It might be said that the oration, the Public Advertiser, and Jopson's Coventry Mercury predicted the course to be taken by the popular press. The mystical ideas of creator and creature, the Mercury's sudden intimate union of Shakespeare with daily life, the Advertiser's interpretation of the Jubilee as opposition to critical authority, appeared in many newspaper columns. The writings were for the most part ephemeral, but even the fliegende Blätter of the daily paper will show the way the wind blows. If the reaction to the Jubilee in the theaters can be dismissed as farce, the reaction in the popular periodicals can be classified as fad. It was, however, a fad of gargantuan proportions, and one which showed its kinship to romanticism as did the Jubilee itself.

Romanticism when it came redefined the terms poet, poetry, and criticism. The new definitions did not come about as a result of edict. They came, rather, as new concepts absorbed the interest previously devoted to other critical ideas. Neo-classical views were not outlawed by judicial decision; they withered from inanition. Absolutes of decorum, unities, and poetic justice, ideals of didacticism and clarity, standards of the current historical era as the peak of civilization were gradually abandoned. Where it was accepted that eighteenth-century man lived in the best of all possible worlds as far as taste was concerned, it was natural that he should correct the gothic barbarities of earlier and less enlightened days; so he regularized faulty vocabulary, plot structure, grammar, scansion, and morals as a
matter of duty. Where a poet was regarded as a teacher committing to his age a received ethic in traditional form, he was judged by his conformity to received standards and by his effectiveness in transmitting them. Where a critic held a judicial office, enforcing rules stated in mathematical digits pertaining to five acts, three characters, ten syllables, twenty-four hours, and one place, the critic tested by these rules. But Garrick had said at Stratford that a poet's own historical milieu was a significant factor in understanding poetry, that a poet was a creator who made his own world, that the methodology of criticism was "Consult your own hearts." At least, he had said this about Shakespeare. When the public took him at his word, the result was a flood of Shakespearean commentary that explicated these precepts.

Lest we be borne away by the flood, let us establish a few landmarks. In the first place, popular periodicals are not the only evidence of a nation's cultural life. Even though Shakespeare in this area set up such a monopoly that one would think all other writers had vanished, still the editions of Milton came from the press, still Pope and Gray and Richardson and Fielding held their reading public, and Bunyan's sales were second only to those of the King James Version. During this time men were turning more and more to the well of English undefiled that is to be found in Chaucer. Dr. Jewel Wurtzbaugh included the years in question within the period she calls "The High Tide of Interest" in Spenser, and her facts amply substantiate her title.

It was only that no one at all wrote letters to the editor about these writers. No one acted charades about Comus. No one wrote songs named "Sweet Eddy-O," or riddles about Britomart or moral meditations on the Slough of Despond or analyses of the emotional life of the Red Cross Knight. One scornful reference to Bunyan said that his allegory, like Spenser's, "wearied
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the modern mind.” Among all that magazine verse about Shake­speare there was one lone “Imitation of Spenser,” and even it was about “the Avon crown’d with flowers.” There was one imitation of an imitation of Milton based on “The Splendid Shilling.” One political controversy used Milton as an analogy. One dedicatory epistle urged the young recipient to avoid the errors of Eve. One jest book, among the multitudes of those using cuts of Falstaff and Shakespeare’s statue and quotations from them on title pages, took as its motto: “Mirth, with thee I mean to live.” Nobody went to Mrs. Cornelys’ masquerades dressed as Satan or Apollyon—and yet it does not follow that the Devil upon Two Sticks replaced the other two fiends in the intellectual life of the nation.

I refer to the eleven years that followed the Jubilee and include the year of Garrick’s death, and I refer to material sent spontaneously from the reading public. The critical reviews and Gentleman’s Magazine had more intellectual sophistication and were not quite so subject to fad; they had also staffs paid to review other writings. Although there was a preponderance of interest in Shakespeare which was striking, one does not get from those publications the feeling that all other English literature had vanished overnight. Even in those publications, the important truth holds that these general concepts applied only to Shake­speare for a long time. The Shakespeare monopoly had a certain geographical factor; the grip of Bardolatry lessened somewhat with the miles between the place of publication and Drury Lane. The Yorkshire Magazine devoted the bulk of its criticism to “That school of morality” to be found in Shakespeare’s plays, to Kemble’s reading of Garrick’s ode to Shakespeare, Sheridan’s “Monody on Garrick,” but occasionally it gave way to an old-fashioned taste for the heroic couplet and quoted Dryden or Collins. The Scot’s Spy: or Critical Observer stubbornly per­sisted in quoting nothing but the Bible, although foreign visitors
to England during the period were struck with the frequency and tone of Shakespeare quotations from pulpit and bar and in the speeches of Parliament. In Dublin the headmaster of the English grammar school, Samuel C. Whyte, perversely said he preferred Addison’s *Cato* to Shakespeare for school theatricals. Edinburgh and Glasgow could not quite give up Milton. But caught up in the fad, one feels these outlandish views were for outlanders. And there was recalcitrance in Wales. Oh, not in the home of young Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, who adorned the Stratford Jubilee, imitated many features of it when he invited eighteen thousand guests to celebrate his coming of age the next year, and promptly instituted a famous series of amateur theatricals at Wynnestay; in 1783 he was in charge of the Handel Jubilee, but in a spirit of emulation, not opposition, as Lord Le Despencer had a jubilee to Bacchus in conscious imitation of Garrick, and those members of the Edinburgh Theatre Royal who were unable to come to Stratford held their own Edinburgh Shakespeare Jubilee on opening day. But in Wales there was a gorgeous exception to the rule of Bardolatry, a noble effort at a counteroffensive. It is true that Sir William Jones, kept from Stratford because he had to read the proof sheets of his history, wrote a letter that day to Lady Spencer suggesting a Milton Jubilee, but that was only a private letter, and his spirit was one of admiration. It was in quite another spirit that Sir W---- L----, knight of P-n--n, Pembrokeshire, held the great Addison Jubilee of 1772. His story is told by that organ of high society, the *Town and Country Magazine.* He firmly said that Shakespeare was not the god of his idolatry. Addison was. At his own expense he held an elaborate reactionary jubilee modeled on the Stratford festival. On a milk-white steed he led a two-mile procession of Addison’s characters, “walked” by guests and professional actors, ending with “a device representing the funeral of Envy.” A laurel-decked statue

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of Addison stood in the specially built rotunda beneath a painting of Britannia crowning Addison as her source of greatest pride. One act of *Cato* was performed. "A Song for Saint Cecilia's Day" was performed and Addison's hymns were sung. Balls featured the De Coverley dances. Medals engraved with Addison's profile rewarded the winners of the horse races. He persuaded three couples to "allay the celebration of their nuptials till this opportunity," and his infant son was christened Joseph Addison as part of the celebration. Certainly the knight could draw a check as courageously as ever Welshman drew sword in defense of his principles. In his oration he announced: "I have solemnly ordained by will that our festivities be renewed septennially, and have obliged my heirs (in case of my decease) to expend five hundred pounds upon every such occasion."

But alas for his hope that "posterity will applaud the happy prelude we have made." He had no genuine Addison gloves, no Addisonian coach dog "spoted like a leper," no mulberry tree. There was not a ripple in the Shakespeare flood, not a letter to *St. James Chronicle* on "What Addison Means to Me." The true jubilee madness was lacking. The choice of a date was rational, even corrected to the current calendar. His rotunda did not wobble. All the properties of the host-guest relation were preserved, placing him beyond the reach of satire and its great advertising power. Most important of all: whereas the god of Garrick's idolatry had been no respecter of persons, here the multitudes were called "the rabble," "the plebians," "the commonalty." The valiant knight tried to fight fire with fire, to restore the Age of Reason by the methods of irrationality. He took many a leaf from Garrick's book; to sell a national poet he should have taken more.

Within the popular press there is a body of writing that seems to be an exception to the declared rule of Shakespeare's perfection. It lies in the theatrical reviews, and forms a parallel with
the writings of the professional men of the theater during the entire neoclassical period in that both bodies of writing represent dissent from the critical generalities of their times. Straight through the period of neoclassical criticism there runs the thin red line of British rebellion against French rules. France had seen a great classical age of drama when writers gave pragmatic proof of how good a classical drama could be. The English stage, for good or ill, had Shakespeare, and men who knew the stage knew his greatness. Rymer was not a professional man of the theater; Farquhar was, and he answered Rymer as best he could. So did Samuel Butler, one of the authors of The Rehearsal, and John Dennis, author of six plays. Seasoned stage hands like Rowe, Fielding, Murphy, and Foote always denied that the rules had jurisdiction over Shakespeare. Pope, with only one youthful effort at drama, could hardly be classed as a professional man of the theater, but Gay was his close associate and he was an ardent playgoer—and he added the opinion of the best poet of the century. Steele, successful playwright, submitted Shakespeare as a model of stage technique. Addison, though he was criticized by Dennis for his slavish adherence to the rules, pointedly exempted Shakespeare from them, saying, "Our inimitable Shakespeare is a Stumbling-block to the whole tribe of these rigid Criticks."

