saint-Denis, 1937). Amongst many reasons why the production would have been tempting to Saint-Denis was the quality of the company that Gielgud had gathered around him for the Queen's Theatre season of 1937/8. These included Peggy Ashcroft, Michael Redgrave, Glen Byam Shaw, Harry Andrews, Alec Guinness, George Devine, Leon Quartermaine (1976-1967), Frederick Lloyd (1880-1949), Angela Baddeley, and John Gielgud himself with guest stars brought in for particular productions. The actors were offered thirty-two week contracts, with leading actors and guest performers on a percentage (Croall, 2011, p.232), and in the style of a repertory company they would rehearse a play during the day whilst performing another in the evening. Motley were engaged to design the whole season of four plays, *Richard II* (1937) and *The Merchant of Venice* (1938) directed by Gielgud and Byam Shaw, *The School for Scandal* (1937) directed by Tyrone Guthrie and *Three Sisters* (1938) directed by Saint-Denis.

*Three Sisters* was the third in the Queen's Season and the company were well used to working together by this point. Their 'teamwork' had already been remarked upon by critics and they had been labelled 'a team of unusually expert actors' (Croall, 2011, pp.228–229). Two new performers were brought in to the company, Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies (1891-1992) to play Olga and Carol Goodner (1904-2001) as Masha, both of whom were familiar to the other actors. Four young LTS students were also employed, Alastair Bannerman (1915-2009), Hereward Russell (1914-1945), Merula Salaman (1914-2000) and Peter Whitehead, illustrating that Saint-Denis and Devine promoted talented students.

Ashcroft recalled that there were seven weeks of rehearsal (McVay, 1993, p.85), and Gielgud that there were eight 'instead of the usual three or four' (Gielgud, 1988, p.90). The two guest artists had been concerned that such a long rehearsal period would make their performances stale, but Ffrangcon-Davies later told Saint-Denis that 'after three weeks I had the impression I was beginning to act. From that time on I discovered in myself regions which had never been touched' (Saint-Denis, 1961, p.38). Saint-Denis had spent a lot of time preparing for the production and brought very full notes in which 'every move and every piece of business was prepared beforehand on paper' (Gielgud, 1988, p.90), although he would always explain his reasoning to the actors (Gielgud et al., 1938). The actors spent almost a week reading the play (Croall, 2011, p.236), going through it three or four times while seated around a table (Anon, 1938a, p.3) and entire rehearsals were spent on details such as the weather for each act, or the general mood of scenes (McVay, 1993, p.85).

## CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

We would spend hours rehearsing things like just how hot it was going to be. I can still see Gwen [Ffrangcon-Davies] clapping her hands to show the mosquitos were biting. (Ashcroft in Billington, 1988, p.93)

Gielgud described Saint-Denis as 'an autocrat' (Anon, 1938a, p.3) and Saint-Denis's combination of meticulous preparation with improvisations, and control with collaboration, illustrates the contradictions between Saint-Denis's experimental and authoritarian tendencies.

### 3.2.2 Motley's process



Figure 40: Large interior with six figures (Vuillard, 1897)

There is no evidence that Motley attended the rehearsals of *Three Sisters* (1938) and the traditional organisation of designer process would have seen the designs completed by the time rehearsals started with Motley overseeing the making of the sets and costumes whilst the actors rehearsed. However, the length of rehearsal time meant that the actors were able to spend two weeks working with all the properties and furniture. They were also given several days to work with 'all effects and lighting' and to have more than one rehearsal in full costume (Gielgud et al., 1938). As shown in the previous chapter, this amount of time to work with sets, lighting, sound and costumes was extremely unusual, and may have contributed to the anxiety free atmosphere of the company on the first night (Gielgud et al., 1938). Several reviews mention the 'collective' nature (Darlington, 1938) and 'harmony' (Brown, 1938) of the performances, which may be partly the result of the length of the rehearsals and the time that was taken over the actors acclimatising to the scenography. As a practitioner, I would be surprised if Motley did not take advantage of the extra time to make adjustments to their sets, costumes and props. There is evidence that they modified Irina's Act I costume to more closely echo Natasha's for example, as will be examined in the costume section below, suggesting that the longer rehearsal period did affect the integration of the design elements into the performance.

It would be logical to surmise Saint-Denis's fastidiousness in preparing the action of the play extended to the set and that he provided a ground plan for Motley to work from, but two set renderings (Figure 42, Figure 43) indicate that Motley were trying out the positioning of the main door into the room as well as the size and placement of furniture to emphasise the dynamics of the action, as will be described below. I would deduce from this and from the methodology promoted by Motley at the LTS that they would have discussed the design extensively with Saint-Denis.

In the last chapter I demonstrated that Motley's methodology included using an artist or art movement to inspire their designs. Mullin has shown that this was habitual (Mullin, 1996, p.53; see for example 1996, pp.25, 42, 48, 92, 158) and I would speculate that Motley used the artist Édouard Vuillard (1868-1940) as visual research for *Three Sisters* (1938). Saint-Denis maintained that Chekhov's art had similarities with French Impressionists such as Vuillard (Saint-Denis, 1961, p.37) and one of the reviews compares Devine's 'imaginative' lighting of a scene as having given the stage 'the indeterminate look of a Vuillard' (Anon, 1938d, n.p.).<sup>106</sup> Additionally, as a practitioner I find these references to Vuillard striking as I was drawn to his paintings when researching a production of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* that I designed in 2011. The figures in the interiors of Vuillard's paintings are staged in a theatrical way<sup>107</sup> (see Figure 40) and many of the paintings convey an undercurrent of emotion in their stillness and domesticity. In Figure 40 there is an emotive aspect to the relationships between the people in the space that is emphasised by their positioning in relation to each other within the room. Although the room is recognisably one of the period in which it was painted the choices of patterns, colours and the positioning of the furniture were chosen to emphasise the dramatic and emotional ambience. I will argue below that Motley created a space with this potential for Acts I and II of *Three Sisters* (1938).

### 3.2.2.1 Identifying authorship

Motley are extremely unusual, if not unique, as a group of three designers working together as one. It is unlikely that it will ever be feasible to fully understand the nuances of this three-way dynamic but in order to explore their working process further I have attempted to identify the authors of each of the surviving *Three Sisters* (1938) costume designs and this has indicated that there was a remarkable synergy between the three women.

Whilst looking through the Motley designs at the University of Illinois I observed that many of the costumes had the initials EM (Elizabeth Montgomery) or MH (Margaret Harris) pencilled into the bottom right corner. I presumed that these had been written by Harris and

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<sup>106</sup> Other artists are mentioned in reviews: Manet (Farjeon, 1938, n.p.; Anon, 1938d, n.p.), Utrillo (Anon, 1938d)

<sup>107</sup> Vuillard also designed theatre productions in fact, so this may explain the theatricality.

Montgomery at the time of the purchase by Illinois to indicate who had created each design, perhaps at the instigation of Mullin, and my first reaction was to assume that the lack of initials for SH or SD (Sophie Harris-Devine) in any pre-war designs indicated that none of her work had survived. Although I knew that Harris-Devine was careless of her work and often used old designs as scrap paper, this seemed curious. I began to question how the designs now at Illinois had survived, particularly those pre-war designs that had been created in a collaborative environment. Had each member of Motley kept their own designs separately? Had one of them acted as the archive holder for past work?

By making a comparison of all the productions designed by Motley with surviving designs in Illinois it is apparent that Harris was the main archivist.<sup>108</sup> Almost all the post-war productions in Illinois are shows that Harris designed, so that most of Sophie Harris-Devine's costumes are from productions in which she and Margaret Harris collaborated.<sup>109</sup> There are three exceptions where Sophie Harris-Devine had designed the costumes with a non-Motley designer.<sup>110</sup> Montgomery appears to have kept designs from some of her own productions in America, but to have been more selective about which ones she preserved, often only holding on to three or four per production, as opposed to Harris who often saved a large quantity. Consequently the evidence points to Harris as being the archivist of the pre-war designs, rather than to each designer keeping their own contribution separately. With this in mind I would assume that some of the pre-war designs are by Harris-Devine. Nevertheless, it would not be safe to assume that all the designs without initials were by Harris-Devine as the lack of identification could also be due to uncertainty about authorship on the part of Harris and Montgomery. Nonetheless the initials appear to be in the handwriting of the author of the design so it may have been that they did not sign the designs they did not create.

Of the *Three Sisters* (1938) costume designs only Irina's Act II coat costume is initialled EM (Figure 41) and I have attempted to identify the authors of the remaining designs by analysing Motley's individual drawing styles. Harris's style of drawing costumes is relatively easy to recognise, as her figures have a weightier stance than either Harris-Devine's or Montgomery's. Additionally, the hands Harris drew were usually heavier and larger with articulated individual fingers, whereas her colleagues would often roughly sketch small, lightweight hands with only a suggestion of individual digits. From these observations it is clear that none of the *Three Sisters* (1938) costume designs are by Harris.

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<sup>108</sup> Productions represented in the Motley Collection at Illinois are indicated by a black box in Appendix 1.

<sup>109</sup> In most cases Harris designed the set and Harris-Devine the costumes.

<sup>110</sup> *Cards of Identity* (1956) in which the sets were designed by Alan Tagg *Much Ado About Nothing* (1958) with sets by Tanya Moiseiwitsch and *Toys in the Attic* (1960) with sets by Howard Bay.



Figure 41: Irina coat costume design, Act II (Motley, 1938c)

When it comes to isolating the differences between Harris-Devine's and Montgomery's styles of costume drawings it is far more difficult to be conclusive. Harris-Devine's daughter, Dr Harriet Devine, who is potentially the last person to have sufficient familiarity with the nuances of her mother's drawing and handwriting style to confidently identify her work, also noted that it is often difficult to differentiate between the two designers, particularly in these early sketches (Devine, 2014). According to Montgomery, in the early days of Motley they 'all discussed everything and worked it out together: there was nothing separate at that time' (Montgomery, 1972, p.3) and Dr Devine found that even the handwriting of Montgomery and Harris-Devine was sometimes hard to distinguish, as well as that a drawing might look like Harris-Devine's style but the writing be in Montgomery's hand. It is conceivable that the collaborative nature of their practice meant that the three women would write on each other's designs. It is even possible that one would make a pencil sketch and another would add details and paint. Their drawing styles could have been influenced by the art schools that they attended together, but I would propose that the indistinguishability of their styles suggests a particularly close collaboration in which authorship was not seen as significant. This lack of ego resonates with their belief that design should serve the play without recognition and is echoed in their choice of the anonymising name of Motley.<sup>111</sup> It would seem that they were pooling their talents in order to achieve the best possible outcome for the productions that they worked on.

Nevertheless, their designs did attract attention, as illustrated in the previous chapter, and they did assume, or were assigned by others, discernable roles and specialisms within the group. Montgomery was seen as the most artistic and highly strung, Harris-Devine as a costume expert and maternal figure, and Harris as practical, down-to-earth and dealing with sets (according to family lore and to Harris in Mullin, 1996, p39). The analysis of the authorship of their costume designs for *Three Sisters* (1938) intimates that these labels were not as unequivocal as they suggest.

Despite the complexity that is indicated in the creation of the costume designs I will advance a hypothesis about who authored them. Due to subtleties in poses of the figures that resonate with later designs that can be definitively ascribed to Harris-Devine, I believe that Figure 48 and Figure 49, of Irina and Natasha in Act I, are by Harris-Devine. Dr Devine's assessment concurred although she thought that Irina's Act II costume (Figure 50) was also by her mother (Devine, 16 March, 2014). Neither myself nor Dr Devine felt that we could be conclusive about whether Harris-Devine or Montgomery were the authors of the costumes for Natasha in Acts II and IV (Figure 51 and Figure 52), although Dr Devine remarked that her mother

<sup>111</sup> By choosing a non gender-specific name for themselves Motley could also have been avoiding a feminine stereotype of designers who were only interested in decoration and 'pretty costumes' (Gielgud in H.G., 1936b, p.15). The word motley also refers to a combination of different colours, a diversity of elements and a quotation by Jaques in *As You Like It* Act 2 Scene 7, 'Motley's the only wear', the latter being Mullin's explanation of the name (1996, p.13).

became a specialist in Victorian costumes after the war and that as *Three Sisters* was set in 1900 it was probable that Harris-Devine would have taken on more of the costumes for this production than the other Motleys (Devine, 16 March, 2014).

### 3.2.3 Motley's designs

#### 3.2.3.1 Set designs

Written in 1900 and first performed in 1901 at the Moscow Art Theatre directed by Stanislavsky, *The Three Sisters*, differs significantly from Shakespeare in that it has detailed stage directions that indicate location, light and time of day. It focuses on three cultured sisters, Olga, Masha, and Irina, and their brother Andrey, who are frustrated by their lives in a provincial town and long to return to Moscow where they spent their early years. There are four Acts in the play. The first and second Acts are set in: 'A drawing room in the Prozorov's house; it is separated from a large ballroom at the back by a row of columns' (Chekhov, 1982, p.249). The third Act is set in a bedroom shared by Olga and Irina, whilst the fourth Act is in: 'the old garden belonging to the Prozorov's house. A river is seen at the end of a long avenue of fir trees, and on the far bank of the river a forest. On the right of the stage there is a verandah' (Chekhov, 1982, p.311). The time of day for each Act is specified: midday in Act I and Act IV, 8pm in Act II, 2am for Act III and it is obvious that weeks or months have passed between each scene. Qualities of light are also indicated: 'cheerful sunshine' (Chekhov, 1982, p.249), 'the stage is unlit' except for a candle (Chekhov, 1982, p.272), 'a window, red with the glow of the fire, can be seen through the open door' (Chekhov, 1982, p.294).

In Motley's design for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) the set had clearly acknowledged the theatre space around it. For *Three Sisters* Saint-Denis was keen to create an entire world inside the proscenium arch without reference to the theatre around it.

He wouldn't accept anything which was just masking. With [the] outdoor scene in [Three] Sisters it had to be all part of the set. It wasn't a set within an area. (Harris, 1973, p.18)

The set was required to appear as if the audience were looking through an invisible fourth wall, a convention borrowed from naturalism. Unlike naturalism however, Motley did not intend *Three Sisters* (1938) to reproduce an environment but rather to interpret it in a way that conveyed the meaning and mood of the play, the 'emotional envelope' that Macgowan described (1921, p.20).



Figure 42: *Three Sisters* (1938), Acts I and II set rendering with figures (Motley, 1938g)



Figure 43: *Three Sisters* (1938), Acts I and II set rendering (Motley, 1938h)

The items of furniture, the props and the colours for the Prozorov's living and dining room in Acts One and Two were not chosen because they are exactly what a house in a small Russian town of the period would have contained, although they do also suggest this, but rather they were selected to emphasise the emotional life of the people who live in the house and the overall atmosphere as will be demonstrated below. The approach is an artistic rather than veristic one and one that falls under the description of poetic realism.

The photographs of the production do not show the colours or the lighting, both major elements in conveying the atmosphere, so that all we can glean from them is what items were in the space and where they were positioned. The set renderings, created at the time (Motley, 1938a and 1938b) (Figure 42 and Figure 43), and the model box (Figure 28), created over fifty years after the production, can give us an idea of the colours, but not of the lighting which appears to have been a major contribution to the piece, 'Mr George Devine's control of the lighting – particularly in the garden scene – is among the productions chief assets' (Brown, 1938, n.p.). The two renderings of the set (Figure 42 and Figure 43) are both for the Prozorov's living room, Acts I and II, and I will evaluate them in relation to the model box, which also portrays Act I, and the production photographs, in order to show how Motley used the mediated reality of poetic realism to communicate the social, physical and mental state of the characters.<sup>112</sup>

Slight differences between the two renderings, and between them and the model, suggest that the sketches were of initial ideas rather than finalised designs but both show a similar layout and this is partly due to the stage directions in the play that ask for a ballroom that can be seen through pillars, as well as the various entrances and large window that are required. The layout is also the same as the small sketch of the LTS production (Figure 39), only reversed, so that the window has been moved to stage right. The proportions of the room remain identical in both Motley renderings but there are significant differences of detail. The pillars separating the higher level 'ballroom' (actually a dining room) are further to the edges in Figure 43 allowing for more of the upper space to be visible to the audience. The grand piano in the same rendering has become smaller, almost a harpsichord, no doubt to give more space for movement in the room and to allow the doorway from the hallway to open front-on rather than at the side, a much stronger and more flexible entrance that allows grand entrances or more subtle ones depending on the positioning of the other characters. The decoration differs between the two images with Figure 42 seeming more lavish. There is a chandelier hanging over the dining table and a decorative sideboard behind it, with opulent and striking wallpaper in the dining room, and coolly elegant ornate walls in the living room. The patterns on the wallpaper in Figure 43 on the other hand, are more restrained with a more personal feel

<sup>112</sup> There are eight original designs for *Three Sisters* (1938) in the Motley Collection in the University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library, as well as one very basic ground plan sketch without measurements. Two of the designs are renderings of the set for Acts I and II (Motley, 1938g; Motley, 1938h) (Figure 42 and Figure 43). The other six consist of three costume designs for Irina, for Acts I and II (Motley, 1938a; Motley, 1938b; Motley, 1938c), and three for Natasha, for Acts I, II and IV (Motley, 1938d; Motley, 1938e; Motley, 1938f). There is a model box that was built for the *Design by Motley* exhibition under the supervision of Harris c.1990 that is housed at the University of Bristol Theatre Collection (Figure 28). In the University of Bristol Theatre Collection and at the V&A Theatre and Performance Archive there are press cuttings of the critic's reviews. There are production photographs reproduced in *TheatreWorld* (D.C.F., 1938), as well as in the press cuttings in the files at the V&A Theatre and Performance Archive. In the Devine Family archive there is a set of photographs showing headshots of twelve of the actors in costume.

and the warmer reds, creams and browns relate to those used in the model. The deep red of the dining room and the curtains has a comforting, womb-like, quality but also suggests a passionate undercurrent, and the creams and browns although elegant are welcoming and reassuring. Although the proportions of the room indicate wealth there is a comfortable atmosphere in the model and in Figure 43, reinforced by the choice and detail of the props and furniture. There are informal domestic touches such as the throw on the sofa, the loose covers and antimacassars on the backs of the armchairs and the family portraits on the walls and piano. The unostentatious gas lamp hanging over the dining table and the ceramic stove in the bottom stage left corner further emphasise the atmosphere of a once grandiose house that has become more homely and a little worn.

For Saint-Denis decoration on stage had to have a meaning and purpose as prescribed by the dramatic text and Montgomery noted that she had to fight her inclination to be decorative when working with him (Montgomery, 1972, p.4). This suggests that although Motley already aimed to support the meaning of the play through their designs, Saint-Denis, following the example of Copeau, was more rigorous in this respect and that this impacted on Motley's design style. This is not to say that Motley did not include decoration in their work but rather that they became more meticulous in justifying its presence.<sup>113</sup> Motley's designs were carefully orchestrated to reinforce the narrative and themes of *Three Sisters*. By creating a shabbily elegant room with grand proportions for Act I, the sisters' nostalgia for the past and reduced circumstances are emphasised. The deep reds hint at their yearning for passion and excitement as symbolised by Moscow, whilst the suggestions of domesticity through the use of warm colours and the choice of props and furniture allude to the boredom that the three sisters feel about their home, and their lack of practicality in being able to sustain their wealthy lifestyle.<sup>114</sup> Saint-Denis described Motley's designs for *Three Sisters* as 'full of tact and balance' and that they were 'willing to subordinate their work to the requirements of the play – they are never guilty of decoration simply for the sake of decoration' (Gielgud et al., 1938).

Motley also created a physical space that could be used dynamically by the director and actors to indicate through their positioning the states of mind of the characters and their relationships with others. There are difficult stage logistics to be solved in the setting for Acts I and II, including the fact that there need to be shifts of attention between different characters in

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<sup>113</sup> However, some of their peers, such as Gielgud, believed that Saint-Denis made Motley 'puritan' by taking away all their 'joie de vivre'. He thought that the LTS and Saint-Denis 'inculcated tremendous rigidity into their whole attitude to décor' because 'he didn't like pretty things; he didn't like decorative things' (Gielgud, 1973, p.4). Herbert has also suffered from the 'somewhat misleading conception of her work as that of a puritan minimalist' (Strachan, 2003) echoed in her recollection that if critics didn't like what she had done in a Royal Court production they would call it 'austere' (Herbert, 1985a, tape 5).

<sup>114</sup> There is no evidence of whether any details in the room were changed in Act II to reflect Natasha's influence once she had married Andre.

### CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

crowded moments (Mullin, 1996, p.68). Motley's solution included raising the dining room area thus helping scenes at the back of the stage to be seen. Most of the action was played downstage according to Harris (1996, p.68) but the critics noted that even when the upper area was used the whole space remained charged.

There is a moment in the first act when all the characters retire into the inner room and leave the front stage to the five armchairs. Here one...says to oneself: "Dear God, the very furniture seems to breathe!" (Anon, 1938d, n.p.)

Motley placed five doorways in the room and their location and number gives many options for entrances and exits with the potential for dynamic or dramatic moments of entry or departure, and gives a sense of the house continuing into off stage areas. Using the basic ground plan from the Motley Collection in Illinois, along with the model box created for Mullin's Motley exhibition and contemporary production photographs I have created a digital model of Act I (Figure 44 and Figure 45).

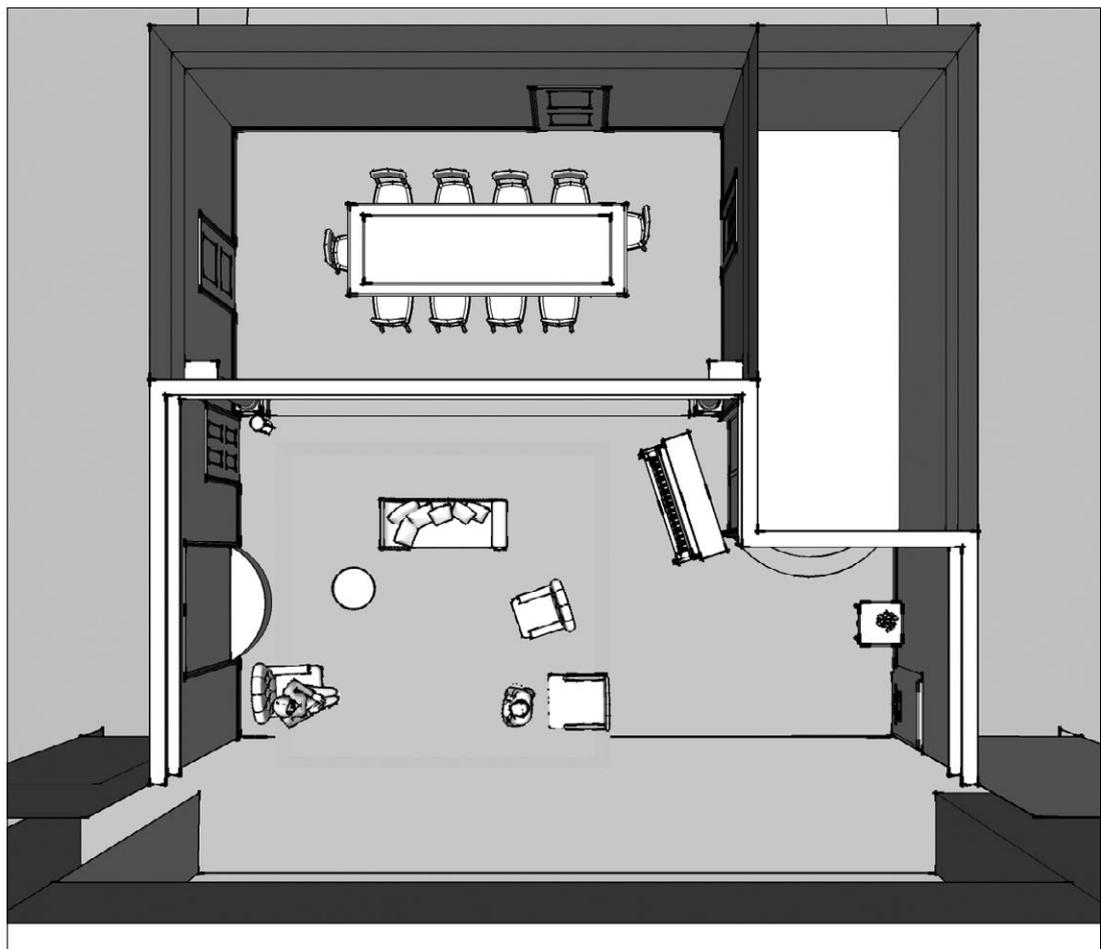


Figure 44: Digital model of *Three Sisters* (1938), plan view



Figure 45: Digital model of *Three Sisters* (1938), front view

The doorways and arrangement of the furniture within the room allowed each character to relate externally to the action, and their positioning could also indicate the dynamics of their individual, internal, relationship with the group. For example, in the production photograph in Figure 46 that has the caption ‘Olga: “He is in love’ Andryusha is in love!”’ (1938, p.120) we can see how characters can be separate from the action but remain engaged in it and part of a larger stage picture. The sisters and Doctor Tchebutykin are gathered around Andrey to the stage left of the sofa whilst Solyony, in love with Irina but rejected by her, coolly removes himself from the easy familiarity of the group by stiffly observing the action from the steps in front of the main double doors. Vershinin is seated on the sofa in the position of a guest, and as a newcomer to the house he cannot yet interact informally, but is obviously amused and captivated by the smaller group. Tusenbach, also in love with Irina and rejected by her, although she admires him, is standing behind the sofa towards stage right and laughing wholeheartedly demonstrating his ease with the family.

The organisation of the space enables complex relationships so that large groups as well as smaller ones can be accommodated, across the whole stage, within the space of the armchairs and sofas, in front of the main entrance or up in the dining room. There are areas for intimate moments to take place that can also be shared by the larger group. In Figure 47 Andrey and Natasha are embracing in front of the double doors to the hallway, thinking they are hidden from the view of the dining room. All the guests around the table have stopped what they are doing and are focused on the couple. Tchebutykin has stepped down to the level of the living

CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

room on stage right, and Fedotik, Roddey and Tusenbach are on the same level on stage left. The other characters are standing or sitting around the table but the raising of the dining room level enables all of them to react to the embracing couple.



Figure 46: Act I, *Three Sisters*, Andrey is teased (D.C.F., 1938, p.120)



Figure 47: Act 1, *Three Sisters*, Andrey embraces Natasha (D.C.F., 1938, p.120)

These examples show that the space had potential to encompass dynamic relationships across its whole area as well as smaller, intimate moments. The precise placing of the doors and furniture and the use of different levels creates a very workable space that was able to incorporate individuals as well as large groups of people and to keep the dynamics between them active. In addition Motley's choice of colours, pattern and props balanced realism with a poetic interpretation of the themes and narratives of the play.

### 3.2.3.2 Costume designs

As in *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) Motley used colour, detail and cut to define character, but in *Three Sisters* (1938) they were more precise about the nuances of social class and character development to emphasise themes within the play. Natasha's costume for Act I (Figure 49) will be compared with Irina's costume for the same scene (Figure 48) to illustrate how they achieved this.<sup>115</sup>

Irina is twenty years old in Act I and the action takes place on her name day.<sup>116</sup> She is the youngest of the sisters and objects to the way she is treated as child, wanting to be seen as a grown-up. She is described as 'beautiful' (Chekhov, 1938, p.25), 'radiant' and 'lovelier than ever' (1938, p.5). Motley's Act 1 costume design for Irina emphasises her youth and freshness with a white dress (as specified by the stage directions) made of marquisette<sup>117</sup> and a simple and unsophisticated hairstyle (Figure 48). A red hairband gives the impression of someone on the cusp between childhood and womanhood.

Natasha, on the other hand, symbolises everything that the sisters dislike about the town they live in. Natasha's age is not stated in the play, but she is young and unmarried in Act I, whilst in the later Acts she has become Andrey's wife and mistress of the house. She is obviously of a lower class and less well educated than the Prozorov's and her clothing is described as 'gaudy' and 'vulgar' (1938, pp.16–17). Although they see themselves as refined and intelligent, the sisters treat Natasha very poorly. Even before Natasha arrives on stage in Act I Masha mockingly describes Natasha's dress sense:

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<sup>115</sup> All six of the costume designs in the Motley Collection at Illinois University are drawn in pencil and painted with gouache, on thin paper pasted onto card. There are three costume designs for Irina, played by Peggy Ashcroft, for Acts I and II (Motley, 1938a; Motley, 1938b; Motley, 1938c), and three for Natasha, (played by Angela Baddeley (1904-1976)), for Acts I, II and IV (Motley, 1938d; Motley, 1938e; Motley, 1938f).

<sup>116</sup> A name day is a celebration that takes place on the day of the year assigned to the Saint who one is named after.

<sup>117</sup> Marquisette fabric is a sheer, lightweight mesh or net that could be made out of cotton, silk, wool or synthetic fibres. In the early twentieth century it tended to be used to describe a gauzy, cotton voile type fabric (Oakes, 2011).



Figure 48: Irina's costume design, Act I (Motley, 1938a)



Figure 49: Natasha costume design, Act I (Motley, 1938f)

Oh how she dresses! It's not that her clothes are merely ugly or out of fashion, they are simply pitiful...And her cheeks scrubbed until they shine. (Chekhov, 1938, pp.16–17)

When Natasha enters, the stage directions note that she is wearing a 'pink dress with a green sash' (1938, p.25) which Olga proceeds to criticise, 'My dear, that's not nice...it looks queer' (1938, p.25). Natasha is made tearful by this criticism and protests that the sash is 'not green exactly, it's more a dead colour' (1938, p.26). Later in the scene she leaves the dinner table, where everyone has been teasing her and Andrey about their relationship, and professes to feel 'ashamed' and not to know why 'they make fun of me' (1938, p.28).

Although there are similarities between Irina's and Natasha's dresses in Act I (Figures 48 and 49) Motley have used subtle differences to make Natasha seem less elegant and sophisticated. Both dresses have pin tucks, lace and a gathered frill around the bottom though Natasha's is made of dusty pink silk rather than fresh white cotton, and Natasha has been made to seem plumper and less refined than Irina through the cut and detail. Irina's bodice is well fitted and the pin tucks on it are angled diagonally towards the centre of her waist to emphasise her hourglass shape. Natasha's bodice is loose, and her pin tucks are perpendicular with a central panel of lace down the front giving her a boxy silhouette. This is emphasised by her fussy wide lace collar that gives her a bulky appearance, whilst Irina's collar is elegant and small with only a narrow edge of lace. Irina's skirt is A-line in shape which once more emphasises her narrow waist and slender hips, whereas Natasha's skirt appears to be gathered, so that her hips are less defined. The dark green sash tied around Natasha's waist has a fringe at the bottom edge and adds to the lack of definition at her waist. Production photographs show that Irina also wore a sash, suggesting that the contrast with Natasha was further emphasised in the final costume. It is hard to assess from the photographs what Irina's sash was made of, and what colour it was, though it has a straight cut edge rather than a fringe, and appears to be well fitted, keeping the waist's outline. In the costume design Motley have given Natasha a pink ribbon tied around her neck, which seems contrived or forced in combination with the sash at her waist and the frilly collar. In contrast to Irina she is far from elegant, and looks overdressed and old fashioned. Her hair is pulled back into a low chignon and her cheeks are flushed, though she is portrayed as wide-eyed and innocent.

The details that Motley used to emphasise and contrast certain aspects of Irina's and Natasha's character and social class indicate that they had studied the text and were translating their assessments of the characters through costume, using cut, fit, colour and texture. It is clear that for Motley the costume renderings were vehicles to represent, mediate and communicate their interpretation of the play and its characters as well as tools to convey what the costume was intended to look like to the director, actors and makers. Costume designs are not as precise as ground plans in giving measurements and specifications, and although Motley included

notes and extra diagrams for clarification, the costume makers had to decide how to translate the drawings into a three-dimensional garment. For example, the fabric may not behave in the way that is indicated on the page, and how to actually cut it out to achieve the desired effect is a highly skilled process. Expressing character in the drawing would assist the maker's interpretation so that Motley's involvement could be limited to discussions and fittings.

The costume sketch is also important for the designer to communicate their ideas to the director. An indication of what Motley expected from the director during the design process can be gleaned from their surprise when Tyrone Guthrie accepted their *Henry V* (1937) costume designs without any discussion at all (Mullin, 1996, p.61). His attitude could be attributed to his lack of interest in costumes, that he saw them as unimportant, or to his total confidence in Motley as designers, but it suggests that that Motley expected to enter into a dialogue with the director about their design ideas. The costume renderings would therefore be a way of establishing agreement with the director over the designer's visual interpretation of character.

I have shown that Saint-Denis meticulously prepared for the production (Gielgud, 1988, p.90) and Motley would have discussed the play in detail with him and created the costume designs before rehearsals began. It is usual for the designer to show the set and costume designs at the beginning of rehearsals and so the costume drawings also served to communicate to the actors the interpretation of character and of character development established by the director and designer. In my experience actors in most theatrical productions<sup>118</sup> are accustomed to being presented with the designer's visualisation of their character through costume at the beginning of their own process and, unless they disagree strongly, they will incorporate it into their investigations into the part. If the actor objects to the costume design then a discussion will be had between them and the designer and director and Motley advocated a similar way of dealing with an unhappy actor in their 1964 *Designing and making stage costumes* book (Motley, 1992, pp.36–37). In most cases I have found there to be elements of negotiation with the actors during the realisation of the costume, such as over shoes, comfort of fit, or personal props that have arisen as important during rehearsals. I have not come across any evidence to indicate whether or not this was the case in Motley's experience in the 1930s although they would later say that during fittings the designer 'must be prepared to be flexible so long as the changes can be made without loss of style or character' (Motley, 1992, p.80).

The costumes for Irina and Natasha in Acts II and IV illustrate how Motley indicated the development of characters through the play. In Act II Irina has taken a job as a postmistress and her youthful enthusiasm has waned. This is shown in Motley's posing of the figure who has a

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<sup>118</sup> Unless the design process is incorporated into the rehearsal period, as in a devised production for example.

### CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

wistful and sad expression with her eyes lowered towards the ground (Motley, 1938b) (Figure 50). Irina is shown in a floor length, A-line, brown skirt with a blouse in white with a grey stripe, and a greenish grey tie. The colours are very muted and restrained, and the stripes of her blouse and heavy skirt appear restrictive in comparison to her bright and airy white dress of Act I.

Natasha's costumes similarly change charting her character's evolution. In Act II Natasha has married Andrey and has a child. She is, in effect, the mistress of the house and is beginning to assert her authority over the three sisters. The costume makes Natasha look much more grown-up and authoritative than in Act I. The costume design (Motley, 1938e) (Figure 51) shows her with her hair piled onto her head in a mature style. She wears a blue blouse with a sweetheart neckline, under which is a lace collar that reaches high up her neck. The blouse has a long black fringe and the pencilled notes indicate that these should be of black jet. Her sleeves are loose to the elbow, and there are tight under-sleeves that reach to the tops of her hands. She wears a black belt so that her waist is emphasised, and a dark mauve A-line skirt that reaches to the floor. Like Irina, Natasha is no longer youthful and innocent and her costume implies a matronly authority, whilst the black jet fringe indicates that she is flaunting her new status.

In Act IV, the final act, all the sisters are due to leave the house and Natasha will soon be in complete control of it. The situations are so reversed that she comments upon Irina's clothes exactly as Olga had commented on hers in Act I, 'My dear, that sash does not suit you at all... It's in bad taste. You want something light' (Chekhov, 1938, p.93). Natasha's costume gives the impression that more money has been spent on it than on the other clothes that she has worn in the play, and that, dressed in a blue-grey suit with a cream blouse embroidered with pink flowers, she is trying to be fashionable and elegant ((Motley, 1938f) (Figure 52). However the production photographs (Figure 53) show that Natasha's actual costume emphasised the stockiness of the actress and that the frilly collar of her blouse was comically exaggerated, so that she still looks over-decorative and fussy in comparison to the faded and elegant sisters and her lower class is still evident.

The methods that Motley used to emphasise character through costume could be subtle, as can be seen by their treatment of the uniforms of many of the male characters playing soldiers. Motley's advice about designing for Chekhov is reflected in teaching notes that Herbert wrote in c.1946:

In realistic [plays] eg Chekov [sic] – effect gained by being more intense than real life.  
An exaggeration of character - if small – smaller etc. (Herbert, c.1946).

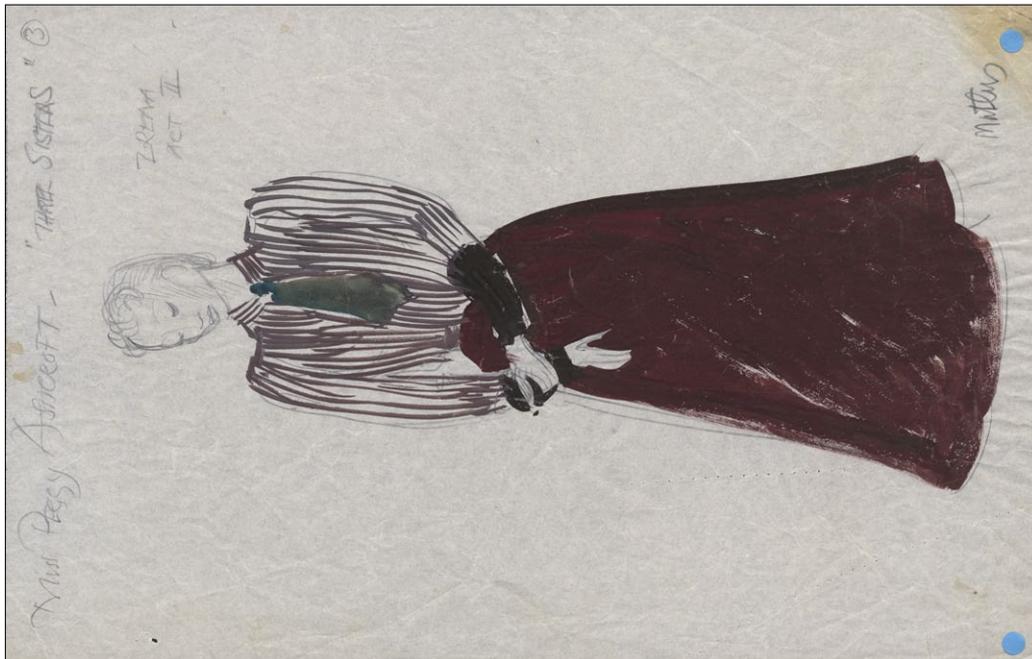


Figure 50: Irina costume design, Act II (Motley, 1938b)



Figure 51: Natasha costume design, Act II (Motley, 1938e)

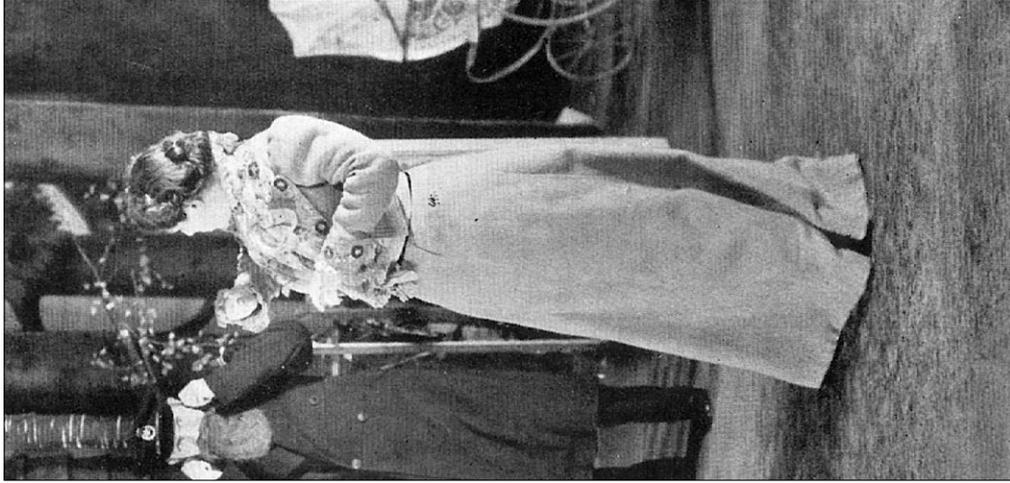


Figure 53: Natasha production photograph, Act IV  
(D.C.F., 1938, p.127)

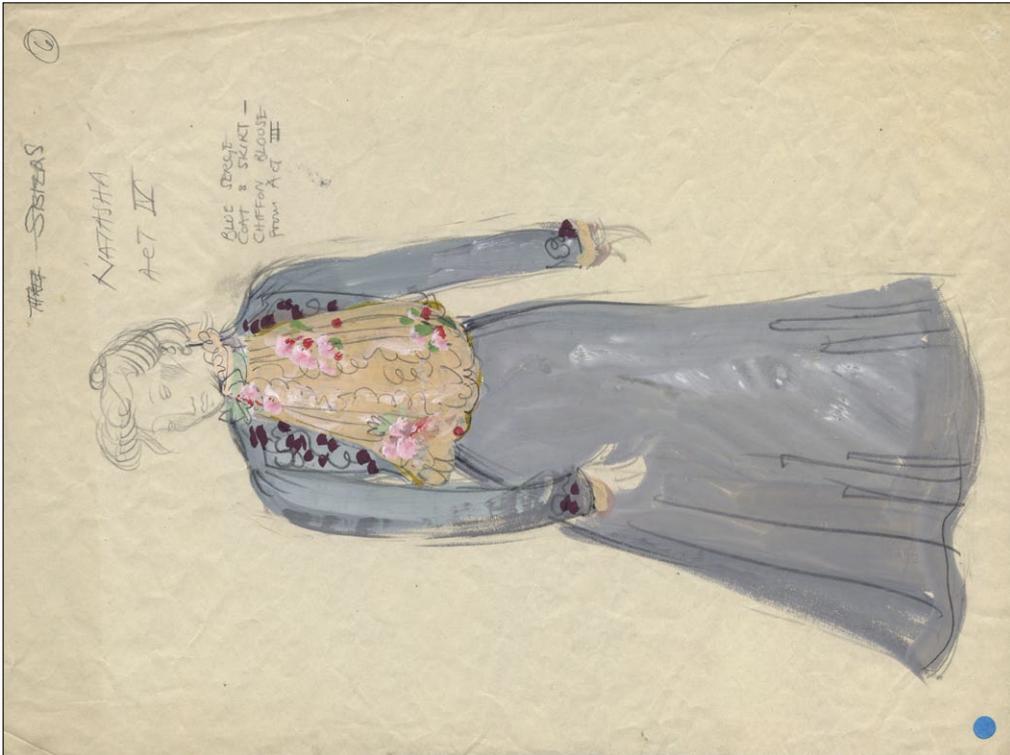


Figure 52: Natasha costume design, Act IV (Motley, 1938f)



Figure 54: Redgrave as Baron Tusenbach  
(D.C.F., 1938, p.119)



Figure 55: Gielgud as Colonel Vershinin  
(D.C.F., 1938, p.119)

As Herbert had not designed a Chekhov play in 1946 I would postulate that Motley imparted this method at the London Theatre Studio. Additionally it is a technique that Motley used in the uniforms for *Three Sisters* (1938), which despite uniforms implying homogeneity, emphasised character through small changes to their cut, such as higher or lower collars or sleeves (Mullin, 1996, pp.66–68). Michael Redgrave's collar as the awkward and philosophising Tusenbach, was too low, for example, (Figure 54), whilst Gielgud's was too high as Vershinin (Figure 55) (Motley, 1992, p.43) and his costume was 'fussily correct' (Mullin, 1996, p.68) reflecting his pompous self-satisfaction and vanity.