And when the shift toward romanticism made current a new vocabulary of criticism, it is strange indeed to see the old terminology linger longest in the professional theater critics. The old idiom of unities, barbarities, faults, and beauties survived in stage reviews and in comments on stage productions until the end of the century, long after Edward Taylor's Cursory Remarks on Tragedy (1774), often cited as the last gasp of neoclassical strictures.

When Garrick in 1772 perpetrated his ultimate horror (from a romantic point of view) in his alteration of Hamlet, the
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contributors to newspaper columns approved. It was a common trick to raise a ghost to comment on a situation, and Shakespeare's spirit rose and gave Garrick his blessing:

Freely correct my page!
I wrote to please a rude, unpolish'd age;
Thou, happy man, art fated to display
Thy dazzling talents to a brighter day;
Let me partake the night's applause with thee,
And thou shalt share immortal fame with me.⁴

This seems to take us right back to 1711, when Elijah Fenton in An Epistle to Mr. Southerne, from Kent spoke so kindly and condescendingly to Shakespeare:

Be all thy faults, whatever faults there be,
Imputed to thy time, and not to thee.

By 1772 the errors of earlier times were not viewed in Shakespeare's writings as culpable deviations from a perfect classical norm, but were new beauties to the eyes of historical relativism, and had become (most romantic of all critical terms) interesting.

The vocabulary arose not from classical ideals in the writers, but with reference to practical stage problems, and was used only in commenting on stage alterations. Critics were faced with a paradox: Shakespeare was perfect, and yet the plays had to be altered for the stage. The out-of-date strictures were useful in accounting for tamperings with the perfect texts. The writings of Francis Gentleman on the subject cite so many rules, display such insistence on didacticism and decorum, that careful excerpting can make him read like an out-and-out Thomas Rymer. This, indeed, has been done, despite the fact that Gentleman in a complete reading shows remarkable similarities to William Hazlitt. Gentleman wrote as a practical man with bills to be
paid, live actors to be managed, solid stage equipment to be moved. When he and others elevated Garrick's taste above Shakespeare's, they meant he could adapt scenes to these ends. If delicate ears reddened at the words of Juliet's nurse, cut the lines. If an actress needed time to change a costume, let Gobbo sing. If the public would pay to see a final tête-à-tête between Romeo and Juliet, let the public have it, and a funeral cortege also. Pad the ladies' scenes to give Henry IV more popular appeal. Alter King Lear if "eighteen lines furnish a better pause for the skirmish that is supposed than seven." That the plays were altered surprises no one who knows how they were staged during the romantic period and during our own day. Only the critical vocabulary is surprising because it justifies alteration by terms that were out of style elsewhere. The justifications were always arguments ad hoc and ad hominem.

Once these modifications and exceptions are recorded, it is hardly possible to overstate either the volume or the ebullience of Shakespeare commentary. It began with the Jubilee. Some considerable fraction of the literate populace must have dashed off a poem about it as a matter of daily routine. When at last the Jubilee palled, there was still Shakespeare, and the habit had been formed. The volume swelled when Garrick left the stage and doubled at the time of his death; I have seen twenty-four such verses in a single issue of a daily paper. One genre, the rhymed prologue and epilogue for theatrical productions, usually printed in periodicals, was inundated for years by the Shakespeare-Garrick combination.

In the general press the Jubilee was used to comment on a wide variety of subjects. If ridicule for the Ossian cult was the point to be made, an Ossian jubilee was suggested. Other readers could be counted on to pursue the subject, naming an inaccessible location where all the inconveniences of Stratford could be duplicated as necessary to a jubilee. Another would suggest
someone to write an ode for the occasion that would be as classical as Garrick's. If, on the other hand, some contributor was really offended that William Duff had classified Shakespeare along with Ossian as a primitive genius, his tone was more serious, but the Jubilee would still serve as a framework. Jubilee extravagance proved the moral flaws of the entertainment world, and was an explanation of the moral and economic instability of the state. Perhaps this problem was especially acute in Scotland, for James Boswell included a refutation in the version of his Jubilee letter published there. The followers of Wilkes parodied Boswell's ode to prove they too loved liberty. "Warwickshire" was parodied in Wilkes's honor by pro-Wilkes factions, and in ridicule of him by anti-Wilkes factions. Both factions described a Wilkes jubilee with processions of notables selected as sympathies dictated. The Wilkes Jest Book: or the Merry Patriot reprinted the jokes of both sides. A favorite means of commenting on current events was an account of an auction of a jubilee medal or a statue, either Shakespeare's or a statue of the character directly discussed. There were stock Jubilee jokes with variations. When someone appeared in an ostentatious new dress, it was smart to ask, "Are you going to walk in the jubilee procession?" A man who could not pay his debts would be advised to plead the Jubilee; presumably his creditors also would have taken that expensive outing and would be more inclined to sympathize than to sue.

These matters are relatively simple to tabulate and explicate; we all know about Duff and Wilkes and Junius and clothes and debts. But the Jubilee touched areas of eighteenth-century life that are more obscure, and a devious path some of the allusions have led me, constantly tempted astray by the obituary notices and the strange ailments people died of then (they were overlaid, and perished of a qualm) and the alluring patent medicines on the market to allay such ailments, and the Shakespeare
embroidery patterns, and recipes with unclassically vague proportions, and the odd garments worn to court balls, and race horses named for Shakespeare, and dangerous landslides at Dover, now called Shakespeare's Cliffs because of Gloucester. One verse urged Garrick to go to Runnymede and put on a jubilee in honor of the Magna Charta, because British liberty came from it, and art can flourish only in a free state, and since freedom was on the wane, a jubilee might help things along. That is clear enough; some documents relating to the Magna Charta had just been presented to the British Museum by the Earl of Stanhope, and it all seems quite coherent except for phrases that have to do with horse racing. The earnest explicator notes them, but it may be some days and many miles thence that the mystery is solved. An underhanded attempt had been made to curtail British liberty in the races at Runnymede.

Only a few pieces of fiction used the Jubilee or related subjects as plot devices. *The Correspondents* (1775) took it as a thread of a plot for a vague epistolary narrative. Some of the characters attended the Jubilee and discussed it at dinner. After dinner the female correspondent started to write a poem about the Jubilee, and the male correspondent (knowing, no doubt, that such a poem would follow the Jubilee as a conditioned reflex) surreptitiously read it. There followed a discussion by mail marked by strongly feminist claims on Shakespeare as the Ladies' Poet and proving that a lady could write a Jubilee poem without incurring a blemish on her modesty. A novel by Mrs. Frances Brooke, *The Excursion* (1777), in its original form incorporated the satiric attacks on Garrick when the heroine denounced him for refusing to give her a job at Drury Lane. This emotional scene was omitted from the serialized version, for it was not well received by critics; indeed, the reviews of the book give valuable evidence to refute charges of mismanagement at Drury
Lane. I found a work of fiction named *Het Jubelfeest van William Shakespeare*, and hoped it was an example of Dutch preromanticism stemming from the Jubilee until I convinced myself that it was a nineteenth-century publication. It is a rich mixture of bardolatry and the gothic, a tale of tombs opened by torchlight, of a lost play clutched in the dead hand of Shakespeare's father, of a hero who is a descendent of the family and who so resembles Shakespeare as to be taken for his ghost. The resemblance wins the heart of the golden-haired heroine. More significant than uses in plot structure was the use of Shakespeare as a catchword. Lovers breathed his phrases in the moonlight of magazine stories. Any artist in a serial who starved in a garret quoted Hamlet with his dying breath. From the Jubilee year on, Shakespeare gave the texts for moral fiction, such as "The Suspicious Husband's Stratagem: a Moral Tale for Modern Wives," or "Don Carlos: or the Fatal Effects of Premature Attachments."

Criticism in the periodicals made similar use of Shakespeare. Since he represented perfection, praise amounted to announcing some likeness to him. Garrick's comedies, for example, were set beside Shakespeare's, and it was said of Samuel Foote that he was the modern writer who most resembled Shakespeare in that he gave "a true and faithful picture of his age." Elements of Shakespeare were found in even more unlikely writers than these two, and any playwright, ancient or modern, was excellent only as he resembled Shakespeare. But again, the most striking development is seen in the mining of the plays for critical catchwords. A musical performance now reminded all reviewers that "Music hath charms. . . ." Angelica Kaufman's painting "Genius" reminded all who attended the exhibition of "The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling." Faulty scansion was dismissed with "'Tis like the forc'd gait of a shuffling Nag." When
correspondents wearied of the rhymed tributes to Garrick at his death, even those protests demonstrated the established custom of using Shakespeare to express a critical opinion; thus:

Cease, scribblers, cease! All eulogies are vain!
We ne'er shall look upon his like again.

Often the *Monthly Review* took its pat phrases from Shakespeare. This excellent publication, though a staunch friend of Garrick, expressed impatience with the hysterical praise given him. It was the fashion at Bath-Easton to conduct poetry contests, the poems on assigned subjects being dropped into a large urn in the public halls at the baths, to be taken out and judged at a stated date. The prize poems often appeared in the newspapers. When the subject was a memorial to Garrick, there must have been some division of opinion, for two poems claimed the first prize, one by Anna Seward, "The Swan of Lichfield," one by Samuel Pratt, author of Garrick's epitaph in Westminster which so annoyed Charles Lamb in later years. The *Monthly's* masterly summation of the Bath-Easton publications on this occasion was caustic, yet poignantly reminiscent of the most famous speech of Garrick's stage career. This is the entire review:

But tell me why the vase
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd
Hath cast thee up again?⁸

Other publications, in their use of catchwords, did not always show the same sensitivity to context and true meaning. Richard Berenger wrote a cento of Shakespeare's lines in celebration of the Jubilee, which, though it was better than its successors, fathered many a cento that was pure nonsense. The mania extended into areas other than fiction, verse, and criticism.
Shakespearean subtitles appeared under engravings in the magazines whether the picture showed “A View of the Riots in the House of Lords, of December 11, 1770,” (“A curse on both your houses”) or the banishment of the Queen of Sweden by her mother-in-law (“Be thou as chaste as ice”). In order to read the Lady’s Magazine from 1769 to 1780 without embarrassing imputation of ignorance, one needed to recognize as Shakespeare’s nineteen passages. Knowledge of context was not necessary. Indeed, it would only confuse one, and quite needlessly, in some cases. The reading of any publication called for recognizing as Shakespeare’s certain key phrases that were quoted or paraphrased. “Expell’d or not expell’d, that is the question”—the Wilkes question, that is. The character of Parolles was found more appropriate for deriding the character of Lord George Germaine. With questionable taste, a discussion of the King’s handwriting quoted, “By my life, this is his very hand, etc.” When the notorious Dr. Dodd was executed, ironic reporters said, “Nothing in his life became him like his leaving of it.” When Mrs. Elizabeth Macauley, a female politician aged fifty-seven, married the twenty-one-year-old brother of Dr. James Graham who invented the Celestial Bed (a cure for sterility), in the newspapers Shakespeare had the word for it, and a book celebrated the nuptials, A Bridal Ode on the Marriage of Catherine and Petruchio (1778). All shadings of yellow journalism felt the inspiration of the Bard.

**National Poet**

From era to era some of the characteristics needed for a national poet will vary. Such qualities as the 1770’s required were promptly foisted upon Shakespeare. Efforts to mold Shake-
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speare into a man's man and a lady's man went on simultane­ously. Love of manly things, rough masculine humor proved
him a regular fellow. Falstaff provided good evidence, and there
was a great run on Falstaff. Inns were named for him. New
anecdotes were added to those Shakespeare had recounted. Jest
books attributed to him every old joke carved out by the cave
man. But Garrick's "Address to the Ladies" had claimed Shake­
speare for the fair sex, and there was a swift reaction in news­
paper columns. Shakespeare was seen to be sentimental on all
required subjects. When a lady took an interminable, serialized
Sentimental Journey through England, she was often reminded
of Shakespeare. For essayists Shakespeare was excellent on
landscapes and pretty good on dogs. The great sentimental Dog
Days were not yet upon us, but the latter eighteenth century
showed premonitory symptoms. It is true that Shakespeare did
not often speak of dogs with positive connotations, but wise
excision could produce a text for a meditation on man's best
friend, and on the subject of kindness to animals in general,
even flies and beetles. At this period Shakespeare had nothing
to say on tiny tots; before 1800 female correspondents to the
press took children for granted in the most unsentimental way.
This was a great era for melancholy, and, although texts might
have been found in Young or Gray or Blair, these were totally
set aside. There was nothing better than Shakespeare for inspir­
ing "Thoughts on Happiness by an Imprisoned Debtor." Love
letters quoted Shakespeare. Essays on "Reputation" found him
indispensable. Philosophers on "What Is Man?" at least made
the point that Shakespeare had raised the question. Even
epitaphs, especially those for actors, offered the odd consolation
of "Life's but a walking shadow."

The prime requisite of a national poet is that he be moral,
and in this field Shakespeare came into his own in 1769, if by
moral one means moralizing. John Upton had paid tribute to Shakespeare's moral philosophy earlier; and surely there is some ethical meaning in Dryden's glowing words, "Shakespeare was the man, who of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul." Samuel Johnson in 1765 had been the first editor to broach the question directly. Too serious to ignore it, too honest to dissemble what he could not see, Johnson had said:

[Shakespeare] sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings, indeed, a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks rationally must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him.

Garrick fortunately was not dependent on Johnson's published preface. Just in time to be touted and sold at the Jubilee, a book appeared declaring Shakespeare moral. An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare, though anonymous, bore the marks of its author, Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, a learned and admirable lady and one of the greatest prudes of the time. William Kenrick, who picked up many an idea at the Jubilee he satirized, instituted a "School of Shakespeare," the first series of public lectures on Shakespeare. Earlier Charles Macklin had spoken on various subjects which included comments on Shakespeare, but Kenrick's was an entire series and was intended primarily to instruct ladies in moral philosophy. Kenrick was very unpopular, and he seemed so singularly ill-suited to the task of instructing ladies in moral philosophy that his lectures are spoken of in some publications as if they were failures; and Goldsmith's well-known allusion to them in "Retaliation" makes the idea seem tomfoolery. From the Public Ledger, the Morning Post, the Critical Review, and the Monthly Review, one has the impression that the lec-
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ures were failures. Tomfoolery they were, but failures they were not; the London Chronicle and the Monthly Miscellany give statistical proof of his success. Twice he had to move to larger quarters to accommodate the growing audience, and he gave a second series of lectures that was also well received. In a book I have not read (the other publications mentioned by name I have read), Paul Hifferman extended moral instruction to the young under the title Ethics: or Moral Precepts for the Youth of Both Sexes Conducting Themselves through Social Life. Deduced from Shakespeare's Texts.

Texts is a significant word in its homiletic sense as well as the general sense. The Female Rambler took a text from Othello for her "Thoughts on Jealousy." "An Old Officer's Advice to Young Ones with Regard to Gallantry" passed on from Shakespeare the admonition to be careful about flirting with the Colonel's lady. Moral meditations not only took a text, they often used the sermon technique of expanding a metaphor such as "Who steals my purse steals trash." Letters to periodicals repeatedly demonstrated that Shakespeare had been a great reader of the Scriptures. Practical and pointed maxims were found in the plays; and if at times they were mistakenly attributed to the Bible, the balance was restored when sayings from Poor Richard's Almanac were attributed to Shakespeare. Tales of lives reformed by the plays were numerous, King Lear being the most expedient. In one case Shakespeare was efficacious as a puppet show, when a shrewish wife observed Katherine's fate and became a better woman.

Poetry of moral meditation was abundant and was usually addressed to the ladies. "Verses to a Young Lady with the New Edition of Shakespeare" began:

Accept, sweet maid, each Scene that Shakespeare drew,
Scenes, whose great lessons may improve ev'n you!9

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The lines of the verse urge certain maxims that would perhaps have done the young maid no harm. The moral drawn from Portia in *Julius Caesar*, for instance, was a temperance lesson.

For what is drinking drams but drinking fire?

is the rhetorical question that clinches the matter. But if the maid had considered the plot situations of Juliet, Hermia, Rosalind, Miranda, and Mistress Ford, she might have led a very eventful life. One striking trait of these moral meditations was the way in which they brushed aside the play as a whole.