Uniforms in real life are likely to have all been cut identically and whilst Motley's costumes were based on uniforms that had belonged to the 'Archduke Michael'<sup>119</sup> who had escaped from the Russian revolution (Mullin, 1996, pp.66–67), they subtly manipulated their veracity to emphasise and contrast character. Motley's visual dramaturgy took their careful analysis of the characters, themes, narratives and moods of the play and visually conveyed these through their costume and set designs in a way that they believed would be understood, either consciously or unconsciously, by the audience.

### 3.2.3.3 Lighting and sound

The poetic realism of *Three Sisters* (1938) was reinforced by the light and sound designs. This chapter has already shown that the lighting was an integral part of the creation of the atmosphere of this production of *Three Sisters* (1938), and was recognised as so by the critics: 'The lighting of [Act IV] is extremely apt – a diffused and faded beauty – as is all Mr. George Devine's lighting throughout the play' (Hale, 1938, n.p.), (see also Brown, 1938, n.p. Anon, 1938d, n.p.). I have shown that that Devine spent time in the LTS theatre experimenting with light (Harris, 1992, tape 6b) and according to Harris he 'took immense trouble with exact colour; distinguishing between candle-light, lamp light, sunlight, misty light and fire' (Wardle, 1978, p.78) for *Three Sisters* (1938). Devine was using his expertise to try to create recognisable lighting states, but as with Motley's set and costumes the intention was not to recreate a place, but to carefully orchestrate reality to emphasise the ambiance and themes of the play.

Critics observed that all the aspects of *Three Sisters* (1938) worked in harmony:

Players and producer, scene designer and costumier, have contrived to fuse into one glorious whole a state of mind and way of living wholly and undeniably of a particular period, a particular country, and a particular place in that country. Herein lies the true art of stage production. (Carroll, 1938, n.p.)

The poetic reality suggested in the quotation above was reinforced by the sound design as well as the lighting.

Mr St.-Denis [sic]...has created the life of a town behind the scenes, a bustling life that reaches us in audible murmurs through the walls, in the sounds of door-bells and sleighs and military orders and the shouts of carnival roysterers. (Hale, 1938, n.p.)

Lighting and sound in the production was representative of natural states, such as candlelight, sunlight or moonlight in the case of lighting for example. In this way they served a function in the narrative of the play but they were also used to heighten poetic or dramatic effect. The

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<sup>119</sup> Possibly Grand Duke Michael Mikhailovich of Russia (1861–1929).

sound of sleighs, for example, would have occurred in Act II to make it painfully clear that Natasha is about to cuckold Andrey by meeting her lover for a sleigh ride, whilst the military orders may have been placed in Act IV to emphasise Masha's anguish that her lover Vershinin must leave for ever to join his unit. Additionally the noises of the world outside the Prozorov's house may have been introduced to contrast with the emotional turmoil within it.

As mentioned in the previous chapter the amount of time given to the technical rehearsal, which included lighting and sound, was minimal during this period, but this chapter has illustrated that for the *Three Sisters* (1938) actors were given two weeks to work with the props and furniture and several days with 'all effects and lighting' (Gielgud et al. 1938). It would seem that Devine capitalised on the time and space that was available to him, both at the LTS and during the rehearsals for *Three Sisters* (1938), to carefully compose the lighting for this play.

Although it is not clear whether the sound effects used in *Three Sisters* (1938) were live or pre-recorded, the live creation of theatrical sound design has existed since theatre began, but it was during the 1930s that pre-recorded material began to be used in performances (Gillette, J.M., 2008). The design of the sound has been attributed to Saint-Denis and we do not know whether he worked with anyone else to achieve it. According to the Association of Sound Designers the job title of 'Sound Designer' has only been around since the 1960s (Anon, 2011). However, with all the scenographic aspects of performance working towards conveying the meaning of the play, the evidence of *Three Sisters* (1938) suggests that sound design as well as lighting design appears to have begun to emerge as an important aspect of theatre production at this time.

### **3.3 Summary**

Michel Saint-Denis brought his development of Copeau's European theories into the London Theatre Studio curriculum, and many of his ideas reinforced those of British and American theatre reformers demonstrated in the previous chapter; collaborative ensembles, for example, or the integration of the design with the acting and directing of the production. Some aspects of the design curriculum combined Saint-Denis's theories with Motley's practice, for example that designers were taught the practical as well as theoretical aspects of design. Others, however, such as the notion that the director should generate the ground plan, appear to have been more problematic, and to be at odds with the way that Motley encouraged design students to be prepared to develop the ground plan themselves and to question the director about his choices. Nonetheless the questions of whether the responsibility for the ground plan lay with the designer or director demonstrates shifting areas of control within that relationship at this time. In contemporary practice it is understood that the designer is predominantly responsible for the spatial arrangement of the stage in dialogue with the director, although there are many variations in the exact collaboration between the director and designer. This

indicates not only that the designers role has developed and that they are now accepted as being able to engage with the dramaturgy of the play but that there has been a growing recognition of the contribution of the visual to the overall reception of a production.

It is clear that the London Theatre Studio provided an experimental environment that Devine took advantage of to extend his lighting abilities. Motley could also have benefitted from the opportunity to experiment on student productions which were created outside of the restrictions and pressures of profit driven theatre, although there is little evidence to support this. However, in order to teach, Motley also had to evaluate and articulate their own practice and this reflexivity could be seen as the development of a methodology and theoretical framework for design practice. Additionally, Motley contributed to the planning of the LTS stage and through this process were introduced to considerations about the affect of theatre architecture on theatre design. More importantly, through their involvement in the LTS as a whole organisation Motley had to reflect on how theatre design related to acting, directing, stage management and technical arts. The importance of the contributions of all those involved in a theatre production was emphasised at the LTS and this was evidenced in the productive balance of lighting, sound, set, costumes and performance that was created for *Three Sisters* (1938). The unusual length of the rehearsals for *Three Sisters* (1938) allowed the design to become more integrated with the actors' performances, and Motley had the advantage of taking time to make adjustments. Although this is not overtly evidenced, the difference between the rendering of Irina's costume and the finished outfit indicates that this was the case. As a designer myself I find it hard to believe that Motley would not have taken this additional time to fine tune the impact of their visual ideas.

For *Three Sisters* (1938) Motley utilised the mediated reality of poetic realism to create a set that suggested the period and location of the play, emphasising the specifics of the material environments in which the action takes places whilst simultaneously highlighting the emotional narratives. Although the previous chapter showed that Motley were already carefully composing colour, pattern and detail in their sets, Saint-Denis appears to have had a more rigorous approach to what was shown on stage. This affected Motley's design style, restraining any decorative leanings by incorporating his insistence that decoration should only be used if it supported the meaning of the play. As with the sets, Motley's costumes for *Three Sisters* (1938) likewise balanced reality with poetic interpretation, translating their assessments of the characters through costume, using cut, fit, colour and texture to emphasise and contrast them.

Using the case study of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961, designed by London Theatre Studio graduate Jocelyn Herbert, Chapter Four will link the scenographic ideas of the London Theatre Studio with those of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre in 1956. *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) will be analysed to assess how the various influences of Motley, Saint-Denis, Devine

### CHAPTER THREE: The London Theatre Studio and 'Three Sisters' (1938)

and the contemporaneous theatrical aesthetics of the Berliner Ensemble were incorporated by Herbert into her design style. How Herbert negotiated with the writer and director of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) in the 'writer's theatre' environment of the Royal Court will also be evaluated.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **The Royal Court Theatre and *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961)**



Figure 56: Model box for *The Kitchen* (1961), built for Jocelyn Herbert exhibition 1993 (Herbert, 1993)

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

If Jocelyn likes what I'm doing it's reassuring – if she doesn't, I question what I've done. (Dexter in Courtney, 1993, p.215)

Director John Dexter (1925-1990) indicates that by the late 1980s he had come to rely on Jocelyn Herbert's judgement of his own contribution to a production, signalling that Herbert not only employed her skills as a designer but also assumed some of the features of a co-director when working with him. In the previous two chapters I have shown how, whether or not they themselves would have recognised this as such, Motley's designs provided a visual dramaturgy for the productions they worked on. I also argue that although Motley's working relationships with directors Gielgud and Saint-Denis could be described as collaborative, they were far from being considered equals in the hierarchy of production, with the tensions underlying these relationships being clearly manifested around the generation of the ground plan for example.

The existence of a hierarchy within the creative team persisted at the Royal Court Theatre, and continues in British theatre practice today in many cases, but this chapter's case study of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) will demonstrate that alternative methods of collaborative practice can be detected in some circumstances. In the instance of *The Kitchen* (1959) there are indications that Jocelyn Herbert was integral to the thinking through of the production, and that she, director John Dexter (1925-1990) and writer Arnold Wesker (1932- ) worked together closely.

Herbert was a graduate of the London Theatre Studio and this chapter will demonstrate that her design for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) was a synthesis of her training under Motley and Michel Saint-Denis. This grounding in the principles she had been schooled in by Motley and the LTS chimed aptly with George Devine's experiments with masking at the Royal Court and was further influenced by her exposure to the European aesthetic of Bertolt Brecht. Herbert was to become one of the designers who worked most frequently at the Court between 1957 and 1976 and her design style is closely identified with the aesthetic of the Court in those years, described as a 'spare poetic aesthetic' (O'Brien, 2003) and a 'pared-down, neo-Brechtian aesthetic' (Strachan, 2003). Herbert formed close working relationships with several Royal Court directors such as Lindsay Anderson (1923-1994), Tony Richardson (1928-1991), Bill Gaskill (1930-) and most prolifically John Dexter,<sup>120</sup> all of whom became eminent figures in British theatre in the second half of the twentieth century.

*The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) has been chosen as a case study for a number of reasons. The 1959 version was presented as a 'Sunday night without décor' production, an opportunity to try out new plays that were rehearsed up to dress rehearsal standard and performed in front of an audience. I will argue that the circumstances of the production, such as a low budget, having

<sup>120</sup> Herbert and Dexter worked together on twenty-two productions between 1957 and 1990.

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

to get the performance on and off stage in one day, and the reduced pressure of a 'scratch' performance, created conditions that allowed for experiment both scenographically and in terms of working processes.

Additionally there is a lack of material evidence for the costume or set designs for either production (1959 & 1961) indicating that Herbert was more involved in rehearsals and discussions with the director and writer than in a traditional design process, marking a significant shift in her role as designer at the Court in relation to previous working practices. Furthermore, I will argue that the experimental situation of the Sunday night performances led to a leap forward in set design conventions at the Court, such as the way masking was used, an area that I will show that Devine and Margaret Harris were grappling with when they introduced the 'permanent surround' to the Court stage in 1956.

A further reason for choosing *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) is that Herbert described her designs for other productions in this period, including Wesker's trilogy,<sup>121</sup> as poetic realism, and Stephen Lacey uses *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) as an example of this style of theatre at the Royal Court. On the surface the aesthetic of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) would appear to have little in common with the 'poetic realism' of *Three Sisters* (1938) so a close study of the intentions and visual composition of *The Kitchen* provides an opportunity to investigate how this production extends our understanding of the term.

Following the pattern of Chapters Two and Three I will begin by contextualising the case study, commencing with an evaluation of the aesthetic of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre at its foundation in 1956. I will examine the establishment of Herbert's theatre design career at the Court between 1956 and 1959 before moving on to evaluate Herbert's design process, and set and costume designs for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961). Whilst others have conceded that Devine retained certain ideas at the Court from his involvement with Michel Saint-Denis (see for example Baldwin, 2003, p.186; Wardle, 1978, p.173) the dominant narrative is that the key influence on the Court's, and particularly Herbert's, aesthetics was Bertolt Brecht and the Berliner Ensemble. Whilst not negating their importance my close analysis of Herbert's process and designs for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) will expand theatre history by illustrating the connection between the London Theatre Studio, Motley and Herbert.

### **4.1 Context**

#### **4.1.1 The English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre (1956-)**

Herbert's theatre design career was closely related to the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre (the Court). This section will explain how the English Stage Company came to

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<sup>121</sup> *Chicken Soup with Barley* (1960), *Roots* (1959) and *I'm Not Talking About Jerusalem* (1960).

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

be founded in 1956, how George Devine and Motley were involved, and what relationship the organisation had to the ideas behind the London Theatre Studio.

In order to gain an understanding of the connection between the LTS and the Court it is first necessary to go back to the post-war period and to describe the Old Vic Theatre Centre (OVS) that was established in 1947 by Saint-Denis, Devine, Harris and Glen Byam Shaw. Comprising the Old Vic School, headed by Byam Shaw, Young Vic Theatre, headed by Devine, and Experimental Theatre, which never materialised but was headed by Saint-Denis who oversaw the whole Centre, it ran between 1947 and 1952 along almost identical lines to the LTS.<sup>122</sup> A major difference was the introduction of local authority educational grants after World War II, enabling students from many different social backgrounds to attend, which had not been the case at the LTS when such grants were unavailable.

The Old Vic School, and by association the Old Vic Theatre Centre, was closed down in 1952 by the Old Vic Theatre governors after a series of political machinations. According to Wardle there are several theories as to why the Centre fell out of favour with the governors. Firstly, that the Old Vic Theatre had become aligned with the plans for a National Theatre and that the governors and other influential theatre people were unhappy at the possibility of a Frenchman (Saint-Denis) becoming the director of the English National Theatre. Secondly, that the school was ahead of its time in terms of theatre style and that it was 'preparing the students for a theatre that didn't exist', by training them in improvisation and mask work for example (Wardle, 1978, p.133). The situation became so difficult that Devine, Byam Shaw and Saint-Denis offered their resignation, which was promptly accepted and publicised in the newspapers by the Old Vic governors. Wardle, (1978, pp.129–142) and Cornford (2012, pp.214–233) both give a comprehensive account of the circumstances of the closure of the Old Vic Theatre Centre but its significance to this thesis is that Devine felt badly let down by people who had formerly supported the LTS<sup>123</sup> and that as a result he turned away from training towards creating a working theatre company (Wardle, 1978, p.142).

Just as the Old Vic Theatre Centre was closing down in 1952 a young director called Tony Richardson (1928-1991) cast Devine in a television adaptation of *Curtain Down*.<sup>124</sup> Devine and Richardson became friends, realising that they shared many common theatrical aims, and decided to lease a London theatre and establish a small permanent company (Little &

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<sup>122</sup> Harris, in fact, believed that the LTS would have developed into the OVS if it had not been interrupted by the war (Harris, 1992, tape 7b).

<sup>123</sup> Director Tyrone Guthrie, for example, had put money into the LTS when it started. He was asked by the Old Vic Governors to step in to help sort out the problems with the Old Vic School and Theatre but advised the Governors to close the school, saying that he had changed his mind and no longer believed in training for actors. (Wardle, 1978, p.138)

<sup>124</sup> A short story by Anton Chekhov.

McLaughlin, 2007, p.12). The complicated series of events that led to the founding of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre in 1956 with George Devine as Artistic Director and Tony Richardson as Assistant Artistic Director has been covered in detail elsewhere (see for example Browne, 1975; Wardle, 1978; Roberts, 1999). However, when the English Stage Company was launched 'to provide the modern playwright with the stage he so urgently needs' (Devine quoted in Anon, 1956a) it was stepping into a gap left by the failure of several other companies that had been formed since 1945 in order to support new playwriting outside of commercial theatre (Browne, 1975, pp.4–5). Furthermore, in the early 1950s many of the theatre clubs and small try-out theatres that had traditionally been able to give playwrights the opportunity to test their work were closing down (Browne, 1975, p.6). Despite the foundation of the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1946, commercial theatre dominated during this period.<sup>125</sup>

The encouragement of new playwrights was not the English Stage Company's only aim; it also wanted to find 'a contemporary style in dramatic work, acting, décor and production' (Browne, 1975, p.12).<sup>126</sup> Moreover, as pointed out by Lacey, new writing 'reflects only one aspect of the company's interests' and 'the Court, and Devine in particular, were also interested in another kind of contemporary theatre, the Absurd' (Lacey, 1995, p.46)<sup>127</sup> as revealed by the inclusion of Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett in the programming of the early years at the Court. Beckett's lasting relationship with the Court will be examined in Chapter Five.

Devine did not wholly abandon his commitment to education and his early plans for the Court included part-time courses for actors, designers, playwrights and opera singers as well as lectures to be given on theatre subjects after performances (Devine, 1953). Although these classes did not materialise, Devine set up a writer's workshop in 1957 and, continuing to disseminate LTS and OVS classes, gave lessons on improvisation and masks. Director Bill Gaskill was inspired by these sessions to set up the Royal Court Actors Studio<sup>128</sup> to explore

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<sup>125</sup> As was explained in Chapter Two pre-war arts funding was entirely commercial. The Arts Council of Great Britain was created in 1946, a continuation of CEMA (Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts) that had been founded in 1940 to bring theatre, music and dance to commercially unprofitable areas of Britain during the Second World War. In 1946 the Arts Council's total budget was £235,000 (approximately £8,500,000 today) and had risen to only £820,000 (approximately £18,000,000 today) by 1956 (Lacey, 1995, p.42). In 2011/12, total investment by Arts Council England (including Lottery funding) was £624,479,000 (Arts Council England, 2014).

<sup>126</sup> As noted in Chapters One and Two the term décor continued to be used alongside theatre design well into the second half of the twentieth century.

<sup>127</sup> 'Theatre of the Absurd' is a term coined by Martin Esslin in his 1961 book of that name. It covers plays written by playwrights including Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Edward Albee and Harold Pinter that share 'the basic belief that man's life is essentially without meaning or purpose and that human beings cannot communicate' (Hartnoll, 1996, p.2)

<sup>128</sup> According to Tschudin the Royal Court Actors Studio ran from 1963 to at least 1966 (Tschudin, 1972, p.65).

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

improvisation, mime and mask work (Gaskill, 1988, p.54). Devine himself referred to the Court as 'a kind of school of the theatre' and said that 'actors...directors, designers, musicians, photographers, poster artists' had been 'attracted to the Court, passed through it, and been absorbed by the theatre at large' (Devine in Tschudin, 1972, p.242). This indicates that Devine's involvement with the LTS and OVS informed his view of the importance of continued learning, what would now be called professional development,<sup>129</sup> to theatre practitioners.

Additionally Devine created an environment that supported experimentation or 'the right to fail' (Little & McLaughlin, 2007, p.61). This phrase is seen by Dan Rebellato as being scornful of audiences (Rebellato, 1999, p.113) but Nicholas Wright<sup>130</sup> believed that Devine meant 'the right to put on one or two plays which would be financially unsuccessful, and not actually have to close the theatre down, to go bankrupt' (Wright in Little & McLaughlin, 2007, p.61).<sup>131</sup>

The budget for production costs at the Court was kept to a minimum and they paid very low wages (Shellard, 2000, p.50) but the policy of trying out new work was a costly one and the Court constantly struggled with deficits (see Browne, 1975, for a thorough account of the ESC finances).<sup>132</sup> Devine relieved this financial pressure by casting major stars in productions that he knew would bump up box office takings, such as *The Country Wife* (1956-57), designed by Motley, starring Laurence Harvey, and Noel Coward's *Look After Lulu* (1959) starring Vivien Leigh and designed by Roger Furse (1903-1972) both of which transferred to the West End, but he did so in order to support productions that he believed should be given a chance. For example, *The Country Wife* (1957) played to 94.8% houses and took £13,962 at the box office, whilst Beckett's *Endgame and Krapp's Last Tape* (1958) played to 40% houses and took only £2,800 (Browne, 1975, pp.112 & 114). The Sunday night without décor productions were another way of providing an experimental platform to try out new plays in a less pressured environment than that of a full-scale production, and as will be illustrated by *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961), they also provided an opportunity for directors and designers to try new ideas.

### 4.1.2 The permanent surround at the Royal Court Theatre

That surround of white net did more than provide continuity to the succession of Royal Court productions. It was also an artistic, even a moral statement in itself. It did not long survive, alas...but the principle remained embedded in the consciousness of all. (Anderson in Findlater, 1981, p.147)

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<sup>129</sup> That is, the acquisition of skills and knowledge that will help to advance one's career.

<sup>130</sup> Nicholas Wright (1940-) is British dramatist who started work at the Royal Court Theatre as a casting director in 1965 and became joint-artistic director between 1975-1977. More recently he was a literary manager and associate director of the National Theatre.

<sup>131</sup> Defending this right, and managing the building, had its personal costs and Devine suffered a nervous breakdown in 1961 (Roberts, 1999, p.79).

<sup>132</sup> The Court received a small Arts Council subsidy and raised other money through private donations and loans guaranteed against losses (Browne, 1975, pp.12-13; Wardle, 1978, p.170).

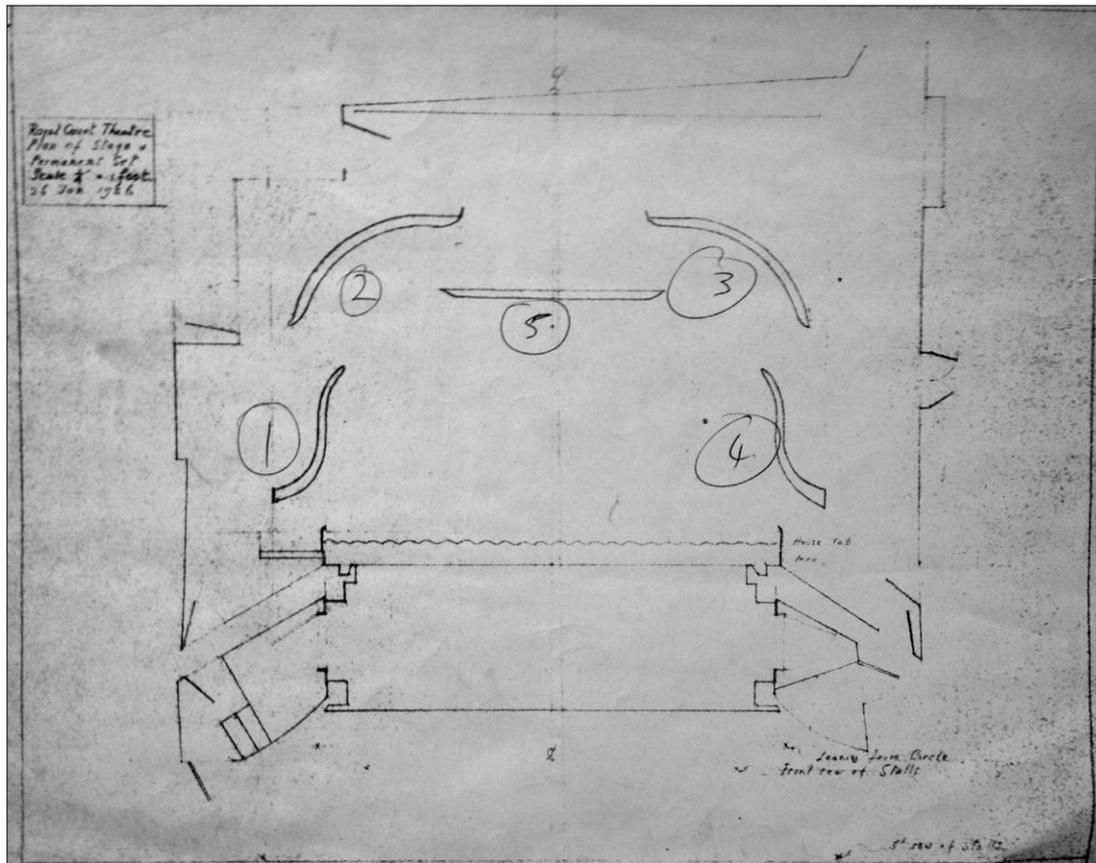


Figure 57: Ground plan of the Royal Court Theatre permanent surround (Harris, 1956)

As described by the quotation above, when the Court opened in 1956 it was equipped with a permanent surround within which the sets for each production were intended to sit (see Figure 57). Although the permanent surround did not last for very long (the exact date is contested as will be explained later in this section), the style of design that it encouraged and the reasons why it was created would have a long lasting effect on the aesthetic of Court productions, particularly those designed by Herbert. In order to assess the genealogy of Herbert's design for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) it is necessary to evaluate the origins and reasoning behind the surround. This section will show that the features of the surround demonstrate once more the aspirations of modern theatre design as discussed in Chapters Two and Three. It will also become clear that the permanent surround combined practical and aesthetic imperatives.

Wardle states that the Royal Court Theatre's permanent surround was based on the surround at Brecht's Theater am Schiffbauerdamm (Wardle, 1978, p.170). Devine had visited Brecht in January 1955 whilst on tour. Although this is obviously a decisive influence on the surround at the Court, particularly as the Schiffbauerdamm surround was constructed from a layer of canvas lined with netting, as was the Court surround, Saint-Denis, Devine and Motley had experimented with the concept of a permanent surround as far back as 1936. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Motley had designed a form of permanent masking and webbing through which lights were thrown for the LTS stage. There is no evidence as to what the masking

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

was like but the webbing may have been an attempt to move away from hiding the lighting equipment behind traditional black borders.

It is evident that the search for new methods of masking was linked to the rejection of a veristic style of stage settings by Devine during the period when he worked as a freelance director, between the end of the OVS in 1952 and the launch of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre in 1956 (see Appendix 8 for a list of productions lit, directed or acted by Devine). According to Wardle, Devine's idea for *King Lear* (1955) designed by Isamu Noguchi<sup>133</sup> was that it would have a 'permanent surround framing a series of fluid locations, which, above all would enable the play to expand beyond the confines of representational scenery' (Wardle, 1978, p.152), echoing the aims of what would later become the permanent surround at the Royal Court Theatre.

In common with the tendencies in Motley's practice, Devine wanted to use suggestion rather than representation in settings and he therefore proposed that the masking should be a framing device in sympathy with this style of set design. By implication Devine was rejecting the pretence of hiding the mechanics of the theatre behind black masking which audiences accepted as invisible, a convention still applicable today when nearly every theatre has a set of black masking in stock. Harris would later explain that:

[Devine felt that] the theatre...shouldn't cheat. That it should be an honest effort to put the author's intention into a space which was suitable for it. Not to try to pretend that you were in the desert [for example]. To say, "this is a theatre; but the action takes place in the desert. The rest of it is a theatre". That is what he believed about the visual side of the theatre. (Harris, 1973, p.17)

In early 1955, a series of notes were written between Devine, Harris and Tony Richardson that defined the scenographic aspirations for the Court and illustrated that they were grappling with a tension between different modes of representation on stage that incorporated ideas about reality and pretence. Devine described that what was required was 'a new milieu in modern terms which will be a completely fresh restatement of the old traditions' (Roberts, 1999, p.24), the equivalent, in fact, of Copeau's *tréteau nu* as described in Chapter Three. Devine questioned:

In what kind of space can the words of a dramatist both live and create the poetic world of the drama?...The stage must have space and air and freedom from the

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<sup>133</sup> Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988), prominent Japanese American artist who created sculptures, gardens, furniture and lighting designs, ceramics, architecture, and set designs (notably for Martha Graham's dance company).

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

trappings which are used to pretend that it is something which it is not. (Roberts, 1999, p.24)

Harris was in agreement stating that '...scenery and costumes conceived to convince and deceive. I think that is one of the clashes of our transition period' (Harris, 1955). She also asserted that one should:

...not try and conceal construction but to make it part of the design: in fact to feature it as being the leading part of the design because in fact it is. And not decorate it, hide it, or put something on the other side to balance it or pretend it is something else: in fact *not to pretend at all*... (Harris in Roberts, 1999, p.25)

Richardson concurred although he questioned whether audiences are really deceived 'or they would get up and stop Othello [from killing Desdemona]'; instead an audience must 'suspend its disbelief' and are both 'apart and part of [the play]' (Richardson, 1955). Richardson's comments are a description of the duality that exists in theatre performances whereby there is an unspoken contract between the audience and the creators of the piece of theatre. The audience might agree to accept that a wooden chair is Macbeth's throne for example, but also that objects can signify other things, such as that a piece of red fabric is blood, or that a man with a hat is a cow. However, as this thesis illustrates, the exact nature of the understanding between the performers and the audience is continuously changing and adapting, and the discussion between Harris, Devine and Richardson highlights a moment of identifiable transition that we will see began to be manifested in Herbert's design for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961).

Devine wrote that 'some form of masking is essential for reasons of economy and time' and that the solution must be practical, functional and natural (Roberts, 1999, p.34). It was not yet conceivable to altogether discard the convention of hiding the mechanics of the theatre so the surround was designed to mask but also to be as imperceptible as possible. In a sense it was to fulfill the function of masking whilst suggesting its own invisibility. It was to be a shape that implied that the stage led to further space beyond and the material of the masking was intended to insinuate that air could pass through it. It should 'seem as impermanent and of the moment as the life that takes place on the stage, which lives and dies in less than a second' (Devine in Roberts, 1999, p.35).

Harris described making 'model after model after model' in order to get the 'flowing box' that Devine wanted (Harris, 1973, p.16). As can be seen from the plan (Figure 57) Harris solved the problem by creating two downstage S-shaped wing flats, two upstage, concave wing flats and a backcloth flat that the plan shows as placed in front of the upstage wings but which

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

could presumably be moved upstage of them if required. Harris noted that these flats could be 'moved out and moved back in' (Harris, 1973, p.16), although it is not clear whether this refers to them being flown in and out or whether their position could be adjusted so that they were further on or off the stage. According to Harris there were also borders to conceal the lighting bars because 'at that time one didn't think that it was possible to see the lights and leave everything open' (Harris, 1973, p.16). I will assess this in more detail when I analyse Herbert's design for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961).

The surrounds were constructed of metal frames with an unpainted canvas backing, sprayed with paint at the edges, six inches apart from a transparent layer of netting at the front. According to Wardle:

It proved immensely responsive to light. It could present the hard brilliance of white canvas, or melt into a watered, *moiré* effect. In Devine's phrase, the surround was a 'box that flowed.' (Wardle, 1978, p.172)

It is clear, however, that the reasons for the surround were financial and practical as well as promoting a certain scenographic ethos. When the English Stage Company was launched at the Court its finances were limited. Each production had a budget of £2000 (equivalent to around £42,300 today) for all costs including transport, wages, lighting and sound equipment, materials, photos, scripts and all other expenses (Findlater, 1981, p.16; Browne, 1975, p.15). The permanent surround was intended to discourage designers from building large sets, instead providing a practical space in which to suggest environments with the introduction of a few elements of set, props and costumes. Not only were these kinds of design solutions cheaper than building bulky sets, but they would also be easier to store<sup>134</sup> and be quicker to get in and out of the theatre in a repertory programme where productions were frequently rotated.

According to the *New Statesman* in 1956, 'Mr. Devine is [solving the problem of storage] by a new system that he wittingly [sic] christens "essentialism", the audience will be called on to use their imaginations' (Worsley in Tschudin, 1972, p.242). Devine appears to have used the word 'essentialism' humorously to describe the minimal sets that were necessitated by the financial and spatial challenges of the new theatre, but it also related to the style of design that I have established as being practiced by Motley and promoted by Saint-Denis in the previous two chapters. The permanent surround was almost a way of compelling designers at the Court to follow the ethos of only putting on stage what supported the meaning of the dramatic text and of using suggestion. It is perhaps for this reason that it had mixed success.

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<sup>134</sup> The Royal Court Theatre has minimal wing space for storage.



Figure 58: *Mulberry Bush* (1956), designed by Motley, rehearsal photograph (Anon, 1956b)



Figure 59: *The Crucible* (1956), designed by Stephen Doncaster (Hamilton in Findlater, 1981)



Figure 60: *Look Back in Anger* (1956), designed by Alan Tagg (Scherschel, 1957)



Figure 61: *Member of the Wedding* (1957), set designed by Alan Tagg (Anon, 1957)

Although the surround worked well for the first two productions at the Court, by the third its restrictions were becoming evident. Motley designed Angus Wilson's *The Mulberry Bush* (1956), which launched the ESC at the Court, and the settings were described as 'realistic, but not fussily or extravagantly naturalistic: they stood out with clarity against a pure, white surround' (Findlater, 1981, p.144). Photographs show freestanding architectural elements, such as doors, windows or steps, with the netting of the surround clearly visible behind them (Figure 58).<sup>135</sup> Old Vic School graduate Stephen Doncaster's designs for the second production, *The Crucible* (1956), (Figure 59) similarly used a simple setting, with a ceiling of wooden beams and elements of furniture that fitted with the spirit of the surround (Gaskill, 1988, p.12).

When Alan Tagg (1928-2002), another Old Vic School graduate, designed the set for the third production, *Look Back in Anger* (1956), he struggled against the surround, insisting that the attic setting had to be enclosed by walls (Hallifax, 2004, pp.30–31) (Figure 60). By the time of *Member of the Wedding* in early 1957, (Figure 61) with sets designed by Alan Tagg and costumes by Stephen Doncaster, which had been designed with massive scenery, the surround was removed and appears to have stopped being permanent, instead being brought in for particular productions.<sup>136</sup> The permanent surround had been found to be too restricting, partly because of the kinds of new plays that were being discovered by the Court which were more advanced in content than in form as discussed in Chapter One, and as can be seen by Alan Tagg's insistence on having walls for *Look Back in Anger* (1956). However, the very permanence of the surround restricted the style of design that could exist within it. In a theatre whose aim was to forefront the play, and for designers who aimed to serve the play, this inflexibility was not appropriate in practice although my hypothesis is that the ideas behind it influenced Herbert's designs even after it had been abandoned, as will be discussed below.

#### 4.1.3 The permanent wardrobe at the Royal Court Theatre

Another plan to economise at the Court led to Sophie Harris-Devine creating a permanent wardrobe based on the 'basic costumes' that had been designed by Motley for students at the London Theatre Studio and that were further refined for the Old Vic School (see Figure 62 and Figure 63).<sup>137</sup> It was hoped that they would save money on period costumes by providing an adaptable base onto which detail could be added. The idea was to show only the suggestion of a period using the minimum of resources.

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<sup>135</sup> According to Harris one problem with the netting was that the branches of the mulberry tree that had to be flown in and out kept getting caught in it (Harris, 1973, p.16).

<sup>136</sup> Little & McLaughlin claim that the surround stopped being used in February 1957 (2007, p.38), Wardle states that it lasted until May 1958 (1978, p.182), and others state that it continued to be used, less as a permanent surround than as a possible element for a stage design, until as late as 1959 (Doty & Harbin, 1990, p.178).

<sup>137</sup> Design students at the National Theatre School of Canada, founded in 1960 under the guidance of Saint-Denis, make a full length practice skirt for acting students in their first term and I would suggest that this is a remnant of the idea of basic costumes that were created for the LTS and OVS.

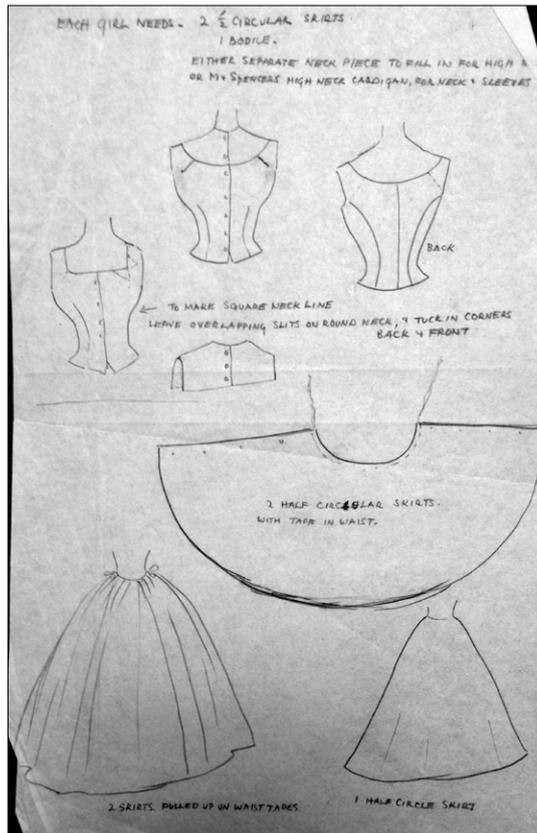


Figure 62: Motley designs for basic costume for women (Motley, c.1936)

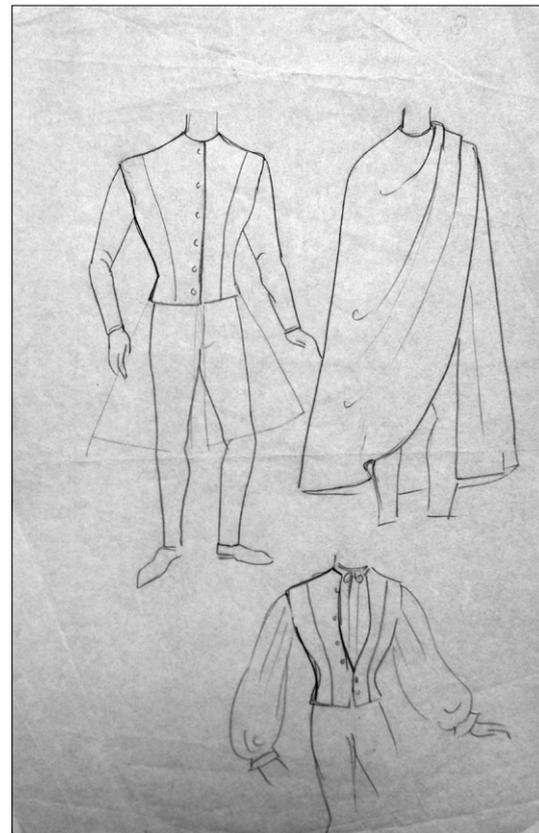


Figure 63: Motley designs for basic costume for men (Motley, c.1936a)

For men the costume consisted of wool tights and a cloth jacket and for women of several half circular ground length skirts and a fitted cloth jacket. The skirts had a drawstring around the waist and press-studs down each open side and in this way the skirts could be worn singly or several could be fastened together to create a fuller skirt (Figure 62). These half circle skirts could also be used for cloaks (Figure 63). The basic costume could provide a foundation on which to build costumes for a production of any historical period. For example, the bodice in Figure 62 shows that the neckline would be adaptable and could be square, curved or high-necked. Similarly the basic jacket for men in Figure 63 shows that adding sleeves or panel sections could change it significantly. According to Stephen Doncaster, who with his wife Wendy ran the Court's wardrobe department in the first years of the English Stage Company, the permanent wardrobe was unsuccessful and had stopped being used by the time of *The Country Wife* in December 1956 (Doncaster, 2012).