Undisputed queen of the snippet school of moral philosophy was an actress from Ireland, Mrs. Elizabeth Griffith. Her book *The Morality of Shakespeare’s Drama Illustrated* was serialized in the press not for months but for years. She had some scholarship, considerable intuition, and an actress’s knowledge of the plays. Had she chosen another school of criticism, she might have done work of value. But she set her course in her preface by a snippet from Samuel Johnson’s preface, calling him to her support by citing the passage quoted above. Her cutting of that passage causes it to read: “From his writings a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks rationally must think morally.” The tendentious snippet measures the distance between her and Johnson’s comprehensive honesty as her cutting of Shakespeare shows how far his drama stands from her preoccupation with moralizing epigram. She proceeds without regard for the speaker of the lines or the circumstances under which they were spoken, even when consideration of these would reveal an irony that reverses her moral.

She began with *The Tempest*, and with good judgment concluded, in the face of opinion then prevalent, that it was one of the later plays. Her canon, incidentally, is the same as we now accept but for her exclusion of *Pericles*. It was her object
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to draw a general moral from each of the plays. In the case of The Tempest she was successful, but it was her only success. Of her second drama she wrote, "I shall not trouble my readers with the Fable of this piece, as I can see no general moral that can be deduced from the Argument." Of the third, "The Fable of this Play has no more moral than the former." Of the fourth, "I cannot see what moral can be extracted from the Fable of this piece. . . . I shall proceed to collect together the dispersed maxims." With the fifth, Measure for Measure, she gave up. "I shall take no further notice of the want of a moral Fable in the rest of these Plays." It was upon this non-Aristotelian basis that she declared, "Shakespeare is not only my Poet, but my Philosopher also." When the Universal Magazine printed the book (1774-77) as a serial, it used the original form, but the Westminster Magazine (1776-78) made a digest of her digest by arranging the aphorisms in alphabetical order by subjects. Beginning with Advice, Affections, and Appearances, specious, they go through Modesty, Murder, on to Vice, Virtue, and Wandering of the Mind in Prayer, arriving years later at Youth. During part of the time the magazine published another serial, "Shakespeare's Modern Characters," a sort of parlor game which fitted texts to contemporary figures. Together the two formed a solid Shakespearean backlog of moral grandeur and gamesomeness.10

And of the two, I am wondering if the latter was not the more important. The scribblers employed so much wordplay in puns, verses, centos, parodies, affixing Shakespearean titles to things. We have record of the fun on stage, of balls and games that made the society column. There is record also of gatherings below the level of society columns. The latest printing of "Sweet Willy-O" I have seen is in a twentieth-century collection, English Songs of the Georgian Period, edited by Kidson and Moffatt, where it survives as a curiosity, an echo of a time when British homes suddenly burst into ballads about Shakespeare and his
country dances. The pirated printings of the Garland were for home consumption. Shakespeare’s Jests printed seven of the songs, but was too rowdy in spirit for family gatherings. Many appeared under such moralistic imprimatur as:

Not one immodest subject here you’ll find,
But harmless Mirth and Friendship are combin’d.

The Dramatic Muse: or the Jubilee Songster printed all the songs. The Songster’s Pocketbook: or the Jubilee Concert had also the new songs written for the Drury Lane production. The Masque printed “Sweet Willy-O.” The Jubilee Concert: or the Warwickshire Lad gave all the songs and G. S. Carey’s masque. The Ladies’ Complete Pocketbook had the Garland and twelve of the dances. The Ladies’ Polite Songster: or Harmony for the Fair Sex carried a reprint of all the songs and “a choice selection” of the dances. The Vocal Companion printed “Warwickshire,” “Sweet Willy-O,” one of its many parodies “Sweet Jenny-O,” and also included Marlowe’s lines, “Come live with me,” attributed to Shakespeare, “as sung at Ranelagh.” The British Ladies’ Complete Pocket Memorandum Book for 1769 (they were annual publications) went all out, printing all the songs, all the country dances, Garrick’s “Poetical Address to the Ladies,” and a long account of the Jubilee. That I have handled the publications is proof that someone valued the things. All this play may be far removed from The Works, but perhaps it was no small thing to make Sweet Willy-O the boon companion in the play of a whole society in all price ranges.

Morality, however, is important. Mrs. Griffith’s inspiration in her work had been Garrick, and she dedicated it to him in these words:

There is no person whose patronage a work of this kind may so properly claim as yours; your private life having done so much
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honour to the moral part, and your public one such justice to
the principal Characters in our Author’s Writing. Your action
has been a better comment on his Text than all his Editors have
been able to supply.

Mrs. Griffith spoke here to two controversial points. The com­
parative value of actor and editor I will defer. The first point,
Garrick’s private life, can be briefly stated, but it cannot be
dismissed, for it has a tenuous connection with Jubilee satire.
Anyone who reads the whole record of the Jubilee will find
veiled aspersions on Garrick’s morals, and even some sneers at
Mrs. Garrick, the only ones I know of.

The Jubilee was part of the controversy between what was
considered honest “English” art, and art that was “French,”
“foreign,” and “operatic.” These adjectives were not to be taken
literally at this point in history, but by extension were applied to
Englishmen with foreign notions. During the summer of 1769
the terms were applied to the Jubilee, and Garrick’s answer was
to evoke English history and good solid English virtues, the
climax being Tom King’s skit which showed a “French” English­
man who by his very nature would hold the Jubilee in contempt.
But there were also insinuations that Garrick personally had a
taint of the rococo, the effete, the decadent, and venomous
attacks on the ode and the play The Jubilee which included
personal innuendo. The letters were confined to a single publi­
cation and were not reprinted; the London Museum was a politi­
cal organ, violently antagonistic to Lord Bute. Antagonism to
Garrick was not a matter of editorial policy (as it was in the
Middlesex Journal); two essays appeared in the Museum with
some of the most extravagant praise of Garrick I ever saw, one
praising him as a man, one as an actor. The laudatory essays
were from the same pen, and the attacks were sometimes signed
by the same pen name. The attacks allude to his French ancestry
as if it were proof of decadence, and mention his defense of
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Baretti (surely an act of disinterested justice) as manifestation of culpable foreign sympathies. The term “Belialism” with all its ugly suggestions was applied to Garrick’s writing. The insinuations stopped in 1772, and never appeared again, although in 1776 and 1779 all other charges against the Jubilee were revived. These attacks are not to be viewed as a public phenomenon like the general criticism of Jubilee taste, but as product of the private malice of William Kenrick.

Kenrick’s abuse of personalities was so erratic that men of the day—Johnson, Goldsmith, and Boswell among them—pursued a settled policy of refusing to answer his insults except by silence. He was rather like the villain of a Jacobean tragedy seen through the wrong end of opera glasses. He had in small the essential characteristics which a Jacobean villain enlarged in the grand manner. Several times in this book it could have been said that “Kenrick did it first,”—for he had a mind that was peculiarly inventive; the statements have been omitted not from any reluctance to give the devil his due, but because his mind was as ineffectual as it was inventive. His own publication the London Review (first published in 1775) was less a critical journal than an inverted autobiography. He did so many things badly, and hated so cordially the men who did them better, that his life work, it was said, was to “libel the genius of the age.” Even obituary notices are filled with epithets that betray him; he conferred his own traits on his subject. In Garrick’s notice he tells of an unbridled appetite that by gluttony took ten years off his life; it was Kenrick, not Garrick, who was noted for intemperance. But there was no mention of Belialism, for a trip to the courts had put a stop to those insinuations in 1772. When Isaac Bickerstaffe was forced to flee the country, Kenrick publicly accused Garrick of criminal misconduct in his relations with Bickerstaffe. Garrick sued him; and then, after public opinion had been expressed with sufficient clarity and Kenrick
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had published an abject apology, he withdrew the suit. A law
suit would have ruined Kenrick, and Garrick had a clear case,
for Kenrick acknowledged not that he was mistaken but that he
knew all the time he was lying and had no faint suspicion of
Garrick's conduct. Goldsmith seems to indicate in "Retaliation"
that he thought Garrick would have done better to ignore
Kenrick, but actually it was almost impossible to ignore such a
criminal charge, and in withdrawing the suit he followed as
closely as was prudent the practice of swallowing Kenrick's
insults.

SHAKESPEARE THE CREATOR

The Jubilee oration is the most powerful enunciation of the
analogue of the poet as creator in English criticism before
Coleridge. The popular press, for some time after the Jubilee,
shows no formal statements of theories of aesthetic production
nor of the aesthetic experience which can be isolated as such,
except as they appear in quotations from so well known a scholar
as William Richardson. But the terminology that described the
aesthetic experience can be seen moving from the rational in the
direction of the ecstatic. There was little formal analysis of
creativity as a theory of aesthetic production, but one can read
the wholehearted acceptance of the metaphor of creation both
in the elevation of Shakespeare to something above the human
level and in the radically altered attitude toward his characters
as creatures in their own right. The autonomy of the poet had
been declared with true mysticism and deep conviction, and
from that declaration there exfoliated new elements that shocked
pious and rational natures. "A superstitious sacrifice" at Stratford
was followed by a use of that statue in the theaters that was
nothing other than heathen idolatry. The Drury Lane production seemed so foreign to Garrick's true nature that some of his friends could only conclude that it was some sort of tasteless joke with the public as butt—"a severe, though oblique, satire upon public taste." The highest praise of Garrick was joined with amazement and sorrow that he should so betray public confidence. The quotation above appeared in a book dedicated to him "as a Mark of perfect esteem." In 1774 Phillip Parsons wrote an imaginary dialogue between Shakespeare and Garrick in a spirit of undisguised adulation. He gave Shakespeare words of the most extravagant praise of Garrick as "a soul so like my own," but nonetheless he denounced the "superstition and blasphemy" of the Jubilee. William Cowper, a devout and gentle soul who admired Garrick, in The Task used as prime examples of man's idolatry of man Garrick's idolatry of Shakespeare and the public idolatry of Garrick associated with the mulberry tree.

Pamphlets portrayed the Jubilee as an attempt to found a new religion with Garrick as great a saint as Saint George and Shakespeare as an even greater figure, but the satire has undercurrents of a sort of shamefaced approbation. The best example is a pamphlet which because of its memorable title is often mentioned as a satire on bardolatry: Garrick's Vagary: or England Run Mad, but it actually is an endorsement of bardolatry and the worship of the mulberry. Professor Lily B. Campbell took it as title of her discussion of the Jubilee, which marked the complete identification of Garrick with Shakespeare in the public mind. Reams of magazine verse could be cited to illustrate Miss Campbell's discerning generalization. George Steevens in "Alexander's Feast" had predicted that the proclaiming of Garrick as "A Present Shakespeare" would be the first step in the degradation of the poet. The two names had been joined for years in occasional verse; the change after the Jubilee
came not only in greatly increased numbers, but also in the aura of mysticism. The wisdom of the two was described as miraculous in depth and scope. Shakespeare taught politics, metaphysics, logic, natural history. From him more than from any other there had fallen “showers of knowledge, of precept, and of principle.” By prescience he had anticipated the discovery of the circulation of the blood. Philosophical studies of man could be made from his portraits better than from history or from life. Mother Nature had not given him his powers of creation, but his father Jove, and they surpassed the creative powers of Jove himself. One magazine poet found someone who excelled Shakespeare in creative power, but since the name was Garrick, no complaints were made. Garrick raised Shakespeare’s characters from the dead; when he retired, they all died, when he died, they all died again, mourned for him, welcomed him joyously to Heaven and Mount Olympus simultaneously. No amount of satire could halt the ectoplasmic emenations. Shakespeare and Garrick were deity and priest, father and son, twin brothers, Elijah and Elisha. Garrick was the reincarnation of Shakespeare. The relationship was stated in terms of many myths. The reiterated proof of their oneness was their mastery of both comedy and tragedy, a miraculous power found only in Shakespeare until Garrick proved he also possessed it, thereby proving he was Shakespeare.

By means that were silly and idle London society proclaimed the reality of Shakespeare’s creatures. For four seasons there was a fad for dressing like the characters at costume balls and theater parties. It died out; I found one Ophelia in 1773, and in 1775 one witch, possibly Shakespearean, though his usually came in threes. There was a slight upsurge of interest in 1776 when the processions were staged again at Drury Lane. In pamphlets the characters began to have their own thoughts and their own speeches. In magazine verse Portia and Rosalind
found their own voices and Hamlet spoke a new “Dirge for Ophelia.” Puck and Falstaff played their own jokes, and Queen Mab took on added characteristics. Names of characters were signed to letters when the content was thought appropriate. A denunciation of the state would be signed “Thersytes,” a plea for mercy “Portia.” Several medals were given to “Mercutio” for jokes in the Wit’s Magazine. Amateur theatricals were popular, but it was not necessary to confine the characters to the plays, as can be seen by newspaper accounts of people who in growing numbers dressed up and recited “pieces,” acted pantomime scenes and elaborate Shakespearean charades.

It is not wise to pursue too far this concept of reality of the characters as it appeared in these forms. Falstaff’s impersonation of King Henry was used as a basis for a dramatized comment on politics in Kent. Within the framework of the Bardolatry of the era, it is normal to think of Falstaff as taking an interest in Kentish elections. But when Falstaff begins one speech, “Hyperion’s brow, the front of Jove himself,” are we to conclude that the imagined Falstaff had a contemporary existence so real that he read Hamlet? That “Enobarbus” would write a letter to the press reminding military leaders of their eighteenth-century responsibilities was normal, but to see Enobarbus quote Iago adds little to a sense of his reality. In a way these characters had no more “reality” than Cato, who also signed many letters to newspapers; and few things have less emotional reality than a charade.

And yet the public persuaded itself that it knew these dramatic characters, that Shakespeare’s people were, as the oration had said, “not creatures of the imagination, but partakers of the same nature with ourselves.” Serious study was given to the problem of their souls’ salvation. Othello presented a difficult question in theology. Complicated arguments offered some hope in the fact that “Moors were much inclined to Christianity.” Their moral
qualities were analyzed in the press seven years before Maurice Morgann published his essay on Falstaff. To magazine readers, long used to such methods, his work did not seem revolutionary. Spoiled by Garrick’s ingratiating assumption of a community of knowledge, the public rather resented Morgann’s argumentative tone, and did not feel the need of instruction in Falstaff’s character.

In romanticism this searching of the soul was typically concentrated upon Hamlet. The great romantic mystery of Hamlet came by direct descent from Garrick’s playing of the role. The first essay on the subject of this mystery was by Francis Gentleman, whose contribution to preromantic criticism was in a sense of reality of the characters of Shakespeare that was at variance with a mere sense of theatrical illusion. In his writings after the Jubilee, it can be seen that even some of the minor characters had for him that sense of independent life, and it shows itself most subtly in his discussions of Garrick’s playing of Lear, Macbeth, and Hamlet. In Hamlet there was a mysterious ambivalence as Garrick interpreted the role, a tameness and irresolution of deeds that directly contradicted the essential firmness of the character. Gentleman admitted that the duality was a marked departure from “decorum and consistency,” but from it came the great fascination of Garrick’s portrayal.

Gentleman’s essay set off a controversy which was not, in its first publications, confined to the popular press, but which was freely reported in periodicals. Writings discussed in this paragraph appeared before the publication of Wilhelm Meister, the locus criticus of the romantic conception of Hamlet. George Steevens, unlike Gentleman, felt no charm in Hamlet’s inconsistencies. Hamlet’s actions differed culpably from his expressed sentiments. He was responsible not only for the closing holocaust, but also for the deaths of Ophelia, Polonius, and his two schoolfellows Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern and for making a
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reprehensible scene at the funeral. Steevens quoted a conversation with the late Dr. Mark Akenside, who had said Hamlet was deranged. It seemed to Steevens that it was time someone should clarify the flaws in Hamlet's ethics, since "no writer on Shakespeare has taken the pains to point out the immoral tendencies of his character." Joseph Ritson took sharp issue with Steevens and Akenside; Hamlet's actions were neither immoral nor indefensible, and the charges were "groundless, unwarranted and unjust." William Richardson explained the mystery of Hamlet's hesitation before shedding blood by his extreme sensitivity. Frederick Pilon showed how the cutting of key soliloquies (as in John Henderson's playing of the role) falsified for the audience the true picture of Hamlet's soul, and weakened his ambivalence into sheer irresolution. Henry Mackenzie asked for a consideration not of particular passages but of the man as a whole, whose native gentleness, wit, taste, and wisdom were reacting against terrible circumstances. To James Harris the inconsistencies seemed a breach of good manners; Hamlet's jests at the death of Polonius and his lack of compassion distress us because we cannot reconcile them with the character of a noble courtier. John Monck Mason confessed himself baffled by the mystery. Lord Craig saw Hamlet as a soul of unusual geniality driven to melancholy by the rebuffs of a world harsh beyond endurance. Thomas Robertson went further in his attempt to think Hamlet's thoughts after him, or, more precisely, to take Horatio's place for the defense. In the face of death men speak the truth, he said, and we must accept as Shakespeare's own the summary of Hamlet's character given at his death by Horatio. A noble heart—the key to the character was in the conjoining of the two traits in the substantive and the adjective. "It is the struggle between the two, upon which his conduct hinges, . . . operations not successive but co-existent." Hamlet, sensitive to the extreme, still had every noble virtue and accomplishment proper
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to man. Mere sensibility cannot arouse the tragic interest and neither can the mere sense of virtue alone. Hamlet shows us both qualities. In Hamlet, “the world for the first time saw a man of genius upon the stage.” “It becomes the duty of the charitable to justify the poet, and to revive the office of Horatio in the defense of his hero.”