Although Doncaster does not expand on the reasons for the failure of the basic costumes it would seem that whilst they had been useful in the drama schools of the LTS and OVS, they were too restrictive and prescriptive to work in a professional environment. Like the permanent set the permanent wardrobe, despite its aim to be flexible, was too uncompromising for designers whose goal was to visually interpret and support each dramatic text. For example they dictated colour and texture that I have shown to be key tools for

conveying character and mood in Motley's practice. Additionally, the Court had not anticipated the kinds of plays that would be discovered; plays like *Look Back in Anger* (1956) that were not set in historical periods but were in modern dress and concerned with working class issues.

#### 4.1.4 Repertory and ensemble at the Royal Court Theatre

Another conflict between the aims of the Court and the practicalities of their realisation can be observed in the original policy of presenting seasons played in repertory and having a permanent company of actors or an ensemble. The repertory system was unsuccessful partly because the British audiences were unused to it, being more accustomed to productions that lasted for several weeks rather than changing every few days, and so they did not understand what performance was on when (Wardle, 1978, p.187); with the result that repertory was relatively quickly replaced by short runs of plays.

The idea of the ensemble was never completely achieved either, as, in actuality, there was from the beginning a two-tier system that had a permanent core of young and versatile actors, supplemented by more established actors who were brought in for particular productions (Wardle, 1978, p.172). The strains between the Court as a writer's theatre and the ideal of an ensemble, that is if the play was the most important thing then the cast needed to be selected to support each play individually, finally killed off even this attempt and it was replaced with a core of regularly used actors (Wardle, 1978, p.187).

However, it could be argued that the ethos of an ensemble remained even if it was not possible to practically maintain. This manifested itself in several ways, as, for example, in the pairing up of young directors, designers and playwrights,<sup>138</sup> which created small teams that worked together regularly, thereby attaining close working relationships that were able to explore and push the boundaries of their work, as was the case with Jocelyn Herbert, director John Dexter and writer Arnold Wesker.

#### 4.1.5 Jocelyn Herbert

The daughter of humourist, writer and Independent MP J.P. Herbert (1890-1971), Jocelyn Herbert grew up surrounded by painters, writers and theatre people. She studied at the London Theatre Studio between 1936-1938 but had previously spent time in Paris learning painting from Cubist André Lhote (1885-1962). In London she had also been taught scene painting at the Slade by Vladimir Polunin (1880-1957) and drawing and printing by Leon Underwood (1890-1975). During her second year at the LTS<sup>139</sup> Herbert married Anthony

<sup>138</sup> The early years of the Court saw the launch of the careers of many writers such as John Osborne, Arnold Wesker, John Arden, Ann Jellicoe, N.F. Simpson, Donald Howarth, Wole Soyinka, Peter Gill, David Cregan and Edward Bond; directors such as Tony Richardson, John Dexter, Bill Gaskill, Anthony Page, Lindsay Anderson, Keith Johnstone, Jane Howell, Ann Jellicoe and Peter Gill and designers such as Alan Tagg, Jocelyn Herbert, Stephen Doncaster and Clare Jeffrey.

<sup>139</sup> Between 1937 and 1938 Herbert completed the Décor Course Extension year.

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

Lousada (1907-1994) and was heavily pregnant with the first of her four children by the time she finished the course. After the Second World War Herbert designed two productions for Suria Saint-Denis,<sup>140</sup> taught evening classes at Toynbee Hall, c.1946, and classes in scene painting at the Old Vic School in 1947. However, she came to the conclusion that she needed to concentrate on her young children and, apart from two productions that she designed in 1951 and 1954,<sup>141</sup> withdrew from both teaching and designing (Herbert, 1985a, tape 11) until the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre was founded in 1956 and she was employed as scene painter for the company. Although her professional activity was limited between 1938-56 Herbert continued to mix socially with her former tutors, now friends, Saint-Denis and George and Sophie Devine.<sup>142</sup> In 1954 the Devines moved to a house on the same stretch of river as *The Tides*, where Herbert and her husband lived, and the families met frequently (see Devine, 2006, pp.65–66). Gradually Devine and Herbert began a romantic affair, eventually leaving their spouses and setting up home together at Rossetti Studios, Chelsea, in around 1958.

The first show Herbert designed at the Court was the British premiere of Ionesco's *The Chairs* (1957), directed by Tony Richardson, and later that year she designed W.B. Yeats's *Purgatory*<sup>143</sup> for the newly appointed Associate Director of the English Stage Company John Dexter. This was Herbert's second design job at the Court and Herbert and Dexter would go on to work together on twenty-two productions between 1957 and his death in 1990 (see Appendix 2). In 1958 John Dexter directed Arnold Wesker's first professionally produced play, *Chicken Soup with Barley*, designed by Michael Richardson.<sup>144</sup> When he directed Wesker's next play, *Roots*, in 1959 Dexter invited Herbert to design it.<sup>145</sup>

The play *Roots* requires a different room in each of its three acts and for each change of setting Herbert changed the location of the window, door and chimney (Figure 64). For the first two acts the window and door sat within an open frame, which had no walls, so that projections onto the cyclorama could be seen through it. Herbert described her design for *Roots* as 'my first attempt at poetic realism for a naturalistic play...I was trying to create the *feeling* of those isolated cottages without *actually* re-creating them on stage' (Courtney, 1993, p.32).

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<sup>140</sup> *Magic Bat* and *Harlequinade* at Toynbee Hall c.1946 (Herbert, 1985a, tape 11).

<sup>141</sup> The Group Theatre's production of *Les Mouches* by Sartre in 1951 and Goldoni's *Mistress of the Inn*, directed by George Devine for the Piccolo Theatre Company in 1954.

<sup>142</sup> Having started a relationship during the 1932 OUDS *Romeo and Juliet*, George Devine and Sophie Harris married in 1939. Their daughter Harriet was born in 1942.

<sup>143</sup> A Royal Court Theatre production at the Devon Festival.

<sup>144</sup> *Chicken Soup with Barley* premiered at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry and played at the Court for a week from 14<sup>th</sup> July 1958.

<sup>145</sup> *Roots* was produced at the Coventry Belgrade on May 25<sup>th</sup> 1959 then came to the Court on 30<sup>th</sup> June and transferred to the Duke of York's Theatre on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1959.

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

But how does Herbert's use of the term poetic realism relate to Motley's as described in the previous chapter? Motley were shown to be mediating reality to emphasise emotion or mood and Herbert also seems to intimate that poetic realism relates to providing a feeling on stage. Herbert's use of fractured architectural elements inside a cyclorama is suggestive of Motley's design for *The Mulberry Bush* (1956) as well as their unit sets for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935). Roger Pinkham in his 1987 article *Design for Effect* saw the Court's trend for 'economy of design' (Pinkham, 1987, p.16) as beginning in Motley's pre-war practice, which moved away from illusionist scenery and placed fragmented, free-standing units on the stage. However, the addition of projections onto the background is reminiscent of Jo Mielziner's use of painted gauzes for productions such as *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) and *Death of a Salesman* (1949) in the USA.<sup>146</sup>



Figure 64: Rendering for Act 1 of *Roots* (Herbert, 1959a)

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<sup>146</sup> Several Mielziner designed productions were seen in Britain after the war including: *Streetcar Named Desire* (1949), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1951), *Guys and Dolls* (1952), *The King & I* (1955); as well as three that included costumes designed by Motley, *The Innocents* (1952), *South Pacific* (1952) and *Can-Can* (1955). Elizabeth Montgomery regularly collaborated with Mielziner on productions in New York (see Appendix 1).

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

Mielziner used poetic realism<sup>147</sup> as a method for expressing the 'political and social commentary and detailed study of contemporary experience' (Doona, 2002, p.63) of social realist plays. Social realism, as seen in the key British proponents of the genre in the 1950s and 1960s, the Royal Court Theatre and Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, represented and engaged with the social experiences of the contemporary working class, who had rarely been seen on stage before this point. The relationship between 'individuals and groups and their social environment' is the 'source' of social realism's politics (Lacey in Tucker, 2011, p.59). The poetic realism of Herbert's work at the Court, therefore, was providing a recognisably real but mediated environment that could communicate both the physical and psychological context of the play, in a similar way to Motley's and Saint-Denis's approach to Chekhov as illustrated in the previous chapter. How Herbert's poetic realism differed from Motley's, but echoed Mielziner's, was in its application to social realist plays that emphasised the political, and this will be further explored in the case study of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) below.

A trait that Lacey assigns to poetic realism at the Court in his book *British Realist Theatre* (1995) is that the way productions were presented showed an awareness of the 'constructedness' of theatre (Lacey, 1995, p.113), and this can certainly be observed in Herbert's design for *The Kitchen*, as will be demonstrated. This awareness can be traced to the modern theatre design concept, described in Chapter Two, of suggestion rather than mimesis, as using only a few objects on stage to suggest a location acknowledges, by its very nature, the convention that the actions are taking place in a theatre.

A figure who had a major impact on an awareness of 'constructedness' at the Court was Bertolt Brecht and his Berliner Ensemble, in whose productions 'the public at all times is being made aware of the fact that "this is not life, this is not a room with the fourth wall cut away, this is a stage"' (Bornemann, 1965, p.147).

Although Herbert herself recognised the importance of Saint-Denis and her training at the LTS on her practice (see Courtney, 1993, p.15 for example), it has very often been argued that her design style was influenced by Brecht (Mathers, 1975, p.82; Howard, 2009, p.106; Strachan, 2003). Others, whilst concurring, saw the Brechtian influence on the Court as a whole as pervasive (Billington, 1998, p.9; Rebellato, 1999, p.98; Gaskill, 1988, p.12). Mathers, however, maintained that Brecht's influence on British theatre practitioners was 'almost exclusively centred on certain aesthetic criteria, on "the technical elements of alienation"' (Mathers, 1975, p.81), in other words that the political basis of Brecht's ideas about theatre

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<sup>147</sup> It has also been described as 'selective realism' for the way in which he chose real objects and 'emphasised their significance by placing them within more ambiguous, expressionistic backgrounds' (Yannacci, 2007, p.188).

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

were less understood and emulated in Britain than his style of presentation.<sup>148</sup> There are, in fact, conflicts in Brecht's desire to reveal the mechanics of his productions in order to stop the audience from getting so involved in the performance that they could not '*contemplate* the scene and receive its full impact as a *guide to action*' (Bornemann, 1965, p.147), for, as Bornemann goes on to point out, 'the exposed stage lights, far from alienating us, communicated all of Brecht's love for the stage: the stage itself, thus deified, became a place of poetry' (1965, p.147). However, Brechtian theatre cannot be described as poetic realism even if some of the visual techniques developed by him and his designers, such as revealing the lighting equipment, were appropriated by Herbert as the aesthetic of her poetic realist settings.

The nuances between the poetry of Brechtian theatre and of that of poetic realism can be seen in their intentions. Brecht and his designers wanted the audience to remain critically and actively engaged so that they would 'recognise the form of their oppression, and so overcome it' (Shepherd & Wallis, 2009, p.185). Brecht's theatre was intended to elicit a dialectic reaction from the audience whereas the political message of Wesker's *The Kitchen*, for example, as a synecdoche for the world of work, is embedded in narratives and characters that engage the audience in an empathetic response. Whilst the intention of Brechtian design was *not* to create 'an aesthetically coherent, harmonious and unified stage picture...so as to deliver to the audience a completed interpretation of the play's meaning' (Baugh, 2005, p.76), this is exactly what I will demonstrate Herbert's *Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) design to have been doing.

Brecht's impact on Herbert and the Court is undeniable but if one removes the political motivation for Brecht's theatre style there are aspects of what have been considered Brechtian aesthetics that can also be traced in the ideas of Copeau, who opened the Vieux-Colombier theatre in 1912 when Brecht was only fourteen, and of the work of Saint-Denis who was Brecht's exact contemporary. For example, Brecht's use of exposed stage lights was equally prevalent in Copeau's Vieux Colombier theatre and Saint-Denis's Compagnie des Quinze productions as was illustrated in the previous chapter. Popular narratives and established histories about influences on theatre practice rarely acknowledge the interrelation of ideas amongst theatre practitioners and movements, preferring to identify singular, transformative events or personalities.

It is apparent that there was a confluence of influences on Herbert's aesthetics at this time, demonstrating the complexity of the genealogy of theatrical approaches and styles. On the one hand most at the Court would have agreed that the Berliner Ensemble's visit to London in

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<sup>148</sup> In fact the visual elements of Brecht's theatre were created in close collaboration with the designers he worked with although the aesthetic is commonly referred to as 'Brechtian'. For example, Brecht and theatre designer Caspar Neher (1897-1962) developed a method of collaboration in which they worked closely together before and during rehearsals so that the scenographic was 'an integral component within what Brecht termed the "practical dramaturgy" of the play in performance' (Baugh, 2005, p.76).

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

1956 had excited and influenced many British theatre practitioners (see Howard, 2009, p.106 for example). On the other hand there was New Stagecraft, Motley, Saint-Denis and poetic realism that had an impact through the involvement of Devine and Motley, and Herbert's LTS training.<sup>149</sup>

By 1959 Herbert appears to have established a design style that was an antecedent to her design for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961), in which a set would be placed in the centre of the stage with space between it and a cyclorama or backcloth (see Appendix 9 for a chart of Herbert's designs between 1946 and 1961). Herbert would later say that it was for *Roots* (1959) that she first 'hit on the idea of setting it in the middle of an empty stage and using projections of the countryside' (Courtney, 1993, p.32) (see Figure 64). Herbert also used the technique of having a central piece of set with space around it for the other plays that she designed in what would become known as the 'Wesker Trilogy'<sup>150</sup> as well as for other plays on the Court stage at this period such as *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (1959) and *The Changeling* (1961). In her design for *Richard III* (1961) at the Royal Shakespeare Company Herbert used the striking feature of a round tower off-centre of the stage, and instead of a plain cyclorama, as in the other examples discussed, she used a wire mesh background.

This style of design would appear to relate closely to the concept of the 'permanent surround' and Devine's appeal for light and air around the sets, as mentioned in his 1955 correspondence with Harris and Richardson. Ideas about lighting at the Court, and Devine's particular interest in lighting also had an impact on Herbert's designs at this period. On taking over the Court Devine removed the 'old house curtain and [took] up the proscenium borders' which altered the proportions of the proscenium arch and revealed 'some of the bars and vertical lighting positions, which, in England, was unheard of at that time' (Wardle, 1978, p.172). According to Wardle this was an 'incidental occurrence' caused by the opening up of the proscenium arch, and not due to any 'positive design feature' that intended to make lighting integral to the design (p.172). However, from my research into Devine's ideas about the Court stage I believe that it was almost certainly to do with his attempts to create a fluid, non-illusionistic stage space, and that it signaled a move towards the lighting rig that became part of Herbert's *Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) design. Devine had observed that the lighting bars at Brecht's Theater am Schiffbauerdamm were fully exposed (Wardle, 1978, p.170) but Richardson denied that Brecht's stage had a great influence on the Court and although the lighting equipment at the Court was visible it was not used only for white light (Wardle, 1978, p.172) as Brecht's lighting tended to be (see Bentley, 2008, p.424).

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<sup>149</sup> This was despite Tony Richardson's rejection of OVS trained actors for their 'mime and sub-Copeau jumping about' (Wardle, 1978, p.171).

<sup>150</sup> *Chicken Soup with Barley* (1960) and *I'm Talking About Jerusalem* (1960).



Figure 65: Set rendering *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (Herbert, 1959b)

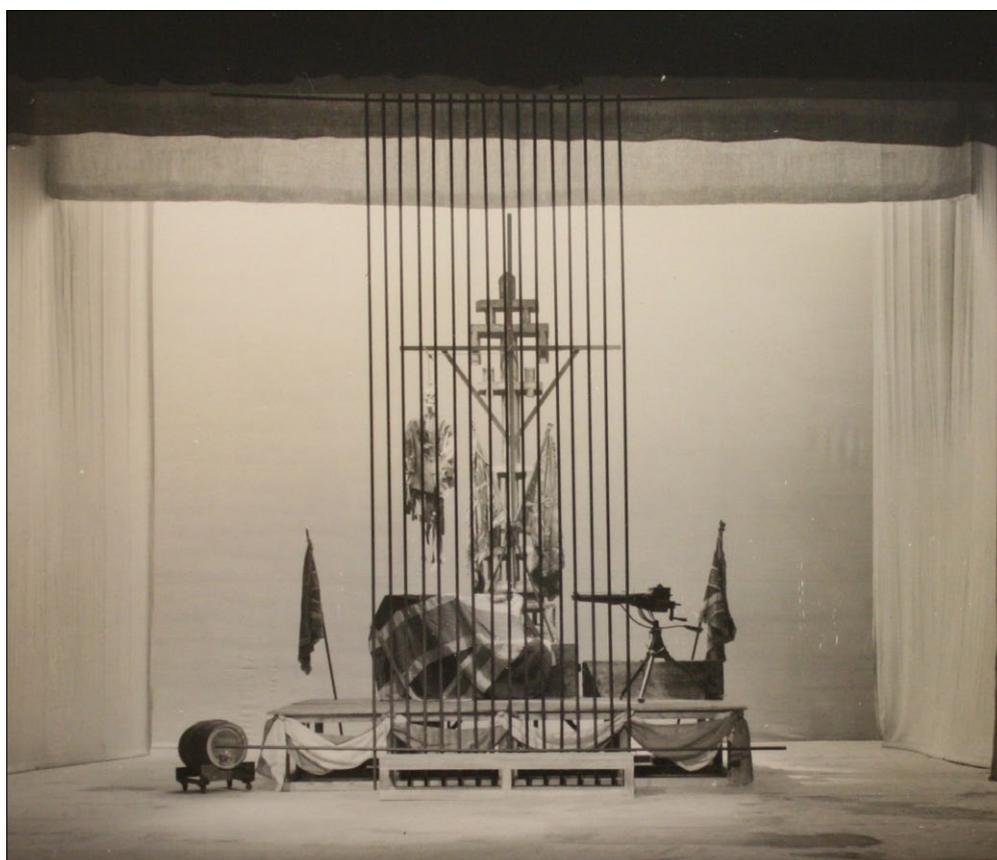


Figure 66: Production photograph *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (Snowdon, 1959)

Herbert stated that, 'in the old days at the Court we didn't have any lighting designers and George Devine always lit the plays he directed with the lighting engineers' (Courtney, 1993, p.48).<sup>151</sup> In working closely with Devine and his lighting expertise it seems likely that Herbert developed the confidence to allow the lighting to contribute to the atmosphere of the sets in a greater way. For example, by comparing a set rendering (Figure 65) (Herbert, 1959b) and a production photograph (Figure 66) from *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* (1959) it is possible to get an idea of the atmosphere that lighting could add. The photograph is taken without any projections and with a basic lighting state, and the set therefore comes across as stark. However Herbert's set rendering allows us to imagine that the lighting would have created a sense of the time of day, weather and the gloominess of the town in which the action is set.

Herbert described the Court as having 'discovered *light*' as more of an integral part of stage design in the period 1956-65 (Herbert, 1981, p.85; original emphasis). Herbert is specifically referring to productions at the Court and to the 'development of the quality of lighting equipment' (p.85) at this time. However, it is clear that light had been an increasingly significant aspect of modern theatre design since the turn of the century as demonstrated in the writings and practice of Craig and Appia (see Baugh, 2005, pp.94–118 for example). Chapter Three of this thesis discussed Devine's interest and proficiency in lighting before the war, so that Herbert's statement may indicate that the other directors and designers at the Court, besides Devine, had begun to recognise the value of light as an essential element of scenography to the extent that the role of a lighting designer was accepted as necessary. As will be demonstrated in the case study of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) below, this growing appreciation of light also stimulated the incorporation of the lighting rig into the production design.

#### 4.1.6 *The Kitchen* world premiere

In the previous two chapters I have shown how Motley approached plays by Shakespeare and Chekhov, both dead writers whose work had been staged many times before, both with a history and tradition of performance to be considered. An obvious difference for Herbert working at the Court was that she was frequently working with living writers on the premieres of their plays and was therefore the first designer to find a way to visually interpret their dramatic text. The writers were often present during preparation and rehearsals and could therefore be questioned about their intentions for the staging. My own experience of working with a living writer on a premiere was that the author would not necessarily know the answers to my queries or, if they did know, they might not be willing to communicate them, preferring

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<sup>151</sup> Although it is unclear what period 'the old days' covers I would speculate that it represents 1956-65, as 1965 was the year that Devine resigned as Artistic Director and that Andy Phillips (1940-2004) became Head Electrician at the Court. Phillips would later go on to 'take on responsibility for lighting productions and he became integral to the ESC's aesthetic' (Strachan, 2004).

instead to see how I would interpret their words. Herbert herself said that, 'it very often doesn't occur to writers to imagine what their plays will look like' (Courtney, 1993, p.144).

It is apparent, however, that Wesker is a playwright who wishes to retain as much control over the realisation of his plays as possible and that he has a clear image of how his plays should look. Wesker has said that 'much of my work is autobiographical and I have very vivid images in my mind of what I want' and that he believes 'that it is the responsibility of the playwright to conceive his play as totally as possible' as well as that he tries to make his work 'director-proof and, to some extent, designer-proof' (Courtney, 1993, p.215). He has even described interpreters (directors) who demand complete freedom from the playwright's directions as 'scavenging' (Wesker, 1985, p.25). However, Wesker himself acknowledges in the texts of *The Kitchen* that have been published since 1961 that at least one section of the play is based on 'the actual production worked out by John Dexter based on what was originally only an indicative framework set out by me' (Wesker, 1990, p.10).<sup>152</sup> The translation of a written text to a performance necessitates interpretation by the director, actors and designer, but what Wesker would appear to be concerned about is that they keep close to the author's intentions. This was the ethos of the LTS that continued to the Royal Court Theatre and the process of realising Wesker's script will be assessed in the case study below.

*The Kitchen* is set over the period of one day in the kitchen of a busy commercial restaurant. The central story tells of a frustrated love affair between a high-spirited young German chef, Peter, and a married English waitress, Monique. When Peter is finally rejected he goes berserk, severing the main gas line to the kitchen stoves. Wesker provides extensive explanatory notes about the layout and action of the kitchen setting. He specifies the kitchen 'stations', the tables or units at which, for example, poultry, fried fish, and puddings are prepared and dished up or at which clean plates are collected. Wesker also makes it clear from the first draft that 'at no time is food ever used. To cook and serve food is of course just not practical' (Wesker, n.d.). The consequences of this are that the waitresses carry empty plates and the cooks mime their cooking. Wesker gives detailed information about the main characters, their backgrounds and what exactly each cook is preparing. He describes the lighting of the ovens and the accompanying light and sound and that 'there will be this continuous battle between

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<sup>152</sup> I have located several different versions of the play, including the undated first three typescripts in the Harry Ransom Center (Wesker, n.d.; Wesker, n.d.; Wesker, n.d.), the published text from 1960 (Wesker, 1960), the annotated prompt book of the 1961 production (Wesker, 1961) and the text as published since the 1961 production (Wesker, 1990). By assessing the difference between them it is possible to ascertain that the text developed to a certain extent and some of the differences that pertain to the design of the play will be highlighted in the following sections.

the dialogue and the noise of the ovens. The producer must work out his own balance' (Wesker, 1960, p.19).<sup>153</sup>

## 4.2 *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) case study

### 4.2.1 Circumstances of the production

*The Kitchen*, Wesker's first play, had been read by Devine and Richardson but considered too technically problematic, probably because of its cast of nearly thirty, which, even in the 1950s when casts were larger than today, would have required a large budget for actors wages. Intriguingly, Keith Johnstone's<sup>154</sup> report on the submitted script in 1958 commented that, 'I don't see how it will work without the elaborate set he suggests' (Little & McLaughlin, 2007, p.55). I have not found any evidence of an elaborate set in the early drafts, so it is possible that Johnstone was referring to the complicated kitchen arrangements that Wesker specified.

After the success of Wesker's trilogy *The Kitchen* was taken up by Dexter and presented as a 'Sunday night production without décor' (13 and 20 December 1959). As described, Sunday night without décor productions were created as a chance for playwrights to see their work in performance, and to try out new directors without the pressure of a full-scale production. They were intended to be 'rehearsed up to dress rehearsal point, but performed with only indications of scenery and costumes' (Findlater, 1981, p.42). The concept of having little or no design input suggests that design was considered to be a potentially inessential addition to a production. It also indicates that the plays being written at this time did not incorporate the scenographic in the same way that Beckett did for example, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter.

Despite the name, Sunday night productions did sometimes include designers and Jocelyn Herbert was invited to work on *The Kitchen*. Although the text contained a new central section requested by Dexter to provide a moment of contrast to the intensity of the two other parts of the play (Wesker, 1994, p.562), it was a shorter version than the 1961 production. According to Wesker, notwithstanding the Sunday night version being well received the Court only put the full scale production on because of the cancellation of another play (Wesker, 1994, p.562).

The budget for Sunday night without décor productions was small, only £100 (equivalent to around £2100 today). Authors were paid £5 (about £100) and actors a couple of guineas

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<sup>153</sup> I have not been able to establish whether the noise of the ovens was added before or after the 1959 production. They are mentioned in the three drafts at the Harry Ransom Centre, Texas, but these are undated (Wesker, n.d.; Wesker, n.d.; Wesker, n.d.). I would however, postulate that they were written before 1959.

<sup>154</sup> Keith Johnstone (1933-) an educator, playwright, actor and theatre director, started working as a play reader during the first years of the Court.

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

(around £50) for two weeks of rehearsal (Findlater, 1981, p.42). The large cast of *The Kitchen*, with nearly thirty parts that cannot be doubled up due to the nature of the action on the stage, would have mostly been recruited from the casts of plays running in the theatre at that time, so that the actors would rehearse in the day and perform at night. The technical rehearsal would take place on the main stage during the day, before a Sunday night performance, which the public and some critics would attend, and after which the set and props would have to be removed from the stage.

According to Peter Gill, if you were clever you would arrange your performance to take place on a Sunday that fell in between productions, so that one show would have taken down their set on Saturday night, but the next one would not have set theirs up until the Monday (Gill, 2013). In this way you would be able to use a bare stage rather than having to fit in around someone else's set. Dexter had directed two Sunday night performances before *The Kitchen* (1959), *Yes – and After* (1957) and *Each His Own Wilderness* (1958), so he had some idea of how to use the minimal resources to the best advantage.

*The Kitchen* had four iterations between 1959 and 1966. First as a Sunday night without décor production on the main stage in 1959, and then revived as a full-length production in June 1961. It was recast for an extended run in August of the same year. On 13<sup>th</sup> June 1966 scenes from the play were recreated at the National Theatre at the Old Vic Theatre as part of a fundraising performance towards the foundation of the George Devine Award.<sup>155</sup>

Few of the photographs of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) have a date assigned to them, and even at the V&A, which has acknowledged that there were performances in 1959 and in 1961, the files sometimes contain photographs from the wrong year. In order to ascertain the dates of photographs I have referred to interviews that I conducted with Sally Jacobs (Jacobs, 2013) and with Peter Gill (Gill, 2013), who acted in the 1959 production. I have also referred to interviews with Herbert herself, carried out by Cathy Courtney (Herbert, 1985b; Herbert, 1985a), and to Herbert's comments on the productions in *Jocelyn Herbert: a workbook* (Courtney, 1993). Using theatre programmes I have also compiled a chart showing the cast lists for each production and was able to ask Peter Gill and Dr Harriet Devine to help identify actors in the photographs when I have been unsure myself. (See Appendix 10 for a cast list comparison chart). Using these resources I have then been able to identify which performance was captured in the photographs.

The 1966 production is comparatively straightforward to identify as the background is not a brick wall, as in 1959 and 1961, but appears to be a neutral textured surface. Additionally,

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<sup>155</sup> As mentioned in Chapter One the George Devine Award is an annual award for playwriting and was established in 1966.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

the cast was full of well-known actors who were not in the earlier productions, such as Sybil Thorndyke, Laurence Olivier and Barbara Windsor for example. The difference between 1959 and 1961 has been more complex to separate as some cast members were in all three versions; however, where there has been doubt I have relied on my judgement of the solidity of the kitchen units which were much more sturdy in 1961.

There are no ground plans of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) in the Jocelyn Herbert Archive but there is a model box that was made for the Jocelyn Herbert exhibition at the National Theatre in 1993. I made this model under Herbert's directions as a young graduate but unfortunately I have little recollection of the details of doing so. I do not remember being given a plan of *The Kitchen* to work from, although I must have been given a ground plan of the Royal Court Theatre itself in order to build the stage. I remember using the photograph on p.38 of Courtney's book as reference (1993) (Figure 71) and Herbert must also have given me measurements for the kitchen units and the lighting bar, but I do not have a record of these despite searching through my old notebooks. However, I have measured the model box and drawn up a digital model of the set (see Figure 67 and Figure 68).

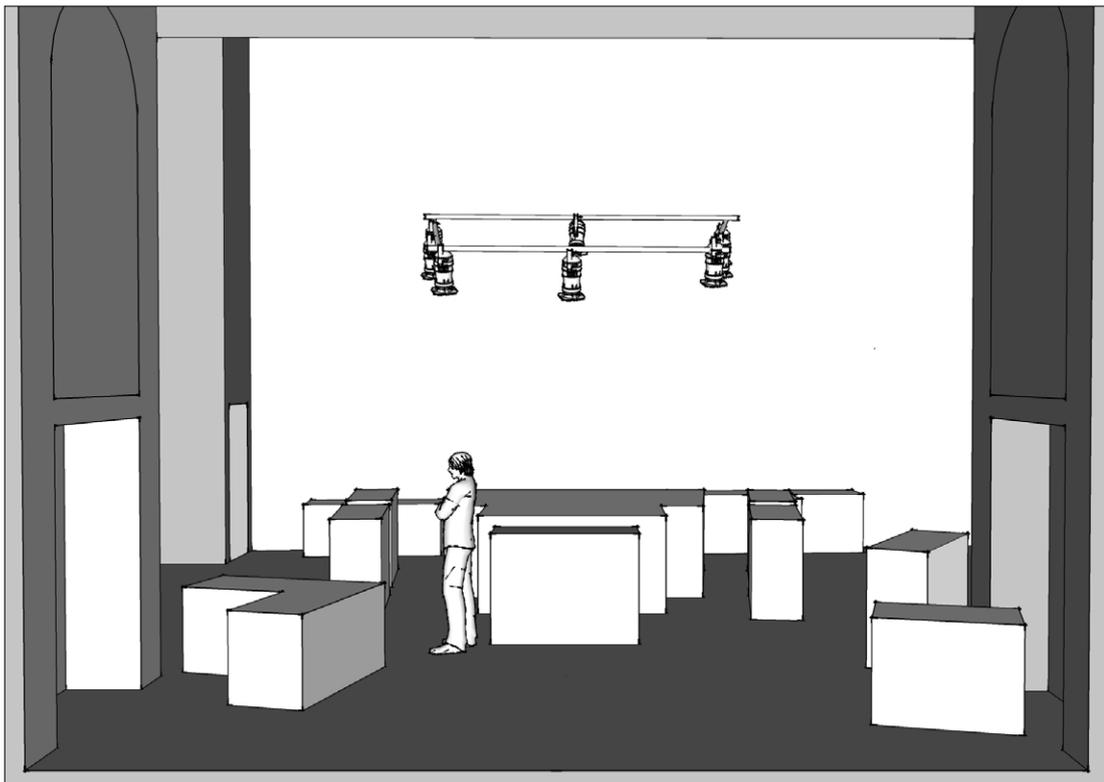


Figure 67: Digital model of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) front view

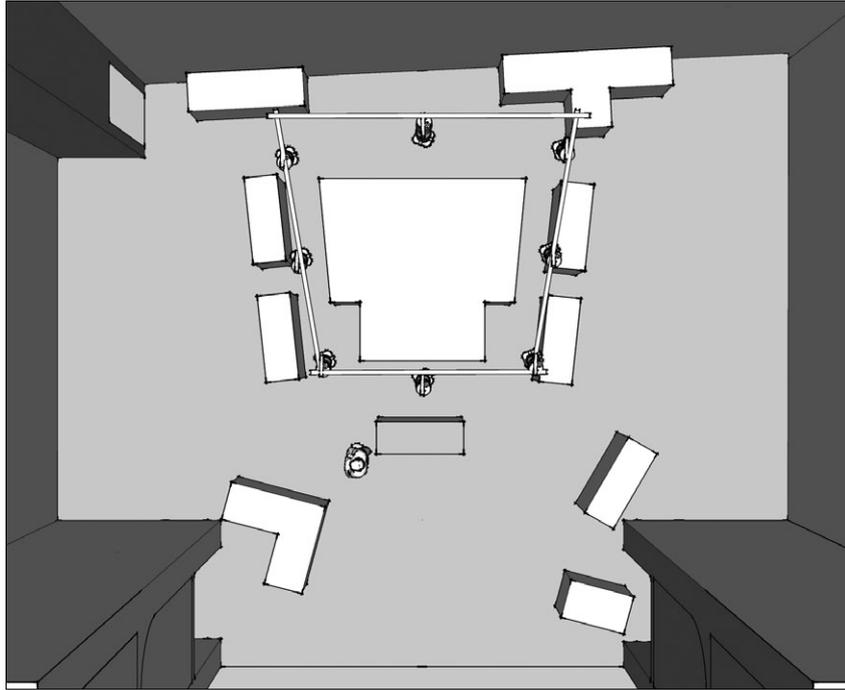


Figure 68: Digital model of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) top view

#### 4.2.2 Herbert's design process

The world she comes out of is one of total theatre, where the director, the designer and the writer are working together for a unified concept, and her work isn't born out of conflict but collaboration. (Richardson in Courtney, 1993, p.213)

Chapter Three demonstrated that the kind of training that Herbert had received at the London Theatre Studio advocated that the director and designer worked closely together. Nevertheless the relationship was revealed to have areas of complexity, with Saint-Denis keen that the director should maintain control for example. Motley, on the other hand, using their own experience, encouraged designers to be prepared for many different levels of collaboration including that the designer be proactive in organising the stage space. In the quotation above Tony Richardson acknowledges Herbert's background but includes the playwright in the partnership. I have not found any evidence that playwrights were involved in the production of plays at the LTS, although there were several devised productions including both of the end of year productions that Herbert designed at the LTS, *The Fair* (1937) and *Juanita* (1938) that were shaped by the directors into a play<sup>156</sup> and Saint-Denis's description of the author as the

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<sup>156</sup> Listed in the programmes as being devised by George Devine and Suria Magito. In fact, both were developed in improvisation and movement classes run by Devine and Magito respectively (see actress Yvonne Mitchell in Robson, 1978, p.83), and presumably moulded into the final shows by them as directors. This apparently echoed the Compagnie des Quinze's process in which the actors improvised material which was then formed by the playwright into a play so that, 'no longer creators, the actors became, under their director's guidance, faithful interpreters of the text' (Baldwin, 2003, pp.43–44). At the LTS the director took on the playwright's role of shaping the material, although both *The Fair* (1937) and *Juanita* (1938) appear to have been movement based rather than textual.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

'only completely creative person' (1960a, p.92) in theatre implies that the playwright would have been included in the creative team at the LTS had they been available.

The evidence points to the working relationship between Dexter, Herbert and Wesker on *The Kitchen* (1959) as being collaborative and fluid. For example, according to Dexter, Herbert was responsible for the inclusion of the overhead lighting grid into the design of the production (see Figure 71).

Jocelyn initiated our experiments with an overhead grid. It developed during our preparatory conversations to doing the first Sunday night of *The Kitchen*...I asked despairingly for a light which would define the actor and separate him from the space and said I thought the direction could only be from overhead, but didn't see how to solve the problem. Jocelyn, within ten minutes, had solved the visual problem... (Dexter, 1993, p.233)

Herbert also recalled that she had come up with the idea for the lighting rig, but that Dexter had the 'brilliant' idea of using it to indicate the gas coming on in the ovens (Herbert, 1985b, tape 5). In a similar recognition of the collaborative process Wesker, as mentioned, credited Dexter's staging of the serving of the food in the revised editions of the play after 1961, writing that he wished 'to acknowledge [Dexter's] creation of this workable pattern' (Wesker, 1990, p.10).<sup>157</sup> In finding a solution to Dexter's desire for the lighting to define the actors in the space, Herbert had created a visual dramaturgy for the piece that had inspired Dexter's staging and Wesker would go on to adapt his published text in accordance with Dexter's arrangement of the action of the play. The excitement of the working relationship between the three is evident in Herbert's statement that:

They were very young and it was a great adventure we were going on...and it was a great collaboration. We did trust each other, and talk to each other. We were able to discuss things and say whatever direction [we thought we should go in]. (Herbert, 1985b, tape 5)

That Herbert was included in this collaborative process and could contribute suggestions about the direction of the production is significant as it indicates the integration of design into their process and therefore a recognition of the importance of the scenography to the realisation of the play.

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<sup>157</sup> My analysis of the prompt book from the 1961 production (Wesker, 1961) indicates that there were also small changes in the text that were to do with the physical staging or placing of the characters on stage. For example when Nick is explaining who each of the cooks are to newcomer Kevin (Wesker, 1961, pp.11–12) the order is changed, and the 'cauldrons of potatoes' (Wesker, 1960, p.19) are no longer wheeled on stage at the beginning of the play but are pre-set.

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

As mentioned, no designs exist of either the 1959 Sunday night or 1961 full production in the Herbert Archive and I have not been able to trace anything in any other archives or private collections. This is unusual as Herbert kept designs from most of her shows.<sup>158</sup> According to Herbert herself, she did not make a model for this production (Courtney, 1993, p.37) and she described the organic process in 1959 of designing the layout of the kitchen units as growing 'out of rehearsals and I just assembled the bits and pieces' (Herbert, 1985b, tape 5). This suggests the possibility that Herbert attended rehearsals, so that she was able to respond to the changing needs of the performance space as they developed, although it is also feasible that she could have been informed of what was needed without being present. Herbert described arriving on the Sunday of the first performance in 1959 and deciding that 'the tables for salads and sweets should be white, so I went home and got my sheets and pinned them round. We never changed the main idea after that, we just made it better' (Courtney, 1993, p.38). Although such last minute changes can occur in productions that are meticulously planned in advance this indicates that the design was continuously evolving up until the performance. The tables Herbert refers to are placed around the central black unit and the addition of white suggests that Herbert wanted to visually define the space in which the actors would be moving, and delineate the different workspaces, by creating a ring of white tables around the large black unit in the middle.

The simplicity that was required by the constraints of the Sunday night without décor performances could have prompted this kind of responsive process but there are several similarities with that of another designer of the period, John Bury (1925-2000), who worked with Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop at Stratford East, London.<sup>159</sup> Untrained as a theatre designer, Bury had begun working for Theatre Workshop as a van driver and moved on to lighting shows and then designing the sets and costumes from 1953 to 1963. By the mid-1950s he was 'effectively second in the company's artistic hierarchy after Joan Littlewood herself' (Leach, 2006, p.192). Littlewood's approach was to work collaboratively with the company to create the performance.

I do not believe in the supremacy of the director, designer, actor or even of the writer. It is through collaboration that this knockabout art of theatre survives and kicks... No one mind or imagination can foresee what a play will become until all the physical and intellectual stimuli, which are crystalized in the poetry of the author, have been understood by a company, and then tried out in terms of mime, discussion, and the

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<sup>158</sup> There are other rare exceptions such as *The Changeling* (1961).

<sup>159</sup> John Bury was chief designer of Theatre Workshop between 1958 to 1963 when he became Associate designer at the Royal Shakespeare Company. He was Head of design at the RSC between 1965-1968, and Resident designer, under Artistic Director Peter Hall, at the National Theatre between 1973-1985.

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

precise music of grammar; words and movement allied and integrated. (Littlewood cited in Holdsworth, 2006, p.49)

It is significant that the dramatic author was of importance to Littlewood but Theatre Workshop has been described as 'theatre-as-performance' rather than the Court which was 'theatre-as-playscript' (Leach, 2006, p.141). In other words the playwright was the pivotal figure for the Court, whereas for Littlewood the way the text was presented in performance was central and so the text could be shaped and altered with that in mind. We have seen that Dexter requested alteration of the text of *The Kitchen*, and Littlewood also worked with living writers<sup>160</sup> on new plays, but her alterations could be drastic and this was known to frustrate playwrights.