These men were concerned not with aphorism, not with plot in the classic sense of action, but with the man. The Prince was as real to some of these critics as to Wilhelm Meister. On him they exerted such subtlety of psychological analysis as they could command. He laid claim to the duty of charity. He haunted their minds with his problems, searching their souls with his questions as they in turn searched his. By their standards uniqueness could not be extended to include morals (certainly not in Edinburgh), but in these writings there is developing the nomenclature of one element of the romantic ideal, the unique and solitary nature of its heroic prototype. Critical terminology can be seen withdrawing from public life into the secret heart.

Actor versus Scholar

The Public Advertiser had charged that Garrick was no classicist (and therefore unfit to write an ode) and no intellectual (and unfit to judge Shakespeare). The intellectuals absented themselves from Stratford. When they did not go in person to prevent Garrick's turning criticism over to a “Fraternity of Tradesmen,” it seemed that the battle went by default to Garrick and the common man. Verses, letters, dedications hailed Garrick as “Best Commentator on Great Shakespeare's Text.” Attacks on the eggheads moved through allegory to myth to plain name-
calling. The common man first waved aside the accusations that Garrick had small Latin and less Greek, then rejoiced in them and in the delightful coincidence that opposition could be lumped under the name Johnson (for Ben was usually thus spelled at the time). Extended metaphors elaborated on how footnotes were creeping up and up the page to throttle the text. Quaint illustrations showed Garrick as a Phoenix bringing new life to plays almost smothered in dulness. But the anti-intellectualism was of a paradoxical nature, and the very definition of dulness had reversed itself from the days of Addison and Pope. Addison feared the narrowing of the mind that might be caused by too earnest work on details, and Pope, in his devotion to the universal qualities of art, had dismissed as mere antiquarian dullards the men who dwelt upon the particular problems of historical minutiae. Now the generalities were dull. Shakespeare was perfect. Garrick, the sun, had made that clear, although he "scorched the eyes of all be-doctored Bats." What fascinated the public now was historical detail.

If my account of Garrick deals with so narrow a part of his career as to make him sound like a mere ballyhoo artist, the facts of his life are so well known that this restricted view does not even need denial. He was a man of taste and culture whose wealth, position, and personality gave him a strategic place as a collector. For many reasons it was a pleasure to serve him, and he found many colleagues as he made his collection of old plays on which Johnson, Malone, the Wartons, Farmer, Percy, Steevens, and other scholars drew freely, and which later made possible the work of Charles Lamb in that field. His knowledge of those plays so far surpassed that of his contemporaries that writing has been assigned to him because it contained borrowings from old plays that Garrick would know; and the borrowings in his known writings prove how well he knew English and French drama. When the public turned its attention to Shake-
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Shakespearean backgrounds, it could hardly have found at the time a better leader. History in that area was his business, and he knew his business. But he was not their leader in that sense; he was only inspiration. Nor did he add anything to theories of historical relativism. One modern scholar, G. M. Miller, in considering The Historical Point of View in English Literary Criticism (1913) felt justified in setting the year 1770 as a terminus ad quem for his study of that phenomenon. But a declaration of independence is not synonymous with a successful revolution. Inertia had to be overcome, for the ignorance and indifference of the eighteenth century with regard to pre-Augustan literature is proverbial. In 1773 the highly literate Gentleman's Magazine printed "Corinna's Maying" as anonymous. Public interest in Shakespeare was the channel through which the concept of historical relativism began to flow and spread.

From 1769 to 1800 there were forty-three new editions of Shakespeare, eighteen of them complete editions. All editions before 1769 had printed Rowe's biography compiled from available seventeenth-century sources in 1709, and all had a general critical preface. No new general preface appeared in editions after 1769; the additions were in historical data, biography, anecdotes, notation on character study, and explication of language. But Johnson's great edition held its own, and Malone, who did the best of the new work, added his findings to Johnson. Malone was sorry that so much information had been lost by lack of interest during Augustan times, but he was aware that it had not been "an age of curiosity." The times had changed; Malone did not cause it, nor did Garrick. But Garrick disseminated and democratized the ideas and focused them on Shakespeare.

History, says Professor Johan Huizinga, is not the story of the past, but rather "the intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself of its past."27 The public, with varying

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degrees of intellectuality, began to render account to itself of those segments of its past that related to Shakespeare. The account was formless, anecdotal, versified, fictionalized; but it was popular—of the people. Among the books on sale at Stratford was a special edition of the *London Magazine* with a biography of Shakespeare. There was no significant factual information, but there was a strong tone calculated to pronounce him a national hero. The essay was widely reprinted and sold. Twice again this biography occupied a key position. In 1776 when Pierre Le Tourneur launched his famous French edition of Shakespeare, he used the essay as basis of his *Vie de Shakespeare*. In 1778 the second edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* drew on it for its biography of Shakespeare. The first edition had included no biographies.

Having at first no facts to contribute, the popular press resorted to anecdotes that tended to mold Shakespeare along the desired lines, the regular fellow, very sentimental and very moral. This was a period rich in stage history and memoirs; anything that linked the Bard with stage or greenroom was emphasized. The actors of his troupe became so well known as to need no given name for identification. Burbage was enough to identify the actor in some bawdy story of a contest between him and Shakespeare for some light o’ love. A whole book of such yarns was printed for the Jubilee black market. *Shakespeare’s Jests: or the Jubilee Jester* was one of the many apocryphal jest books of the time. Garrick was similarly honored by the unauthorized publication of *Garrick’s Jests: or the English Roscius in High Glee*, a collection of inoffensive punning epigrams. *Yorick’s Jests* came ostensibly from Laurence Sterne. *Joe Miller’s Jests: or the Wit’s Vademecum* had its fourteenth edition in 1769 and was alluded to by Colman in *Man and Wife: or the Stratford Jubilee* to denote jejune wit as Danny Kaye uses the name today. Among these, *Shakespeare’s Jests* was conspicuous for its indecency.
Mr. Alfred Westfall records the fact that its printing in the colonies next year made it the first "Shakespearean" volume to be printed in America, and he suggests that its indecency may have played into the hands of puritan opposition to the stage.29 While it was being established that his writings were both sentimental and moral, the man was shaped to fit. He was not only righteous; he was self-righteous and his whole life had been one long uplift movement. There was simply nothing to go on, so it became customary perforce to raise his shade in order that the ghost might give voice to sentiments the man neglected to stress during life. It had been his purpose and his glory to write so that "a Vestal might read my every Sentiment without a Blush," and he sorrowed over the moral blemishes of other playwrights. "Their Muse was like a beautiful Prostitute," whose loveliness we admire while we weep her lost virtue.30 This trend and the legends of carryings-on with ladies of the town did not cancel one another out, but flourished together.

George Steevens had predicted all this vulgarity, but he thought he might as well get in on the fun. He was on good terms with Garrick again, and he devised a letter with a complimentary headnote and enough scholarly paraphernalia to pass it off as genuine. It was from George Peel [sic] to Marlowe, and told of another of those bibulous evenings that have been bestowed upon the Bard. It was a successful hoax. First published in the Theatrical Mirror, it was reprinted in good faith not only in periodicals but also in serious studies.31 Those early and forced proliferations in the press seem to be credentials to the truth of Steevens' prediction, and yet in the long run there was justification for Garrick's faith in democracy.

Periodicals from 1770 on carried historical commentary, information about sources in literature and in contemporary incident. When Arden of Feversham was published that year, the Monthly Review led the way in evaluating means by which the
canon might be established, and the Lady's Magazine, among others, kept a continuing interest in the problem. The problem of interpolation intrigued readers; although at first the grounds for identifying interpolated material was merely personal taste, the historical procedures did develop. When one compares the books on Shakespeare published during that period with the material in periodicals, it appears that every book was anticipated in the popular press at least in method, with the exception of A Specimen Commentary on Shakespeare (1794), by Walter Whiter, a work which prefigures modern studies of image clusters. Morgann's character study, Malone's study of Henry VI, James Plumptre's study of historical analogues are better work than that which came from anonymous correspondents; but if the wide familiarity with the principles upon which these men worked did nothing more than prepare an audience for them, that is not without value.

Reprintings of early works other than Shakespeare's grew in numbers. Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Middleton, Sir John Harington, the pastorals of William Browne were issued, and professional critics reviewed the editions. Thomas Davies included some Restoration drama (Cibber, Betterton, Nathanael Lee, Dryden) as well as an essay on Jonson and a study of Rule a Wife and Have a Wife among the Shakespeare studies that made up the bulk of Dramatic Miscellanies. Theatrical reviewers discussed such Elizabethan and Jacobean dramas as were actually on the boards. Yet so rare is a spontaneous contribution from a reader on any such subject that one may note as an exception "A Memoir of Andrew Marvel" in the Weekly Magazine and Edinburgh Amusement (VII, 197). The single exception in the case of drama, I believe, is a study of George Peele's David and Bathsheba [sic] in the Town and Country Magazine of 1779. The typical mention of any other playwright pointed out the inferiority to Shakspeare. Not only the common
man was deficient in sympathy for early writers; Malone said in his notes to Shakespeare that not one of his contemporaries would bear rereading. (In 1821 James Boswell the Younger dissented from Malone’s opinion in a signed footnote: “The plays of Marlow give frequent evidence of no common genius, however little they may be regulated by taste.”) Sift all references to early writers in the popular press, and the term “Shakespeare monopoly” is still appropriate if it is understood as referring to the public’s spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling in unsolicited contributions, for these concerned the Bard. Genuine historical figures which had been treated by Shakespeare—his kings and queens, Sir John Fastolf, Cardinal Wolsey—were proper subjects, and were discussed as Shakespeare’s. When historical study spread to other areas of the past, interest could best be engaged by some connection with Shakespeare.

Editorial policies of different publications varied. At one extreme was the *Monthly Review*, which remained non-antiquarian and averse to historical relativism. At the other extreme was the *Westminster Magazine*, almost an organ for antiquarians. This magazine idolized Warton for his historical attitudes; it rebuked Voltaire and Hume for their lack of sympathy with the Middle Ages, Gibbon for his refusal to read *inédits*. Year by year the publication pushed the field of interest farther back into the Middle Ages, but still an effort was made to tie all matters to Shakespeare, who remained the dominant interest. Old Whitsun plays, ancient customs and words gained in value from any association with him. It is a fair summary of editorial interest to cite a poem which memorialized the death of Garrick for their readers, “A Visit to the Poet’s Corner in Westminster Abbey.” The section on Shakespeare is five pages long, the sections on Chaucer, Spenser, and Jonson are in part pretexts for further comment on Shakespeare.
The Grass Roots of Bardolatry

It was in the study of Shakespeare's language that the major change came and the major gains were made. Here the genuine historical approach manifested itself in its most permanently valuable aspect, and it is to the credit of the periodicals that they led the way in the movement toward a better gloss and urged the work upon the scholars. The language theories that lay behind the altered attitude toward language itself were on paper by 1769, but the application was still to be made. That language was of rational origin and poetry and criticism ought at least in theory to be governed by the consequent ideas of clarity and the related concepts of metaphor and metrics, that common sense was all one needed to understand "good" language—these neoclassical concepts were being replaced by ideals of emotion, music, and ambiguity as positive values. The historical approach joined with these theories in the explication of texts. No longer was one to regularize and improve Shakespeare, for his words had emotional connotations, his metrics had emotional bases, and his vocabulary had historical overtones that were to be heard and understood.

Absorption in Shakespeare had, unfortunately, the narrowing effect of confining to his drama alone the salutary attempt to understand rather than to improve. Warton in 1774 gave the public A History of English Poetry with factual material and a firm critical point of view, but so intent was the public on the Bard that for a while there was little use made of them in the study of other poets. Long after Shakespeare was declared perfect, the same old "faults" were pointed out in Milton and Spenser. Even James Beattie almost in the same breath deplored Milton's few puns and praised Shakespeare's; he was offended by Spenser's deliberate archaisms, but humbly suggested that Shakespeare's jokes would be even funnier when all the allusions to old saws and songs should be fully explicated. In popular periodicals for years the attitude in general was this: If we do
not understand Milton, it is his fault for writing badly; if we do not understand Shakespeare, it is the fault of our own ignorance, and we must apply the historical method and correct the ignorance, not the poetry.

In 1775 it was still necessary to correct Spenser’s “uncouth phrases and obsolete style.” The words are quoted from a congratulatory review of a strange and maddening book. An anonymous wretch who called himself “The Transposer” published Canto I of The Faerie Queene in a form calculated to please current taste, and announced that he had the other cantos ready for publication should the public approve. The public approved and he published Canto II. Then, let us hope, someone throttled him. The Transposer brought Spenser up to date by flattening his sweet music into blank verse. Thus:

A gentle knight was riding on a plain,
In mighty arms and silver shield array'd,
Wherein appear'd old dints of deepest wounds;
His angry steed chiding the foaming bit
Disdain'd the curb: a valiant knight he seem'd,
For noble deeds and fierce encounters form'd;
Upon his breast he bore a bloody cross,
The dear rememb'rance of his dying Lord,
Whom he ador'd as living evermore.

The previous year (1774) a grammarian named Buchanan had published The First Six Books of Milton’s “Paradise Lost” Rendered into Grammatical Construction. Reviews of the book commended it to those who had desired to read with pleasure that noble but ungrammatical poet; and letters to the press voiced the joy of those who had long deplored Milton’s syntax. Still the eighteenth century would undertake to teach Spenser music and Milton grammar; but Shakespeare did not abide their question. Any hint that he had a flaw was answered under
the title "Shakespeare Vindicated," with an editorial rebuke added to the contributed vindication. And even these few and timid questions came mostly from a single pen when "Peter Puzzle" began a series of queries in the newly established Town and Country Magazine in 1769. For some months he raised questions about Shakespeare's meaning and grammar, with the apology that he "had not the honour to be at his coronation at Stratford." The questions were so simple-minded and they elicited such heated response that one suspects Peter of being a straw man set up to attract attention to a new publication.

There were essays in general praise of the language, studies of imagery, of difficult metaphors and obscure syntax. Even if Shakespeare had erred in thinking _moro_ meant "Moor" instead of "chief," we should be grateful for "a mistake which has been so advantageously repaired by the incomparable genius of Shakespeare." The exquisite Spenser and the superlatively learned Milton were fraught with gothic barbarities still, but one poet could do no wrong. Any variation from current usage was described as "such piquancy of singularity."

For the public to do intensive study of Shakespeare's language, thought Charles Jennens, the public must have the correct text, hitherto kept from them by the arrogance of editors, who in their regularizing had substituted their own words. Capell had not even indicated where his alterations had occurred. Jennens decided to edit all the plays in small, inexpensive volumes giving all variant readings from the early texts. He was an eccentric man, best known as Handel's friend and librettist. His wealth had attracted a protective circle of sycophants that had previously shielded him from criticism, but nothing could avert the wrath of George Steevens when _King Lear_ appeared in 1770. Jennens was persuaded to publish a "vindication," unwisely, for the work strictly as scholarship was indefensible, and he had neither the learning nor the stamina to sustain a quarrel with Steevens.
Outstanding scholars of a more liberal spirit—Malone, Beattie, Ritson—approved his work in principle and the Gentleman's Magazine vigorously espoused his cause. Editions of Macbeth and Othello came out in 1773, but his editing was cut short by his death; Julius Caesar was published posthumously in 1774. The work, though not scholarly, was intended to further scholarship by placing in the hands of the people the instrument of language study. Perhaps Steevens' anger was rightly aroused by the unscholarly procedures, but it was the motto of the work that he could not accept: "Let the People Be the Judge."