The moment of a play's acceptance [at Theatre Workshop] was very often the moment of departure from it. The journey from page to stage was fraught with hazards for the unwary playwright. Powerless to do anything about it, short of call the whole thing off, a forlorn author would sit hunched in the stalls and gaze up at a stage littered with discarded pages as Littlewood tore his play to bits with her bare hands, cut out the heart, gave it the kiss of life and tossed it to the assembled company of improvisers. With the raw material of ad libs she would then proceed to remodel the flesh in her own image. (Frank Norman in Leach, 2006, p.167)

Bury's designs were typically partially completed environments that enabled the Theatre Workshop actors to move between inhabiting the set and a more presentational style in which they would address the audience (Leach, 2006, p.193). 'Working closely with Littlewood in the early stages of a production' (2006, p.192) Bury would often start by considering the lighting and then develop a set design. Norman's view of Littlewood's process as quoted above, and Littlewood's disdain for directors who planned the production before working with actors (Holdsworth, 2006, p.48) suggests that Bury was reacting to the development of rehearsals as Herbert may have done in the 1959 production of *The Kitchen*. The designer's involvement in rehearsals in both Bury's process and, as seems likely, in Herbert's for *The Kitchen* intimates that new forms of design process were emerging at this time, running concurrently with more formal arrangements.

If designs were being developed during rehearsals this positions the designer differently to the traditional 'pre-designed' process. The designer and director may have had many conversations about the play, as in a pre-designed production, and the director may still retain the ultimate position of authority, but in this way of working it is clear that the designer and director would have to work closely to shape the scenography, in terms of the spatial organization as well as

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<sup>160</sup> For example, Brendan Behan (1923-1963), Shelagh Delaney (1938-2011), Frank Norman (1930-1980), Alun Owen (1925-1994) and Wolf Mankowitz (1924-1998).

the set and costumes, of the production during rehearsals. If it is true that Herbert did not produce any set renderings or plans then the way she communicated with Dexter must have been less formalised. This may have included verbal discourse, rough sketches that she did not consider worth keeping, or by bringing in actual objects and costumes to try out. In any case the lack of designs or model suggest that Dexter was less controlling about the design than Saint-Denis who had insisted on generating the ground plan himself.

The forefronting of the dramatic text at the Court created an apparent contradiction in the role of the theatre designer there. Alongside Dexter, most of the directors and writers in Courtney's book including Richardson (1993, pp.213–214), Anderson (1993, p.216) and Tony Harrison<sup>161</sup> (1993, p.231) emphasise how much they valued Herbert as a collaborator. The reasons that they give are repeatedly stated as her understanding of the 'author's vision' (Richardson in Courtney, 1993, pp.213–214) and that she didn't 'impose' (Dexter in Courtney, 1993, p.215) or 'assert' (David Storey in Courtney, 1993, p.217) her own vision, rather she 'subordinated' it (Richardson in Courtney, 1993, p.215) so that her design was at the service of the play. During the Jocelyn Herbert Lecture in 2012 playwright Christopher Hampton (1946-) said that Herbert would 'serve the play and keep out of its way' (Hampton, 2012), almost implying the invisibility of an ideal servant (Lethbridge, 2013, p.10), and according to Anderson 'the better a designer is the less likely it is that their work will be noticed' (Anderson in Courtney, 1993, p.216). These are not descriptions that would have perturbed Herbert, although as mentioned in Chapter One contemporary theatre designers might challenge the idea of service, but it does call into question the nature and value placed on Herbert's contribution to a production. On the one hand Herbert was described as 'the mainspring of most of the best work I have done' (Dexter, 1993, p.233), and on the other it is inferred that her designs should not be noticed. The implication of this is that her designs should facilitate the play but not assert themselves above the direction or text. But I would also propose that some directors had begun to see Herbert as a kind of ally.<sup>162</sup> She was concerned with the overall dramaturgy of a production and shared Motley's lack of ego about her own contribution, preferring instead to support the play without drawing attention to the design and holding the belief her work was just one of the elements amongst all the contributions that went towards realising the dramatic text. Directors such as Dexter who appreciated these qualities could therefore see Herbert as a partner with whom they could discuss their own ideas about the production and with whom they could work in partnership towards a unified concept.

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<sup>161</sup> Tony Harrison (1937-) is an English poet, translator and playwright.

<sup>162</sup> There was not, and is not, any theatrical terminology to describe this new position for the theatre designer although it could be argued that many people who call themselves scenographers do so with this kind of designer/director relationship in mind.

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

It should also be considered that the usual route into directing in this period was through attending university, and that most of the directors at the Court had attended Oxbridge.<sup>163</sup> This provided them with a literary background and they were likely to have had little visual training or confidence. Herbert was therefore able to introduce them to the possibilities and importance of the visual in theatre. She would later comment on their lack of design articulacy:

Funnily enough very few of [the writers and directors] seem to have [had] strong conceptions about what it should look like. They happen to have been involved with me, but they might just as well have been involved with another designer and had very elaborate sets. I'm absolutely certain that if someone else had designed different things, as long as he liked them, John [Dexter] wouldn't have said anything. (Herbert, 1985b, tape 5b)

Dexter was an exception in that he did not attend University, and he felt it keenly (Brown et al., 1993), but Herbert's statement indicates that he had no greater assurance about the look of productions than those who had attended Oxford. I would argue however that his comment about Herbert being the 'mainspring' of his best work (Dexter, 1993, p.233) is not one that a director often makes about a designer, and that it indicates that he appreciated her input as well as her opinion of his own.

### 4.2.3 Herbert's design

#### 4.2.3.1 Set, lighting and sound

The set that Herbert designed for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) was very simple with a large, black central unit to represent the industrial cookers and rectangular-shaped kitchen units to represent the various kitchen stations placed around it (see Figure 69 and Figure 70). All the props were real kitchen items, pots, pans, ladles and plates for example, but as requested by Wesker the food was all mimed. Herbert recognized the back wall and wooden floor of the theatre as suggestive of the industrial kitchen in which the play is set, 'we thought it looked very much like a kitchen with the pipes and things' (Herbert, 1985a, tape 5b), and these were left exposed.<sup>164</sup> The lighting rig was shaped to echo the central kitchen unit and hung in full view of the audience. The production began in semi-darkness with the first action being the kitchen porter coming on stage to light the ovens. As he did so the lights began to build alongside the roar of the gas ovens that remained in the background throughout the play (Tschudin, 1972, p.169). There was no masking or borders so the audience could see the

<sup>163</sup> Devine, Richardson and Anderson had all attended Wadham College and Gaskill attended Hertford College at Oxford University.

<sup>164</sup> *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) was the first time that Herbert used the actual back wall and floor of the Court theatre as part of a set, and that the lighting rig was incorporated into the design. For this reason the lighting and sound will be discussed alongside the set in this section rather than being given their own section as in the previous chapters.

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

entrances and exits and lighting positions. The action and the dialogue of the play suggested that the restaurant dining room was off-stage whilst the actions of the actors were choreographed and stylised, described by Herbert's assistant on the 1961 production, Sally Jacobs, as 'selective realism: not all kitchen business done, not every pan and ladle mimed' (Jacobs, 2013 ).<sup>165</sup> The visible back wall and the lighting grid signified both an industrial kitchen and what they actually were, part of a theatre.

The differences between the two productions were minimal (see Figure 69 and Figure 70). The lighting rig for the 1959 Sunday night production was arranged on bars to echo the shape of the central unit (Figure 69), whilst the 1961 version was placed on a specifically built arrangement of lighting bars and the lights were all one type giving a more precise appearance (Figure 70). In a similar way, in 1961 the kitchen units were better constructed, solid as opposed to having fabric draped around them for example, but the design did not otherwise differ from the 1959 version (Herbert, 1985b, tape 5).

The sparseness of the design was certainly originally partly a result of the practical considerations of the Sunday night performances that had to fit around the main production on the stage, that had to get-in and perform in one day and to be created with a minimal budget. Furthermore, the props used were actual kitchen utensils and 'not more than a thousand plates' (Dexter, 1993, p.10) were needed in order to create the service section of the play and so it is possible that a large proportion of the small budget was taken up by these items. However once the play was given a full-scale production in 1961 Herbert clearly didn't feel the need to alter the design in any significant way, implying that she recognised the success of what had once been experimental and born of necessity.

I have shown that the permanent surround had been the result of a struggle to solve the problem of theatre masking that was raised by questions around illusion and reality on stage and I would propose that Herbert's design for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) neatly balanced the two in a way that led to the removal of masking altogether, leading to a leap forward in masking conventions. Herbert made a connection between the permanent surround and the method of creating a lighting grid to 'define the actor and separate him from the space' (Dexter, 1993, p.233), describing it as creating 'an acting area leaving darkness all around, thus creating a surround of light' (Herbert, 1981, p.85). The permanent surround was meant to act as a more fluid way of masking, but once the lighting was used to create darkness at the edges of the stage and strong light on the actors it was fulfilling the role of the masking without any physical presence.

<sup>165</sup> Sally Jacobs (1932- ) British theatre designer who works in theatre, opera, and film, notably for Peter Brook in the 1960s and 1970s. At the time of the full-scale production in 1961 Herbert was simultaneously working on *Richard III*, directed by Bill Gaskill at the RSC and asked Jacobs to supervise the recreation of the set and costumes for *The Kitchen*.



Figure 69: *The Kitchen* (1959) production photograph (Lousada, 1959a)

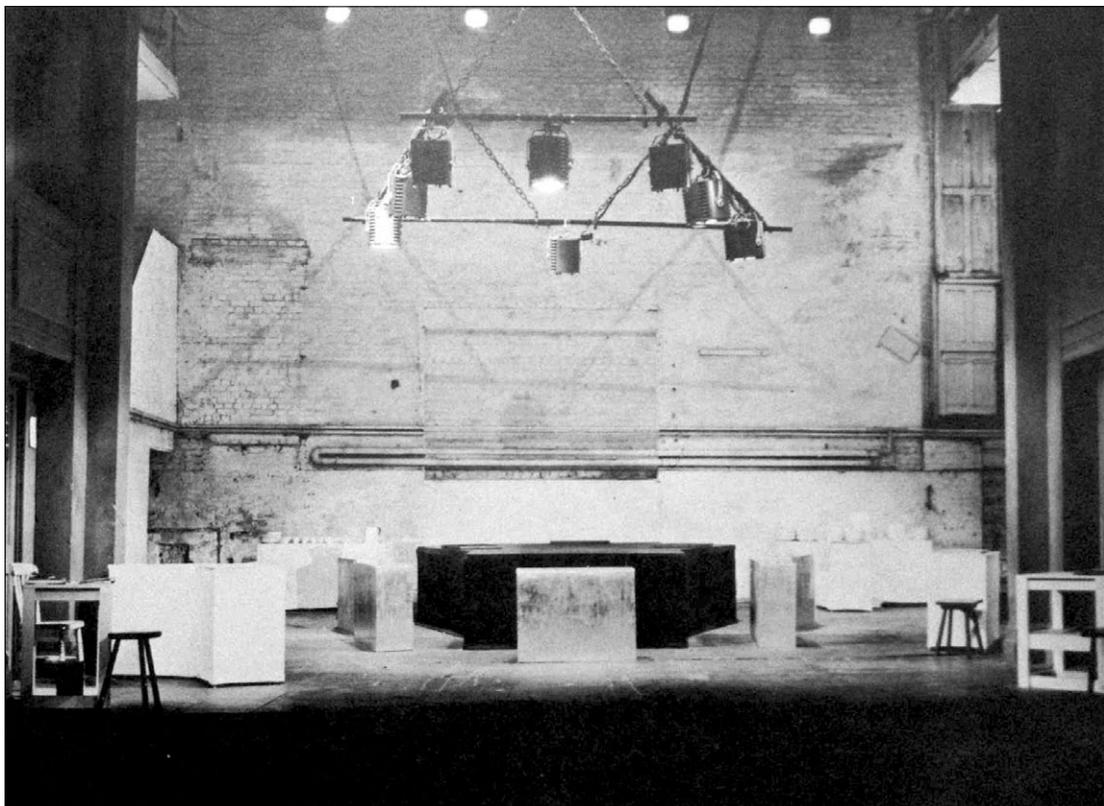


Figure 70: *The Kitchen* (1961) production photograph (Courtney, 1993, p.37)



Figure 71: *The Kitchen* 1959 (Lousada, 1959b)



Figure 72: *The Kitchen* 1961 (Anon, 1961)

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

Not having any masking comes with its own technical problems. It is unlikely that the wing spaces would be totally invisible, for instance, and it can restrict movement in theatres like the Court that don't have a way to get around the back of the stage. For example, Peter Gill described having to work out complicated plans of how actors could cross the open stage during the scene changes of Anderson's *Julius Caesar* (1964) in order to protect Herbert's set from having to have masking (Gill, 2013). In 1956 it did not seem possible that there could be no masking at all, but theatrical conventions had developed in the years between 1956 and 59 to the extent that it was possible to remove them completely. Additionally, the experimental nature of the Sunday night performances allowed more freedom to try out such new ideas.

Herbert believed that *The Kitchen's* exposure of the theatre wall was a 'breakthrough' and that it was the first time that the lighting rig was incorporated into the design of the set (Herbert in Courtney, 1993, pp.37–38). The press did not remark on the back wall of the theatre being visible and there are several possibilities why this may have been the case. Firstly, Sunday night productions were known to be experimental and work-in-progress, to the extent that some productions that had been too ambitious and not managed to complete their technical rehearsal had to ask Devine to give an announcement to request the audience to bear with them over any technical problems (Gill, 2013). Secondly, the bare back wall had been seen in other productions such as *Quare Fellow* (1956) at Stratford East designed by John Bury, and indeed, by the time of the 1961 *Kitchen* Herbert herself had used the back wall of the theatre in at least one other production<sup>166</sup> so that critics would have been accustomed to the convention by the time of the 1961 reviews. Other practitioners had exposed lighting and the theatre space, Copeau and Brecht's Berliner Ensemble for example, so I would suggest that Herbert was referring to her own practice at the Court in 1959 when she described a 'breakthrough'. However, Copeau's stage at the Vieux Colombier was a permanent setting designed by Jouvet, rather than a 'found space'<sup>167</sup> and if the Berliner Ensemble left the stage bare it was a political statement intended to remind the audience of the pretence of theatre not an attempt to signify another location. Therefore Herbert's set for *The Kitchen* was synthesising contemporaneous ideas at the Court about truthfulness of stage conventions with poetic realism.

The starkness of Herbert's design for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) does not initially appear to have any similarities to the expressiveness of Motley's *Three Sisters* (1938) design, but there are several reasons why I would like to propose that they could both be considered poetic realist. On the one hand what is meant by the term is likely to have developed over the twenty years between 1938 and 1959 alongside the development of theatre conventions and practice; I have

<sup>166</sup> *The Changeling* (1961).

<sup>167</sup> Although not in use at the time the term 'found space' refers to either a non-theatrical space that has been used for performance or to a theatre where the revealed or exposed architecture is used as the performance space. Peter Brook's Theatre des Bouffes du Nord in Paris is a well-known example of the latter.

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

already mentioned that Herbert's poetic realism incorporated the politics of social realism for example. Secondly, Wesker's *The Kitchen* is a different style of play to Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. It is not as concerned with the individual emotions of its characters, but is rather trying to convey the suffocating atmosphere of an inhuman working environment and its effect on those who have to inhabit it.

Motley selectively chose how to present the reality of the Russian house in *Three Sisters* (1938) in order to convey the emotional and psychological meaning of the play, and Herbert's design for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) is also both real and selective, acting as a visual 'metaphor for the dehumanising impact of industrialised labour' (Billington, 2011). The lighting rig in Herbert's design is positioned to loom oppressively over the kitchen units, whilst the light they emit and the associated sound of the roaring gas ovens reinforces the heat and intensity of the conditions. The stage is organised in a way that restricts movement to certain configurations, and forces the rhythm and circularity of the service section in which everyone is frantically trying to fit into an almost mechanised system in order to serve the increasing numbers of customers. There is realism in the design, such as in the real props and the real kitchen uniforms, yet the set merely suggests a kitchen through simple shapes and careful organisation and through the way that the actors inhabit and interact with it, realistically miming their cooking actions. The black and white colour scheme of both set and costumes reflects reality but is simultaneously deliberately controlled to emphasise the uniformity of the situation.

The simple trestle tables and boxes covered in fabric and clad in wood made little attempt at pretence but in combination with the lights, sound and movement they evoked the atmosphere of the kitchen that beguiled the critics into commenting on the realism of the set: 'it is like eavesdropping at the open window of a restaurant kitchen' (Anon, 1961b, n.p.); 'so realistic... that it has left me with the unsavoury smell of burnt cabbage and fat' (F.J.C., 1961, n.p.); 'Miss Jocelyn Herbert designs the kitchen with the sizzling oven most realistically' (Anon, 1961a, n.p.); 'a realistic setting by Jocelyn Herbert' (R.B.M, 1961, n.p.). For the 1959 production Herbert used 'some trestle tables and some blackout [fabric]' for the central unit, 'orange boxes which we just put a bit of tin on top [of] to make the noise' and 'little tables' (Herbert, 1985b, tape 5), and in 1961 Herbert asked her assistant Sally Jacobs that it be made to look the same as the Sunday night production, but sturdier in order to cope with a longer run and change of location between the Belgrade theatre and the Court (Jacobs to Jump, 2013).<sup>168</sup>

I would therefore contend that although Herbert's design for *The Kitchen* does not share the lyricism of Motley's *Three Sisters* (1938) or Mielziner's *Death of a Salesman* (1949) it does share the approach of harnessing the visual to express atmosphere, and that it does so in combination

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<sup>168</sup> *The Kitchen* opened at the Coventry Belgrade Theatre on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1961 and transferred to the Royal Court on the 27<sup>th</sup> June.

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

with sound and light as was shown to be the case with *Three Sisters* (1938) in the previous chapter.

The poetic qualities of Herbert's design were intended to support the social realism of the play but Lacey has argued 'that the aestheticizing of a situation or action could mask its significance – that the 'poetry' could contradict the 'realism' (Lacey, 1995, p.115); in other words that the stylisation of the production, both scenographic and performative, hindered its political message. Lacey uses the example of the character Peter severing the kitchen gas pipe at the end of the play, arguing that if the 'central act of alienating physical labour' had not been 'blurred by the choreography' this action would have been read as a futile gesture; whereas Dexter's staging resulted in this destructive act appearing to be without motivation (Lacey, 1995, p.115). The inference of extending this argument to the scenography is that Herbert's spare and controlled design was too visually pleasing to convey the harshness and hostility of the working environment. Lacey seems to imply that poetic realism cannot achieve Brecht's 'verfremdungseffekt', or distancing effect, whereby the audience are intended to remain distanced from the play in order to be able to engage intellectually rather than emotionally but as I have described this was not the intention of poetic realism. I have shown that poetic realism did not seek to create Brechtian dialectical theatre but rather that the audience were intended to read an interpretation of the dramatic text, and that visually this was achieved through mediated reality and controlled design. I have also illustrated that although Brecht was an undoubted influence on Herbert's visual aesthetic that it was synthesised with her training under Motley and Saint-Denis, and with the ideas around staging that were current in the early years of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court.

### 4.2.3.2 Costumes

As mentioned, I have been unable to trace any costume designs for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961), but the production photographs show that, as with the sets, they changed very minimally between the 1959 and 1961 versions (Figure 71 and Figure 72). The black and white kitchen uniforms reveal character only through small details such as the angle of a hat or style of knot for a neckerchief. The female waitresses wear identical black dresses with white aprons but are differentiated by their hairstyles and the styles of their collars. The dress of the main female character Monique appears to have changed to a sleeveless one when Sandra Caron took over from Mary Peach in August 1961, but otherwise she is only distinguished from the other women by her lack of apron and by a brooch. Although there are definite power relationships between the workers in the kitchen the uniforms and colour scheme emphasise the institutionalisation of everyone working there.

Sally Jacob's recalled that when she was realising Herbert's designs for the 1961 production and all the kitchen uniforms had arrived:

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

Jocelyn came and said, "Now wash them all and throw them in a corner. Don't iron them. Then let all the actors come and choose some...it will give a more realistic feel, as if they are clothes rather than costumes". (Jacobs, 2013)

The aim of making the costumes feel like clothes was one that I have shown to have been taught at the London Theatre Studio. This randomisation of the costume selection in 1961 could indicate a process that Herbert had used in the Sunday night version or could be indicative of her confidence that the costumes would work as they had in 1959. There is no evidence as to whether Herbert or the actors made the slight adjustments to them as mentioned above, but the following chapter will demonstrate that Herbert did design costumes that carefully emphasised character in keeping with her training at the LTS.

This way of apportioning costume also indicates that Dexter was content not to see costume designs, although this must of course be qualified by the fact that this was for the remounting of the production and that there may have been a full set of costume designs, now lost, produced for the 1959 production.

### 4.3 Summary

The power structure within the creative team as demonstrated in Chapter Three can be detected in the collaboration between Dexter, Herbert and Wesker but *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) case study has provided an example of an alternative process in which the designer was integral to the shaping of the production. Nevertheless the hierarchy of the director over the designer, as demonstrated in Chapter Three, can be detected. It would appear that Herbert did not pre-design the play in 1959 and that she developed the design during the rehearsal period. I have shown that other designers, such as John Bury, in the period also worked in this way but that the difference between them was that Herbert and the Royal Court were more focused on conveying the meaning of the text than Theatre Workshop. The relationship between Herbert, Wesker and Dexter suggests a degree of synergy between the design, writing and directing with each element affecting the other to a certain extent.

Herbert's design aesthetic at the Court is commonly identified as being influenced by Brecht and the Berliner Ensemble and although this is undeniably evidenced in her work I have shown that her designs did not have the same political intention as those of Brecht and his designers. Whilst Brechtian theatre intends the audience to stay distanced from the action so that they can engage in a critical debate, the political message of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) is embedded in an empathetic narrative and characters, for which Herbert's design provides a mediated and controlled visual experience that communicates the atmosphere of the play, drawing the audience in and reinforcing its themes. I have argued that these qualities are what link the poetic realism of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) with that of *Three Sisters* (1938). Although the

## CHAPTER FOUR: The Royal Court Theatre and 'The Kitchen' (1959 & 1961)

form and aesthetics of the two productions differ significantly, with *The Kitchen's* (1959 & 1961) minimalism seeming to have nothing in common with the realistic detail of *Three Sisters* (1938), they are connected by a philosophy that sees the design as visually conveying a unified and completed interpretation of the dramatic text to the audience. Their view of the purpose of the visual within a production is what relates them to each other, rather than the style of their designs.

Herbert was influenced by her training at the London Theatre Studio as well as by the visual ethos of the English Stage Company introduced by Devine and Motley at its foundation in 1956. The short-lived 'permanent surround', for example, was intended to compel designers to use minimal, suggestive sets, and Herbert developed a style whereby she placed fragmented sets within a cyclorama. The permanent surround was also the result of Devine's and Harris's experiments with masking and the circumstances of the Sunday night without décor production of *The Kitchen* (1959) provided the conditions that enabled Herbert to develop the thinking around masking by removing it completely.

The Royal Court Theatre and Devine's 'right to fail' ideology created an environment that encouraged experiment and the Sunday night production of *The Kitchen* (1959) also provided a less pressured situation that resulted in a non-traditional design process, as well as scenographic experiments that not only pushed forwards masking conventions but also developed design features, such as the incorporation of the lighting rig into the set design and the use of the actual back wall of the stage, that would become significant aspects of Herbert's design style, and consequently that of the Royal Court.

Chapter Five will examine how Herbert interacted with Samuel Beckett on *Happy Days* (1962), in whose theatrical work the scenographic and literary are intertwined and who was a playwright who notoriously insisted on his plays being performed 'without changes or alterations' (Rabkin, 1985, p.144).

**CHAPTER FIVE:**

**Samuel Beckett and *Happy Days* (1962)**



Figure 73: *Happy Days* set rendering, head bowed, orange sky (Courtney, 1993, p.52)

## CHAPTER FIVE: Samuel Beckett and 'Happy Days' (1962)

She has great feeling for the work and is very sensitive and doesn't want to bang the nail on the head. Generally speaking, there is a tendency on the part of designers to overstate and this has never been the case with Jocelyn. (Beckett in Courtney, 1993, p.219)

Chapter Four illustrated that Herbert's training at the London Theatre Studio and the Royal Court Theatre's ethos encouraged her to consider design dramaturgically and in unity with the other elements of performance. Samuel Beckett indicates that he valued Herbert's visual restraint as well as her sensitivity to and understanding of his plays. Herbert and Beckett would work together frequently over the rest of his life and she became his 'most trusted friend in England' (Beckett in Courtney, 1993, p.219).<sup>169</sup>

In Beckett's dramatic works text and scenography are intertwined to create a meaning that any alteration would modify and this is perhaps why Beckett was notoriously resistant to changes to his written text including to his stage directions (see McMullan, 1996, p.196; Taylor, 1994). Such a position might suggest that the role of the theatre designer in realising Beckett's work gave little opportunity for creative input but the following chapter will establish that a close working relationship with the designer was integral to Beckett in the staging of his dramatic texts. Through a case study of *Happy Days* (1962) I will demonstrate how Herbert influenced the visualisation of one of Beckett's plays and provide insight into their collaborative working relationship to reveal the process behind the first London production of what was to become one of the most important stagings and iconic images of twentieth century western theatre.

*Happy Days* (1962) followed a more conventional design process than *The Kitchen* (1959) in that Herbert created costume and set designs in advance of the production and there is an opportunity to examine her working methods in these circumstances. Close analysis of correspondence between Devine, Beckett and Herbert referring to *Happy Days* (1962) gives rare insight into the interaction between them, as director, writer and designer in the lead up to the production. Whilst others have looked at these letters (Knowlson, 1997, p.500 for example) this thesis is the first examination of them from the point of view of the designer. Putting the designer at the centre of the interpretation of the letters contributes to a fuller understanding of the process of transferring Beckett's play to the stage, as well as shedding light on how a designer negotiated their relationship with the director and playwright. As a designer myself, for example, I identified that it was unusual for Herbert to require the playwright's opinion of her work before she proceeded when she had the director to hand. It would be more usual, even up to sixty years later, for the director's opinion to hold more sway. There are several possibilities for this particular balance of power; Herbert may have been keen

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<sup>169</sup> See Appendix 2 for a full list of Beckett plays designed by Herbert. Beckett was almost always involved in these productions and directed *Footfalls* (1976) and *Happy Days* (1979) himself.

to get Beckett's opinion because, as will be shown, both she and Devine admired him greatly, or because she understood the significance of the scenographic precision of his play as will be discussed in this chapter.

This chapter will begin by evaluating the association between the Royal Court Theatre and Samuel Beckett up to 1962 before assessing the importance of the scenographic in Beckett's dramatic works and his developing relationship to performance. The late 1950s and early 1960s were a period in which Beckett began to appreciate that the translation of his dramatic text into the materiality of production needed to become part of his creative process.

I will show that Herbert's settled position in the supportive environment of the Royal Court in 1962 was relatively privileged in comparison to freelance designers in purely commercial theatre. Whilst freelance designers needed to attract attention through their designs in order to gain employment Herbert's security at the Court meant that she did not need to make eye catching statements but was rather able to exercise her restrained and minimal visual instincts to support the production.

The *Happy Days* (1962) case study will reveal the subtleties of Herbert's design process, how she worked through drawings and how she negotiated Beckett's scenographic precision. The evidence as to how much Herbert was able to affect Beckett's idea of the scenography for *Happy Days* is complicated and somewhat contradictory as will be illustrated. On the one hand Beckett could be responsive to Herbert's suggestions, about the colour of the sky for example, whilst on the other he appears to have pushed her towards certain decisions, such as the height of the mound. Nevertheless, I will show that *Happy Days* (1962) marked a shift towards a deeper understanding between Beckett and Herbert as friends and colleagues. For example, the first letter known to have been addressed directly to Herbert from Beckett was sent after the opening of *Happy Days* (1962) (Beckett, 8 Nov, 1962b); previously communications between them had been inserted into letters to or from Devine, as will be discussed below. In this letter Beckett talks about his admiration for Herbert's *Happy Days* (1962) set and concedes that she was probably correct about an element of the set that they had some disagreement over.

## **5.1 Context**

### **5.1.1 The Royal Court Theatre and Beckett**

As shown in the previous chapter, Devine's plans for the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre were not only based around finding new English playwrights, but included plays that were considered European avant-garde or 'Theatre of the Absurd'. These included the

## CHAPTER FIVE: Samuel Beckett and 'Happy Days' (1962)

Herbert designed productions of Samuel Beckett's *Krapps' Last Tape* (1958) and *Endgame* (1958) directed by George Devine and Donald McWhinnie.<sup>170</sup>

Peter Hall's English language production of *Waiting for Godot* had been shown at the Arts Theatre in 1955 and although initially not well received, critics Kenneth Tynan and Harold Hobson supported it, contributing to its subsequent success (see Knowlson, 1997, p.415). Devine's involvement with Beckett began when, on hearing of the difficulties director Roger Blin (1907-1984) was having getting Beckett's new play *Fin de Partie* (*Endgame*) staged in Paris, Devine organised for it to premiere at the Court in April 1957. In this instance Herbert was only involved in the production to the extent that she fabricated and painted the sets from Jacques Noel's (1924-2011) designs, but this was her first encounter with Beckett who came to the workshop to inspect them (Knowlson & Knowlson, 2006, p.165)

Both Herbert and Devine were profoundly affected by coming into contact with Beckett:

I felt that someone absolutely extraordinary had come amongst us. (Herbert in Courtney, 1993, p.27)

I spent half an hour with him in his flat in Paris. We talked, drank whiskey and decided nothing...I felt I was in touch with all the great streams of European thought and literature from Dante onwards. (Devine in Wardle, 1978, p.204)

Herbert's respect and admiration for Beckett's writing, as well as her profound appreciation and understanding of his work, can be seen in her comment to Devine after reading *Fin de Partie* in 1957: 'I don't know how anyone could write that and go on living' (Herbert in Courtney, 1993, p.27). According to Herbert however, whilst she would come to feel able to tell Beckett if she thought something didn't work, Devine remained 'diffident' about expressing disagreement with Beckett (Herbert, 1992). The actor playing Willie in *Happy Days* (1962), Peter Duguid, recalled that Devine 'virtually handed the show over to [Beckett]' (Wardle, 1978, p.207) and certainly the impression is that Devine was deferential towards Beckett and his work.

This deference however was based on Devine's conviction that Beckett's dramatic writing was remarkable and important and he fought hard to stay faithful to what he saw as fundamental aspects of the performance of the texts. In Saint-Denis's opinion: 'George had admiration for Ionesco, but for Beckett he had complete admiration. He was not as truthful to Ionesco

<sup>170</sup> Plays by other European playwrights were: Ionesco's *The Chairs* (1957) and *The Lesson* (1958) designed by Herbert, Brecht's *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (1956), designed by Teo Otto, Giraudoux's *The Apollo de Bellac* (1957), designed by Carl Toms, and Sartre's *Nekrassov* (1957), designed by Richard Negri.

as he was to Beckett' (Saint-Denis in Tschudin, 1972, p.237). For example, whilst directing Beckett's *Play* (1964) at the National Theatre, Devine threatened to walk out of the production when Kenneth Tynan wanted Beckett's wishes about the slow tempo of the lines to be ignored (Knowlson, 1997, p.517). According to Herbert, 'all the theatre people thought [the tempo] was crazy but George [Devine] had that sort of sense of its theatrical impact' (Herbert, 1992). The case study of *Happy Days* (1962) will demonstrate that Herbert had a similar sense about Beckett's scenographic impact and that she worked hard to achieve this in her designs.

Devine gained Beckett's trust during negotiations with the Lord Chancellor over the English language translation of *Endgame* that he wanted to present at the Royal Court Theatre. The Lord Chancellor had wanted to cut the play so heavily that Beckett was prepared to drop the whole production (Beckett, 28 July, 1958). Following many letters back and forth such as Beckett's of 26 December 1957: 'It is a pity to lose "arses" because of its consonance with "ashes". "Rumps" I suppose would be the next best' (Beckett, 26 Dec, 1957), Beckett wrote that: 'I simply refuse to play along any further with these licensing grocers' (Beckett, 28 July, 1958). But Devine stood his ground with the Lord Chancellor's office and managed to negotiate a version that was acceptable to Beckett, and Beckett offered Devine 'first option on UK rights of my next play, in the unlikely event of my writing another' (Beckett, 28 July, 1958). *Happy Days* was Beckett's next play and in March 1961 Devine began discussions with Beckett for it to be premiered at the Royal Court Theatre.

### 5.1.2 Beckett, performance and scenography

According to McKinney & Butterworth, Beckett is 'perhaps the most scenographically innovative playwright' and 'words and scenography are inextricably intertwined' in his plays (2009, p.88). Beckett's plays show an awareness of the visual, spatial, aural and temporal aspects of theatre performance and he uses them carefully, in combination with each other and with the spoken word, so that each element is interdependent on the others to convey his meaning.

Beckett's visual choices can create a tension in his plays between what is seen and what is spoken, as in *Happy Days*, for example, when Winnie is buried in a mound in a blazing, scorched landscape. The setting is necessary to convey the absurdity and hopelessness of her relentless optimism. If Winnie were placed in a wheelchair rather than buried up to her waist then the contrapuntal positioning of her psychological state and physical environment, which stops the play tipping into bathos, would collapse.

Beckett's stage directions are also integral to his view of the play. The 2014 Young Vic production of *Happy Days*, directed by Natalie Abrahami and designed by Vicki Mortimer, chose not to follow Beckett's stage directions for the setting to be 'pompiertrompe l'oeil',

instead creating a realistic slice of a mountain with gravel tumbling around Winnie. Beckett's wish for the play to be obviously theatrical, however, reinforces its theatrical self-awareness. Thus, he plays with the idea that the action will be repeated nightly, as when Winnie says that although she breaks and throws away her mirror it will be in her bag again tomorrow (Beckett, 2010, pp.22–23). This holds a dual meaning of the play being reset for each performance as well as that Winnie, as a character, can't escape from her situation. Beckett also refers to the audience's presence, for instance, when Winnie says that she has a 'strange feeling that someone is looking at me' (Beckett, 2010, p.23), or when she mentions the couple who have passed by asking, 'What's she doing?...What's the idea?...What's it meant to mean?' (Beckett, 2010, p.25). The couple's questions anticipate those made by theatre critics and the audience itself, as well as being metaphysical questions about the meaning of existence. The audience is constantly being reminded that they are in a theatre and that they are also playing a role as viewers of the performance. The reality and geological association of the slice of rock in the Abrahami and Mortimer production in 2014 on the other hand suggested a more detached observation of Winnie and her predicament, almost as if viewing her under a microscope, and lost the self-reflexivity of Beckett's original intentions.

Beckett was resistant to departures from the stage directions in his plays and according to Anna McMullan:

Beckett's objections to certain productions of his work seem to be rooted in their disregard for his intense focus on the mechanics of conceptualization and perception. The minimalism of his dramatic material forces the audience to concentrate intently on the few perceptual elements offered. (McMullan, 1996, p.199)

Beckett even went so far as to threaten legal action against productions that violated 'their contractual agreement to produce his play "without changes or alterations"' (Rabkin, 1985, pp.143–144), as, for example, in 1984 when director JoAnne Akalaltis and designer Douglas Stein set *Endgame* in 'a desolate length of subway tunnel replete with derelict cars and the detritus of modern technological civilization' (1985, p.146). An out of court settlement required that a statement by Beckett, that included the line, 'My play requires an empty room and two small windows', should be included in the programme (Gussow, 1984).

However, the translation of the written word into a theatrical event by necessity involves interpretation by actors, directors and designers and it appears that the period when he got to know Devine and Herbert in the late 1950s and early 1960s coincided with Beckett beginning to appreciate that the materialisation of his text in the theatre needed to become part of his creative process. According to Gontarski, Beckett 'realized that the creation of a dramatic text was not a process that could be divorced from performance' (1998, p.132) to the extent that

he told his publishers that he did not want *Happy Days* to be published until he had 'seen some rehearsals in London. I can't be definitive without actual work done in the theatre' (Beckett quoted in Gontarski, 1998, p.134).

Beckett therefore relied on the directors, actors and designers involved in the production process to hone his written text and to develop his understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of theatre performance. This explains Beckett's preference for collaborators with whom he had developed a long-term working relationship, including the French designer Matias (Charles Henrioud (1926-2006)) and Jocelyn Herbert (McMullan, 2012, p.5). Herbert would design all but one<sup>171</sup> Beckett production at the Royal Court between 1958-79,<sup>172</sup> as well as *Play* (1964) at the Old Vic Theatre. Consequently, his negotiations with Herbert over the design for *Happy Days* (1962), as assessed in the case study below, are significant in illustrating this process in relation to the scenography of the play.

### 5.1.3 Jocelyn Herbert in 1962

By 1962 Herbert was in a relatively secure position at the Royal Court Theatre where she had been working as a designer for five years. Although not officially attached to the theatre she had only designed one production for another company, *Richard III* for the RSC in 1961, and was the most prolific of the regular designers at the Royal Court<sup>173</sup> indicating that she would have been familiar with the Royal Court stage, its proportions, potential and relationship to the audience. Herbert had established working relationships with directors such as John Dexter, Tony Richardson and Lindsay Anderson, as illustrated in the previous chapter, and had worked with George Devine on three productions, two of which were at the Court.<sup>174</sup>

Having worked predominantly on plays by new writers<sup>175</sup> Herbert designed the double bill of two Beckett productions in 1958, the English language premiere of *Endgame* and the world premiere of *Krapp's Last Tape*. Beckett attended these rehearsals and Herbert discussed the design of Krapp's costume with him. Beckett originally described the character as looking like a clown, but when he saw Herbert's drawing Beckett was unconvinced and so she developed the costume into a shabby old man (Courtney, 1993, p.29). The process can be observed by looking at three of the costumes sketches (Figure 74, Figure 75 and Figure 76) and establishes

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<sup>171</sup> *Waiting for Godot* (1964) directed by Antony Page and designed by Timothy O'Brien.

<sup>172</sup> *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958), *Endgame* (1958), *Happy Days* (1962), *Come and Go* (1970), *Play* (1970), *Krapp's Last Tape* (1973), *Not I* (1973), *That Time* (1976), *Footfalls* (1976), *Happy Days* (1979).

<sup>173</sup> Between 1956 and November 1962 she had designed seventeen productions, whilst the next most prolific designer, Alan Tagg, had designed thirteen.

<sup>174</sup> *Mistress of the Inn* (1954), *The Sport of my Mad Mother* (1958) and *Endgame* (1958).

<sup>175</sup> Only two of the productions Herbert worked on at the Court between 1957 and 1962 were not by living writers, *The Changeling* (1961) a Jacobean tragedy by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1962) by Shakespeare.

that Beckett and Herbert had experienced working together before 1962 and that Beckett was responsive to her visual input.

A 1961 article by theatre designer Timothy O'Brien<sup>176</sup> (1929-) maintained that 'the system of employment of designers on the English stage made them insecure' and that the 'growth of [Herbert's] talents owes a great deal to the settled circumstances of her work at the Royal Court' (1961, p.35). His argument is that freelance designers in a purely commercial theatre environment were like 'mercenaries of war' fighting for work and without a 'just cause' (1961, p.33) and that they would therefore try to distinguish themselves through their designs in order to stand out from their peers.<sup>177</sup> Designers working at the Royal Court or Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop, on the other hand, were supported by organisations that had standards and ideals other than achieving box office success and consequently encouraged 'scenery that has meaning apart from being a background' (1961, p.34).

O'Brien's article suggests that Herbert's involvement with the Court placed her in a privileged position in comparison with many other designers in this period and that the theatre designer's engagement with the dramaturgy of a production, as charted through the work of Motley and Herbert in this thesis, had not become commonplace by the early 1960s. For O'Brien, however, the generation of the ground plan acted as a signal of the overall movement towards a designer who considers the play's meaning. As mentioned in Chapter Three, O'Brien's 1961 article implies that in his view it had become the task of the designer to work out the layout of the stage by this time. The generation of the ground plan surfaces once more as a tangible site of the negotiation of power between the director and designer, as was discussed in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four demonstrated that Devine and the Royal Court Theatre provided an environment that encouraged experiment, close working relationships between writers, directors and designers, as well as minimal designs that dramaturgically supported the play. Herbert matured as a designer in these conditions and this, combined with her training that put the dramatic text at the centre of the design process, placed her in an excellent position to deal with the subtleties of Beckett's dramatic work in which scenography was embedded into the meaning.

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<sup>176</sup> Designing for television and theatre, O'Brien was appointed Associate Artist of the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1966.

<sup>177</sup> O'Brien does not name any designers working in this way. Theatre designer Disley Jones (1926-2005) could be taken as an example, however, as his obituary states that; 'During the early 1960s he was in demand in the West End, often irritating directors by earning better notices than they did' (Robinson, 2005).



Figure 76: Krapp's *Last Tape*, Krapp costume sketch (Herbert, 1958c)

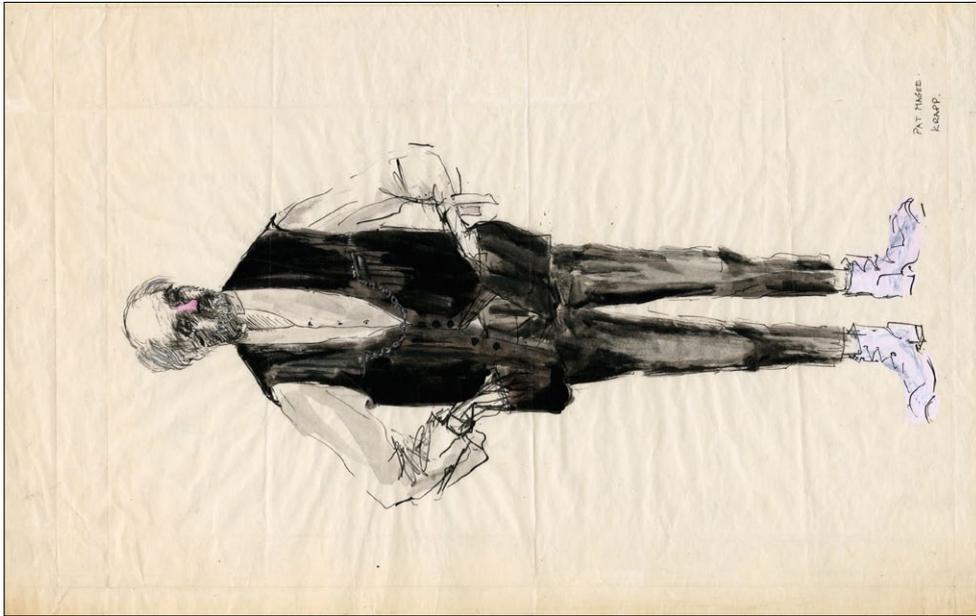


Figure 75: Krapp's *Last Tape*, Krapp costume sketch (Herbert, 1958b)



Figure 74: Krapp's *Last Tape*, Krapp costume sketch (Herbert, 1958a)

## 5.2 *Happy Days* (1962) case study

### 5.2.1 Conditions of the production

Devine began negotiations to stage *Happy Days* at the Royal Court in March 1961, but the production was delayed until November 1962 because of casting problems. Joan Plowright (1929-) was originally offered the part of Winnie but was expecting a child, and although the Court had delayed in order to wait for her, she dropped out when she became pregnant again and was advised by her gynaecologist not to take on the role. In the meantime Donald McWhinnie, Beckett's preferred director for the production, also had to withdraw and so Devine directed, with Beckett attending rehearsals from the second week onwards, and Brenda Bruce (1918-1996) was recruited at very short notice to play Winnie.

In the meantime *Happy Days* had premiered at the Cherry Lane Theatre in New York in September 1961 directed by Alan Schneider (1917-1984) with a set designed by William Ritman (1928-1984). Beckett was not present in New York but there was extensive written correspondence between him and Schneider in the lead up to the production (Beckett & Schneider, 1998). There were also two German productions of *Happy Days* prior to the Court's 1962 version. First it was shown at the Schiller-Theater Werkstatt, Berlin in late September 1961<sup>178</sup> and second at Schauspielhaus 'Tribune', Düsseldorf, on December 17, 1961.<sup>179</sup> Information about these productions has been hard to access but *Beckett in Berlin* (Beckett et al., 1986) contains reviews of the Berlin production that do not mention the set, alongside black and white photographs. The Royal Court Theatre production in 1962 was the British premiere, directed by George Devine with the assistance of Beckett, starring Brenda Bruce as Winnie and Peter Duguid (1923-2009) as Willie.<sup>180</sup>

Beckett lived in France and so he and Devine corresponded by letter with rare meetings either in Paris or London. The letters between Devine and Beckett concerning *Happy Days* are almost all about the troublesome logistics of casting and timing although there are references to a productive meeting between Beckett, Herbert and Devine in Paris in June 1962 (Devine, 15 June, 1962b). Beckett was sent some of Herbert's design sketches, as will be described in the section below, and he came to London on 7 October to attend rehearsals from the beginning of the second week. Herbert was involved in filming *Tom Jones* until 9 October but we know that Beckett visited her and Devine on the evening of 8 October to view the model boxes (Beckett, 2014, p.505).

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<sup>178</sup> Directed by Walter Henn, deigned by H. W. Lenneweit, starring Berta Drews and Rudolf Fernau.

<sup>179</sup> Directed by Karl Henry Stroux, starring Maria Wimmer.

<sup>180</sup> In 1979 Beckett himself directed *Happy Days* at the Court, starring Billie Whitelaw and Leonard Fenton, and designed by Herbert.

Beckett's presence in rehearsals was not always helpful. For example, because of her late appointment in the role of Winnie Brenda Bruce was still struggling to learn the lines during rehearsals, and Beckett's microscopic notes and heavy sighs when she got anything wrong put a strain on her (Knowlson, 1997, p.501). Beckett and Bruce got on well outside of the rehearsal room but she got 'absolutely hysterical' (Bruce in Courtney, 1993, p.220) when he insisted on her speaking the lines to a strict rhythm and 'brought a metronome into the theatre and set it down on the floor, saying, 'This is the rhythm I want'' (Knowlson, 1997, p.501). This is not the only case of an actor finding Beckett's presence in rehearsals difficult (Knowlson & Haynes, 2003, pp.110–111), and one suggestion as to why this was often the case is that Beckett did not appreciate the process that actors needed to go through to achieve a performance (2003, p.113). The actors that Beckett was working with were trained and steeped in theatre that valued psychological realism, but this was not of interest to Beckett. Nonetheless, by 11 October Devine had asked Beckett not to come into rehearsals, to give Bruce some space (Beckett, 2014, p.507)<sup>181</sup> and Beckett appears to have remained unhappy with Bruce's performance and to have felt anxious about the production in general, calling it 'hopeless' and predicting a 'disaster' (2014, pp.509–510).

### 5.2.3 Herbert's design

The folder for Happy Days in the Jocelyn Herbert Archive contains drawings and designs for both the 1962 and 1979 productions. They have not been labelled to signify which drawing belongs to which year, but I have divided them into the two productions and a proposed order of creation using the following methods: comparing the style of mound in the two productions; analysing the correspondence between Beckett and Devine; evaluating the style of sketches and the materials used to create them; photographs of Herbert's arrangements of images in the exhibition *Jocelyn Herbert – designing for Beckett* (1994); and using my own instincts as a practicing designer. The designs that I identify as 1962 are JH4347-54, JH4358, JH4362-65 and JH4367.

#### 5.2.3.1 Herbert's design process

The letters between Devine, Herbert and Beckett during 1962 illustrate that despite her being able to discuss the production with Devine in situ as director, conversations with Beckett were vital to both of them at this time.

In May 1962, Devine wrote to Beckett to say that neither he nor Herbert wanted to start working on the play before they had met with him in Paris (Devine, 29 May, 1962c). On 15 June Devine wrote again to say how much they had enjoyed the meeting, which had presumably taken place on the day or so previously, and that they were 'both terribly pleased to see you and to talk about the play, which grows on me more and more and more and more'

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<sup>181</sup> Beckett stayed away until 16 October (Beckett, 2014, p.508).

(Devine, 15 June, 1962b). Clearly Herbert felt able to begin working on the designs after this meeting because in the next letter in August Devine explained that he was enclosing some of Herbert's sketches for consideration and that 'she won't start the model until she knows she is on the right lines' (Devine, 31 Aug, 1962b).

From Beckett's response to the sketches sent by Herbert (Beckett, 4 Sept, 1962a) I have identified them as JH4363-65 and JH4367 in the Herbert Archive and as the image reproduced in Courtney's book<sup>182</sup> (Courtney, 1993, p.52) (Figure 77, Figure 78, Figure 79, Figure 80, and Figure 73). Beckett indicated that he liked the sketches, specifically the one with Winnie's head resting on the mound (Figure 73).

Of the five sketches that Herbert sent Beckett three are backed by an orange sky (Figure 77, Figure 78 and Figure 73) and two by a blue sky (Figure 79 and Figure 80). Herbert later told Courtney:

I had a terrible problem with the blue sky which Sam Beckett referred to in the text as being azure. I just couldn't make it work with the yellow sand although I tried three or four different drawings and, eventually, I did one with an orange sky. I sent them all to Sam and said did he think orange was better because it gave the idea of more concentrated heat? He wrote back and agreed and from then on *Happy Days* was done with an orange sky. (Herbert in Courtney, 1993, p.54)

The word azure does not appear in the published texts of *Happy Days*<sup>183</sup> or in the stage directions at the beginning of the first manuscripts of the play (see Gontarski, 1977) and there is no copy of the text in the Jocelyn Herbert Archive. However, there are references to the sky being blue in the published editions, for example Winnie's lines; 'if I were not held – [gesture] – in this way, I would simply float up into the blue' (Beckett, 2010, p.19) and, 'Yes love, up into the blue, like gossamer' (Beckett, 2010, p.20) and in the French language publications blue is translated as azure: 'je m'en irais tout simplement flotter dans l'azur' (Beckett, 1963, p.45). This suggests the possibility that Herbert read the play in French as both she and Devine were fluent French speakers.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Cathy Courtney recalled that Herbert gave this drawing to Brenda Bruce and that it was Herbert's favourite drawing of the play.

<sup>183</sup> Grove Press published *Happy Days* in the USA in late 1961, and Faber in the UK in 1962. The complete text was published in *Plays and Players* in November 1962. None of these published texts contain the word 'azure'.

<sup>184</sup> Further ambiguities around the use of the word azure or blue are that it could refer to the Cote d'Azur holiday destination in France or to the common phrase 'into the blue'. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary refers to blue as being 'of the colour of the sky and the deep sea' (Trumble et al., 2002, p.253).



Figure 77: *Happy Days* set rendering, orange sky with head on mound (Herbert, 1962d)



Figure 78: *Happy Days* set rendering, orange sky with umbrella (Herbert, 1962f)



Figure 79: *Happy Days* set rendering with blue sky (Herbert, 1962b)



Figure 80: *Happy Days* set rendering, blue sky with umbrella (Herbert, 1962c)

Although the stage directions do not specify that the sky should be blue Beckett suggested that Schneider and Ritman try it as such in the New York premiere, despite being sceptical that it would work:

Colour: that which best conveys heat and desiccation. But this will be more a question of lighting than of painting. Hot blue sky (*if blue can be hot, which I doubt*) and yellow brown scorched earth. (Beckett & Schneider, 1998, p.95; my emphasis)

As Beckett did not attend the rehearsals or performance of *Happy Days* (1961) in New York Schneider sent him the reviews and photos of the production, presumably in black and white. A contemporary review said that 'William Ritman has designed a mound as barren as a dune and has set it against a glaringly yellow cyclorama' (Taubman, 1961, n.p.). According to a letter he sent to Schneider on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1961 Beckett read the reviews (Beckett & Schneider, 1998, pp.112–113) and I would therefore surmise that he knew that the sky was not blue in this version.

It is impossible to know whether Herbert herself knew about the set for the New York premiere. Devine mentioned to Beckett that he had heard that *Happy Days* was a big success in the USA (Devine, 9 Oct, 1961), but there is no way of knowing how he heard this or how much detail he heard or read. In my own experience as a theatre designer I would not expect Herbert to have wanted to know much detail of the design by Ritman, as theatre designers tend to want to believe that they have had an original interpretation and not been influenced by how another designer solved the design problems.<sup>185</sup> However, there is no evidence that Herbert shared this inclination and it is possible that Beckett showed Herbert the photographs of Ritman's set when they met in June 1962.

In the letter responding to Herbert's sketches Beckett wrote that, 'blue sky I'm afraid simply won't work - tant pis<sup>186</sup> for the word in the text' (Beckett, 4 Sept, 1962a). This letter combined with Herbert's suggestion that the idea of an orange sky came from her indicates that Beckett had either asked Herbert to try out a blue sky or had not discouraged her from trying it. It is feasible that, not having seen the New York production, and having a particular visual image in mind for the setting of *Happy Days* that included a blue sky, Beckett wanted to see if Herbert could make his idea of a hot blue sky work. As mentioned Beckett saw the realisation of his plays into performance as part of his process and it is conceivable that Beckett was utilising Herbert's artistic skills to try to achieve his own visualisation of his play.

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<sup>185</sup> Harris for example stated that she would not look at previous designs 'because I think then one gets influenced by what other people have done' (Harris, 1992, tape 17a).

<sup>186</sup> French for 'too bad'.

Whatever the explanation, there is an implication in Herbert's account of the process (Herbert in Courtney, 1993, p.54), as quoted on page 206, that conveys how she wished her collaborative role to be seen, which is that she had managed to persuade the notoriously intractable Beckett (see McMullan, 1996) to change his mind about the colour of the sky. Although her work on Krapp's costume in 1958 demonstrates that there is a precedent for Herbert developing Beckett's original visual image, the evidence around whether this is the case for the colour of the sky for *Happy Days* is inconclusive. Beckett may have already known that a blue sky would probably not work and, as mentioned, there are often tensions in Beckett's plays between what is seen and what is said so that it would be in keeping for Winnie to refer to it as blue when it was not that colour. However, it is evident that Herbert persuaded Beckett that an orange sky would work better.

Considerations of what effect the first design of a new play has on later interpretations are posed by Herbert's statement that *Happy Days* was always done with an orange sky after her 1962 design. Baugh discusses this issue in relation to Brecht's model books,<sup>187</sup> which by providing details of the original designs, suggest that 'scenography is as central to Brecht's theatre as the written text' and should acquire a similar status (2010, p.200). However, the reproduction of original staging or scenography is likely to come across as a historical reconstruction rather than living performance because 'prevailing theatre styles and audience expectations' (2010, p.200) will have changed over time. This thesis has demonstrated for example that theatrical conventions are constantly evolving. Consequently what was once seen as striking may not remain so at a later date or in different circumstances. This does not negate the fact, however, that the original production can become closely associated with the play, and influence later versions. Arnold Wesker, for instance, sees Herbert's design for *The Kitchen* (1961) as the most successful of the many versions that he has seen or been involved with, although many of those have also worked well (Wesker, 2013). Herbert's designs for Beckett's plays are certainly seen by some as iconic, 'Herbert's settings created indelible visual images for many of Samuel Beckett's severe metaphors of human isolation' (Wengrow, 1994, p.24), but what effect they have had on later productions is a complex area. A dramatic text may require or specify certain visual or spatial aspects so that it is complicated to untangle whether an early production design influenced a later one. It is certainly the case that the first design for a play can become associated with the ideal way to visualise it.

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<sup>187</sup> Brecht and his collaborators created modelbooks of their productions that were intended to expand on the dramatic text by including notes and photographs on the staging and performance of the plays.



Figure 81: Detail of Figure 79 mound texture (Herbert, 1962b)



Figure 82: Detail of Figure 80 mound texture (Herbert, 1962c)

### 5.2.3.2 Set designs

The stage directions for *Happy Days* specify:

Expanse of scorched grass rising centre to low mound. Gentle slopes down to front and either side of stage. Back an abrupt [sic] fall to stage level. Maximum simplicity and symmetry.

Blazing light.

Very pompier trompe-l'oeil backcloth to represent unbroken plain and sky receding to meet in far distance.

Embedded up to her waist in exact centre of mound, WINNIE. (Beckett, 2010 [1962], p.5)

Although there are two characters, Winnie and Willie, in actual fact *Happy Days* is more or less a monologue by Winnie, a well to do, middle-aged woman, who is buried up to her waist in the mound in Act I and up to her neck in Act II. Willie spends most of the play hidden behind the mound and his speech is confined to grunts and sentences read out from his newspaper. Winnie is relentlessly cheerful in the face of her adversity, and is aided by a bag containing a selection of items including a revolver, a medicine bottle, a mirror, some lipstick and a parasol that

catches on fire when opened.<sup>188</sup> Apart from Winnie being buried to the waist in the first act and to the neck in the second act, the scenery remains unchanged.

Herbert's set renderings (Figure 73, Figure 77, Figure 78, Figure 79, Figure 80) for *Happy Days* (1962) demonstrate that she used them to explore texture, the height and proportions of the mound and the colours of the sky and landscape.

For example in Figure 79 and Figure 80 the ground recedes behind the mound to achieve a sense of the earth continuing into the horizon and the blue of the sky is darker at the top fading to pale grey at the bottom, but the texture of the mound differs in the two sketches. One is smoother (Figure 81) than the other (Figure 82) which indicates that she appears to have pulled a dry brush through the wet paint to create the texture of tufts of grass. Looking at the production photographs (Figure 83 and Figure 84) it seems that the actual mound was covered in realistic grass, and although the photographs are black and white, a description of 'scorched grass' in one of the reviews indicates that it was the orangey browns of Herbert's sketches (Levin, 1962). The smoothness of the realised mound relates to the drawing that Beckett preferred (Figure 73).

Each of the sketches show variations in the positioning of the horizon, suggesting that Herbert was trying out different proportions of sky, landscape and mound to try to achieve the feeling of distance, 'plain and sky receding to meet in far distance' (Beckett, 2010 [1962], p.5), that Beckett specified in his stage directions. The height of the mound appears to have been the subject of discussion, or even slight disagreement, between Herbert and Beckett. After the opening of the production Beckett sent a letter to Herbert:

Thank you and George again for all your kindness and concern with the play. I never said sufficiently how much I liked and admired your set. It's my fault if it wasn't quite right from the stalls. A lower mound would have worked in the Royal Court. From the circle it was perfect. But perhaps any lower you couldn't have hidden Willie. Awful English this. (Beckett, 8 Nov, 1962)

This letter, as discussed earlier the first that Beckett is known to have written directly to Herbert, indicates that Beckett had requested that the mound be higher than Herbert had originally planned it to be and Herbert herself later commented that she felt that the mound was a failure, partly because its height meant that the audience in the stalls could not see the 'perspective of sand dunes going away' (Courtney, 1993, p.54).

<sup>188</sup> Full props list for Winnie: Black shopping bag, collapsible parasol, toothbrush, toothpaste, small mirror, spectacles in case, handkerchief, revolver, bottle of red medicine, lipstick, magnifying glass, comb, hairbrush, music box, 'unidentifiable odds and ends', nailfile. Props for Willie: handkerchief, newspaper, postcard (Beckett, 2010).



Figure 83: *Happy Days* production photograph (Anon, 1962a)



Figure 84: *Happy Days* production photo, close up (Anon, 1962b)

Herbert knew the Royal Court Theatre stage and its relationship to the auditorium very well by this point, having designed almost exclusively for it since 1957 and I have shown that Herbert would suggest changes if she did not believe that Beckett's original instruction served the play as he intended, and so there are several possibilities as to why she acquiesced to Beckett's request. It appears that Beckett was concerned that Willie would be visible in his hiding place behind the mound and Herbert may have considered that this was a more important consideration than losing the view of the horizon from the stalls. Herbert was involved in shooting the film *Tom Jones* (1963) during the first two weeks of rehearsals for *Happy Days* (1962) and Beckett did not arrive until the beginning of the second week. Therefore, even if he made his concerns known immediately, Herbert may have had to make a hurried decision, possibly from the distance of the *Tom Jones* film set, about changing the height of the mound to ensure that it could be built in time by the workshop. Another possibility is that Beckett may have insisted that she do as he asked. Herbert would later say that:

The fact is that, if you have a director who really feels he needs something, you finally have to give it to him; you can't not, even though you think it is wrong and it doesn't fit in with your attitude to the play. (Herbert in Courtney, 1993, p.24)

I have also shown that Beckett was unhappy with what he saw of the performance in rehearsals and in my experience of such situations it is often the set or costumes that will be criticised. This is possibly because material changes to them are more tangible than changes to an actor's performance. I have experienced actors who are anxious about their performance fixating on an aspect of their costume or props that they want to be altered in the belief that it will help. In some cases they might be right, but sometimes such a change will clearly not help the situation and a designer has to choose when to stand their ground.

There is no evidence to decisively point to any of these options but, as mentioned previously, the creation of theatre is an inherently messy process and I would speculate that the negotiations over the mound could have involved a mixture of all of my proposed possibilities to greater or lesser degrees.

That this letter was written directly to Herbert rather than a message to her being embedded into correspondence with Devine, as had previously been the case, suggests that the *Happy Days* (1962) production marked a shift in Beckett's relationship with Herbert. The letter combines discussion of the *Happy Days* set, and confirmation that he will give the Court first option on all his future work, with amiable remarks about Herbert's children and Devine's holiday plans. It is signed 'affectionately' whereas previous letters to Devine ended with more formal closing phrases such as 'Bien amicalement'<sup>189</sup> (Beckett, 28 May, 1962a) or 'Greetings and compliments

<sup>189</sup> Sincerely.

## CHAPTER FIVE: Samuel Beckett and 'Happy Days' (1962)

to Jocelyn' (Beckett, 12 Sept, 1962). During rehearsals Beckett had spent the weekend with Herbert, her children and Devine in their cottage in Hampshire (Beckett, 2014, p.509) and later in 1962 Herbert and Devine visited Beckett in Paris on a social rather than work related occasion (Herbert in Knowlson & Knowlson, 2006, p.166).<sup>190</sup>The indications are that Beckett's friendship with Herbert and his confidence in her scenographic judgements developed in tandem with each other.

Beckett asked for a 'very pompier trompe-l'oeil backcloth' (Beckett, 2010 [1962], p.5) in his stage directions and he told Schneider that the whole set should feel tawdry and like a '3<sup>rd</sup> rate musical or pantomime' (Beckett & Schneider, 1998, p.95). Neither Herbert's design sketches or the production photographs indicate any tawdry-ness about Herbert's set. However, the difficulties in making assessments from production photographs are highlighted once more. As described in the previous chapters colour adds a great deal to the atmosphere of the set, as does theatre lighting, which is rarely conveyed in photographs during the period covered by this thesis. Herbert's set renderings show a sky with horizontal gradations of colour, but the photographs show no sense of a backdrop that is painted or that even has a change in tone across it.



Figure 85: Cherry Lane Theatre, New York world premiere of *Happy Days*, 1961 (Anon, 1975)

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<sup>190</sup> This is despite the fact that Beckett and Devine spent much of the evening discussing the idea of a play without an actor that may have transpired as Beckett's play *Not I* (1973).

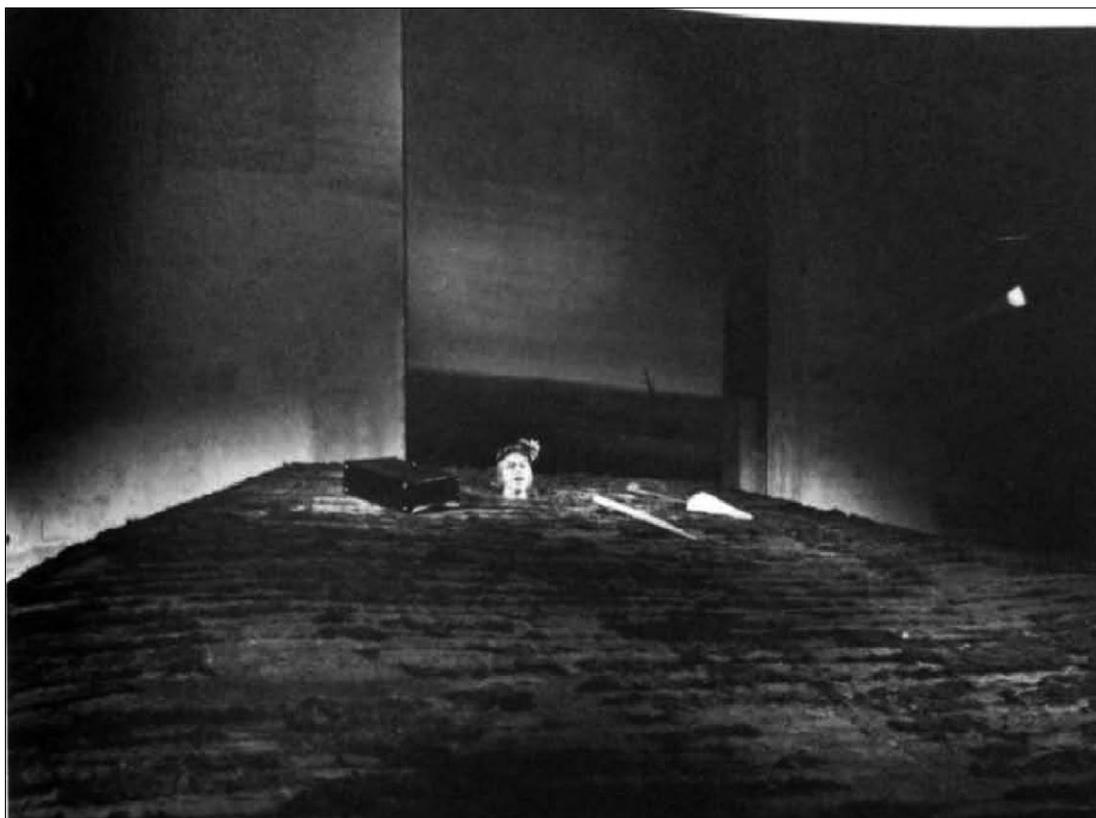


Figure 86: Schiller-Theater Werkstatt, Berlin production of *Happy Days*, 1961 (Beckett et al., 1986, p.63)

Herbert's 1962 design, in fact, appears to be the least 'pompiere' of all the early versions of the play. Photographs of the 1961 New York production (Figure 85) indicate that the mound was covered with canvas and dotted with tufts of long grass. The 1961 Berlin production photograph (Figure 86) shows a much larger, steeply sloping mound, with a lot of shorter tufts of grass springing from canvas, appearing to be quite a dark colour, with only a vertical strip of backcloth painted with horizon and sky rather than a whole cyclorama as used in London and New York. I have not located any images of the Dusseldorf production.

From the photographs and descriptions of Herbert's 1962 production it appears that the cyclorama (cyc) enclosed the stage, but they do not show whether the cyc was painted or whether the effects of the orange sky were created with lighting. When commenting on the sketch of Jocelyn's that he preferred Beckett wrote, 'I like it very much and if this effect can be obtained when the sky is lit I think it is just about right' (Beckett, 4 Sept, 1962a) (Figure 73). This could indicate that the intention was for the effect to be obtained through lighting or for it to be maintained when lit, so does not answer the question about which technique was used.

Herbert's friend Donald Howarth recalled that Herbert disliked 'any crude painted feeling' and that if the backcloth was painted she may have placed a scrim<sup>191</sup> in front of it in order to

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<sup>191</sup> Scrim is very open weave natural linen that is often used for lighting effects in theatre.

diffuse such an effect (Howarth, 12 Nov, 2013). This might explain why the photographs of the production do not show any kind of texture or brush strokes as might be expected if Herbert's designs were reproduced onto the cloth. I would postulate that the effect is unlikely to have been achieved through lighting as this would be difficult to accomplish, particularly as the general lighting state was described as 'blazing'. Therefore I would surmise that the cloth was painted and may have had a scrim placed in front of it.

### 5.2.3.3 Costume

It is apparent from looking at Herbert's sketches of Winnie and Willie that Herbert used drawing to develop her ideas about their characters, and that this went hand-in-hand with the development of the details of their costumes. This makes it clear that costume and character were closely related for Herbert, as I have shown them to be for Motley, and that she would express this through careful control of even the smallest details, such as, in these sketches, the size of pearl necklace or the exact crumpled quality of the feather.

Winnie who is immobile and only seen from the waist and then the neck up, is described as 'about fifty, well-preserved, blonde for preference, plump, arms and shoulders bare, low bodice, big bosom, pearl necklace' (Beckett, 2010, p.5) and later that she puts on an 'ornate brimless hat with crumpled feather' (p.9). Willie is described only by the parts of him that show over the mound: in the first act 'bald head...boater, club ribbon...rakish angle' (p9), 'hairy forearm' (p.11), and at the end of the second act when he crawls up the mound he is 'dressed to kill – top hat, morning coat, striped trousers, etc., white gloves in hand. Very long bushy white Battle of Britain moustache' (p.36).

Willie's outfit, known as a morning suit, was commonly worn by upper-middle to upper class men from Edwardian times until the 1930s. After the 1930s it was less frequently worn, except for formal occasions such as weddings or balls. The overstated 'Battle of Britain moustache' indicates an exaggerated, slightly pompous, upper middle class British stereotype.

According to my analysis, there are five sketches of Willie in the Herbert Archive that are from 1962 (JH4347-54 & JH4358) and all of them take a different approach to representing him. The loosely painted sketch of a kneeling man in a top hat and long coat (Figure 87) indicates what I would call a 'moment drawing' that is created to try to capture a particular moment in a play, an aspect of a character, or an intuitive image that has come to mind. Speedy and instinctive black ink or gouache brush strokes are visible and the layout of the figure in the bottom left corner is unlike other drawings by Herbert which usually position the figure centrally.

Figure 88:  
*Happy Days*  
full-length  
costume  
sketch Willie  
(Herbert,  
1962j)

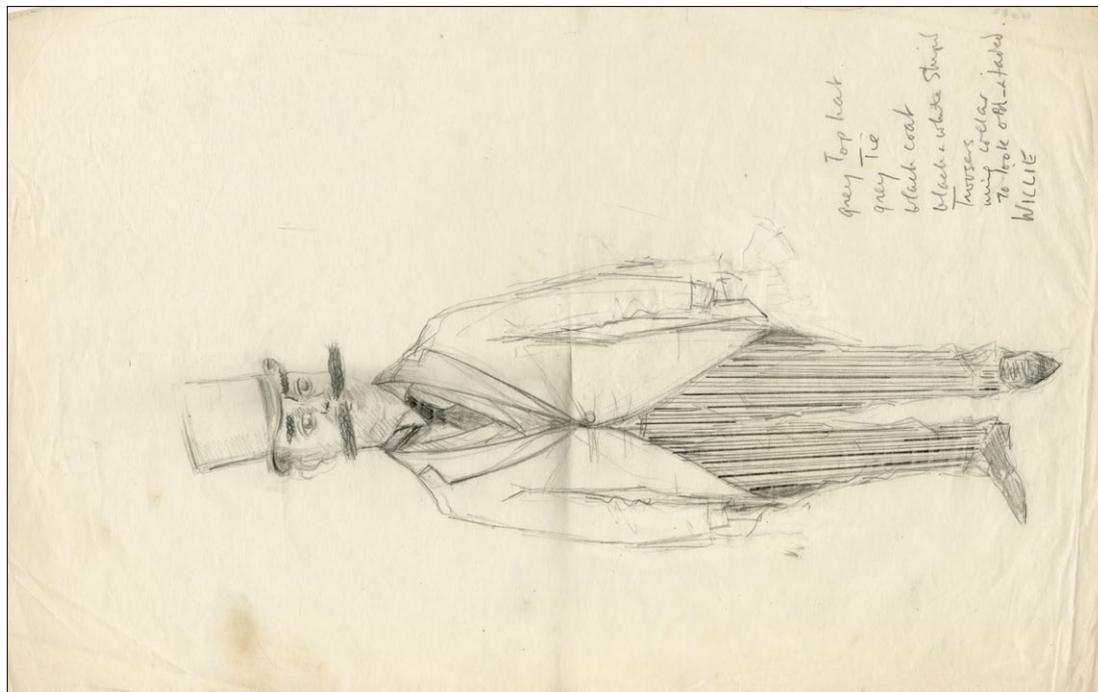


Figure 87:  
*Happy Days*  
sketch, Willie  
kneeling  
(Herbert,  
1962i)



Figure 89: *Happy Days* costume sketch, Willie kneeling (Herbert, 1962k)

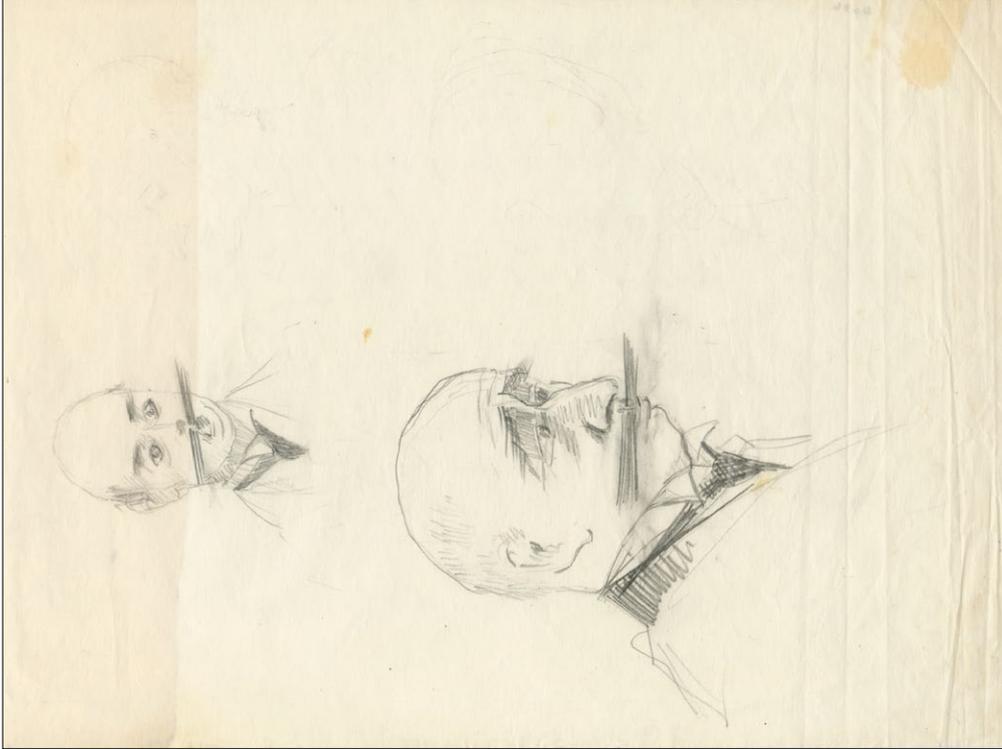


Figure 90: *Happy Days*, Willie's head and shoulders (Herbert, 1962g)

Figure 90, on the other hand, shows two pencil sketches of Willie's face, particularly focused on his moustache, collar and tie and indicate that Herbert was trying to visualise Willie's facial hair so that it would emphasise his character. The bottom and larger sketch on the page shows Willie's expression as slightly cross-eyed and comical. This drawing may have been generated as a way of thinking through the character and how he looked and may also have been shared with the costume department to illustrate the facial hair that was required. It is clear that Herbert was using drawing to develop her thinking about the character in tandem with her exploration of costume possibilities.

The full-length pencil sketch of Willie in Figure 88 gives clear details about his costume, both in the drawing and by the addition of notes down the side of the page, which indicate the colours required and that the outfit should look 'worn and faded'. The layers of Willie's costume are clearly drawn and Herbert has filled in an outline of the trousers with different widths of stripes drawn with a ruler, a technique that she used in other drawings of morning suit trousers. The detail of this drawing makes it likely to have been created for the wardrobe department.

The colour rendering of Willie kneeling on an orange wash of colour (Figure 89) may have been created to show what the character would look like to Devine, Beckett and the actors, as it combines character, detail and costume colour in relation to the colour of the set.

Of the costume renderings that I have identified as those of the 1962 Winnie all are in pencil, but there is one set rendering that portrays Winnie in a pink dress (Figure 91). This is the colour of the final costume and must have been created by Herbert after she received Beckett's feedback to her sketches in early September 1962. Beckett had suggested that pink would enhance Winnie's 'fleshiness' (Beckett, 4 Sept, 1962) and probably with this in mind Herbert changed it to a strapless, rather than off the shoulder, dress.

The four pencil sketches of Winnie suggest that Herbert was developing her thoughts about Winnie's character alongside her designs for Winnie's hat, illustrating that the two were closely related for her. Following my proposed chronology, the first sketches (Figure 92 and Figure 93) show a light pencil touch and rather undefined features that give a general impression of a warm, but slightly simple, good humour. In Figure 94, the first drawing showing Winnie up to her waist and wearing the strapless, ruched bodice that was the final costume, Winnie's face has become more defined, and has a suggestion of world-weariness about it. In the final sketch (Figure 95) the marks are far stronger and the costume, hat and face of Winnie are more defined and detailed. Winnie's expression has less simple humour and looks more wistful and long-suffering. Throughout the four drawings the size and shape of the hat and pearls are explored, as is the 'crumpled'-ness of the feather. It is not possible to know whether these sketches were made after Herbert knew that Brenda Bruce would be playing Winnie but it



Figure 91: *Happy Days* set rendering with pink dress (Herbert, 1962e)

would be reasonable to expect Herbert to have had to make decisions about the hat and bodice before Bruce's late appointment in the role circa 20 September 1962. It is unclear whether Herbert created these pencil sketches to be shared with either the costume makers or the creative team but it is possible that they fulfilled both functions.

Once rehearsals started Beckett was closely involved with decisions over props and costumes and 'inspected the hat that Jocelyn Herbert bought and modified for [Bruce] and the parasol' (Knowlson, 1997, p.500). It is intriguing to consider what judgement Beckett was making; perhaps whether the hat and parasol were what he had imagined, or whether they communicated the character as he intended. Beckett could be specific about props and costumes, such as about the handbag: 'I see it like the big black capacious "*cabas*"<sup>192</sup> (Beckett & Schneider, 1998, p.94), and its positioning: 'the bag is higher and more to her left [than in Herbert's renderings] so that she has to turn strongly to get at it' (Beckett, 1962b). He could also be less precise, as when he tried to describe Winnie's hat to Schneider: 'Kind of fussy toque with long feather (what French call a "*couteau*"). Close fitting, brimless, casting no shadow on face. Sorry to be so vague' (Beckett & Schneider, 1998, p.102). Although there is no evidence as to how much Herbert modified Winnie's hat, she is recorded as being very exact over Billie Whitelaw's costume for Beckett's *Footfalls* (1976) taking a lot of trouble over it according to Beckett (Courtney, 1993, p.219) so that Whitelaw recalled '[walking] around in it a bit and [Jocelyn] would tear a bit here and grab a bit there and so it grew' (1993, p.222).

<sup>192</sup> A 'cabas' is a French shopping bag.



Figure 93: *Happy Days*, sketch of Winnie's head (Herbert, 1962i)



Figure 92: *Happy Days*, sketch of Winnie's head (Herbert, 1962h)



Figure 95: *Happy Days*, Winnie costume sketch (Herbert, 1962m)



Figure 94: *Happy Days*, Winnie costume sketch (Herbert, 1962a)

## CHAPTER FIVE: Samuel Beckett and 'Happy Days' (1962)

Bruce and Beckett went together to choose Winnie's reading glasses without Herbert (Bruce in Knowlson, 1997, p.500) which carries an echo of the freedom of Herbert's costume technique for *The Kitchen* (1958 & 1962). Perhaps linking to the LTS idea of costume as clothing, and as a method for making the actor feel comfortable with what they were wearing, Herbert would let them choose some, or all, of their costume. The reading glasses are only worn infrequently in the play but given the care that Herbert had taken in her sketches to link costume and character it is notable that she did not feel she needed to be in absolute control of this element. This points towards slight changes in approach and suggests that her involvement in the kinds of alternative praxis indicated in the previous chapter had some impact on her processes in more traditional working structures.

### 5.2.3.4 Critical reception

Given Samuel Beckett's status as one of the most important dramatists of the twentieth century it is surprising to discover that his dramatic work had a mixed reception from the critics in the late 1950s and early 1960s, although he was recognised at the time by forward thinking theatre practitioners for his originality and challenges to theatre conventions. According to Herbert: 'No Beckett [play] was well received for years and years and years' because his work was so different from anything that had come before it (1993, p.27). The thirty five performances of *Happy Days* (1962) achieved only 49% occupancy (Little & McLaughlin, 2007, p.73) and critics were divided about the production although Herbert's design was praised when mentioned, indicating that her set appealed to the reviewers in a way that the play itself did not always do. One of the worst reviews, in *The Stage* newspaper, called the play 'obscure and uncommunicative' but noted that 'Jocelyn Herbert's setting neatly created the illusion of parched heat' (Blake, 1962).

I mentioned in Chapter One that because *Look Back in Anger* (1956) was more innovative in its content than its form, being a more or less conventional box set, attention could be placed on the issues it raised and it made more impact than the contemporaneous *Waiting for Godot* (1955) which was radical in both form and content (Lacey, 1995, pp.28 – 29). However, with *Happy Days* (1962) it would appear that critics appreciated the recognisable form of the production although many were unenthusiastic about the content and did not comprehend the interrelationship between the scenographic and textual in the play.

## 5.3 Summary

I have demonstrated that the scenographic and textual elements of Beckett's plays are interdependent and that this is one reason why he was reluctant to allow changes to his stage directions. Nevertheless the period covered by *Happy Days* (1962) was one in which Beckett was becoming aware that translating his written text into a performance needed to be part of his creative process and this involved working with designers as well as directors and actors.