If the arrogance of the editors moved Jennens, it was their ignorance that moved Joseph Ritson. Shakespeare served as inspiration, solvent, and conductor for the work of the growing tribe of medievalists. The periodicals welcomed Shakespearean comment from any of them, but anything on the subject from Ritson was stop-press news. The mad career of Ritson through the columns of the periodicals can best be read in the stirring biography by Professor Bertrand H. Bronson, who chose as his subtitle the fine descriptive phrase "Scholar-at-Arms." Ritson was a fighter who loved a fight. The number of live issues he could find in a language recently thought to be dead was infinite. Year after year his regular campaigns went on, waged chiefly against Bishop Percy; but he dreamed of being in the regular ranks of the Shakespeareans, for Shakespeare was indeed the god of his idolatry. Keeping all the medievalists honest did not leave him time to complete his proposed edition of Shakespeare, but he was never too weary from "The Hunting of the Percy" to do guerrilla warfare for the Bard. With a great love for his hero, a vast knowledge of the roots of his language, and a bellicose disposition, Ritson turned the historical approach into assault and battery in the newspapers. From his etymological highlands he pounced on Johnson's ignorance. He taunted editors with his medieval linguistics. And when it was the
irascible George Steevens who misread some old technical term from a mystery play, Ritson gloated and the public rejoiced. His factual and critical contribution was not small, but his nuisance value was greater. Subscribers cheered him on as he heckled Shakespeareans into accuracy and kept Shakespeare criticism where it always belongs, in the public eye. Among those subscribers he had many assistants in the long labor of love by which our gloss has come down to us, but of all who infused their own vitality into the old, the obsolete, the obscure, Ritson was the chief and the ideal.

Since Ritson was a professional scholar and wanted to be a professional Shakespeare scholar, his amateur standing may be questioned; but he loved the Jubilee and published a parody and was a professed idolator. I close with the unquestionable amateur at work among the grass roots. Anonymous, gay, aware she is in vogue, she sounds as if she has just cut the roses for the Altar Guild and has a few minutes before she dashes off to tea with her elderly mother, one of the founders of the Ladies' Club in the old days. Tone, subject, and method are significant. "As almost everybody, seized with the spirit of scribbling, is making emendations, annotations, or illustrations on some passage of Shakespeare, permit me to take this opportunity to throw another mite into the treasury of criticism." Thus she introduces her proof that a bare bodkin is not, as one might think, an embroidery needle, but a dagger. She cites Sidney's Arcadia and a seventeenth-century almanac as evidence of similar usage. In the next issue, a gentleman gallantly signing himself "Philo-criticus" came to her support with Welsh and Latin philology. Extravagant things were said about Garrick, but so far as his influence reached, he deserved this praise:

He made every man a critic.
1. Material in this chapter is drawn from the periodicals listed below, which are available at: Widener and Houghton Libraries, Harvard University; Sterling Library, Yale University; Folger Shakespeare Library; New York Public Library; Archives of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. The eleven years 1769-79 are the center of interest.


2. Jewel Wurtzbaugh, Two Centuries of Spenser Scholarship 1609-1805 (1936); Raymond D. Havens, The Influence of Milton on English Poetry (1922); George H. McKnight, Modern English in the Making (1928).


5. The Correspondents, although it has the subtitle “An Original Novel,” professed to be letters of Lord Lyttelton and Mrs. Peach, who married his son after his death in 1773. It was thought by some (Horace Walpole among them) that the letters were genuine; but when the executors disclaimed them, the statement was accepted.


7. Het Jubelfeest van William Shakespeare is in a collection in Folger Shakespeare Library. It seems to be uniform with a speech placed in the collection “Redevoering over William Shakespeare, door N. G. Van Kampen,” given December 14, 1814. Nouvelle Biographie Générale says Nicholas Godefroi Van Kampen (1776-1839) was professor of German literature at the University of Leyden, and from 1815 to 1821 published a review Mnemosyne. It is probable that the speech and the story were published in the review.


10. Two volumes of Modern Characters from Shakespeare were published in 1778. Boswell (Johnson, III, 250-60) gives contemporary comment on this popular form of amusement.

11. Kenrick claimed to have anticipated Morgann's work on Falstaff by his play Falstaff's Wedding (1760) and Thomas Whately's analysis of Macbeth (in a lecture reported in the press for Wednesday, March 9, 1774). He gave the first series of lectures on Shakespeare, compiled an early pronouncing dictionary, reinforced Jennens' movement toward the lay collation of texts, and published the first individual invitation to the Jubilee—to himself. His attack on Garrick also was a “first,” but even this charge of homosexuality was an enormity that had so little significance many biographers ignore it. The court at the preliminary hearings laughed in a most unlegal ridicule. Some anonymous publications were: Love in the Suds: A Town Eclogue. Being a Lament.
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of Roscius for the Loss of His Nyky (1772); An Appeal to the Public from the Judgment of a Certain Manager, with Original Letters and the Drama of One Act which was Refused Representation (1774); A Letter to David Garrick on His Conduct as Principal Manager and Actor at Drury Lane (1772); Introduction to the School of Shakespeare (1774). Published under his name: Kenrick's New Dictionary (1773) with preface "A Rhetorical Grammar." The New York Public Library has the entire file of the London Review.

13. Phillip Parsons, Dialogues Between the Living and the Dead (1779).
15. L. B. Campbell, "Garrick's Vagary," in Shakespeare Studies (University of Wisconsin, 1915), pp. 218-30. Some separate publications which bear on the union of Garrick and Shakespeare in mystical terms are: Henry Jones, Ode to Shakespeare in Honour of the Jubilee; John Gilbert Cooper, The Tomb of Shakespeare: A Vision (1770); William Pearce, The Haunts of Shakespeare (1778); George Savile Carey, Shakespeare's Jubilee: A Masque (1769); Paul Hifferman, Dramatic Genius (1770); "Courtney Melmoth" (Samuel J. Pratt), The Shadows of Shakespeare (1779).
22. James Harris, Philological Inquiries (1781). See his chapter viii, "Dramatic Speculations."
26. Evan Lloyd, Epistle to Garrick (1773). Lloyd makes it clear in a footnote that he means Samuel Johnson; he refers to "learned Johnson," and notes: "Not Dr. Samuel Johnson—but old Ben—as the Author would hold himself inexcusable if he was capable of arraying the former with Shakespeare's company, since the publication of his Edition of that immortal Bard."
28. Since studies of eighteenth-century criticism have overlooked the Encyclopaedia Britannica, a summary of eighteenth-century editions may be of interest. Andrew Bell published the first edition in Edinburgh in 1771, a three-volume compendium of scholarly, scientific, and general information. Individuals are not indexed by name, and no biography is included. The seven columns on "Wit" overshadow the one on "Poetry," but poetry is cited as example of wit, eighteen of the forty-three quotations being from Shakespeare. The origin of poetry is ascribed by Vossius to love, by Mme Dacier to religion, by the Abbé Du Bos to mnemonics. A poem is "A composition in verse of due length and measure." It differs from other arts in that "an ignorant person may judge of poetry by the impression it makes on him."
The second edition (10 vols.; 1778-83) gives biographical and critical data; the life of Shakespeare is adapted from the one written for the Jubilee and published in the *London Magazine*: "The great poet of nature, and the glory of the British nation, was descended from a respectable family, at Stratford-upon-Avon." The deer-stealing episode is disposed of by citing contemporary documents which prove that deer-stealing was on a moral level with swiping a handful of apples. "The favorite child of Nature, produced and educated entirely by herself" had no need of "the pedant art." The mulberry tree and the Jubilee are prominent.

The third edition (18 vols.; 1797) shows the tempering influence of Edmund Malone and has high praise for his studies. There is more knowledge of Shakespeare's stage discipline and its value; he knew Latin and "was not unacquainted with French and Italian." By 1797 the Child of Nature had a respectable amount of learning and educative contact with the world. The second edition and (with little change) the third devote almost a hundred pages to James Beattie's discussion of "Poetry," an essay which comprises a small anthology of well-chosen poems, critically analyzed. Beattie accepted the language theory of Hugh Blair, a compromise between the rational and the evolutionary theories: all savage peoples had poetry of a "rude and imperfect" kind, but God gave to the Hebrew people the gift of polished and refined poetry. "Periods in rhyme and metre" will not serve as a definition of poetry, for such a definition is merely grammatical. Poetry is not imitative "in any strict sense," but rather is "the art of expressing our thoughts by fiction." On this question also Beattie affects a compromise. Verse and rhyme are not necessarily constituents of poetry, for much prose (e.g., Fénélon's) is truly poetry. Children are born with "a happy sensibility to the beauties of nature" which should be fostered by the reading of descriptive poetry. A total response to poetry will bring about not only a response of the soul, but also regularity of nature, proper habits, bodily health. He offers rhetoric and meter as studies which will do the reader good in extraliterary matters. As always, he has high praise for Garrick, comparing his comedies with those of Shakespeare and Terence.

34. *Court Miscellany*, VI (1770), 364. Other examples of explication: *Town and Country Magazine*, VI (1774), 358-59; *Gentleman's Magazine*, XLII, 555, 573; XLIII, 68; XLIV, 454; *Universal Magazine*, LIII, 290; *London Chronicle*, XXIX, 142.
35. Note 18 above. "The Hunting of the Percy" is Mr. Bronson's chapter title.