It has been suggested that Herbert's position at the Royal Court was unusual in comparison to freelance designers working in the purely commercial sector during this period. Herbert was more-or-less a resident designer at the Court, and the supportive environment that encouraged experiment, collaboration between the creative team, the foregrounding of dramatic text and her London Theatre Studio training put her in a strong position to negotiate Beckett's precise scenography.

The case study has shown that despite Beckett's play appearing to give little room for a designer to alter or adjust the scenography, Herbert worked carefully on the details of colour, texture and proportion of the set to support *Happy Days*. Different reasons for the creation of costume sketches have been considered with some drawings appearing to illustrate that Herbert used them to think through character and that costume and character were directly related for her. Other sketches appear to be more instinctive, and to illustrate that Herbert was capturing the sense of a moment. In some of the costume renderings the composition and detail of costumes are clarified, and these are likely to have been created for the wardrobe department to work from, whereas others may have been made to share with the actors, Devine and Beckett to convey her ideas about character, costume and how the colours would relate to the set. Additionally, there is the possibility that Herbert's praxis in a traditionally structured production such as this one was affected to some degree by her experience of the alternative processes suggested in Chapter Four.

The evidence as to what effect Herbert had on Beckett's own view of the visual aspects of *Happy Days* is somewhat contradictory. Beckett may have utilised Herbert's creative and theatrical skills as a designer to try out his own mental image of the colour of the set and to find out whether this was achievable, but Herbert found a solution that was appropriate and sympathetic to the aims of the production. Whilst the height of the mound appears to have been a question that was not resolved satisfactorily between Herbert and Beckett I have suggested that the letter on this subject addressed directly to Herbert, rather than via Devine, indicates that the friendship between Beckett and Herbert developed alongside his increasing opinion of her ability to visually interpret and support his dramatic work.

The relationships that have been closely analysed in this chapter were being formed in an environment that is widely understood to have been, along with Theatre Workshop, at the centre of cutting edge theatre in 1960s Britain. Whether or not other theatre practitioners agreed with the Royal Court's ethos or admired the visual aesthetic of its designs, the attention given to Royal Court productions makes it inevitable that what happened there would have had an impact on theatre designers working in other British theatres and in other parts of Britain. This would certainly have been the case in terms of the way the productions looked, but the

## CHAPTER FIVE: Samuel Beckett and 'Happy Days' (1962)

processes that went into their creation may also have affected theatre design practice in this country.

The following, concluding, chapter will reiterate the aims of the thesis, elaborating on key findings and reflecting on its methods. It will suggest areas for further research and highlight the contribution to knowledge that this thesis has made.

## **CHAPTER SIX:**

### **Conclusion**

The intention of this research has been to address the relatively restricted range of inquiry into theatre design practice in general and specifically British theatre design between 1935-1965. This was implemented through a close analysis of four case studies of productions designed by Motley and Jocelyn Herbert, seminal figures in British theatre design who were active during this period.

I set out to trace various strands of influence on the practice of Motley and Herbert including: how they were trained; collaborators they worked with closely; and theatre practitioners, theoreticians or reformers who had significant impact on their thinking. My objective was to ascertain what effect these had on their approaches to their work during the period covered.

Assessment of the case studies was carried out through careful study of archival design material, such as set and costume renderings and sketches, as well as written texts, press reviews and recorded interviews, and incorporated my own experience as a theatre design practitioner. Through analysis of the circumstances in which Motley and Herbert operated, including their relationships with directors and playwrights and how they negotiated these conditions, I aimed to evaluate one particular, but significant, strand of the evolving praxis of mid-twentieth century British theatre design. My own experience as a practitioner and my involvement in theatre design pedagogy as a regular visiting lecturer on several courses indicates that there are key aspects of Motley's and Herbert's practice and philosophy evident in contemporary theatre design and design training.

The sections below will begin by elaborating on three main areas of the key findings of the thesis:

- Threads of influence;
- The materials of theatre production – and what they reveal;
- The evolving praxis of Motley and Herbert between 1935-1965

I will then proceed to reflect on the research and on my approach to it before suggesting future research directions. I will conclude by highlighting the contribution to knowledge of this thesis.

## **6.1 Key points of findings**

### **6.1.1 Threads of influence**

My research highlights that the core of Motley's and Herbert's ideas about theatre design were shared by others who wished to reform British theatre in the early twentieth century, including Edward Gordon Craig and Harley Granville-Barker, as well by American New Stagecraft.

These British and American theatrical reformers shared a view of modern theatre in which design was a significant aspect of theatre productions. New Stagecraft in particular identified the requisite qualities of theatre design as synthesis, simplification and suggestion and I demonstrate that these values are reflected in Motley's approach to their practice. This is evident in their unit set for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935), for example, which did not try to replicate an Italian city but rather suggested it through simplified details and was designed to be changed quickly between scenes in order to aid the overall speed and energy that was an integral part of the production's aims.

When Frenchman Michel Saint-Denis came into contact with Motley in the mid-1930s he brought with him his own development of the European theatrical theories of his Uncle, Jacques Copeau. Some of Saint-Denis's approaches reinforced Motley's existing practice, such as that the designer should have an understanding of both practical and theoretical aspects of designing for theatre. In other instances there were areas of Motley's practice that were challenged and pushed further by Saint-Denis's ethos, such as an increased rigour in the justification of the use of decorative elements. Equally, Motley appear to have pragmatically absorbed some of Saint-Denis's ideas as one of several different methods they might use depending on particular situations and circumstances.

My research proposes that Saint-Denis, Motley and the LTS have had more affect than has previously been acknowledged on the aesthetics of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre. The majority of existing literature highlights Brecht and the Berliner Ensemble<sup>193</sup> as the main influence on the visual ethos of the Court in the early years.<sup>194</sup> Whilst I do not deny the Brechtian impact, an examination of Herbert's style and approach to theatre design, and a considered assessment of the thinking behind the Court's attitude to scenography, establishes the additional influence of the ethos of the LTS.

This has been illustrated in the case study of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961). Despite differing aesthetically from *Three Sisters* (1938) the two productions share a view that the purpose of theatre design is to visually convey a mediated, controlled and completed interpretation of the meaning of the dramatic text to the audience. As a play *The Kitchen* itself presents an empathetic narrative and characters and intends to transmit the themes and message of the play to the

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<sup>193</sup> As mentioned, Brecht worked closely with designers Neher, Otto and von Appen though they are rarely mentioned and the style of theatre that they created with Brecht is most often assigned to him alone or called *Brechtian*.

<sup>194</sup> As stated in Chapter Four there are those who acknowledge the influence of Saint-Denis and the LTS (Herbert in Courtney, 1993, p.15; Baldwin, 2003, p.186; Gaskill in Doty & Harbin, 1990, p.181; Wardle, 1978, p.173), whilst the majority identify Brecht as the major influence on the Court's aesthetic (Mathers, 1975, p.82; Howard, 2009, p.106; Strachan, 2003, n.p.; Billington, 1998, p.9; Rebellato, 1999, p.98; Gaskill, 1988, p.12; Halifax in Doty & Harbin, 1990, p.174; Clancy in Doty & Harbin, 1990, pp.178–9).

audience through their absorption in, and empathy with, the situation on stage. Brechtian theatre, on the other hand, aims for the ‘*verfremdungseffekt*’, or distancing effect, whereby the audience are intended to remain distanced from the play in order to be able to engage intellectually rather than emotionally. Therefore, although *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) shares a concern for political and social issues with Brechtian theatre, and both may superficially seem to have a similar theatrical aesthetic, there is a nuanced but key difference in how each attempts to share their message with the audience, and how they intend their audience to respond. Additionally, Herbert’s use of the bare wall and floor of the theatre as part of *The Kitchen*’s set is not only a result of the impact of Brecht’s designers, but was influenced by considerations around masking that I identified at the LTS and that continued to preoccupy Devine and the Royal Court designers during the early years of the English Stage Company.

Rather than seeing the genealogy of Motley’s and Herbert’s theatre design practice as a linear progression handed down from Saint-Denis or borrowed from Brechtian theatre I have demonstrated in this thesis that it was affected by a complex web of a variety of influences.

### 6.1.2 The materials of theatre production - and what they reveal

The materials of production can tell us a considerable amount about the hierarchies in place in the working relationships within the organisation of theatrical production. For example, a costume design fulfils many functions, including communicating costume ideas to collaborators such as the director, writer and cast. This is, of course, widely recognised as established practice. However, what my close analysis in this thesis has revealed is that costume drawings can also tell us something about the particular ways that costume designers were communicating with other members of the production team. For instance, costume designs with notes and details on them, such as for the ‘guest at a party’ for *Romeo and Juliet* (Motley, 1935o), imply that the designer was communicating with the makers about the construction of the costume including about which fabrics were preferred, details of trimmings or stitching, or back views. In the case of a costume sketch for Willie in *Happy Days* (Herbert, 1962j) details of the finish of the costume are also conveyed.<sup>195</sup> Equally, where there are no costume designs, as in *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) there is a suggestion, or at least the possibility, that the designer made the costumes themselves or found and adapted existing clothing rather than working with makers. In the case of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) the lack of design artefacts could also indicate a closely collaborative process, as discussed below.

Moreover, Motley’s costume designs indicate how the three women worked to create co-ordinated productions that appeared to be designed by one person. *Three Sisters* (1938) demonstrates that the drawing style and handwriting of Montgomery and Harris-Devine could be indistinguishable, and suggests that they may have co-authored renderings. Additionally,

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<sup>195</sup> Herbert wrote ‘to look old and faded’ alongside the sketch (Herbert, 1962j).

artefacts can contribute to an understanding of how Motley kept an overall view of the designs when they were all three working on them. For example, a sheet of fabric samples in various colours (Motley, 1951) indicates how colour was decided and a colour scheme maintained. Moreover, the many small pinholes in costume designs for *Romeo and Juliet* (1935) imply a method of pinning up drawings so that they could assess whether the costumes that each of them authored were working together as a whole group.

Herbert's and Motley's *approaches* to theatre design can also be revealed in renderings. For example Herbert's set of drawings of Winnie's hat for *Happy Days* (1962) demonstrated that character was closely linked to costume for her, as was clear from the care that she took over the details of the hat in conjunction with her effort to capture Winnie's character through the depiction of her face. This need to understand characters in order to design the details of their costumes establishes Herbert's engagement with the dramaturgy of the play that was also demonstrated in Motley's costume renderings. For example, the costume designs for Irina in *Three Sisters* (1938) show Motley's portrayal of the development of Irina's character throughout the play, both in the poses and expressions of the figures and in the details of each costume (Motley, 1938a; Motley, 1938b).

One of the unexpected discoveries of this thesis was that the ground plan was a key indicator of the designer's increasing dramaturgical engagement in a production during the period 1935-1965. It became clear through the course of the research that the issue of who generated the ground plan was an area of contention at this time. Saint-Denis saw it as crucial that the director should be the one to provide the ground plan for the designer to work from, whilst Motley appear to have been prepared to generate it themselves or to work on it with the director in their own practice. Herbert did not make a model for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) and whilst the absence of a ground plan could simply be an omission in the archive I have suggested that the lack of these artefacts, or of any costume designs, could indicate a dynamic negotiation between Herbert, the director and the writer; a hypothesis backed up by Herbert's explanation that her positioning of the kitchen units in 1959 grew out of rehearsals (Herbert, 1985b, tape 5).

### **6.1.3 The evolving praxis of Motley and Herbert between 1935-1965**

Motley and Herbert were amongst those theatre practitioners in the period 1935-1965 who were striving to make theatre design dramaturgically and visually coherent within a theatre production and were breaking away from the concept of the theatre designer as a provider of décor, or background decoration. This thesis has shown the connections between a theatrical ethos, the development of the designer's role in the creation of theatrical productions and their design praxis.

## CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion

The reasoning behind Motley setting up their own costume making workshops provides an example of this correlation. Their determination that design be more unified within a production prompted Motley to seek to be more involved in the practical realisation of both their costume and set designs. Finding that existing costume making companies were reluctant to change their established methods, that is, to cut costumes according to the patterns of historical clothing and to use unconventional materials, Motley decided to open their own workshops in order to work closely with the makers.

That there should be a close relationship between all the contributors to a theatre production, including designers and technicians was an attitude that was demonstrated at the London Theatre Studio between 1936-1939. By training theatre designers, stage managers and directors alongside actors, and teaching them to value each other's contributions, the LTS embodied the idea that visual elements should be fully unified into a production. In fact, the LTS aimed to create a renewable ensemble, a 'group of artists and technicians' who would 'collaborate' (Saint-Denis & Devine, 1935, p.2) on productions.

The professional production of *Three Sisters* (1938) appears to have assimilated many of the ideas promulgated at the LTS. The cast was as close to an ensemble as it was possible to achieve in unsubsidised theatre, with Gielgud offering long contracts for a season of plays. For this reason it was possible to have a longer than usual period of rehearsals which in turn enabled the cast to familiarise themselves with the sets, costumes and props for several days before the official tech and dress rehearsal. In this production sound and light contributed to the overall atmosphere that was aimed for, creating harmonious scenographic elements that blended with the performative aspects.

Whilst the term 'collaboration' might suggest a democratic method of working, this thesis has shown that the balance of power in collaborations varies substantially depending on the differing combinations of participants and the circumstances of the productions. For example, director Saint-Denis, despite combining experimental and authoritarian methods in *Three Sisters* (1938), was described as an autocrat by Gielgud (Anon, 1938a, p.3), and remained firmly in control. *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961), on the other hand, shows an example of close co-operation between a designer, director and writer, with ideas feeding into each other as they are bounced between participants. I have argued that this dynamic collaboration, and Herbert's atypical working methods in this case, were encouraged by the conditions in which the production was created and by the ethos of the Court. This ethos included Devine's 'right to fail' policy that I have shown encouraged development not only in playwriting, as is commonly accepted, but also in thinking around theatre design and theatrical conventions.

For example, the first production of *The Kitchen* in 1959 was a ‘Sunday night without décor’ performance at the Court. These performances were seen as an opportunity to try out new work and it appears that Herbert’s process was affected by this informality. The evidence suggests that she worked closely with Dexter and Wesker in a more instinctive manner than was conventional, trying things out in rehearsals and on stage. The circumstances also led to Herbert’s exposure of the stage’s back wall and floor, facilitating a leap forward in thinking around masking conventions. This was an area that the Court had grappled with since the inception of the English Stage Company in 1956, as demonstrated through the permanent surround that was installed on the stage. It was also in this production that Herbert incorporated the lighting grid into her design for the first time, a technique that would be applied in later Court shows that she designed.

This thesis has also suggested that Herbert’s working relationship with Samuel Beckett during *Happy Days* (1962) was affected by her situation at the Court and by her dramaturgical engagement with the dramatic texts she designed. Herbert’s settled position at the Court freed her to some extent from the need to overtly show her talents as a designer in the way that freelance designers of the period, working in mainstream commercial theatre, were having to do in order to secure their next job. Herbert’s environment enabled her to react with subtlety and sensitivity to Beckett’s dramatic work and I propose that it was in this period that Beckett’s confidence and high opinion of Herbert as an interpreter of his plays was extended, as is intimated by the first letter he is known to have addressed directly to her (Beckett, 1962c).

On the surface the praxis involved in *Happy Days* (1962) looks more traditional than that of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) but it is possible that Herbert combined a way of working that can be traced in Motley’s teaching at the LTS, such as firmly establishing the relationship between character and costume, with her experience of a non-conventional process. There are small aspects that point towards slight changes in approach, such as that Herbert sent Beckett and Bruce to buy Winnie’s glasses without her, which carries an echo of her advising her assistant, Sally Jacobs, to allow *The Kitchen* (1961) actors to choose their own costumes from a pile placed in the corner.

## **6.2 Relevance to contemporary practice**

### **6.2.1 Directors and designers**

Despite the nuances in the director and designer relationships described in this thesis, the director remained dominant and remains so in many contemporary creative partnerships. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that it is often the director who employs or chooses the designer so that the balance of power is already weighted towards the director. In my experience, there are still many cases in which the designer is not welcomed into the rehearsal

room, or, if they are present, their opinions are not invited. Not only does such a situation demonstrate the director's authority but it also reveals the continued compartmentalisation of the design from the rest of the production.

Additionally, the 'literary traditions of university Drama or English departments', which produce the majority of theatre directors, contribute to the hierarchy of the spoken word over the visual in the theatre industry (Collins & Nisbet, 2010, p.140). The continuing tension between word and image encourages a persistent perception of the theatre designer as having a natural instinct to assert the visual over other elements of performance. For example, John M. Morrison writing about two productions whose designs he approved of<sup>196</sup> on the *Guardian Theatre Blog* stated that 'at no point did the design get in the way of the actors' (Morrison, 2012). The implication that the best a design can achieve is to stay in the background hints at the endurance of the idea of the designer as a decorator that Motley and Herbert were attempting to alter through their engagement with the dramaturgy of the play. Furthermore, Morrison also declares that '...the stage design seemed to have grown naturally out of the director's vision for the play' (Morrison, 2012) highlighting the tenacious concept of the auteur director with a personal creative vision that the designer merely facilitates. Such a view fails to take into account the complexity of director/designer relationships that has been demonstrated in this thesis.

### 6.2.2 My perspective as a practitioner

In this section I would like to speak from my own experience as a practicing designer and visiting lecturer teaching on a variety of performance design courses. There are several elements that I have traced in Motley's and Herbert's work between 1935-1965 that I observe to be present in contemporary practice. The designer is now almost always required to oversee the making of the set, costume and props they have designed, for example. However, the main area that appears to me to have become established in present-day practice is around the designer's engagement with the dramaturgy of the dramatic text. This is reflected in the assumption that the designer will be responsible for the generation of the ground plan, usually in consultation with the director, and that character and costume are commonly seen as closely related.

In terms of theatre design pedagogy, I have observed that some courses continue to contain key elements of the theatre design praxis taught by Motley at the LTS. For example, they teach theatre and costume history alongside technical areas such as set or costume construction. My own training at Central St Martins in the late 1980s stressed the importance of the text and imparted methods of analysing it and creating a visual interpretation of it. However, there are

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196 *The Merchant of Venice* (2011), designed by Tom Scutt, and *Hamlet* (2012) designed by Jeremy Herbert.

many courses that now incorporate the idea that the designer can be a generator of their own work, and have moved away from traditional theatre design and towards performance design that encompasses site-specific, multi-disciplinary work and non-traditional creative team organisation. In my experience these courses put more emphasis on the designer as a creative artist who can co-direct or even direct their own work; in effect, such courses encourage designers not only to *engage* with the dramaturgy of a performance, but to *shape* it as an equal partner with a director or completely independently.

How these areas have been passed into contemporary practice and training has been suggested in this thesis in its exploration of the complexities of the influences on Motley and Herbert that occurred through training, contact with practitioners, and theories and philosophies embedded in theatre practice or encountered in the ideas of theatre reformers.

### **6.2.3 Theatre design nomenclature**

The role of the theatre designer continues to evolve and to remain in flux and perhaps one of the clearest ways of demonstrating this is the persistent debate over what practitioners should call themselves. Some have adopted *scenographer*, whilst others call themselves *designers for performance*, *theatre designers*, *set designers*, *stage designers* or *costume designers*. Personally, I have adopted the pragmatic approach of choosing the term that I feel most suitably describes my role in the particular piece of work. The question of nomenclature, however, elicits a surprising amount of ire between both practitioners and academics, and much discussion over the definition of each title. Such heated discourse suggests that the designer's role and position in the creation of theatre production remains in a state of continual change, and that many forms of design practice co-exist and jostle with one another.

## **6.3 Reflections**

### **6.3.1 Archival research**

A thorough examination of the available archives has enabled me to document the practice of Motley and Herbert between 1935-1965, but even the Jocelyn Herbert Archive, which is unusually exhaustive, is not complete as will be described below. Why certain items have been archived and others discarded became significant during the research: in relation to authorship and the roles undertaken by the three Motley women working as a group for example, or to what the lack of design artefacts for *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) indicated about the collaborative process. It has also raised questions around the reasoning behind Motley's or Herbert's retention of a personal archive. Was this because they foresaw their importance to future researchers or that they wanted to be reminded of the details of their own work for personal reasons?

## CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion

No production in either the Herbert or Motley archives is absolutely complete, containing every doodle, construction note, fabric sample, ground plan or technical drawing, and this may in part have been due to the fact that they gave away some of their designs or threw away items that did not seem important to them as a record of the production, or because of considerations of storage space. There is also the problem, as discussed in this thesis, of the lack of documentation of certain kinds of collaborative processes whereby artefacts have not been created or preserved, and when the authorship of designs created in collaboration are hard to ascertain. Given the incomplete nature of any archive I have attempted to fill the gaps by: analysing newly conducted or pre-recorded interviews; assembling visual and temporal timelines; digitally reconstructing model boxes; and using my own experience as a practitioner to make new connections and to speculate on process. My knowledge as a theatre designer facilitated the creation of digital models for three of the case studies in order to reconstruct the layout of their set designs.

Additionally, considerations into the purposes of the sketches, models and renderings are stimulated by consideration of what items have survived in the archives. I demonstrate in this thesis that renderings of sets and costumes are not necessarily a record of the final outcome of the design, as the ideas that they seek to communicate have to be physically realised, and that this process involves changes and adaptations. Moreover, a single sketch can fulfil many functions as discussed above. On the other hand, there might be several sketches or renderings of a single set or costume that have been created for different purposes, as appears to have been the case for the costume sketches of Willie in *Happy Days* (1962). These range from a loose drawing capturing a moment of the play, to a detailed sketch of Willie's face that may have been trying to capture his character alongside the details of his facial hair, to an annotated full costume sketch that could have been created for both makers and creative collaborators to view.

The problems around the reliance on production photographs as evidence of what a production looked like has been discussed in the thesis. That the photographs in this period are almost all black and white precludes any judgement of atmosphere created by the colour or lighting. Furthermore, I have demonstrated that the production photographs were not created for documentation but rather for publicity, so that accuracy was not a priority and, for example, non-existent scenes could be created if it was believed that they would generate interest in the play.

When I began the research I had envisioned that interviews that I carried out with those who knew Motley and Herbert, and those who had been involved with or seen the plays that formed the case studies, would be more central than they subsequently turned out to be. It became clear that speaking to individuals with a strong visual sense, such as playwright Peter

Gill or designer Sally Jacobs whose contributions appear in the case study of *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961), revealed more detail about the design of a production than speaking to those for whom the visual was less significant. Pre-recorded interviews with Harris and Herbert could contain detail about *what* productions were like but when it came to what they said about *why* they created them as they did it was important to keep in mind the fallibility of memories and that they cannot be accepted as ‘true’ without further investigation.

For this reason it was also necessary to unpick anecdotes or stories that had become mythologised through repeated telling. For example the tale of how Gielgud came to invite Motley to design *Romeo and Juliet* in 1932 had become shortened over time, and by its retelling in books and articles, so that it appeared that Motley had attracted Gielgud’s attention only through the sketches they did of him at the Old Vic. My analysis has revealed that they had in fact shown remarkable persistence in demonstrating their skills at every opportunity over several years. Moreover, Herbert’s implication that she had persuaded Beckett that *Happy Days* worked better with an orange rather than a blue sky was particularly complicated to disentangle. Despite containing some truth there were complexities in the story such as that the previous New York production used an orange sky or trying to ascertain whether Beckett had actually asked that the sky be blue. It was initially tempting to seize on this story as a neat representation of Herbert’s influence on Beckett, and the process of unravelling it felt at times like a diminishing of Herbert’s significance. However, the result of my investigation has not lessened Herbert’s impact but merely revealed the complexities behind the negotiations around the visualisation of a dramatic text. Similarly the narrative of Motley working hard to be recognised does not reduce the talent that Gielgud spotted in them, rather it reveals the persistence and multiple possibilities for entry points that lead to success in this industry.

### 6.3.2 Reflections as a researcher

I started this investigation with the founder of the London Theatre Studio, Michel Saint-Denis, as a central figure around which the structure of the thesis was to revolve. This was because I believed him to be the most important influence on both Motley and Herbert. It became clear however that he reinforced ideas about theatre that were shared by other theatrical reformers in Britain, America and Europe and that were therefore already present in Motley’s practice in the 1930s. This has answered one of the personal questions that I had posed myself at the start of the research; how was it that I shared many of Motley’s and Herbert’s ideals and core elements of their praxis when they did not train me? This thesis has revealed to me that influences are not linear, there is not necessarily a direct line down which ideas are passed, rather there is a complex web of shared genealogies in which certain ideas may be reinforced for some practitioners at the same time as they make new connections.

## CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion

By choosing the four case studies to analyse in detail I was able to closely observe Motley's and Herbert's roles and work methods in the productions I selected. I could have encompassed a wider range of their work to examine in less detail, but I believe that this would not have enabled me to delve into their practice enough to answer the questions that I particularly posed myself. That is, I would have been able to assess *what* they had done, but not necessarily to get a detailed sense of *how* and *why*.

If I had chosen to follow *either* Motley *or* Herbert through the period I would have observed the development of an individual artist and their changing attitude towards their practice but I would not have had the opportunity, as in this thesis, to assess how the approaches to theatre design apparent in 1930s Britain were transformed and developed into the ethos apparent at the Court in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Furthermore, without such a contextualisation I would not have been able to gain a perception of how several key threads of practice that I traced in Motley and Herbert are observable in current design practice.

On reflection, *Happy Days* (1962) could be considered an incongruous choice for the fourth case study in this thesis, as there are key areas in which it differs from the other three productions. When considering the designer/director relationship for example, the interaction between Beckett as a playwright, Devine as director and Herbert as designer is not typical. Beckett was consulted more closely about the design than one would expect of most writers, possibly because of Herbert's and Devine's admiration for, and deference towards, him. The exchange between the three was tipped more towards the playwright than was common so that whilst *Romeo & Juliet* (1935), *Three Sisters* (1938) and *The Kitchen* (1959 & 1961) all assess the relationship between a designer and director, *Happy Days* (1962) evaluates the interaction between the designer and playwright. Although this may seem a slight difference, as Beckett was a playwright with substantial influence on the direction, it is enough for the case study to stand out to some extent. In addition, Beckett's rare understanding of the relationship between the visual and the text in theatre performance, and incorporation of the scenographic into his dramatic texts distinguishes it from the other productions studied in the thesis.

I have been aware throughout the research that my familial relationship to the subjects of this thesis required self-reflexivity and it has proved to be the case that there have been advantages and disadvantages to my connections to Motley and Herbert. On the one hand I already had some understanding of their histories and practices, but on the other, I had to unravel the narratives constructed about certain past events and situations and to disentangle them from family politics. I have had to assess the evidence I uncovered whilst trying to carefully determine what my 'inside' knowledge could contribute and whether it needed to be reframed in the light of my findings. For example, there is a narrative that Herbert was a 'new broom' sweeping away the old-fashioned Motley both personally, by replacing Sophie

Harris-Devine as George Devine's partner, and professionally, in her practice at the Court. As Harris-Devine's granddaughter I have had to consider whether my instinct that Motley and Herbert were connected was justifiable when their aesthetics were so different or whether it was motivated by a desire to rebalance the scales in Motley's favour. My findings have signalled that whilst there is often some truth in accepted narratives, there is always more complexity than is commonly acknowledged. In the case of this example, whilst Motley's and Herbert's design styles were dissimilar, their approaches to theatre were linked through the sharing of fundamental attitudes, aims and concerns as well as through key elements of their praxis. My impression is that this connection is something that Jocelyn Herbert and Margaret 'Percy' Harris understood and that it was one reason for their lasting friendship and mutual admiration.

#### **6.4 Further research**

Several areas with the potential for further research have been suggested by this thesis. Firstly, a study could be made of Herbert's theatre design processes and practice after 1965 in order to continue to trace the role of the theatre designer in the twentieth century. This could incorporate a focus on Herbert's work with Beckett as director of his own plays, adding to knowledge about Beckett's practice as well as Herbert's. Alternatively, a careful analysis of other British designers who practiced between 1935-1965 could further expand knowledge of theatre design in the period.

Secondly in order to continue the theme of theatrical heritage an analysis could be made of how the practice of Motley and Herbert affected the next generation of designers, such as Hayden Griffin, for instance, who was taught by both Harris and Herbert at the Motley Theatre Design Course in the late 1960s.

Thirdly, an explicit comparison could be made between the changing roles of the theatre director and theatre designer in the twentieth century. Such a focus would build on the work carried out in this thesis by further clarifying the complex dynamics that contribute to theatrical performance.

Fourthly, although others, such as Wright (2009), have looked into the transference of knowledge in twentieth century theatre design education, specific research could be done into the development of theatre design pedagogy between the London Theatre Studio, the Old Vic School and the Motley Theatre Design Course. It could also incorporate other theatre design courses that were influenced by these particular organisations. For example, the Wimbledon College of Art theatre design course run by Old Vic School design graduates Richard Negri

and Malcolm Pride trained several designers who went on to run other design courses.<sup>197</sup> The Motley Theatre Design Course itself, closely modelled on the LTS and OVS ethos, produced many renowned theatre designers between 1966 and 2011 including Ultz, Paul Brown, Es Devlin and Jon Bausor.

Additionally, research could be carried out into how gender affected the practice of female designers during the period when the majority of theatre directors, producers and playwrights were male. For example, between 1930 and 1965 Motley worked with ninety-four male directors but only seven female directors, whilst Herbert only worked with two women directors in her career.<sup>198</sup> One director of particular interest is Irene Hentschel (1891-1979) who worked with Motley on several Ibsen plays in 1936 and was the first woman director to work at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, on *Twelfth Night* (1939) designed by Motley. Research could be carried out into how the process of working with Hentschel differed from that of Saint-Denis for example.

Finally, I propose to research into Motley designed theatre productions that were also made into Motley designed films. These include; *Great Expectations*, on stage in 1939 and filmed in 1946, *The Innocents* on stage in 1952 and filmed in 1961, and *Long Day's Journey into Night* on stage in 1956 and filmed in 1962.

## 6.5 Contribution to knowledge

This thesis has addressed the paucity of critical engagement with the role of the theatre designer in the creation of theatre productions between 1935-1965. The analysis of Motley's and Herbert's practice during the period of study has suggested an alternative to the prevailing view that linear events or singular personalities have transformative impact, instead exposing the complexity of influences on these practitioners during this period. It has presented examples of how the materials of theatre, such as models, drawings and renderings of sets and costumes, can reveal the ideological approaches to theatre and hierarchical relationships that are embedded in theatre practice.

Through the reconstruction and detailed analysis of the four case studies this thesis has identified Motley's and Herbert's evolving praxis during the period. It has illuminated their relationships with writers and directors in the creation of the productions and revealed the

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<sup>198</sup> Ann Jellicoe (1927-) on *The Sport of My Mad Mother* (1958) co-directed by Devine, and *Skyvers* (1963). Suria Magito (1903-1987) on LTS productions *The Fair* (1937), co-directed by Devine, and *Juanita* (1938), and on *The Magic Bat* (1946).

## CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion

intricacy of the theatre designer's role. It has also contextualised their practice and attitudes to design within modern British theatre practice at this time. In doing so it has added to knowledge about Motley and Herbert as individual designers as well as about theatre design practice in this period. It has identified the influence of British, European and American ideas about theatre reform on Motley and Herbert and on British theatre design in the mid-twentieth century. In addition it has established that there were several key areas that linked Motley's and Herbert's approaches to theatre design despite the apparent visual dissimilarity of their design styles.

Knowledge about the four plays dealt with in the case studies has been extended through this research into their designs. The histories of the London Theatre Studio and English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre have been augmented by the addition of information about how theatre design was practiced in, and viewed by, these important institutions. The connection between the London Theatre Studio and the Royal Court Theatre and the impact of this relationship on the visual ethos of the Court has been revealed. Considerations of the visual philosophy of the Royal Court have widened understanding of its early years and George Devine's 'right to fail' ideology has been shown to affect designers as well as writers. Furthermore, awareness of the process of creating performance by playwrights and directors has been expanded through this evaluation of their interaction with the designer.

Through its study of the seminal theatre designers Motley and Jocelyn Herbert, their approaches to theatre design, working methods, and relationships with directors and playwrights, this thesis has contributed towards a fuller understanding of theatre history by weaving in the rich seam of theatre design.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Jocelyn Herbert and Margaret 'Percy' Harris in 1999 (Courtney, 1999)	iii
Figure 2: Model of a theatrical event and the operating conditions that influence or determine it (Postlewait, 2009, p.18)	17
Figure 3: Model box, <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935) balcony scene, reproduced for Motley exhibition (Motley, 1987a)	31
Figure 4: <i>Othello</i> (1951) costume and colour scheme swatches (Motley, 1951)	48
Figure 5: Digital model of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935) Prologue	51
Figure 6: Digital model of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935) Act 1 Scene 1	51
Figure 7: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935) Act 1 Scene 1, <i>Theatre World</i> December 1935, p26	52
Figure 8: Digital model of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935) Act 1 Scene 2	52
Figure 9: Digital model of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935) Act 1 Scene 3	53
Figure 10: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , sketch of Act I Scene 3 (Motley, 1935q)	53
Figure 11: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935) Act 1 Scene 3 (Anon, 1935i, p.269)	53
Figure 12: Digital model of <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935) Act 1 Scene 5	54
Figure 13: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , sketch of Act I Scene 5 (Motley, 1935r)	54
Figure 14: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935) Act 1 Scene 5 (Anon, 1935i, p.270)	54
Figure 15: Carpaccio, <i>The Dream of Ursula</i> (1495)	55
Figure 16: Guest at a party costume design (Motley, 1935o)	61
Figure 17: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1935) 'marriage scene' staged for press photographs (Park, 1935)	63
Figure 18: Ashcroft as Juliet in 1932 dress (Coster, 1935a)	65
Figure 19: Back view of Ashcroft in 1932 Juliet dress (Coster, 1935b)	65
Figure 20: Detail of Botticelli's <i>Primavera</i> (Botticelli, c.1477)	65
Figure 21: Botticelli's <i>Pallas and the Centaur</i> (Botticelli, c.1445)	65
Figure 22: 1935 Juliet costume design (Motley, 1992, p.22)	66
Figure 23: Painting of Peggy Ashcroft as Juliet (Gabain, 1935)	66
Figure 24: Photograph of Ashcroft as Juliet (Coster, 1935d)	66
Figure 25: Ashcroft as Juliet (Coster, 1935c)	66
Figure 26: Lady Capulet tomb scene costume design (Motley, 1935j)	69
Figure 27: Motley portrait with model box in background. (Coster, 1935e)	70
Figure 28: Model box front view, <i>Three Sisters</i> (1938) Act I, reproduced for Motley exhibition (Motley, 1987b)	75
Figure 29: Model box top view, <i>Three Sisters</i> (1938) Act I, reproduced for Motley exhibition (Motley, 1987b)	75
Figure 30: Stage of Copeau's Theatre Vieux Colombier (Jouvet, 1919)	80
Figure 31: Rehearsals for <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (1932) showing rehearsal clothing of the period (Anon, 1932)	82
Figure 32: London Theatre Studio stage left proscenium arch (Breuer, 1936b)	85
Figure 33: Louis Jouvet with a model showing his adaptations of the Garrick Theatre, New York 1917 (Rudlin, 1986, p.57)	86
Figure 34: Shadows of webbing ceiling on London Theatre Studio stage (Anon, 1936b)	87
Figure 35: Inside the London Theatre Studio lighting control booth (Anon, 1936a)	88
Figure 36: Lighting control booth at London Theatre Studio (Felton, 1936)	88
Figure 37: Scene from <i>Macbeth</i> (Motley, 1937)	99
Figure 38: LTS <i>Three Sisters</i> (1937) rehearsal photograph (Anon, 1937b)	102
Figure 39: Sketch of the LTS <i>Three Sisters</i> (1937) ground plan in London Theatre Studio programme: first show (Anon, 1937a)	102

Figure 40: Large interior with six figures (Vuillard, 1897)	104
Figure 41: Irina coat costume design, Act II (Motley, 1938c)	107
Figure 42: <i>Three Sisters</i> (1938), Acts I and II set rendering with figures (Motley, 1938g)	110
Figure 43: <i>Three Sisters</i> (1938), Acts I and II set rendering (Motley, 1938h)	110
Figure 44: Digital model of <i>Three Sisters</i> (1938), plan view	113
Figure 45: Digital model of <i>Three Sisters</i> (1938), front view	114
Figure 46: Act I, <i>Three Sisters</i> , Andrey is teased (D.C.F., 1938, p.120)	115
Figure 47: Act 1, <i>Three Sisters</i> , Andrey embraces Natasha (D.C.F., 1938, p.120)	115
Figure 48: Irina's costume design, Act I (Motley, 1938a)	117
Figure 49: Natasha costume design, Act I (Motley, 1938f)	118
Figure 50: Irina costume design, Act II (Motley, 1938b)	122
Figure 51: Natasha costume design, Act II (Motley, 1938e)	122
Figure 52: Natasha costume design, Act IV (Motley, 1938f)	123
Figure 53: Natasha production photograph, Act IV (D.C.F., 1938, p.127)	123
Figure 54: Redgrave as Baron Tusenbach (D.C.F., 1938, p.119)	124
Figure 55: Gielgud as Colonel Vershinen (D.C.F., 1938, p.119)	124
Figure 56: Model box for <i>The Kitchen</i> (1961), built for Jocelyn Herbert exhibition 1993 (Herbert, 1993)	130
Figure 57: Ground plan of the Royal Court Theatre permanent surround (Harris, 1956)	136
Figure 58: <i>Mulberry Bush</i> (1956), designed by Motley, rehearsal photograph (Anon, 1956b)	140
Figure 59: <i>The Crucible</i> (1956), designed by Stephen Doncaster (Hamilton in Findlater, 1981)	140
Figure 60: <i>Look Back in Anger</i> (1956), designed by Alan Tagg (Scherschel, 1957)	141
Figure 61: <i>Member of the Wedding</i> (1957), set designed by Alan Tagg (Anon, 1957)	141
Figure 62: Motley designs for basic costume for women (Motley, c.1936)	143
Figure 63: Motley designs for basic costume for men (Motley, c.1936a)	143
Figure 64: Rendering for Act 1 of <i>Roots</i> (Herbert, 1959a)	146
Figure 65: Set rendering <i>Serjeant Musgrave's Dance</i> (Herbert, 1959b)	150
Figure 66: Production photograph <i>Serjeant Musgrave's Dance</i> (Snowdon, 1959)	150
Figure 67: Digital model of <i>The Kitchen</i> (1959 & 1961) front view	155
Figure 68: Digital model of <i>The Kitchen</i> (1959 & 1961) top view	156
Figure 69: <i>The Kitchen</i> (1959) production photograph (Lousada, 1959)	163
Figure 70: <i>The Kitchen</i> (1961) production photograph (Courtney, 1993, p.37)	163
Figure 71: <i>The Kitchen</i> 1959 (Lousada, 1961)	164
Figure 72: <i>The Kitchen</i> 1961 (Anon, 1961)	164
Figure 73: <i>Happy Days</i> set rendering, head bowed, orange sky (Courtney, 1993, p.52)	171
Figure 74: <i>Krapp's Last Tape</i> , Krapp costume sketch (Herbert, 1958a)	179
Figure 75: <i>Krapp's Last Tape</i> , Krapp costume sketch (Herbert, 1958b)	179
Figure 76: <i>Krapp's Last Tape</i> , Krapp costume sketch (Herbert, 1958c)	179
Figure 77: <i>Happy Days</i> set rendering, orange sky with head on mound (Herbert, 1962d)	183
Figure 78: <i>Happy Days</i> set rendering, orange sky with umbrella (Herbert, 1962f)	183
Figure 79: <i>Happy Days</i> set rendering with blue sky (Herbert, 1962b)	184
Figure 80: <i>Happy Days</i> set rendering, blue sky with umbrella (Herbert, 1962c)	184

Figure 81: Detail of Figure 79 mound texture (Herbert, 1962b)	187
Figure 82: Detail of Figure 80 mound texture (Herbert, 1962c)	187
Figure 83: <i>Happy Days</i> production photograph (Anon, 1962a)	189
Figure 84: <i>Happy Days</i> production photo, close up (Anon, 1962b)	189
Figure 85: Cherry Lane Theatre, New York world premiere of <i>Happy Days</i> , 1961 (Anon, 1975)	191
Figure 86: Schiller-Theater Werkstatt, Berlin production of <i>Happy Days</i> , 1961 (Beckett et al., 1986, p.63)	192
Figure 87: <i>Happy Days</i> sketch, Willie kneeling (Herbert, 1962l)	194
Figure 88: <i>Happy Days</i> full-length costume sketch Willie (Herbert, 1962j)	194
Figure 89: <i>Happy Days</i> costume sketch, Willie kneeling (Herbert, 1962k)	195
Figure 90: <i>Happy Days</i> , Willie's head and shoulders (Herbert, 1962g)	195
Figure 91: <i>Happy Days</i> set rendering with pink dress (Herbert, 1962e)	197
Figure 92: <i>Happy Days</i> , sketch of Winnie's head (Herbert, 1962h)	198
Figure 93: <i>Happy Days</i> , sketch of Winnie's head (Herbert, 1962i)	198
Figure 94: <i>Happy Days</i> , Winnie costume sketch (Herbert, 1962a)	199
Figure 95: <i>Happy Days</i> , Winnie costume sketch (Herbert, 1962m)	199

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Motley timeline

Where the three members of Motley worked together they are listed as Motley. Where only one or two members worked on a production they are listed under their individual names although they would have been credited as Motley.

(A black square in left hand column indicates that there are items pertaining to the production in the Motley Collection, Illinois)

UI	YEAR	THEATRE SHOW	director	designer	costume designer if different	Theatre/film company
	1927	<i>The Nativity Play</i>	Tom Harrison	N/A	Motley	St. Martin-in-the-Fields
	1928	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Terence Gray	Dora Paxton	Elizabeth Montgomery	Festival Theatre, Cambridge
	1930	<i>Cochran's Revues</i>	Frank Collins	Unknown	Motley	London Pavilion
	1931	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	John Gielgud	Unknown	Elizabeth Montgomery (two costumes)	Sadler's Wells Theatre season
	1932	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	John Gielgud	Molly McArthur	Motley	Oxford University Dramatic Society
	1932	<i>Men About The House</i>	Andre Charlot	Motley		Globe Theatre
	1932	<i>Richard of Bordeaux</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		Arts Theatre Club
	1932	<i>Strange Orchestra</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		St. Martin's Theatre
	1932	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		Old Vic Theatre
	1932	<i>A Midsummer Nights Dream</i>	Robert Atkins	N/A	Motley	Regents Park Open Air Theatre
	1933	<i>Ball at the Savoy</i>	Oscar Hammerstein	Unknown	Motley	Drury Lane Theatre
	1934	<i>Queen of Scots</i>	John Gielgud	McNight Kaufer	Motley (women's costumes only)	New Theatre
	1934	<i>Spring 1600</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		Shaftesbury Theatre
	1934	<i>The Haunted Ballroom</i>	Geoffrey Toye	Motley		Sadler's Wells Theatre
	1934	<i>Hamlet</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		New Theatre

1934	<i>Sweet Aloes</i>	Tyrone Guthrie	Unknown	Motley	Wyndham's Theatre
1935	<i>The Old Ladies</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		New Theatre
1935	<i>Noah</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		New Theatre
1935	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		New Theatre
1935	<i>Dusty Ermine</i>	A.R. Whatmore	Unknown	Motley	Morris Harvey Arts Theatre
1935	<i>Auccassin and Nicolette</i>	Wendy Toye	Unknown	Motley	Duke of York's Theatre
1936	<i>Richard II</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		New Theatre, Oxford
1936	<i>A Doll's House</i>	Irene Hentschel	Motley		Arts Theatre, Cambridge
1936	<i>Romersholm</i>	Irene Hentschel	Motley		Arts Theatre, Cambridge
1936	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>	Irene Hentschel	Motley		Arts Theatre, Cambridge
1936	<i>The Master Builder</i>	Irene Hentschel	Motley		Arts Theatre, Cambridge
1936	<i>The Happy Hypocrite</i>	Maurice Colbourne	Motley		His Majesty's Theatre
1936	<i>Farewell Performance</i>	Irene Hentschel	Motley		Lyric Theatre
1936	<i>Charles the King</i>	Maurice Colbourne	Motley		Lyric Theatre
1936	<i>The Witch of Edmonton</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		Old Vic Theatre
1936	<i>Bitter Harvest</i>	Stephen Thomas	Unknown	Motley (women's costumes only)	Arts Theatre
1936	<i>Parnell</i>	Normal Marshall	Unknown	Motley	Gate Theatre
1937	<i>A Woman Killed with Kindness</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		London Theatre Studio
1937	<i>The Beaux' Stratagem</i>	Oliver Reynolds	Motley		London Theatre Studio
1937	<i>Hay Fever</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		London Theatre Studio
1937	<i>L'Occasion</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		London Theatre Studio
1937	<i>Candida</i>	Irene Hentschel	Motley		Globe Theatre
1937	<i>Henry V</i>	Tyrone Guthrie	Motley		Old Vic Theatre
1937	<i>He Was Born Gay</i>	Emlyn Williams	Motley		Queen's Theatre

1937	<i>The Great Romancer</i>	Jules Eckert Goodman	Motley		New Theatre
1937	<i>Richard II</i>	John Gielgud, Glen Byam Shaw	Motley		Queen's Theatre
1937	<i>The School for Scandal</i>	Tyrone Guthrie	Motley	Sophie Harris	Queen's Theatre
1937	<i>Macbeth</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		Old Vic Theatre
1938	<i>The Top of the Ladder (never staged)</i>	N/A	Motley		N/A
1938	<i>The Three Sisters</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		Queen's Theatre
1938	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	John Gielgud, Glen Byam Shaw	Motley		Queen's Theatre
1938	<i>Ariadne</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		London Theatre Studio
1938	<i>Electra</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		London Theatre Studio
1938	<i>Judith and Holofernes</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		London Theatre Studio
1938	<i>Dear Octopus</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Motley		Queen's Theatre
1939	<i>Weep for the Spring</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		U.K Tour
1939	<i>Marriage of Blood</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		Savoy Theatre
1939	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Irene Hentschel	Motley		Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1939	<i>The Confederacy</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		London Theatre Studio
1939	<i>Rhondda Roundabout</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Motley		Globe Theatre
1939	<i>Hamlet</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		Kronborg Castle, Elsinore, Denmark
1939	<i>The Importance of Being Ernest</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		Globe Theatre
1939	<i>Great Expectations</i>	George Devine	Motley		Rudolph Steiner Hall
1939	<i>Scandal in Assyria</i>	John Gielgud	Unknown	Motley	Globe Theatre
1940	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Laurence Olivier	Margaret Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery	Margaret Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery	Fifty-First Street Theatre, New York
1940	<i>The Beggars Opera</i>	John Gielgud	Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Glyndbourne Opera Company & Haymarket Theatre

1941	<i>Three Virgins and a Devil</i>	Agnes de Mille	Arne Lundborg	Margaret Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery	Majestic Theatre, New York
1941	<i>The Cherry Orchard</i>	Tyrone Guthrie	Frederick Crooke	Sophia Harris	New Theatre
1942	<i>The Doctor's Dilemma</i>	Guthrie McClintic	Donald Oenslager	Margaret Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery	Shubert Theatre, New York
1942	<i>The Three Sisters</i>	Guthrie McClintic	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Ethel Barrymore Theatre
1942	<i>The Doctor's Dilemma</i>	Irene Hentschel	Michael Relph	Sophia Harris	Haymarket Theatre
1942	<i>Watch on the Rhine</i>	Emlyn Williams	Michael Relph	Sophia Harris	Aldwych Theatre
1942	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	John Gielgud	Motley	Sophia Harris	Phoenix Theatre
1942	<i>Rodeo</i>	Agnes de Mille	Oliver Smith	Elizabeth Montgomery	Metropolitan Opera House, New York
1943	<i>Richard III</i>	George Couthouris	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Forrest Theatre, New York
1943	<i>Dim Lustre</i>	Anthony Tudor	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Metropolitan Opera House, New York
1943	<i>Lovers and Friends</i>	Guthrie McClintic	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Plymouth Theatre, New York
1943	<i>A Month in the Country</i>	Emlyn Williams	Michael Relph	Sophia Harris	St. James's Theatre
1944	<i>Sadie Thompson</i>	Rouben Mamoulian	Boris Aronson	Elizabeth Montgomery	Alvin Theatre, New York
1944	<i>Tally-Ho (or The Frail Quarry)</i>	Agnes de Mille	Elizabeth Montgomery		Metropolitan Opera House
1944	<i>Highland Fling</i>	George Abbot	John Root	Margaret Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery	Plymouth Theatre, New York
1944	<i>The Cherry Orchard</i>	Margaret Webster, Eva Le Gallienne	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	National Theatre, New York
1944	<i>A Bell for Adano</i>	H.C. Porter	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Cort Theatre, New York
1944	<i>The Last of Mrs Cheyney</i>	Tyrone Guthrie	Ernest Stern	Sophia Harris	Savoy Theatre
1945	<i>Pygmalion</i>	Cedric Hardwicke	Donald Oenslager	Elizabeth Montgomery	Ethel Barrymore Theatre, New York
1945	<i>Carib Song</i>	Mary Huter	Jo Mielziner	Elizabeth Montgomery	Adelphi Theatre, New York
1945	<i>The Tempest</i>	Margaret Webster	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Alvin Theatre, New York
1945	<i>Hope for the Best</i>	Marc Connelly	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Fulton Theatre, New York

1945	<i>You Touched Me!</i>	Guthrie McClintic	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Booth Theatre, New York
1945	<i>Skydrift</i>	Roy Hargrave	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Belasco Theatre, New York
1945	<i>The Wind of Heaven</i>	Emlyn Williams	Unknown	Sophia Harris	St James's Theatre
1945	<i>Sigh No More</i>	Noel Coward	Unknown	Sophia Harris	Piccadilly Theatre
1946	<i>He Who Gets Slapped</i>	Tyrone Guthrie	Elizabeth Montgomery		Theatre Guild at the Booth Theatre, New York
1946	<i>The Dancer</i>	Everett Sloane	Elizabeth Montgomery		Biltmore Theatre, New York
1946	<i>Second Best Bed</i>	Ruth Chatterton and Richard Nash	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Ethel Barrymore Theatre, New York
1946	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Piccadilly Theatre
1946	<i>The King Stag</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Young Vic, Lyric Hammersmith
1947	<i>The Shoemaker's Holiday</i>	Nevill Coghill	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Young Vic
1947	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>	John Gielgud	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery	Royale Theatre, New York
1947	<i>The Snow Queen</i>	Suria Magito and Michel Saint-Denis	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Young Vic Company
1948	<i>Anne of a Thousand Days</i>	H.C. Potter	Jo Mielziner	Elizabeth Montgomery	Shubert Theatre, New York
1948	<i>The Wedding</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris		Young Vic Company
1948	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	Anthony Quayle	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1948	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	Anthony Quayle	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1948	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	George Devine	Motley		Old Vic Theatre
1948	<i>A Winter's Tale</i>	Unknown	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1949	<i>Billy the Kid</i>	Unknown	Elizabeth Montgomery		Metropolitan Opera House
1949	<i>South Pacific</i>	Joshua Logan	Jo Mielziner	Motley	Majestic Theatre, New York
1949	<i>As You Like It</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Young Vic Company

1949	<i>The Heiress</i>	John Gielgud	Margaret Harris and Sophia Harris		Haymarket Theatre
1949	<i>Antigone</i>	Laurence Olivier	Roger Ramsdell	Sophia Harris	New Theatre
1949	<i>Marriage Story</i>	Michael MacOwan	Unknown	Sophia Harris	Strand Theatre
1949	<i>Miss Liberty</i>	Moss Hart	Oliver Smith	Elizabeth Montgomery	Imperial Theatre, New York
1950	<i>The Liar</i>	Alfred Drake	Donald Oenslager	Elizabeth Montgomery	Broadhurst Theatre, New York
1950	<i>Happy as Larry</i>	Burgess Meredith	Elizabeth Montgomery		Coronet Theatre, New York
1950	<i>The Innocents</i>	Peter Glenville	Jo Mielziner	Elizabeth Montgomery	Her Majesty's Theatre, London
1950	<i>For Love or Money</i>	Willard Stoker	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Ambassador's Theatre
1950	<i>Bartholomew Fair</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris		Young Vic Company
1950	<i>Hamlet</i>	Hugh Hunt	Margaret Harris (for Elsinore)		Kronburg Castle, Elsinore, Denmark
1950	<i>Peter Pan</i>	John Burrell	Ralph Alswang	Elizabeth Montgomery	Imperial Theatre, New York
1950	<i>Captain Cavallo</i>	Guthrie McClintic	Rolf Gerard	Elizabeth Montgomery	Erlanger Theatre, Buffalo, N.Y.
1951	<i>The Grand Tour</i>	Elmer Rice	Howard Bay	Elizabeth Montgomery	Martin Beck Theatre, New York
1951	<i>The Wedding</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris		Old Vic Theatre
1951	<i>Hassan</i>	Basil Dean	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Cambridge Theatre
1951	<i>Othello</i>	Orson Welles	Margaret Harris		St James's Theatre, London
1951	<i>Henry V</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Motley		Old Vic Theatre
1951	<i>Two on the Aisle</i>	Abe Burrows	Howard Bay	Elizabeth Montgomery	Mark Hellinger Theatre, New York
1951	<i>Colombe</i>	Peter Brook	Gurschner & Stanley Moore	Sophia Harris	New Theatre
1951	<i>Paint Your Wagon</i>	Daniel Mann	Oliver Smith	Elizabeth Montgomery	Shubert Theatre, New York
1952	<i>The River Line</i>	Michael MacOwan	Alan Tagg	Sophia Harris	Lyric Hammersmith
1952	<i>Candida</i>	Herman Shumlin	Donald Oenslager	Elizabeth Montgomery	National Theatre, New York

1952	<i>To Be Continued</i>	Guthrie McClintic	Donald Oenslager	Elizabeth Montgomery	Booth Theatre, New York
1952	<i>The Innocents</i>	Peter Glenville	Jo Mielziner	Sophia Harris	His Majesty's Theatre
1952	<i>Coriolanus</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1952	<i>As You Like It</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1952	<i>Eugene O'Neill</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Sadler's Wells Opera
1952	<i>The Happy Time</i>	George Devine	Vivienne Kernot	Sophia Harris	St James's Theatre, London
1953	<i>Ballad</i>	Agnes de Mille	Elizabeth Montgomery		Agnes de Mille Dance Theatre Company
1953	<i>Conversations Pleasant and Unpleasant</i>	Agnes de Mille	Elizabeth Montgomery		Agnes de Mille Dance Theatre Company
1953	<i>Dances of Elegance</i>	Agnes de Mille	Elizabeth Montgomery		Agnes de Mille Dance Theatre Company
1953	<i>Legends</i>	Agnes de Mille	Elizabeth Montgomery		Agnes de Mille Dance Theatre Company
1953	<i>Can-Can</i>	Abe Burrows	Jo Mielziner	Elizabeth Montgomery	Shubert Theatre, New York
1953	<i>Richard III</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1953	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1953	<i>King John</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris		Old Vic Theatre
1953	<i>Mid-Summer</i>	Paul Crabtree	Howard Bay	Elizabeth Montgomery	Vanderbilt Theatre, New York
1953	<i>Paint Your Wagon</i>	Daniel Mann	Oliver Smith	Elizabeth Montgomery and Sophia Harris	Her Majesty's Theatre, London
1954	<i>Mademoiselle Colombe</i>	Harold Clurman	Boris Aronson	Elizabeth Montgomery	Longacre Theatre, New York
1954	<i>Nelson</i>	George Devine	Felix Kelly	Sophia Harris	Sadler's Wells Opera
1954	<i>The Immoralist</i>	Daniel Mann	George Jenkins	Elizabeth Montgomery	Royal Theatre, New York
1954	<i>Can-Can</i>	Jerome Whyte	Jo Mielziner	Elizabeth Montgomery and Sophia Harris	London Coliseum
1954	<i>Charley's Aunt</i>	John Gielgud	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	New Theatre
1954	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris		Shakespeare Memorial Theatre

1954	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1954	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>	Peter Ashmore, George Devine	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Lyric Hammersmith
1954	<i>I Capture the Castle</i>	Murray MacDonald	Paul Sherif	Sophia Harris	Aldwych Theatre
1954	<i>Peter Pan</i>	Jerome Robbins	Peter Larkin	Motley	Winter Garden Theatre, New York
1954	<i>Wedding in Paris</i>	Charles Hickman	Thea Neu	Sophia Harris	Hippodrome
1955	<i>The Honeys</i>	Frank Corsaro	Ben Edwards	Elizabeth Montgomery	Longacre Theatre, New York
1955	<i>The Young and the Beautiful</i>	Marshall Jamison	Eldon Elder	Elizabeth Montgomery	Longacre Theatre, New York
1955	<i>The Island of Goats</i>	Peter Glenville	Jo Mielziner	Elizabeth Montgomery	Fulton Theatre, New York
1955	<i>The Magic Flute</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris		Sadler's Wells Opera
1955	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1956	<i>Look Back in Anger</i>	Tony Richardson	Alan Tagg	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1956	<i>Cards of Identity</i>	Nigel Davenport	Alan Tagg	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1956	<i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i>	Jose Quintero	David Hays	Elizabeth Montgomery	Helen Hayes Theatre, New York
1956	<i>The Esther Williams Aqua Spectacle of 1956</i>	Unknown	Unknown	Sophia Harris	Empire Pool, Wembley
1956	<i>The Middle of the Night</i>	Joshua Logan	Jo Mielziner	Elizabeth Montgomery	ANTA Theatre, New York
1956	<i>The Most Happy Fella</i>	Joseph Anthony	Jo Mielziner	Elizabeth Montgomery	Imperial Theatre, New York
1956	<i>A Likely Tale</i>	Peter Ashmore	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Globe Theatre
1956	<i>The Mulberry Bush</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1956	<i>Othello</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1956	<i>The Seagull</i>	Michael MacOwan	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Saville Theatre
1956	<i>The Country Wife</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1956	<i>The Chalk Garden</i>	John Gielgud	Reece Pemberton	Sophia Harris	Haymarket Theatre
1956	<i>The Crucible</i>	George Devine	Stephen Doncaster	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre

1957	<i>Shinbone Alley</i>	Peter Lawrence, Rod Alexander	Eldon Elder	Elizabeth Montgomery	Broadway Theatre
1957	<i>Look Homeward, Angel</i>	George Roy Hill	Jo Mielziner	Elizabeth Montgomery	Ethel Barrymore Theatre, New York
1957	<i>As You Like It</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1957	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1957	<i>Requiem for a Nun</i>	Tony Richardson	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1957	<i>The First Gentleman</i>	Tyrone Guthrie	Ralph Alswang	Elizabeth Montgomery	Belasco Theatre, New York
1957	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	Jack Landau	Rouben Ter-Arutunian	Elizabeth Montgomery	American Shakespeare Festival, Connecticut
1957	<i>Mike Todd's Birthday Party (event)</i>	n/a	n/a	Elizabeth Montgomery	Madison Square Garden, New York
1958	<i>Jane Eyre</i>	Demetrios Vilan	Ben Edwards	Elizabeth Montgomery	Belasco Theatre, New York
1958	<i>The Cold Wind and the Warm</i>	Harold Clurman	Boris Aronson	Elizabeth Montgomery	Morosco Theatre, New York
1958	<i>Asmodee</i>	John O'Shaughnessy	Elizabeth Montgomery	Ballou	Theatre 74, New York
1958	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1958	<i>Hamlet</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1958	<i>Major Barbara</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1958	<i>Love Me Little</i>	Alfred Drake	Ralph Alswang	Elizabeth Montgomery	Helen Hayes Theatre, New York
1958	<i>Lady at the Wheel</i>	Wendy Toye, Tommy Linden	Richard Negri	Sophia Harris	Lyric Hammersmith
1958	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	Douglas Seale	Tanya Moisewitsch	Sophia Harris	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre
1959	<i>The Rivalry</i>	Norman Corwin	David Hays	Elizabeth Montgomery	Bijou Theatre, New York
1959	<i>A Majority of One</i>	Dore Scharly	Donald Oenslager	Elizabeth Montgomery	Shubert Theatre, New York
1959	<i>Il Trovatore</i>	Fausto Cleva, Herbert Graf	Elizabeth Montgomery		Metropolitan Opera House, New York
1959	<i>The Magistrate</i>	Douglas Seale	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Old Vic Theatre
1959	<i>King Lear</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Shakespeare Memorial Theatre

1959	<i>Rosmersholm</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1959	<i>Tannhauser</i>	Antony Besch	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Sadler's Wells Opera
1959	<i>The Aspern Papers</i>	Basil Dean	Paul Mayo	Sophia Harris	Queen's Theatre
1959	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	John Houseman, Jack Landau	Will Steven Armstrong	Elizabeth Montgomery	American Shakespeare Festival, Connecticut
1960	<i>Song in the Theatre</i>	Bernard Shaktman	(No sets)	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1960	<i>Simon Boccanegra</i>	Dimitri Mitropoulos, Margaret Webster	Frederick Fox	Elizabeth Montgomery	Metropolitan Opera House, New York
1960	<i>Toys in the Attic</i>	John Dexter	Howard Bay	Sophia Harris	Piccadilly Theatre
1960	<i>The Naming of Murderer's Rock</i>	John Bird	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1960	<i>Ross</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Haymarket Theatre
1960	<i>A Man for All Seasons</i>	Noel Willman	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Globe Theatre
1960	<i>Waiting in the Wings</i>	Margaret Webster	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Duke of York's Theatre
1960	<i>You in Your Small Corner</i>	John Bird	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1960	<i>The Complaisant Lover</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Ethel Barrymore Theatre, New York
1960	<i>Becket</i>	Peter Glenville	Oliver Smith	Elizabeth Montgomery	St James's Theatre, London
1961	<i>The Lady From the Sea</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Queen's Theatre
1961	<i>Dazzling Prospect</i>	John Gielgud	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Globe Theatre
1961	<i>Martha</i>	Carl Ebert, Nino Verchi	Oliver Smith	Elizabeth Montgomery	Metropolitan Opera House, New York
1961	<i>As You Like It</i>	Word Baker	Robert O'Hearn	Elizabeth Montgomery	American Shakespeare Festival, Connecticut
1961	<i>Macbeth</i>	Jack Landau	Robert O'Hearn	Elizabeth Montgomery	American Shakespeare Festival, Connecticut
1961	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	Jack Landau	Robert O'Hearn	Elizabeth Montgomery	American Shakespeare Festival, Connecticut

1961	<i>Kwamina</i>	Robert Lewis, Agnes de Mille	Will Steven Armstrong	Elizabeth Montgomery	Fifty-Fourth Street Theatre, New York
1962	<i>Richard II</i>	Allen Fletcher	Eldon Elder	Elizabeth Montgomery	American Shakespeare Festival, Connecticut
1962	<i>Henry IV Part One</i>	Douglas Seale	Eldon Elder	Elizabeth Montgomery	American Shakespeare Festival, Connecticut
1962	<i>Latin Quarter (event)</i>		Elizabeth Montgomery		
1962	<i>Playing with Fire</i>	John Blatchley	John Bury	Sophia Harris	Aldwych Theatre
1962	<i>The Rake's Progress</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Sadler's Wells Opera
1962	<i>Idomeneo</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris		Sadler's Wells Opera
1962	<i>The Tulip Tree</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Haymarket Theatre
1962	<i>We Take the Town</i>	Alex Segal	Peter Larkin	Elizabeth Montgomery	Shubert Theatre, New Haven
1962	<i>Vanity Fair</i>	Lionel Harris	Tom Lingwood	Sophia Harris	Queen's Theatre
1963	<i>Lorenzo</i>	Arthur Penn	David Hays	Elizabeth Montgomery	Plymouth Theatre, New York
1963	<i>Così fan Tutte</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Sadler's Wells Opera
1963	<i>The Doctor's Dilemma</i>	Donald McWhinnie	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Haymarket Theatre
1963	<i>Where Angels Fear to Tread</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	New Arts Theatre
1963	<i>Der Freischutz</i>	Glen Byam Shaw, Colin Davis	Margaret Harris		New Theatre, Oxford
1963	<i>Mother Courage and Her Children</i>	Jerome Robbins	Ming Cho Lee	Elizabeth Montgomery	Martin Beck Theatre, New York
1963	<i>I 10 in the Shade</i>	Joseph Anthony	Oliver Smith	Elizabeth Montgomery	Broadhurst Theatre, New York
1963	<i>Tovarich</i>	Peter Glenville, Herbert Ross, Rolf Gerrard	Rolf Gerard	Elizabeth Montgomery	Broadway Theatre, New York
1964	<i>A Cuckoo in the Nest</i>	Anthony Page	Alan Tagg	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1964	<i>Hobson's Choice</i>	John Dexter	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	National Theatre at the Old Vic

1964	<i>The Makropoulos Case</i>	John Blatchley, Charles Mackerras	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Sadler's Wells Opera
1964	<i>The Right Honourable Gentleman</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Her Majesty's Theatre
1964	<i>Faust</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris			Opera House, Manchester
1964	<i>Ben Franklin in Paris</i>	Jack Brow	Oliver Smith	Elizabeth Montgomery	Elizabeth Montgomery	Lunt-Fontaine Theatre, New York
1964	<i>Hay Fever</i>	Noel Coward	Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Old Vic Theatre (revived at Duke of York's Theatre 1968)
1965	<i>Trelawny of the "Wells"</i>	Desmond O'Donovan	Alan Tagg and Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Chichester Festival
1965	<i>Spring Awakening</i>	Desmond O'Donovan	Dacre Punt	Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Royal Court Theatre
1965	<i>A Masked Ball</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Sadler's Wells Opera
1965	<i>Baker Street</i>	Harold Prince	Oliver Smith	Elizabeth Montgomery	Elizabeth Montgomery	Broadway Theatre, New York
1965	<i>The Devils</i>	Michael Cacoyannis	Rouben Ter-Arutunian	Elizabeth Montgomery	Elizabeth Montgomery	Broadway Theatre, New York
1966	<i>The Clandestine Marriage</i>	Desmond O'Donovan	Alan Tagg	Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Chichester Festival Theatre
1966	<i>The Fighting Cock</i>	Norman Marshall	Alan Tagg	Alan Tagg and Sophia Harris	Alan Tagg and Sophia Harris	Chichester Festival Theatre
1966	<i>Don't Drink the Water</i>	Stanley Prager	Jo Mielziner	Elizabeth Montgomery	Elizabeth Montgomery	Morosco Theatre, New York
1966	<i>You Never Can Tell</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Haymarket Theatre
1966	<i>La Boheme</i>	John Blatchley	Margaret Harris	Sophia Harris	Sophia Harris	Sadler's Wells Opera
1966	<i>The Rivals</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Anthony Powell	Anthony Powell	Haymarket Theatre
1967	<i>The Unknown Soldier and His Wife</i>	John Dexter	Elizabeth Montgomery			Vivian Beaumont Theatre, New York
1967	<i>The Dance of Death</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris			National Theatre at the Old Vic
1967	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Elizabeth Montgomery	Haymarket Theatre
1967	<i>Wise Child</i>	John Dexter	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Elizabeth Montgomery	Wyndham's Theatre
1968	<i>The Bells</i>	Marius Goring	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Elizabeth Montgomery	Vaudeville Theatre

1968	<i>The Mastersingers of Nuremberg</i>	Glen Byam Shaw, John Blatchley	Margaret Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery	David Walker	Sadler's Wells Opera
1969	<i>Trio</i>	Michael Denison	Margaret Harris		Yvonne Arnaud Theatre
1970	<i>The Heretic</i>	Morris West with Joseph O'Connor	Don Ashton	Elizabeth Montgomery	Duke of York's Theatre
1970	<i>The Wild Duck</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Margaret Harris	Elizabeth Montgomery	Criterion Theatre
1970	<i>Three</i>	Michael Denison	Margaret Harris and Elizabeth Montgomery		Fortune Theatre
1972	<i>War and Peace</i>	Colin Graham	Margaret Harris		Sadler's Wells Opera
1975	<i>A Family and a Fortune</i>	Alan Strachan	Margaret Harris		Apollo Theatre
1976	<i>Tosca</i>	John Blatchley	Margaret Harris		English National Opera
1976	<i>Paul Bunyan</i>	Colin Graham	Margaret Harris		English Musical Theatre
1978	<i>The Consul</i>	David Ritch	Margaret Harris		English National Opera



1953	<i>Melba</i>	Lewis Milestone	Unknown	Sophia Harris and Beatrice Dawson	Horizon Pictures
1955	<i>Oklahoma!</i>	Fred Zinnemann	Oliver Smith & Joseph C. Wright	Elizabeth Montgomery	MGM Magna Theatres/Todd-AO
1955	<i>The Adventures of the Scarlet Pimpernel</i>	various	Duncan Sutherland	Motley	Television series
1957	<i>Barnacle Bill (US: All at Sea)</i>	Charles Friend	Alan Witly	Sophia Harris	Ealing
1961	<i>The Innocents</i>	Jack Clayton	Wilfred Shingleton	Sophia Harris	Achilles/Twentieth Century Fox
1961	<i>A Taste of Honey</i>	Tony Richardson	Ralph Brinton	Sophia Harris	Woodfall Films
1962	<i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i>	Sidney Lumet	Richard Sylbert	Elizabeth Montgomery	Embassy Pictures
1962	<i>Night of the Eagle</i>	Sidney Hayers	Jack Shampman	Sophia Harris	Independent Artists
1962	<i>The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner</i>	Tony Richardson	Ralph Brinton	Sophia Harris	Woodfall-Bryanston-Seven Arts
1963	<i>The Sporting Life</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Alan Witly	Sophia Harris	Independent Artists
1963	<i>Night Must Fall</i>	Karel Reisz	Timothy O'Brien	Sophia Harris	MGM British
1964	<i>The Pumpkin Eater</i>	Jack Clayton	Edward Marshall	Sophia Harris	Romulus Films
1965	<i>The Spy Who Came in From the Cold</i>	Martin Ritt	Tambi Larsen	Sophia Harris	Salem Films, for Paramount
1965	<i>Fog</i>	James Hill	Alex Vetchinsky	Sophia Harris	Compton-Tekli-Sir Nigel-Planet for Colombia
1966	<i>Dance of the Vampires</i>	Roman Polanski	Wilfrid Shingleton	Sophia Harris	Cadre Films-Filmways for MGM

**Appendix 2: Jocelyn Herbert timeline**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>THEATRE SHOW</b>	<b>director</b>	<b>designer</b>	<b>costume designer if different</b>	<b>Theatre/film company</b>
<b>1937</b>	<i>The Fair</i>	George Devine and Suria Magito	Jocelyn Herbert		London Theatre Studio
<b>1938</b>	<i>Juanita</i>	Suria Magito	Jocelyn Herbert		London Theatre Studio
<b>1946</b>	<i>The Magic Bat</i>	Suria Magito	Jocelyn Herbert		Toynbee Hall
<b>1951</b>	<i>Les Mouches</i>	unknown	S. John Woods	Jocelyn Herbert	Group Theatre at the New Theatre
<b>1954</b>	<i>Mistress of the Inn</i>	George Devine	Jocelyn Herbert		Piccolo Theatre Company, Chorlton Cum Hardy
<b>1957</b>	<i>The Chairs</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert		Royal Court Theatre
<b>1957</b>	<i>Purgatory</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert		The Devon Festival
<b>1958</b>	<i>The Sport of My Mad Mother</i>	George Devine and Ann Jellicoe	Jocelyn Herbert		Royal Court Theatre
<b>1958</b>	<i>The Lesson</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert		Royal Court Theatre
<b>1958</b>	<i>Krapp's Last Tape</i>	Donald McWhinnie	Jocelyn Herbert		Royal Court Theatre
<b>1958</b>	<i>Endgame</i>	George Devine	Jocelyn Herbert		Royal Court Theatre
<b>1959</b>	<i>Roots</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert		The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
<b>1959</b>	<i>The Kitchen</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert		Royal Court Theatre
<b>1959</b>	<i>Serjeant Musgrave's Dance</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert		Royal Court Theatre
<b>1960</b>	<i>I'm Talking about Jerusalem</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert		The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
<b>1960</b>	<i>Chicken Soup with Barley</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert		Royal Court Theatre
<b>1960</b>	<i>Trials by Logue</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert		Royal Court Theatre
<b>1961</b>	<i>The Changeling</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert	David Walker	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1961</b>	<i>The Kitchen</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert		Royal Court Theatre

1961	<i>Richard III</i>	Bill Gaskill	Jocelyn Herbert	The Royal Shakespeare Theatre
1961	<i>Luther</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1962	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1962	<i>Chips with Everything</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1962	<i>Happy Days</i>	George Devine	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1963	<i>Baal</i>	Bill Gaskill	Jocelyn Herbert	Phoenix Theatre
1963	<i>Slyvers</i>	Ann Jellicoe	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1963	<i>Exit the King</i>	George Devine	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1964	<i>The Seagull</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert	Queen's Theatre
1964	<i>Play</i>	George Devine	Jocelyn Herbert	Old Vic Theatre
1964	<i>Othello</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	National Theatre at the Old Vic
1964	<i>Saint Joan of the Stockyards</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert	Queen's Theatre
1964	<i>Inadmissible Evidence</i>	Anthony Page	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1964	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1965	<i>Mother Courage and Her Children</i>	Bill Gaskill	Jocelyn Herbert	National Theatre at the Old Vic
1965	<i>A Patriot for Me</i>	Anthony Page	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1966	<i>The Lion and the Jewel</i>	Desmond O'Donovan	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1967	<i>Ghosts</i>	Alan Bridges	Jocelyn Herbert	RSC at The Aldwych
1967	<i>Orpheus and Euridice</i>	N/A	Jocelyn Herbert	Sadler's Wells Theatre
1969	<i>Life Price</i>	Peter Gill	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1969	<i>Hamlet</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert	The Roundhouse
1970	<i>Three Months Gone</i>	Ronald Eyre	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
1970	<i>Come and Go &amp; Play</i>	Bill Gaskill	Jocelyn Herbert	Theatre Upstairs, Royal Court Theatre
1970	<i>Home</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre

<b>1971</b>	<i>A Woman Killed With Kindness</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	National Theatre at the Old Vic
<b>1971</b>	<i>The Changing Room</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1971</b>	<i>Tyger</i>	Michael Blakemore and John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert with William Dudley	The National Theatre at The New
<b>1973</b>	<i>Krapp's Last Tape</i>	Anthony Page	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1973</b>	<i>Not I</i>	Anthony Page	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1973</b>	<i>Cromwell</i>	Anthony Page	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1973</b>	<i>Savages</i>	Robert Kidd	Jocelyn Herbert with Andrew Sanders	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1974</b>	<i>Life Class</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1974</b>	<i>Pygmalion</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert with Andrew Sanders	The Albery Theatre
<b>1975</b>	<i>What The Butler Saw</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1975</b>	<i>Teeth 'n' Smiles</i>	David Hare	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1976</b>	<i>That Time</i>	Donald McWhinnie	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1976</b>	<i>Footfalls</i>	Samuel Beckett	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1976</b>	<i>Rum an' Coca-Cola</i>	Donald Howard	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1977</b>	<i>The Merchant</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	Plymouth Theatre, New York
<b>1977</b>	<i>Lulu</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	Metropolitan Opera House, New York
<b>1977</b>	<i>La Forza del Destino</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert with Andrew Sanders	Theatre National de l'Opera, Paris
<b>1978</b>	<i>Saratoga</i>	Ronald Eyre	Jocelyn Herbert	RSC at The Aldwych
<b>1979</b>	<i>Happy Days</i>	Samuel Beckett	Jocelyn Herbert	Royal Court Theatre
<b>1979</b>	<i>Die Entfuhrung aus dem Serail</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	Metropolitan Opera House, New York
<b>1979</b>	<i>The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahogany</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	Metropolitan Opera House, New York

<b>1980</b>	<i>Early Days</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert	Brighton Theatre Royal
<b>1980</b>	<i>The Life of Galileo</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	The Olivier Theatre
<b>1981</b>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert	Theatre Royal, Stratford East
<b>1981</b>	<i>The Oresteia</i>	Peter Hall	Jocelyn Herbert	The National Theatre in the Olivier
<b>1982</b>	<i>The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	The Mermaid Theatre
<b>1983</b>	<i>Heartbreak House</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	Haymarket Theatre
<b>1984</b>	<i>The Devil and the Good Lord</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	Lyric Hammersmith
<b>1985</b>	<i>Gigi</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	The Lyric Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue
<b>1986</b>	<i>The Mask of Orpheus</i>	David Freeman	Jocelyn Herbert	English National Opera
<b>1987</b>	<i>J.J. Farr</i>	Ronald Eyre	Jocelyn Herbert	Phoenix Theatre
<b>1988</b>	<i>Timon of Athens</i>	Simon Usher	Jocelyn Herbert	The Studio, Haymarket Theatre
<b>1988</b>	<i>The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus</i>	Tony Harrison	Jocelyn Herbert	Ancient Stadium of Delphi, Greece
<b>1988</b>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	Leicester Haymarket Theatre
<b>1988</b>	<i>Creon</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	Leicester Haymarket Theatre
<b>1989</b>	<i>Catastrophe</i>	Antoni Libera	Jocelyn Herbert	Leicester Haymarket Theatre
<b>1989</b>	<i>Krapp's Last Tape</i>	Antoni Libera	Jocelyn Herbert	Leicester Haymarket Theatre
<b>1989</b>	<i>The March on Russia</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert	The National Theatre in the Lyttelton
<b>1989</b>	<i>The Threepenny Opera</i>	John Dexter	Jocelyn Herbert	Lunt-Fontaine Theatre, New York
<b>1992</b>	<i>Square Rounds</i>	Tony Harrison	Jocelyn Herbert	The National Theatre in the Olivier
<b>1992</b>	<i>Stages</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert	The National Theatre in the Cottesloe
<b>1995</b>	<i>The Kaisers of Carnunatum</i>	Tony Harrison	Jocelyn Herbert	Roman Amphitheater Petronell Carnuntum Austria
<b>1995</b>	<i>The Labours of Herakles</i>	Tony Harrison	Jocelyn Herbert	European Cultural Centre of Delphi

	<b>FILM</b>					
<b>1963</b>	<i>Tom Jones</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert			Woodfall Films
<b>1968</b>	<i>Isadora</i>	Karel Reisz	Jocelyn Herbert			Universal City Studios
<b>1968</b>	<i>If...</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert			Memorial Enterprises Film
<b>1970</b>	<i>Ned Kelly</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert			Woodfall Film Productions
<b>1973</b>	<i>O Lucky Man!</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert			Memorial Enterprises Film
<b>1983</b>	<i>Hotel New Hampshire</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert			Woodfall Film Productions
<b>1987</b>	<i>The Whales of August</i>	Lindsay Anderson	Jocelyn Herbert			Alive Films Production with Circle Associates Ltd
<b>1998</b>	<i>Prometheus</i>	Tony Harrison	Jocelyn Herbert			Arts Council England with Film Four

### Appendix 3: List of Harris/Devine books in Devine Family Archive

- Blum, A. & Chassé, C. (1931) *Histoire du costume. Les modes au XIXe siècle*. Paris: Hachette.
- Boehn, M. U. von (1932) *Dolls and puppets*. London: George G. Harrap.
- Courthion, P. (1956) *Henri Rousseau*. Bibliotheque Aldine des Arts 34. Paris: Fernand Hazan.
- Disher, M. W. (1925) *Clowns and pantomimes*. London: Constable.
- Ilyin, M. (1953) *Utrillo*. Bibliotheque Aldine des Arts 28. Paris: F. Hazan.
- Komisarjevsky, T. (1933) *Settings and costumes of the modern stage*. London: Studio.
- Leymarie, J. (1948) *Les dessins de Degas*. Bibliotheque Aldine des Arts 1. Paris: F. Hazan.
- Matida, K. (1938) *Odori (Japanese dance)*. Tourist Library 22. Tokyo: Board of tourist industry, Japanese Government Railways.
- Nogami, T. (1938) *Japanese Noh plays: how to see them*. Tokyo: Board of Tourist Industry, Japanese Government Railways.
- Noma, S. & Weatherby, M. (1957) *Masks*. Rutland [usw.]: Charles E. Tuttle.
- Schneider-Lengyel, I. (1934) *Die welt der maske*. Munchen: R Piper & co.
- Sheringham, G. (1927) *Design in the theatre*. London: Studio.
- Simonson, L. (1932) *The stage is set*. New York: Harcourt & Brace.
- Simonson, L. (1934) *Theatre art*. New York: Museum of Modern Art ;W.W. Norton & company inc.
- Tériade, E. (1937) *Verve: an artistic and literary quarterly appearing in December, March, June and October*. Vol. Vol. 1, No. 1 (December). Paris: 4 Rue Ferou.
- Tériade, E. (1938) *Verve : an artistic and literary quarterly*. Vol. Spring 1938 (March-June). Paris: 4 Rue Ferou.
- Tériade, E. (1939a) *Verve: an artistic and literary quarterly*. Vol. No.4 (January-March). Paris: 4 Rue Ferou.
- Tériade, E. (1939b) *Verve: the French review of art*. Vol. Nos.5–6 (July-Oct). Paris: 4 Rue Ferou.
- Tériade, E. (1940) *Verve: the French review of art*. Vol. No. 8, Vol. 2. Paris: 4 Rue Ferou.
- Unknown (1949) *Les cris de paris*. n.d.? Zodiac Books.
- Various (1935) *Costume: London museum catalogues no.5*. 2nd edition. London Museum.

<b>Temple Shakespeare books</b>		<b>Publishers: London, J.M. Dent</b>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>Published date</b>	annotated	sketches	<b>signed</b>
<i>Julius Caesar</i>	1906	yes	no	M.F. Harris 49
<i>Hamlet</i>	1919	yes	yes	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>Macbeth</i>	1919	yes	no	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>King Henry VIII</i>	1919	no	no	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane; M.F.H. from E.M. Xmas 1929...
<i>King Richard II</i>	1923	yes	yes	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>King Henry V</i>	1924	yes	yes	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane; M.F.H. from E.M.
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	1925	no	no	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>Measure for Measure</i>	1925	no	no	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	1925	yes	yes	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>King Henry IV Pt 1</i>	1925	no	no	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>Twelfth Night</i>	1926	yes	yes	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>Othello</i>	1926	yes	no	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>Othello</i>	1926	yes	no	E.M. from M.F.H FEB 1929
<i>As You Like It</i>	1927	no	no	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane; M.F.H. from E.M. MAY 1930
<i>Taming of the Shrew</i>	1927	no	no	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	1927	no	yes	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>King Richard III</i>	1929	yes	no	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>Cymbeline</i>	1929	no	no	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane; M.F.H. 1932
<i>King Lear</i>	1930	no	no	M.F. Harris 67 St Martins Lane
<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	n/d	yes	no	Peggie Harris 1933
<i>Hamlet</i>	1934	no	no	
<b>New Temple Shakespeare books</b>		<b>Publishers: London, J.M. Dent &amp; Sons; New York, E.P. Dutton &amp; Co</b>		
<i>Othello</i>	1935	no	no	
<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	1944	no	no	
<i>Richard II</i>	1946	yes	yes	M.F. Harris 52
<i>King John</i>	1946	yes	yes	M.F. Harris 53
<i>King John</i>	1946	no	no	
<i>Venus &amp; Adonis, Rape of Lucrece, The Phoenix &amp; the Turtle</i>	1946	no	no	M.F. Harris 53
<i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i>	1948	yes	no	M.F. Harris 50
<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	1948	no	no	M.F. Harris 50
<i>Sonnets</i>	1949	no	no	M.F. Harris 53
<i>Anthony &amp; Cleopatra</i>	1949	yes	no	M.F. Harris 52

#### Appendix 4: List of copies of Wardle interview transcripts

Photocopies of transcripts of Wardle interviews that are in Devine Family Archive

Forename	Surname	Date	Year	Pages
John	Allen	8th May	1975	13
John	Blatchley	n/d	n/d	3
Glen	Byam Shaw	3rd Oct	1975	8
Glen	Byam Shaw	28th July	1972	6
Glen	Byam Shaw	Aug	1972	10
Francis	Crowdie	21st June	1974	7
Stephen	Doncaster	18th Nov	1972	13
Laura	Dyas	25th July	1974	28
John	Gielgud	31st March	1973	23
Marius	Goring	5th May	1973	10
Marius	Goring	11th Feb	1975	6
Marius	Goring	24th Oct	1972	11
George	Hall	14th Sept	1973	12
Margaret (Percy)	Harris	20th July	1972	14
Margaret (Percy)	Harris	21st Sept	1973	19
Dr John	Henderson	26th June	1973	1
Jocelyn	Herbert	3rd July	1973	11
Hugh	Hunt	2nd March	1973	21
Val	May	3rd Nov	1972	19
Harry	Mills	8th Feb	1974	10
Yvonne	Mitchell	27th March	1973	24
Lee	Montague	18th April	1973	14
Elizabeth	Montgomery	16th Oct	1972	6
Laurence	Olivier	4th May	1973	14
Litz	Pisk	9th June	1973	20
Giles	Playfair	20th Oct	1972	6
Llewellyn	Rees	31st Oct	1972	13
Vera	Russell (née Poliakoff, alias Lindsay)	1st May	1973	22
Vera	Russell (née Poliakoff, alias Lindsay)	10th Nov	1974	2

## Appendix 5: Details of *Design by Motley* exhibition

### Statement taken from the Motley exhibition grant application

From the 150-plus productions represented by the designs in the University of Illinois Motley Collection, we plan to select a dozen productions from distinct dramatic genres: a Shakespeare play, an American musical, a modern classic, an opera, and a West End comedy. Each genre will receive individual treatment on a separate freestanding theme island. One centerpiece will explain how the set design responds to the script's demands; a second centerpiece will treat costumes. The centerpiece will focus on the realization of a dramatic moment in color, line, form, and space as it leaps onstage from the words of the script. For each production selected, we plan to elucidate the process of interpretation as it evolved from the designers' conceptions through rehearsal and performance to the critics' reactions. Detailed textual commentary will provide the play's literary background and set forth the problems in interpretation and staging it poses. Scale model sets made in the designers' London studio will augment the original Motley set designs. Replica costumes, with a few remnants of actual costumes from the vaults of the Royal Shakespeare Company and other costume stores, will be manufactured for the exhibition under the designers' supervision by the staff of the University of Illinois (UIUC) Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. (Mullin, 1986b)

### List of reproduction model boxes used in *Design by Motley* exhibition

Reproduction Model Boxes			
Play	Theatre/Company	Date	Director
<i>The Haunted Ballroom</i>	Sadler's Wells Theatre	1934	Ninette de Valois
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	New Theatre	1935	John Gielgud
<i>Three Sisters</i>	Queen's Theatre	1938	Michel Saint-Denis
<i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i>	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre	1953	Glen Byam Shaw
<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre	1955	Glen Byam Shaw
<i>Othello</i>	Shakespeare Memorial Theatre	1956	Glen Byam Shaw
<i>Requiem for a Nun</i>	Royal Court Theatre	1957	Tony Richardson
<i>Il Trovatore</i>	Metropolitan Opera, New York	1959	Herbert Graf
<i>A Man For All Seasons</i>	Globe Theatre	1960	Tony Richardson

### List of original or photographed designs and sketches used in *Design by Motley* exhibition

Archive ref	Play name	Date	Detail/character	original
321212/2	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	1932	Prince of Arragon costume	Photo
371126/41	<i>Macbeth</i>	1937	Mask for 1st Witch	Original
380421/7	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	1938	Painter's elevation of Belmont	Photo
400509/1	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	1940	Tybalt costume	Photo
320000/1	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	1932	Tybalt costume	Original
530428/1	<i>Anthony and Cleopatra</i>	1953	Part I costumes	Photo

561107/1	<i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i>	1956	Mary costume - I, ii	Original
561107/2	<i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i>	1956	Mary costume - Fay Bantor	Original
561107/3	<i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i>	1956	Mary costume - IV	Original
620202/24	<i>The Rakes Progress</i>	1962	Procession through arch outside Tom's House	Original
571126/1	<i>Requiem for a Nun</i>	1957	Living room scene in Red, Grey, White interior	Original
360408/2	<i>The Happy Hypocrite</i>	1936	Act I, scene vii	Original
670001/1	<i>Esther Williams Water Show</i>	1956	Costume	Original
570000/1	<i>Michael Todd's Birthday Party</i>	1957	Elizabeth Taylor's Peasant girl costume	Original
591026/3	<i>Il Trovatore</i>	1959	Dancers in orange - female	Original
530507/2	<i>Can-Can</i>	1953	Apache Number, 2 dancers	Original
380128/7	<i>The Three Sisters</i>	1938	Acts I and II	Original
601110/5	<i>Toys in the Attic</i>	1960	Carrie - Wendy Hiller	Original
601110/6	<i>Toys in the Attic</i>	1960	Carrie - Wendy Hiller	Original
561107/4	<i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i>	1956	Jamie - I	Original
601005/7	<i>Becket</i>	1960	French Court 6 Figures	Original
601005/6	<i>Becket</i>	1960	Henry - Anthony Quinn	Original
350702/3	<i>Noah</i>	1935	Brown Bear	Photo
380128/2	<i>The Three Sisters</i>	1938	Irina - Act I	Original
380128/3	<i>The Three Sisters</i>	1938	Irina - Act II	Original
380128/7	<i>The Three Sisters</i>	1938	Photo showing 14 characters	Photo
511112/5	<i>Paint Your Wagon</i>	1951	Carrabelle - Jake's Palace Act II	Original
490407/1	<i>South Pacific</i>	1949	Nurses - Act I, scene iii and viii	Original
511112/1	<i>Paint Your Wagon</i>	1951	The Madame - I, ii	Original
511112/6	<i>Paint Your Wagon</i>	1951	Duke's Place - II, I - Cancan girl	Original
620202/2	<i>The Rakes Progress</i>	1962	Babba, Act II	Original
591026/2	<i>Il Trovatore</i>	1959	6 Attendant women - II, ii	Original
591026/11	<i>Il Trovatore</i>	1959	Trees on heavy cardboard (Garden Tree Ground)	Photo
650000/6	<i>Fog (Colombia Pictures)</i>	1965	3 Gentlemen	Original
551009/1	<i>Oklahoma (MGM)</i>	1955	8 Chorus girls- rough	Original
650000/6	<i>Fog (Colombia Pictures)</i>	1965	Holmes - John Neville	Original
650000/6	<i>Fog (Colombia Pictures)</i>	1965	Dr. Watson - Donald Huston	Original

**Appendix 6: Motley/contemporary Romeo & Juliet scene divisions**

2015 scene listing	Scene summary by S. Jump	Scene numbering on 1935 set renderings	Motley Archive 1935 set renderings reference	1935 scene numbering	Scene numbering in Harris's 1985 plans	Motley Archive 1985 plans ref (all 351017-023)	<i>Theatre World</i> (Dec, 1935) ref noted on 1985 plans	Notes marked on 1985 plans
	<b>Prologue</b>							
<b>I.1</b>	Street fight/Prince			<b>1.1</b>				
<b>I.2</b>	Paris & Capulet arrange Juliet marriage			<b>1.2</b>	Act I sc1	P.01	top page 269	street scene
<b>I.3</b>	Lady C, Juliet & Nurse tell of Paris			<b>1.3</b>	Act I scene 2	p.02		set changed to Sc 3 behind d.s P/S runners
<b>I.4</b>	Romeo, Merc, Benv ready for party (Queen Mab)	Act 1 scene iv	35017-010	<b>1.4</b>				(Queen Mab) (set half Scene 6 behind d.s. p/s runners)
<b>I.5</b>	Serving folk conversation			<b>1.5</b>	Act I scene 4	p.03		Both down stage runners drawn (O.P half of sc.6 is set)
<b>I.5</b>	Party	Party	35017-011 35017-017	<b>1.6</b> <b>1.7</b>	Act I scene 5 Act I scene 6	p.03 p.04	bottom p270	Party
<b>II.1</b>	Chorus and Romeo over wall			<b>1.8</b>	Act 1 scene 7	p.04		Overheard wall Both downstage traverse drawn

<b>II.2</b>	Balcony	Act I scene ix	35017-013	<b>1.9</b>	scene 8	p05	top page 281	Orchard & balcony (Juliette [sic] opens shutters). (Sc 9 is set behind upstage P.S. traverse - Friars arches on trolley). 1/2 minute curtain after this scene - shutters closed etc
<b>II.3</b>	Friar Lawrence cell	Act I scene x	35017-014	<b>1.10</b>	Act I sc 9	p06		Friar Lawrence cell ( set sc10 behind downstage O.P. Traverse)
<b>II.4</b>	Romeo Mercutio Nurse Peter			<b>1.11</b>	sc 10	p.07		Nurse Mercutio Street
<b>II.5</b>	Nurse tells Juliet			<b>1.12</b>	Sc 11	p.08	(Motley scrap book)	Juliette [sic] and Nurse / Goes into Friar Lawrence cell. O.P. Downstage traverse drawn across . P.S. upstage traverse drawn back
<b>II.6</b>	Friar Lawrence cell ready for marriage	Act I scene xiii	35017-014	<b>1.13</b>				
<b>III.1</b>	Tybalt Mercutio deaths	Act I scene xiv	35017-015	<b>1.14</b>	Sc 13	p.09	p272 & p281	Mercutio Death. <u>Act Interval</u> (set bedroom rostrum etc)
<b>INTERVAL IN 1935 PRODUCTION</b>								
<b>III.2</b>	Juliet bedroom, hears of death	Act II scene i	35017-017	<b>II.1</b>	Act II sc 1	p.10		Cords Juliette [sic] and Nurse [indecipherable]
<b>III.3</b>	Friar Lawrence cell - banished	Act II scene ii	35017-014	<b>II.2</b>	sc.2	p.10		Friar Lawrence cell

<b>III.4</b>	Capulet & Paris discussing wedding				<b>II.3</b>	sc. 3*	p.10	onstage	
<b>III.5</b>	Romeo leaving Juliet in bed. Lady C & C tell J she marries Paris				<b>II.4</b>	sc.4	p.10	Capulet comes out of door. Also Act III sc1 Apothecary + awning farewell O.P. downstage traverse drawn back P.S. upstage ditto	
<b>IV.1</b>	Friar Lawrence cell w Paris & Juliet. Poison given.	35017-014	Act II scene v		<b>II.5</b>	sc.5	p.10	Friar Lawrence cell	
<b>IV.2</b>	Juliet pretends will marry Paris				<b>II.6</b>	sc.6	p.10	starts on stage finishes bedroom	
<b>IV.3</b>	Juliet goodbye Lady C & takes poison				<b>II.7</b>	sc.7	p.10	bedroom	
<b>IV.4</b>	Lady C send Nurse to wake Juliet				<b>II.8</b>	sc.8	p.10	bedroom	
<b>IV.5</b>	Juliet discovered				<b>II.9</b>	sc.9	p.10	bedroom 1/2 interval	
<b>HALF INTERVAL IN 1935 PRODUCTION</b>									
<b>V.1</b>	Romeo hears J dead & Apothecary				<b>II.10</b>	Act II sc 10	p.12	Mantua (tomb being set)	
<b>V.2</b>	Friar John and Lawrence- message not sent	35017-014	Act II scene xi		<b>II.11</b>	Act II.sc 11	p.13	Friar John (tomb being set) upstage O.P. runner [and] downstage P.S. runner drawn back for scene 12	
<b>V.3</b>	Tomb scene Romeo kills Paris R&J die	35017-015			<b>II.12</b>	Act II sc12	p.14	Tomb	

**Appendix 7: LTS items belonging to George Devine**

**Transcript of document in Devine Family Archive (Devine, 1935)**

[LTS]

Property of George Devine

STAGE

- 1 12ft. "Diamond" Platform Ladder
- 1 Pair White Runners – approx 14 ft. high
- 6 Braces and Braceweights

ELECTRICAL

- 2 1000 Watt. Spots complete with lens and bulb
- 4 500 Watt. Spots
- 4 1000 Watt. Floods
- 4 500 Watt Floods
- Various colour frames
- Masks
- 4 Stands
- 2 Dimmers – sliding type
- 2 Junction boxes
- 2 Knuckle Brackets
- 1 Epidiascope and Resistance
- 1 Foot-candle meter
- Spare Lenses

MUSICAL

- E.M.G. Twin turntable specially constructed Theatre Amplifier with two loudspeakers

MISCELLANEOUS

- Corona Silent portable Typewriter

### Appendix 8: George Devine timeline – director/lighting/actor

Where credited in the programme Devine is listed as lighting designer, although it is known that he usually lit productions he directed and may have been involved in lighting other productions that he was involved in.

Year	Theatre show or film	Director	Designer	Lighting	Devine acting role	Costume designer if different
1932	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	John Gielgud	Molly Macarthur		Mercutio	Motley
1932	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	Ernest Milton?	E. McKnight Kauffer		Salanio	
1932	<i>Le Cocu Magnifique</i>	Komisarjevsky	Komisarjevsky		The Herdsman	
1932	<i>Evensong</i>	A Stewart	L Irving		Senor Luis Moreno	
1933	<i>Caesar and Cleopatra</i>	Harcourt Williams	Owen Paul Smythe		Lucius Septimus	
1933	<i>The Admirable Bashville</i>	Harcourt Williams	Owen Paul Smythe		Lord Worthington	
1933	<i>The School for Scandal</i>	Harcourt Williams	Owen Paul Smythe		Moses	
1934	<i>Magnolia Street</i>	Komisarjevsky	Komisarjevsky		Mr Poyser	
1934	<i>The Voyage Inheritance</i>	Harcourt Williams/ Granville Barker	Molly Macarthur		Rev. Evan Colpus	
1934	<i>Queen of Scots</i>	John Gielgud	McKnight Kauffer		Earl of Morton	Motley (women's costumes only)
1934	<i>Hamlet</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		Bernardo and First Player	
1935	<i>Noah</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley		The Bear and the Man	
1935	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	John Gielgud	Motley		Peter	
1936	<i>The Seagull</i>	Komisarjevsky	Komisarjevsky		Shamraef	
1937	<i>Richard II</i>	John Gielgud	Motley	George Devine	Gardener	

1937	<i>School for Scandal</i>	Guthrie	Motley	Moses	
1937	<i>Three Sisters</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley	George Devine	Andrey
1937	<i>The Fair</i> (LTS production)	George Devine & Suria Magito	Jocelyn Herbert		
1937/ 1938	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	John Gielgud and Glen Byam Shaw	Motley	George Devine	Launcelot Gobbo
1938	<i>The White Guard</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Margaret Jennings		Viktor Myslajevsky
1938	<i>Dear Octopus</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Motley	George Devine	
1938	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Vivienne Kernot		Sir Toby Belch
1939	<i>Weep for the Spring</i>	Michel Saint-Denis	Motley	George Devine	
1939	<i>Rhonda Roundabout</i>	Glen Byam Shaw	Motley		Dai Hippo
1939	<i>Great Expectations</i>	George Devine	Motley		
1940	<i>Rebecca</i>	George Devine	Roger Furse		
1940	<i>The Tempest</i>	George Devine and Marius Goring	Oliver Messel		
1940	<i>The Millionairess</i>	George Devine	Unknown		
1946	<i>The Skin of Our Teeth</i>	Laurence Olivier	Unknown		Mr Antrobus
1946	<i>The King Stag</i>	George Devine	Motley		
1947	<i>The Shoemaker's Holiday</i>	George Devine	Motley		
1948	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	George Devine	Motley		
1949	<i>The Servant of Two Masters</i>	George Devine	Vivienne Kernot		
1950	<i>The Knight of the Burning Pestle</i>	George Devine	Vivienne Kernot		
1950	<i>Bartholemew Fair</i>	George Devine	Motley		
1951	<i>The Wedding</i>	George Devine	Motley		
1951	<i>Don Carlos</i>	George Devine	Unknown		

1952	<i>The Mortimer Touch</i>	George Devine	Unknown				
1952	<i>The Happy Time</i>	George Devine	Vivienne Kernot		Uncle Louis		Sophie Harris
1952	<i>Eugene Onegin</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris (Motley)				Sophie Harris
1952	<i>Volpone</i>	George Devine	Malcolm Pride				
1953	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	George Devine	Malcolm Pride				
1953	<i>King Lear</i>	George Devine	Robert Colquhoun				
1953	<i>Taming of the Shrew</i>	George Devine	Vivienne Kernot				
1953	<i>King John</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris (Motley)				
1954	<i>Mistress of the Inn</i>	George Devine	Jocelyn Herbert				
1954	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>	Peter Ashmore, George Devine	Margaret Harris (Motley)		George Tesman		Sophie Harris
1954	<i>Nelson</i>	George Devine	Felix Kelly				Sophie Harris
1954	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	George Devine	High Casson				
1954	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris (Motley)				
1955	<i>The Magic Flute</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris (Motley)				
1955	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	John Gielgud	Mariano Andreu		Dogberry		
1955	<i>King Lear</i>	George Devine	Isamu Noguchi		Gloucester		
1956	<i>The Mulberry Tree</i>	George Devine	Motley				
1956	<i>The Crucible</i>	George Devine	Stephen Doncaster		Danforth		Sophie Harris

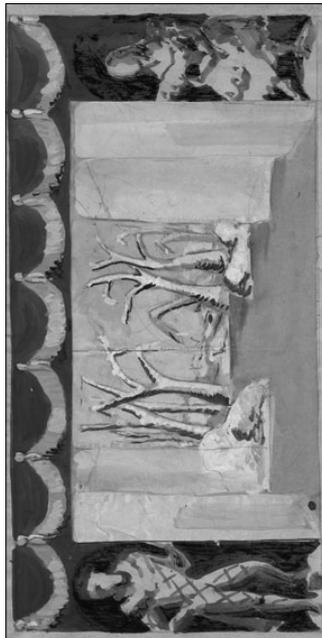
1956	<i>Don Juan &amp; Death of Satan</i>	George Devine	John Minton			Richard Negri
1956	<i>Cards of Identity</i>	Tony Richardson	Alan Tagg		Father Golden Orfe	
1956	<i>The Good Woman of Setzuan</i>	George Devine	Teo Otto			Sophie Harris
1956	<i>The Country Wife</i>	George Devine	Margaret Harris (Motley)		Pinchwife	Sophie Harris
1957	<i>The Chairs</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert		The Old Man	
1957	<i>Nekrassov</i>	George Devine	Richard Negri			
1957	<i>The Making of Moo</i>	Tony Richardson	Audrey Cruddas		Frederick Compton	
1958	<i>The Sport of My Mad Mother</i>	George Devine with Ann Jellicoe	Jocelyn Herbert			
1958	<i>Major Barbara</i>	George Devine	Motley		Undershaft	
1958	<i>Live Like Pigs</i>	Anthony Page	Alan Tagg			
1958	<i>Endgame</i>	George Devine	Jocelyn Herbert		Hamm	
1959	<i>Cock-A-Dooodle-Doody</i>	George Devine	Sean Kenny			
1959	<i>Look After Lulu</i>	Tony Richardson	Roger Furse		Putzboum	
1959	<i>Romersholm</i>	George Devine	Motley			
1960	<i>Platonov</i>	George Devine	Richard Negri			
1961	<i>August for the People</i>	George Devine	Stephen Doncaster			
1961	<i>Luther</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert		Staupitz	
1961	<i>The Way of the World</i>	George Devine	Unknown			
1962	<i>Brecht on Brecht</i>		n/a		recital	
1962	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	George Devine	Unknown			
1962	<i>Happy Days</i>	George Devine	Jocelyn Herbert			
1963	<i>Spring Awakening</i>	Desmond O'Donovan	n/a Sunday night performance		The Man at the End	

<b>1963</b>	<i>Exit the King</i>	George Devine	Jocelyn Herbert		
<b>1964</b>	<i>Play</i>	George Devine	Jocelyn Herbert		
<b>1964</b>	<i>The Seagull</i>	Tony Richardson	Jocelyn Herbert	Dorn	
<b>1965</b>	<i>A Patriot for Me</i>	Anthony Page	Jocelyn Herbert	Baron von Epp	

Appendix 9: Visual timeline of Herbert's designs 1946-1961



Jocelyn Herbert Archive JH/4/3 JH0156



Jocelyn Herbert Archive JH/4/3 JH0159

1946

*The Magic Bat*

by unknown

Directed: Suria Magito (later Suria Saint-Denis)

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Toynbee Hall)



Jocelyn Herbert Archive JH/4/4 JH0160

1951

*Les Mouches*

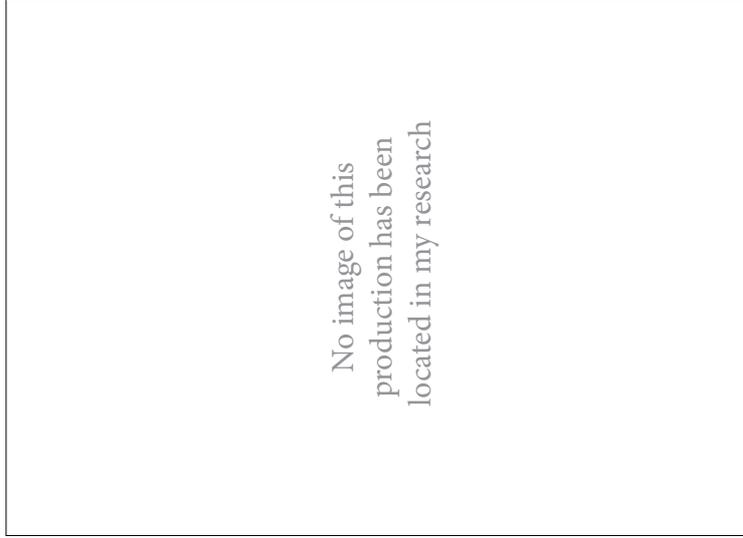
by Sartre

Directed: unknown

Designed: S. John Woods

Costumes: Jocelyn Herbert

(Group Theatre at the New Theatre)



1954

*Mistress of the Inn*

by Goldoni

Directed: George Devine

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Piccolo Theatre Company)



JH/4/5 JH0191



V&A Theatre and Performance archive THM/273/6/1/68

1957

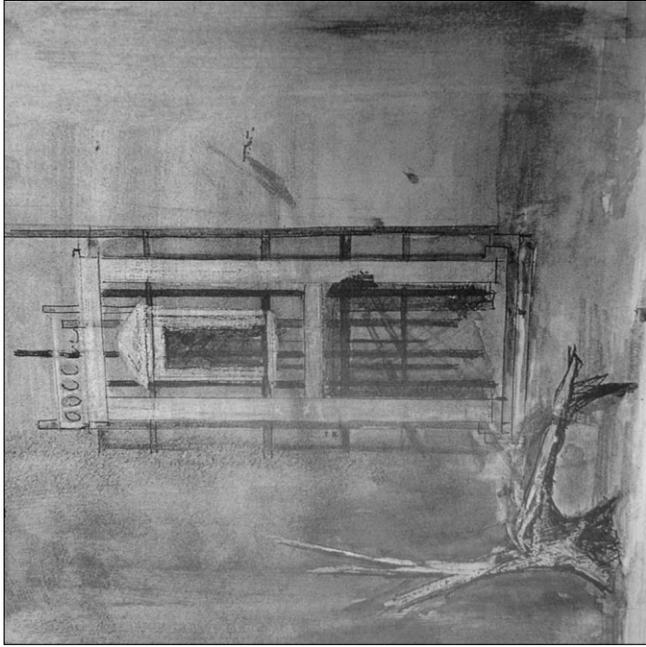
*The Chairs*

by Eugene Ionesco

Directed: Tony Richardson

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Royal Court Theatre)



JH/4/6 JH4658

1957

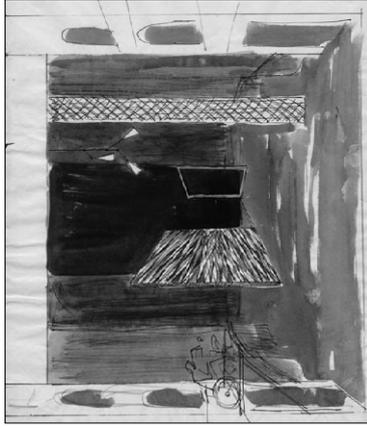
*Purgatory*

by W.B. Yeats

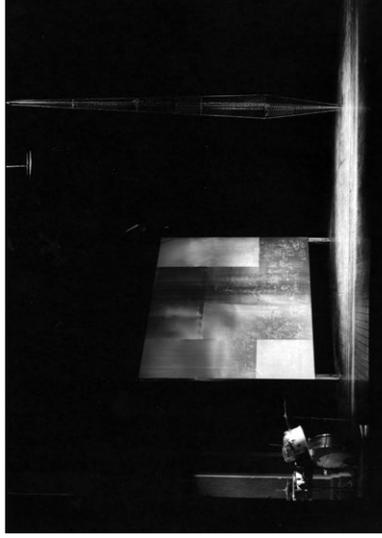
Directed: John Dexter

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Devon Festival)



JH/4/7 JH0448



JH/9/1/27

1958

*The Sport of My Mad Mother*

by Anne Jellicoe

Directed: George Devine and Anne Jellicoe

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Royal Court Theatre)



JH/4/29 JH0218

1958

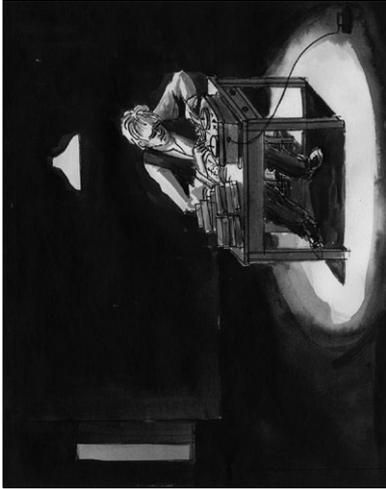
*The Lesson*

by Eugene Ionesco

Directed: Tony Richardson

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Royal Court Theatre)



JH/4/9 JH1748



National Portrait Gallery NPGx127344

1958

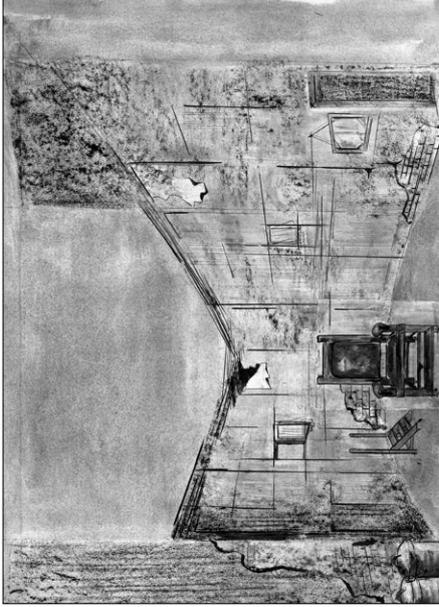
*Krapp's Last Tape*

by Samuel Beckett

Directed: George Devine and Donald McWhinnie

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Royal Court Theatre)



JH/4/8 JH1458

1958

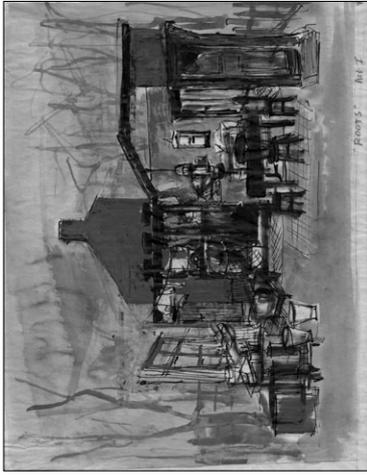
*Endgame*

by Samuel Beckett

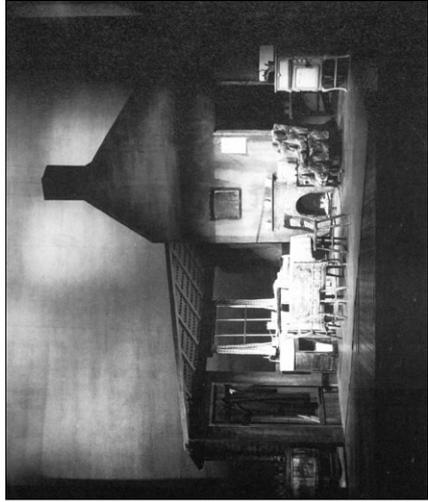
Directed: George Devine and Donald McWhinnie

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Royal Court Theatre)



JH/4/11 JH5387



JH/9/1/27

1959

**Roots**

by Arnold Wesker

Directed: John Dexter

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Belgrade Coventry & Royal Court Theatre)



Sandra Lousada Archive 2914-9 'The Kitchen'

1959

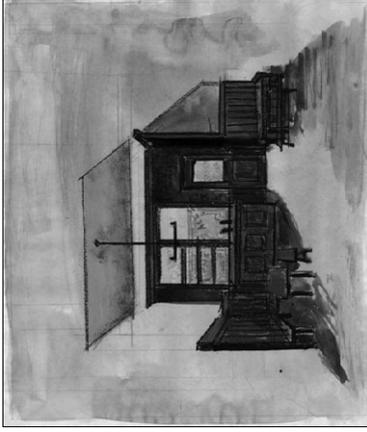
**The Kitchen**

by Arnold Wesker

Directed: John Dexter

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Sunday Night without decor at Royal Court Theatre)



JH/4/10 JH0367



Courtney (1993) p.43

1959

**Serjeant Musgrave's Dance**

by John Arden

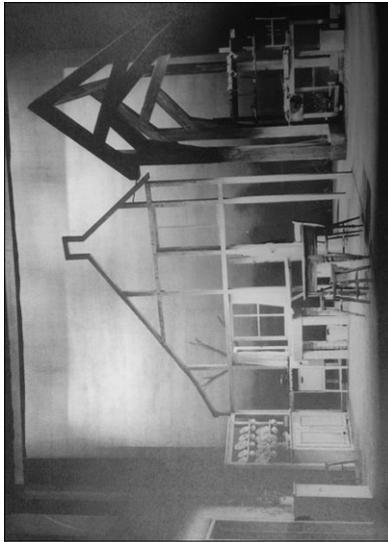
Directed: Lindsay Anderson

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Royal Court Theatre)



JH/4/16 JH5373



JH/9/1/27

1960

*I'm Talking About Jerusalem*

by Arnold Wesker  
 Directed: John Dexter  
 Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Belgrade, Coventry and Royal Court Theatre)



JH/4/18 JH5411



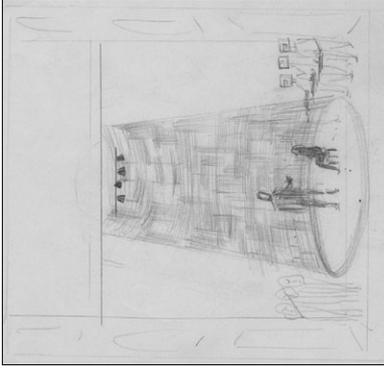
JH/9/1/27

1960

*Chicken Soup with Barley*

by Arnold Wesker  
 Directed: John Dexter  
 Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Belgrade, Coventry and Royal Court Theatre)



JH/4/13 JH5268



JH/4/12 JH5220

1960

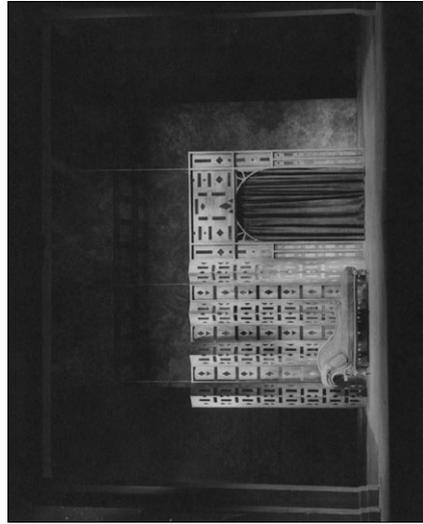
*Antigone* (top) & *Cob and Leach* (bottom)

by Christopher Logue  
 Directed: Lindsay Anderson  
 Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Royal Court Theatre)



JH9/1/27



JH9/1/27

1961

***The Changeling***

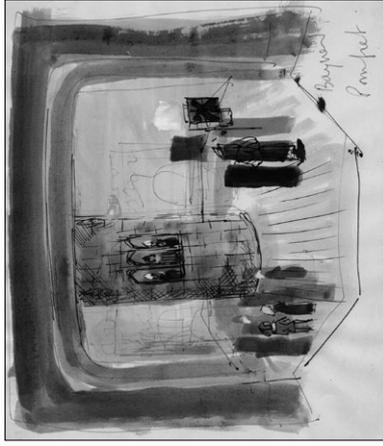
by Thomas Middleton & William Rowley

Directed: Tony Richardson

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

Costumes: David Walker

(Royal Court Theatre)



JH/4/15 JH2805



<http://www.abds.rhul.ac.uk/abdscollections/docroot/shakespeare/performance/details.do?performanceId=11822>

1961

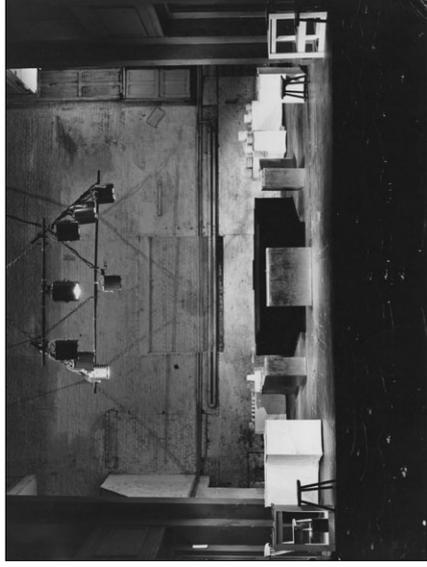
***Richard III***

by William Shakespeare

Directed: Bill Gaskill

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Royal Shakespeare Theatre)



JH9/1/27

1961

***The Kitchen***

by Arnold Wesker

Directed: John Dexter

Designed: Jocelyn Herbert

(Belgrade Theatre, Coventry & Royal Court Theatre)

**Appendix 10: *The Kitchen* cast lists**

<b>Character name</b>	<b>1959 Royal Court Theatre (RCT) production</b>	<b>1961 June RCT production</b>	<b>1961 August RCT production</b>
<i>Mac (Mags) [Magi]</i>	Alan Howard	Tommy Eytley	Rodney Douglas
<i>First Waitress</i>	Jennifer Wallace	Jane Herrow	Valerie Varnham
<i>Max</i>	Tenniel Evans	Martin Boddey	Martin Sterndale
<i>Mangolis</i>	Peter Gill	Marcos Marcou	Panayiotis Jacovou
<i>Paul</i>	Alfred Lynch	Harry Landis	Harry Landis
<i>Raymond (Raymondo)</i>	James Culliford	Andre Bolton	Steven Berkoff
<i>Anne</i>	Patsy Byrne	Gladys Dawson	Gladys Dawson
<i>Second Waitress</i>	Tarn Bassett	Ida Goldapple	Ida Goldapple
<i>Third Waitress</i>	Mary Miller	Rita Tushingham	Jeanne Watts
<i>Fourth Waitress</i>	Jeanne Watts	Jeanne Watts	Shirley Cameron
<i>Dimitri (Dimitrios)</i>	Charles Kay	Dimitri Andreas	Dimitri Andreas
<i>Hans</i>	Christopher Sandford	Wolf Parr	Edward Fox
<i>Alfredo</i>	Jack Rodney	Reginald Green	Reginald Green
<i>Gaston</i>	David Ryder	Andreas Markos	Andreas Markos
<i>Michael</i>	James Bolam	James Bolam	James Bolam
<i>Bertha</i>	Gwen Nelson	Jessie Robins	Mai Bacon
<i>Nicholas (Nick)</i>	Anthony Carrick	Andreas Lysandrou	Andreas Lysandrou
<i>Kevin</i>	John Briggs	Brian Phelan	Michael McKeivitt
<i>Peter</i>	Robert Stephens	Robert Stephens	Jeremy Brett
<i>Frank, second chef</i>	Kenneth Adams	Ken Parry	Ken Parry
<i>First Chef</i>	Arnold Yarrow	Arnold Yarrow	Arnold Yarrow
<i>Fifth Waitress</i>	Ida Goldapple	Shirley Cameron	June Dawes
<i>Sixth Waitress</i>	Brenda Peters	Sandra Caron	Alison Morris
<i>Seventh Waitress</i>	Sandra Miller	Tarn Bassett	Charlotte Selwyn
<i>Eighth Waitress</i>	Ann King	Charlotte Selwyn	Glenda Jackson
<i>Mr. Marango (Marango)</i>	Nigel Davenport	Andrea Malandrinos	Andrea Malandrinos
<i>Monica (Monique)</i>	Anne Bishop	Mary Peach	Sandra Caron
<i>Head Waiter</i>	Cecil Brock	Charles Workman	Charles Workman
<i>Tramp</i>	Patrick O'Connell	Patrick O'Connell	Windsor Davies
<i>(Old Waitress)</i>	--	Alison Bayley	Alison Bayley

George Devine Award performance 13th June 1966 The National Theatre at the Old Vic (Unassigned parts listed alphabetically in programme)
Peggy Ashcroft
Jill Bennett
James Bolam
Miriam Brickman
Noel Coward
Barry Evans
Edward Fox
Reginald Green
Joan Greenwood
Barbara Hicks
Stratford Johns
Harry Landis
Geraldine McEwan
Andreas Markos
Riggs O'Hara
Laurence Olivier
John Osborne
Toni Palmer
Mary Peach
Brian Phelan
Ronald Pickup
Joan Plowright
Vanessa Redgrave
Sheila Reid
Malcolm Reynolds
Maggie Smith
Robert Stephens
Sybil Thorndike
Christopher Timothy
Rita Tushingham
Jeanne Watts
Barbara Windsor
Frank Wylie
Arnold Yarrow

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